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For the degree of

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**THE APOCALYPTIC WORLD**

**OF**

**THE FOURTH GOSPEL**

by

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## ABSTRACT

The perspective adopted in the Fourth Gospel reflects the symbolic world of the Johannine community; a perspective which can be termed apocalyptic because it seeks to reveal another, higher, heavenly order of reality providing a sense of divine legitimation in the face Jewish hostility. Jesus is shown to be the witness *par excellence* of the heavenly realm and the source of ultimate truth. Although bearing resemblances to an apocalyptic seer, the presentation of the Johannine Jesus owes a greater debt to principal angel traditions which are themselves rooted in the figure of the מלאך יהוה. Crucially, the presence of Jesus becomes the defining eschatological moment in the lives of all who meet him, determining both present and future destiny. However, inherent in the idea of an apocalyptic disclosure is the fact that it is hidden from ordinary human understanding, requiring supernatural elucidation. Now in the Fourth Gospel the role of the Spirit-Paraclete is modelled on the *angelus interpres* of apocalypticism. He progressively interprets the full meaning of the Jesus-revelation to successive generations of believers; acts in a legal capacity by representing the interests of believers who are facing the accusations and persecutions of former allies; and lifts the believer into the transcendent realm which, through the act of worship 'in spirit and truth', makes heaven a present reality on earth. Within the worshipping community the revelation of Jesus continues to be a spiritual reality, with his earthly life acting as an apocalyptic paradigm for later followers. Hostility from their opponents reflects the cosmic conflict in the heavenly realm. Thus the encounter between these two contrasting orders of reality is portrayed as an ongoing state of affairs since Jesus is ever present in the community which bear his name; it continues to shine in the darkness of a hostile world.

## Chapter 1

### SURVEY OF PAST RESEARCH AND THE METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH ADOPTED IN THIS STUDY

#### 1. *Introduction*

Nineteenth century biblical criticism, under the influence of such literary-critical scholars as Wellhausen and Duhm, tended to denigrate the importance of apocalyptic writings for an understanding of the New Testament.<sup>1</sup> Apocalyptic authors were considered merely as imitators, *Epigonen*, who distorted the true prophetic ideal. However, towards the middle of the century Adolf Hilgenfeld voiced a protest against this position, contending: ‘Die jüdische Apokalyptik ist die geschichtliche Vermittelung zwischen der Religion des Alten Testaments und dem Christenthum’.<sup>2</sup> Hilgenfeld’s contention received support from the subsequent discovery, publication and systematic study of extra-canonical texts hailing from the late Second Temple period. In the vanguard of this work was R.H.Charles, whose prodigious labours in editing the writings of the Pseudepigrapha convinced him in particular that apocalyptic was ‘the parent of

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<sup>1</sup> Duhm, *Israels Propheten*, 460; Wellhausen, *Israelitische und jüdische Geschichte*, 175. Schürer, *History of the Jewish People*, barely mentions apocalyptic.

<sup>2</sup> *Die jüdische Apokalyptik in ihrer geschichtlichen Entwicklung*, 2. For a discussion of Hilgenfeld’s contribution to the study of apocalyptic, see Schmidt, *Die jüdische Apokalyptik*, 127-47.



Christianity'.<sup>3</sup> At about the same time Johannes Weiss claimed that the concept of ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ is derived from apocalyptic teaching,<sup>4</sup> while Albert Schweitzer sent further shock waves through the old liberal orthodoxy by contending that the teaching of Jesus must be interpreted against the background of his Jewish apocalyptic environment.<sup>5</sup> Wilhelm Bousset also lent his support to the idea that early Christianity was indebted to apocalyptic tradition,<sup>6</sup> although little significant attention was paid to a possible connection between them during the mid years of the twentieth century.<sup>7</sup>

Interest was reignited in 1960 by Ernst Käsemann's stark contention that 'apocalyptic - since the preaching of Jesus cannot really be described as theology - was the mother of all Christian theology.'<sup>8</sup> The ensuing discussion on the question of possible apocalyptic influence tended to focus on the impact of its eschatology, to the point that the terms were treated as loosely synonymous.<sup>9</sup> Broadly speaking, apocalyptic thought was equated with futuristic or consistent

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<sup>3</sup> *APOT*, 1; idem, *Religious Development*, 35.

<sup>4</sup> *Die Predigt Jesu*, 61-64.

<sup>5</sup> *Quest of the Historical Jesus*, 399; idem, *Paul and his Interpreters*, ix.

<sup>6</sup> *Die religionsgeschichtliche Herkunft*, 57: 'Immerhin werden wir sagen dürfen: die jüdische Apokalyptik hat der Predigt des Evangeliums vorgearbeitet und ihr den Boden bereitet.'

<sup>7</sup> Occasionally the connection was alluded to, but not examined in detail. For example, Ethelbert Stauffer, *New Testament Theology*, 21, simply comments: 'The world of apocalyptic ideas is the one in which the NT writers were really at home.'

<sup>8</sup> 'Beginnings of Christian Theology', 40. Käsemann traces the apocalyptic outlook back to post-Easter enthusiasm in which the Spirit's role through charismatic prophets was dominant. However, Koch (*Rediscovery*, 78) notes that Käsemann's concept of apocalyptic is not sufficiently grounded on the apocalyptic texts. For further critiques of Käsemann's thesis, see the articles by Gerhard Ebeling and Ernst Fuchs in the *Journal of Theology and Church*, Vol 6, 1969.

<sup>9</sup> Ebeling, 'Ground of Christian Theology', 51-2.

eschatology which predicted the imminent inauguration of God's kingdom by supernatural means.<sup>10</sup> A cataclysmic irruption into history, preceded by special signs or 'messianic woes', would signal the end of the temporal order and usher in the eternal reign of God. Moreover, on the basis of privileged access into the divine counsels, the apocalyptic seer was able to produce a timetable which would facilitate an accurate calculation of impending events. On this basis the Fourth Gospel was considered the one document in the NT to be most free from apocalyptic influence.<sup>11</sup>

However, recent scholarship has challenged this position, contending that the preoccupation with eschatology seriously truncates the breadth of material in apocalyptic literature.<sup>12</sup> Too often in the past doctrinal presuppositions have governed the approach to documents, with the result that the variegated nature of the material has tended to be overlooked. Christopher Rowland has forcefully demonstrated that the former tendency to equate apocalyptic with a particular type

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<sup>10</sup> Upon later being challenged by Ebeling ('Ground of Christian Theology', 51-2) to define more specifically his concept of apocalyptic, Käsemann responded as follows in 'Primitive Christian Apocalyptic', 100: 'It is plain from the context that I speak of primitive Christian apocalyptic almost always in order to describe the near expectation of the parousia'. Cf. Vielhauer, 'Die Apokalyptik', 412: 'Man kann deshalb die Apokalyptik als eine besondere Ausprägung der jüdischen Eschatologie bezeichnen'. However, Rössler, *Gesetz und Geschichte*, 11, had already protested against the imbalanced nature of this tendency.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Bultmann, *Theology*, II, 6; *ibid*, *John*, 431, comments that for John 'all apocalyptic pictures of the future are empty dreams'. More recently Maurice Casey, *Is John's Gospel True*, 72, has commented that 'apocalyptic is not the most obvious *Sitz im Leben* for Johannine theology'.

<sup>12</sup> Hall, *Revealed Histories*, 241, states that 'when the adjective "apocalyptic" is recognized to mean something more than "eschatological", John (and Luke) may well be the most "apocalyptic" of the Gospels.' Cf. Barrett, *Gospel according to St John*, 31.



of futuristic eschatology is mistaken.<sup>13</sup> For example, the cardinal issue facing the seer in 4 Ezra is not so much ‘when will the End be?’, but the need to resolve the intractable mysteries surrounding Israel’s, and indeed humanity’s, destiny. Eschatological concerns form only one aspect of the literature, and even on this subject there is no uniformity of outlook.<sup>14</sup> Furthermore, while the apocalyptic literature provides evidence for the view that history proceeds according to a predetermined plan, there is no precise homogeneity concerning the details of the impending eschatological era. Thus The Book of Watchers and Jubilees conceive of a future earthly kingdom characterised by abundant fertility but without a Messiah (1 En 10.16-22). The Book of Similitudes pictures a transformed earth (1 En 45.5, 51.4-5), presided over by a pre-existent supernatural Son of Man who has been kept in heaven since creation but who now sits on the throne of his glory (1 En 47.3, 51.3, 62.5) to judge the living and the dead who are raised. However, the fifth book of I Enoch espouses a more transcendental eschatology. The righteous are not given a bodily resurrection to a new earth, but rather the ‘windows of heaven shall be opened for [them]’ (1 En 104.2) and they will become companions of the hosts of heaven (1 En 104.6). Tracing the development of eschatology in Judaism after the exile is not, therefore, a broad

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<sup>13</sup> *Open Heaven*, 47; Stone, ‘Lists of Revealed Things’, 443. In fairness to Charles, it should be noted that he had already argued that apocalyptic thought should not be restricted to eschatological matters. Cf. *Development*, 17; *History*, 178.

<sup>14</sup> Rowland, *Open Heaven*, 23. Hartman, *Asking for a Meaning*, 120, advises on the need for modification of the typical idea, expressed by H.W.Kuhn, that for apocalyptic ‘die Gegenwart heilsleer war und...die Heil erst von der Zukunft erhofft wurde’.

enough base to account for the multi-faceted apocalyptic phenomenon. Other equally important facets of the literature provide scope for comparison with the NT documents.

Students of the late Second Temple period have consequently now moved towards greater refinement in specifying the nature of Jewish apocalyptic. Indeed, much labour has been spent trying to achieve a scholarly consensus over the question of definition. We will therefore present the broad lineaments of this discussion (see §2 below) in order to ground the ensuing argument for apocalyptic influence on the Fourth Gospel on an agreed understanding of the nature and function of apocalyptic. If the view is correct that the kind of Judaism once espoused by the Johannine community was more heterodox,<sup>15</sup> it is reasonable to suppose that, in the process of reformulating the Jesus traditions, the evangelist would employ concepts and ideas of a ‘dissenting’ nature (see further §§3-4 below).<sup>16</sup> It is therefore quite likely that John, together with other members of his community, will have been cognizant with that branch of Judaism which valued the apocalyptic viewpoint.<sup>17</sup> There is no need to argue for direct literary

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<sup>15</sup> Moody Smith, *Johannine Christianity*, 26, suggests ‘connections through a sort of Jewish Christianity with less orthodox forms of Jewish life and thought.’ Ashton, *Understanding the Fourth Gospel*, 159, places the Johannine Christians ‘somewhere among the religious dissenters who proliferated in Palestine in the first century.’ Cf. Cullmann, *Johannine Circle*, 38-40; Aune, *Cultic Setting*, 65-6; Ricca, *Eschatologie*, 13, affirms dependence on non-conformist heterodox Judaism: ‘Es ist in der Tat kaum zu bezweifeln, dass das 4. Ev einer ideologischen und geistigen Atmosphäre angehört, die derjenigen der neuen Texte [von Qumran] verwandt ist.’

<sup>16</sup> Ashton, *Understanding the Fourth Gospel*, 128.

<sup>17</sup> Barrett, *Gospel according to St John*, 32, affirms that ‘John was by no means out of touch with the world of Jewish apocalyptic.’ Dunn, *Christology*, xxvi, has stated that



dependence on the apocalyptic literature, but rather for the influence of ‘a community and continuity of tradition’ as reflected in the Johannine thought-world.<sup>18</sup>

## 2. *What is Apocalyptic? The Problem of Definition*

The word ‘apocalyptic’ derives from the Greek noun ἀποκάλυψις and bears the primary meaning of ‘disclosure’, ‘unveiling’ or ‘revelation’.<sup>19</sup> Its presence in the opening verse of the book of Revelation seemed, according to early scholarship, to be sufficient reason for using the word as a general term for classifying similar literary works.<sup>20</sup> However, disagreement ensued over which works fell into this category, owing to a failure to distinguish between the literary form of a document

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‘part of the context and meaning of the Fourth Gospel is provided by the visionary and speculative concerns of Jewish apocalypse and mysticism’. See also ‘Let John be John’, 325.

<sup>18</sup> Smith, *Religions in Antiquity*, 259; cf. Ashton, *Understanding*, 128.

<sup>19</sup> The Greek verb ἀποκαλύπτειν is used in the LXX to translate the Hebrew פָּלַג (‘reveal’) to denote, for example, the disclosure of a secret (Prov. 11.13) or impending future events (Amos 3.7). However, it is in Theodotion’s translation of Daniel that the verb is used in the sense of a disclosure of transcendent realities (Dan θ’ 2.19, 22, 28,30; 10.1).

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Koch, *Rediscovery*, 18; Morton Smith, ‘On the History of ΑΠΟΚΑΛΥΠΤΩ and ΑΠΟΚΑΛΥΨΙΣ’, 19; Vielhauer, ‘Apocalyptic’, 581; Knibb, ‘Emergence’, 156. Collins, ‘Morphology of a Genre’, 2, reminds us that ‘the classification “apocalyptic” or “apocalypse” is a modern one’. In ‘Genre, Ideology and Social Movements, 18, Collins further notes that, in the context of modern scholarship, genres are analytical categories which may not coincide exactly with the genre labels of antiquity. Among the Jewish apocalypses in the period 250 B.C.E. - 132 C.E. only a few of the later ones (2 Baruch, 3 Baruch) bear the title ‘apocalypse’ in the mss., and even here they may be the result of scribal addition.



and the particular ideas propounded within it.<sup>21</sup> ‘Apocalyptic’ came to be regarded as a *Sammelbegriff* constituting an amalgam of literary features and eschatological ideas,<sup>22</sup> many of which could be found in other documents from late antiquity. The result, according to John J. Collins, was a case of ‘semantic confusion’ over the use of the word because of a tendency to treat it as a world-view ‘independent of specific texts’.<sup>23</sup>

Although disagreement over definition still exists, with some scholars even advocating the abandonment of the term ‘apocalyptic’ altogether,<sup>24</sup> greater precision has been achieved in recent decades regarding the issues involved.<sup>25</sup> In this respect recognition should be given to Klaus Koch for his pioneering attempt to delineate the form-critical characteristics of documents referred to as apocalypses in order to provide a basis for discussion of the subject. His approach was to take a group of writings composed in, or in the spirit of, Hebrew or Aramaic and apply form-critical methods to them. From these writings Koch elicited a set of six literary features (discourse cycles, spiritual turmoils,

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<sup>21</sup> Sturm, ‘Defining the Word ‘Apocalyptic’’, 19; Knibb, ‘Emergence’, 157; Barr, ‘Jewish Apocalyptic’, 14-15; Laws, ‘Can Apocalyptic be Relevant?’, 94; Adler, *Jewish Apocalyptic Heritage*, 5.

<sup>22</sup> Koch, *Rediscovery*, 20.

<sup>23</sup> *Apocalyptic Imagination*, 2. This criticism applies, for example, to Schmithals, *Apocalyptic Movement*, 188-89, who treats the ‘apocalyptic thought world’ as independent of the literary genre of an apocalypse.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. Glasson ‘What is Apocalyptic?’, 99; Stone, ‘Lists of Revealed Things’, 443; Knibb, ‘Emergence’, 164; Saachi, *Jewish Apocalyptic and its History*, 27. Carmignac, ‘Description’, 163, comically remarks: ‘Si nous hésitons à parler d’Apocalyptique, c’est parce que nous voudrions savoir si elle est un genre littéraire ou bien un pudding théologique’.

<sup>25</sup> For this reason the participants of the Uppsala Colloquium on Apocalypticism opted ‘contra *definitionem*, pro *descriptione*’ (see Hellholm, *Apocalypticism*, 2).

paraenesis, pseudonymity, mythical images rich in symbolism, and the composite character of the documents) and eight constituent ideas (urgent expectation of the end, cosmic catastrophe, division of time into fixed segments, angels and demons, new salvation, the throne of God, a mediator with royal functions and the prevalence of the catchword 'glory').<sup>26</sup> While Koch's work is a worthy attempt at clarifying a rather confused situation, he nevertheless received criticism from scholars who noticed a discrepancy between the kind of documents which correspond to his form-critical criteria and those which embody the typical ideas of apocalyptic.<sup>27</sup> His aim to identify a definitive body of literature which may be referred to as 'apocalyptic' can be criticised because of lack of consistency between the literary and ideological criteria he adopts.

In the light of this Paul D. Hanson argues against the attempt to produce a formal cognitive definition, advising instead that one operates within 'a system that identifies three distinct levels which, while interrelated, betray individual peculiarities which should not be blurred.'<sup>28</sup> He therefore distinguishes between

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<sup>26</sup> Koch, *Rediscovery*, 24-32.

<sup>27</sup> For example, Stone, 'Revealed Things', 440-1, criticises Koch's approach since certain writings which would qualify as apocalypses from a form-critical standpoint lack many of the constituent ideas (e.g. 3 Baruch), whereas some documents which contain the ideas do not possess the requisite literary form (e.g. Testaments of the XII Patriarchs).

Knibb's defence of Koch ('The Emergence of the Jewish Apocalypses', 160) is rejected by Paolo Sacchi, *Jewish Apocalyptic*, 38, who accuses Koch of circular reasoning in his investigation of the field of apocalyptic.

<sup>28</sup> 'Apocalypticism', 29. Hanson criticises earlier scholarship for attempting to define 'apocalyptic' by 'compiling lists of characteristics that indiscriminately mix formal, conceptual, and even sociological categories...such a random list fails to identify a definable center'; idem, *Dawn of Apocalyptic*, 6-7. On this point he is in agreement with von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, II, 302; cf. Betz, 'On the Problem', 135. Sanders,



the concepts of apocalypse (a particular literary genre), apocalyptic eschatology (a religious perspective) and apocalypticism (an ideological stance governing the existence of a community).<sup>29</sup> This division is helpful so long as, in the interests of terminological consistency, the discussion of ‘apocalyptic eschatology’ and ‘apocalypticism’ is based upon a clearly identified notion of the literary genre ‘apocalypse’.<sup>30</sup>

To achieve this the Society of Biblical Literature Genres Project set out to identify the recurring features within writings commonly referred to as apocalyptic from the period 250 BCE - 250 CE in the eastern Mediterranean area, with the aim of constructing a paradigm against which an individual document could be judged.<sup>31</sup> The resultant ‘master-paradigm’ differentiates between the framework and content of the revelation. The framework refers to the medium of the revelation (whether visual, auditory, literary, or involving an otherworldly journey), the presence of an otherworldly mediator and the situation of the human recipient. The content of the revelation embraces both temporal and spatial

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‘Genre of Palestinian Jewish Apocalypses’, 448, characterises definitions of this type as ‘a *mélange* of literary and thematic elements’. However, cf. Barr, ‘Jewish Apocalyptic’, 8, who contends that ‘apocalyptic’ does consist of ‘bundles of features on various levels’. Similarly Cook, *Prophecy and Apocalypticism*, 22, employs the Wittgensteinian concept of ‘family resemblance’ as a basis for understanding the meaning of a word. Cf. Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, 32.

<sup>29</sup> Knibb, ‘Emergence’, 161, believes that a simple twofold distinction between apocalypses and apocalyptic eschatology would be sufficient.

<sup>30</sup> Collins, ‘Genre, Ideology and Social Movements’, 13. Cf. Cullmann, *Salvation in History*, 80-3.

<sup>31</sup> Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination*, 4. Fiorenza, ‘The Phenomenon of Early Christian Apocalyptic’, 297, designates this ‘the phenomenological-formal genre-pattern approach’ since its concern is ‘to separate out the different structures from the multiplicity of apocalyptic phenomena’.

aspects, the former consisting of protology, history, present salvation through knowledge, eschatological crisis, judgment and salvation, while the latter involves otherworldly features. Elements that were considered essential to the concept of an apocalypse were extracted to form the following definition of the genre:

“‘Apocalypse’ is a genre of revelatory literature with a narrative framework, in which a revelation is mediated by an otherworldly being to a human recipient, disclosing a transcendent reality which is both temporal, insofar as it envisages eschatological salvation, and spatial insofar as it involves another, supernatural world.’<sup>32</sup>

Collins stresses that the various elements within this definition are integrally related. The key concept is ‘transcendence’, evident in both the manner of the revelation and its content, pointing beyond this world to another world as the source of revealed knowledge and of future salvation. Moreover, the revelation is not the fruit of human enquiry but is supernaturally communicated.<sup>33</sup>

On the basis of this definition the category of apocalypse applies to 1 Enoch, Daniel 7-12, 4 Ezra 3-14, 2 Baruch, the Apocalypse of Abraham, 3 Baruch, 2 Enoch, the Testament of Levi 2-5, the Apocalypse of Zephaniah, and, in certain respects, to Jubilees and the Testament of Abraham. But rather than providing an adequate description of these works, the definition supplies a *Rahmengattung* or

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<sup>32</sup> Collins, ‘Morphology of a Genre’, 9.

<sup>33</sup> Collins, *Apocalyptic Imagination*, 57.



generic framework.<sup>34</sup> It embraces different types of apocalypses, some of which are more characterised by visions with the emphasis on the unfolding of history, while others concentrate on otherworldly journeys and cosmological speculation.<sup>35</sup> Nevertheless, the distinctive view of reality shared by all apocalypses is that ‘the world is mysterious and revelation must be transmitted from a supernatural source, through the mediation of angels; there is a hidden world of angels and demons that is directly relevant to human destiny and this destiny is finally determined by a definitive eschatological judgment’.<sup>36</sup>

Scholars have generally recognised the value of the work carried out by Collins and his colleagues on the SBL Genres Project, although their approach has not won universal acceptance.<sup>37</sup> Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza accepts that while genre definitions are able to establish cross-cultural characteristics of the genre

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<sup>34</sup> Cf. Collins, *Daniel with an Introduction to Apocalyptic Literature*, 4: ‘The purpose of Semeia 14 was to delimit the macrogenre and provide a preliminary classification of the whole corpus of the genre.’

<sup>35</sup> The ‘historical’ apocalypses include Daniel, the Animal Apocalypse (1 En 85-90.1-10), the Apocalypse of Weeks (1 En 93 + 1 En 91.11-17), Jubilees, 4 Ezra and 2 Baruch. The ‘otherworldly’ apocalypses include the Book of Watchers (1 En 1-36), the Astronomical Book (1 En 72-82), the Book of Similitudes (1 En 37-71), 2 Enoch, the Testament of Levi 2-5, 3 Baruch, the Testament of Abraham and the Apocalypse of Zephaniah. The Apocalypse of Abraham contains features pertaining to both types. Cf. Bauckham, ‘Rise of Apocalyptic’, 17, who makes the same distinction, while Willie-Plein, ‘Das Geheimnis der Apokalyptik’, 79, also differentiates between two categories of apocalypse (‘Ereignisapokalyptik’ and ‘Beschreibungsapokalyptik’).

<sup>36</sup> Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination*, 7. Independently of the SBL group, Carmignac, ‘Qu’est-ce que l’apocalyptique?’, 20, has placed a similar emphasis on the priority of defining the genre ‘apocalypse’. Thus an *apocalypse véritable* is a revelation which employs symbols and in which there is a ‘rapport du monde visible avec le monde invisible’.

<sup>37</sup> Charlesworth, *New Testament Apocrypha*, 23, has criticised the attempt at literary precision in defining an apocalypse for ignoring the fact that it is the underlying *tone* that is really determinative. This view harks back to Russell, *Method and Message*, 104.



apocalypse, 'they cannot highlight the unique literary character of individual apocalypses and their peculiar apocalyptic perspective within a certain religious-cultural context. Nor are they able to trace historical developments of the genre as a whole or of special aspects of it'.<sup>38</sup> The Italian scholar Paolo Sacchi is also uncomfortable with the attempt to specify essential features that characterize a disparate body of literature, suggesting instead a 'diachronic' approach.<sup>39</sup> Thus he identifies the basic theme of the oldest apocalypse, the Book of Watchers (1 En 1-36), as the problem of the origin of evil, and maps its influence on the emerging apocalyptic tradition.<sup>40</sup> The idea that evil originated in the rebellion of supernatural beings permeates the whole Enoch corpus and undergirds the theology of later documents such as 4 Ezra and 2 Baruch. But limiting the content of revelation to one theme, albeit an important one, cannot be accepted as normative for the whole of the literature under consideration.<sup>41</sup>

John Ashton concedes that the SBL definition is the best one available but nevertheless criticises it for making the ideas of transcendence and eschatology necessary elements of an apocalypse. He also notes that the SBL definition fails to make any reference to the milieu of apocalyptic writing or the actual mode of revelation. Ashton therefore proposes the following alternative definition: 'An

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<sup>38</sup> 'The Phenomenon of Early Christian Apocalyptic', 299.

<sup>39</sup> *Jewish Apocalyptic and Its History*, 21.

<sup>40</sup> This proposal was adumbrated in an article by Barker, 'Some Reflections upon the Enoch Myth', 10.

<sup>41</sup> Boccaccini, *Middle Judaism*, 126-60, notes that if Sacchi's suggestion were adhered to, the book of Daniel would fail to meet the criteria of apocalyptic.

apocalypse is a narrative, composed in circumstances of political, religious, or social unrest, in the course of which an angelic being discloses heavenly mysteries, otherwise hidden, to a human seer, either indirectly, by interpreting a dream or vision, or directly, in which case the seer may believe that he has been transported to heaven in order to receive a special revelation.'<sup>42</sup> Ashton's recognition of the importance of the social context surrounding the composition of an apocalypse is well taken, however his contention that transcendence is an optional feature is surely mistaken. While it is true that in some cases the matters dealt with in an apocalypse border on the mundane (1 En 8.1), the origin and framework of the revelation always presupposes a supernatural world.

Christopher Rowland's approach to the question of delimiting the subject appropriately is to recognise that, while the term 'apocalyptic' may be used to refer both to the literary form of an apocalypse and the religious perspective evident within the literature, its true hallmark is the *revelation of divine mysteries* in a direct and authoritative manner.<sup>43</sup> This over-arching concept allows for differences in form and content between the various documents, yet provides justification for dealing with 'apocalyptic' as an identifiable phenomenon. A brief comparison of the two biblical apocalypses illustrates the differences that exist between any two samples of the literature, but the common thread uniting these apocalypses and distinguishing them from other types of literature is the

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<sup>42</sup> Ashton, *Understanding*, 385-6.

<sup>43</sup> *Open Heaven*, 14.



conviction that 'man is able to know about the divine mysteries by means of revelation'.<sup>44</sup> Access is provided to a 'higher wisdom through revelation',<sup>45</sup> thereby unveiling that which is hidden from ordinary human perception, enabling the readers or hearers to view their situation from a heavenly perspective.<sup>46</sup>

The view taken in this study builds on Rowland's approach by arguing that it is possible to identify an apocalyptic perspective in writings generally viewed as belonging to the genre 'apocalypse', but also in literature not traditionally termed 'apocalyptic'.<sup>47</sup> This apocalyptic perspective assumes the possibility of a direct, authoritative disclosure of a hidden, transcendent order of existence, operating in parallel to the earthly dimension. Reality is conceived of as bipartite, that is, existing on two distinct but related levels. Behind the earthly actors lie supernatural forces which operate on a higher level of reality. The heavenly revelation consequently enables the seer and his audience to perceive the real reasons determining the course of events. The apocalyptic perspective may indeed be expressed by the axiom 'all things upon the earth shall take place from heaven' (1 En 83.9).

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid, 13-14. Cf. Bilde, 'Gnosticism, Jewish Apocalypticism, and Early Christianity', 12: 'The core of the apocalyptic message and the apocalyptic books may be described as *the unmasking of the otherwise unknown secret plans of God*' [italics original]. John Barton, *Oracles of God*, 201, adopts Rowland's position for his own analysis, maintaining that 'the attempt to find any unifying theme among all the apocalypses that are extant is doomed to failure.'

<sup>45</sup> Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism*, I, 210. Cf. Rowland, 'Apocalyptic, Mysticism, and the New Testament', 422.

<sup>46</sup> Rowland, 'Apocalyptic and the New Testament', 46-47; *ibid*, 'Apocalyptic, God and the world', 240.

<sup>47</sup> Cook, *Prophecy and Apocalypticism*, 23, observes that 'the larger category or macro-genre, "apocalyptic literature", is much more fluid than the genre "apocalypse"'.

Now it is this view of reality which also operates within the Fourth Gospel, as this thesis will seek to demonstrate. J. Louis Martyn argues that John's presentation of his Gospel as a two-level drama is in fact based on an apocalyptic understanding of reality whereby the drama actually takes place both on the heavenly stage and on the earthly stage. He continues:

'Furthermore, the developments in the drama on its heavenly stage determine the developments on the earthly stage. One might say that events on the heavenly stage not only correspond to events on the earthly stage, but also slightly precede them in time, leading them into existence, so to speak. What transpires on the heavenly stage is often called "things to come". For that reason events seen on the earthly stage are entirely enigmatic to one who sees only the earthly stage. Stereoptic vision is necessary, and it is precisely stereoptic vision which causes a man to write an apocalypse'.<sup>48</sup>

John Ashton also recognises that the Fourth Gospel is 'profoundly indebted to apocalyptic', identifying four aspects in particular. First, an age of concealment is contrasted with an age of disclosure. The idea of revelation coming in the form of a mystery (a secret once hidden and now revealed) is 'the essence of apocalyptic'.<sup>49</sup> Thus, for example, Daniel is told to 'seal up the vision, for it pertains to many days hence' (Dan 8.26; cf. 8.17; 12.4). Now although the

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<sup>48</sup> *History and Theology*, 135-6.

<sup>49</sup> *Understanding*, 387-88.



Fourth Gospel is not an apocalypse from a literary standpoint, 'it too is a narrative within which heavenly mysteries are revealed by a messenger sent from heaven'.<sup>50</sup> Secondly, revelation takes place in two stages, the first being partial while the second is complete. The origin of this idea is found in the dream-vision which requires interpretation for complete understanding. Again Daniel provides us with illustrations of the way this concept is employed. In the Greek recension of Theodotion the phrase translated by the RSV as 'show the interpretation' is τὴν σύγκρισιν ἀναγγέλλειν (Dan 2.2,4,9,16, 24). While in the first part of the book Daniel is himself the interpreter of Nebuchadnezzar's dreams, in the second half his own dreams require angelic interpretation (9.23; 10.21; 11.2). Now it is this role of interpreter which the Fourth Gospel assigns to the Paraclete in 16.13 (ἀναγγελεῖ ὑμῖν), indicating to Ashton that 'the Paraclete takes over the apocalyptic role of the *angelus interpres*'.<sup>51</sup>

Thirdly, the apocalyptic tradition, like wisdom, tends to distinguish between the wise and the foolish, limiting true understanding to the former class (cf. 2 En 13.49-55). Outsiders remain obtuse to the unveiling of heavenly reality which is only interpreted for the privileged few. Likewise it is possible to see that the riddling discourses in the Fourth Gospel, which show Jesus' interlocutors as groping in the dark without divine enlightenment, is in keeping with apocalyptic

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid, 386.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid, 394. Ashton later comments: 'There is no aspect of John's extremely elaborate theory of revelation for which he is more clearly indebted to the apocalyptic tradition than his explanation of the interpretative role of the Paraclete' (ibid, 423-4).



thinking. Fourthly, apocalyptic revelation discloses a series of correspondences between the heavenly and earthly spheres: 'There are not two worlds but one; or rather the whole of reality is split into matching pairs (rather like the biological theory of DNA) in which one half, the lower, is the mirror-image (albeit in this case a distorting mirror) of the higher...what happens on earth is a re-enactment in earthly terms of what has happened in heaven: a correspondence!'<sup>52</sup> In the Fourth Gospel Jesus is presented as the Son of Man who, in descending to earth, 'carries heaven with him. Like Jacob's ladder, he can reach up to heaven as well as down to earth and is the most powerful symbol in the Gospel of the apocalyptic correspondence between the two realms.'<sup>53</sup> However, since it is the incarnate life of the Logos that is then projected in the life of the community, both levels of the drama are enacted on earth, leading Ashton to state that 'the fourth evangelist conceives his own work as an apocalypse - in reverse, upside down, inside out'.<sup>54</sup> Instead of a seer *ascending* into the heavenly realms to receive a revelation, Jesus *descends* to earth in order to reveal the Father.

Rowland has also drawn attention to the importance of apocalyptic categories for a proper understanding of the Fourth Gospel. Thus, although there may be a polemic issued against apocalyptic claims to have witnessed the divine presence directly (cf. Jn 3.13), the evangelist 'presupposes and uses the basic framework of apocalyptic for his own christological ends in order to affirm the

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid, 403.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid, 404.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid, 405.

uniqueness of the disclosure in Christ and the inferiority of all earlier claims to divine knowledge'.<sup>55</sup> However, the traditional apocalyptic means of revelation, such as dream-vision or heavenly ascent, are rendered superfluous by the proximity of the one who directly mediates the divine presence.<sup>56</sup> Accordingly, the vision of God which constitutes the goal of the heavenly ascents experienced by the apocalyptic seers is, in the Fourth Gospel, realized in Jesus (14.8). Hence the 'heavenly mysteries are not to be sought in heaven but in Jesus, the one who has seen the Father and makes the Father known.'<sup>57</sup> He is both the revealer and the content of the revelation; the intermediary who embodies the divine glory.

Thus, while for John of Patmos the advent of the new Jerusalem from heaven inaugurates the era when the dwelling of God is with mankind (Rev 21.3), in the Fourth Gospel the divine presence already 'dwells' (σκηνώω) on earth in the person of Jesus (1.14). The key difference between the two perspectives is that Revelation views the presence of God as awaiting the future eschatological era, whereas in the Fourth Gospel this time has already come in the revelation of Jesus. This suggests that 'the life of Jesus of Nazareth is already in some sense at least an anticipation of that eschatological glory which is to be revealed at the end of the age'.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> 'Apocalyptic, Mysticism, and the New Testament', 423.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid, 426; idem, 'Religion and Life of Second Temple Judaism, 212.

<sup>57</sup> 'Apocalyptic, God and the World', 243.

<sup>58</sup> 'Apocalyptic, Mysticism, and the New Testament', 424.

The present study intends to develop the insights of Martyn, Ashton and Rowland, concentrating particularly on the implications of an apocalyptic perspective for the social world of the Johannine community. Martyn argues that apocalyptic thought provides the template for John's two-level drama which superimposes the life of the community upon the story of Jesus. Ashton draws parallels between certain underlying principles that are inherent within apocalyptic literature and which also infuse the Fourth Gospel, while Rowland crystallizes the essential factor linking apocalypticism and the Fourth Gospel as the theme of direct revelation which in the latter case is embodied in Jesus. Given the increasing recognition that John's presentation of his Gospel utilizes an apocalyptic framework, the aim of this thesis will be to consider the way in which this reflected the world-view of the believing community of which the author was a member. Specific attention will be given to the social dimension presupposed in both the apocalyptic writings and the Fourth Gospel. Accepting the undeniable 'interaction between social reality and theological assertions',<sup>59</sup> together with the growing recognition of the value of sociological theory in elucidating the setting

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<sup>59</sup> Scroggs, 'Sociological Interpretation', 165. Cf. Esler, *The First Christians in their Social Worlds*, 2, 18; Collins, 'Daniel and His Social World', 131. Commenting on the enrichment to biblical historical-criticism through attention to social factors, Collins argues that 'texts do not give us simple objective accounts of reality but are constructs which reflect the interests of their particular authors and the groups to which they belonged.'



of biblical texts,<sup>60</sup> this study will make use of some key sociological concepts in its analysis of apocalyptic influences within the Fourth Gospel.

### 3. *The Sociological Context and Function of Apocalyptic Literature*

Further insight into the character of apocalyptic literature, with its attendant influence on the Fourth Gospel, is acquired from an appreciation of the social milieu surrounding its emergence, together with its intended function,<sup>61</sup> that is its ‘illocutionary’ aspect.<sup>62</sup> Certain respected biblical scholars have suggested that the sociology of knowledge, in the form presented by Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann, provides insights into the way in which social experience affects theological perspective. For example, Elizabeth Fiorenza has observed that ‘a sociology of knowledge approach points out that any change in theological ideas and literary forms is preceded by a change in social function and perspective.’<sup>63</sup> It is therefore helpful to summarise those aspects of their discussion that will be of relevance to this study.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Nickelsburg, ‘Social Aspects’, 641, observes that an analysis of the social and cultural factors that lie behind the apocalyptic documents is a *desideratum* for a better understanding of the literature. Cf. Smith, ‘Social Description of Early Christianity’, 19; Hanson, ‘Apocalyptic Literature’, 471; Gager, *Kingdom and Community*, 13.

<sup>61</sup> Cf. Collins, ‘Symbolism of Transcendence’, 8.

<sup>62</sup> Hellholm, ‘Problem of Apocalyptic Genre’, 18, is using J.L.Austin’s term taken from his book, *How to Do Things with Words*, 98-108. Cf. Hartman, ‘Survey of the Problem of Apocalyptic Genre’, 334.

<sup>63</sup> ‘The Phenomenon of Early Christian Apocalyptic’, 311.

<sup>64</sup> Cf. Scroggs, ‘Sociological Interpretation’, 175; Meeks, ‘Man from Heaven’, 163; Collins, ‘Daniel and His Social World’, 131. Esler, *First Christians*, 13, argues that the

Every human society is the fruit of a dialectical process by which humans collectively construct a social reality within which they then conduct their lives. This social reality or 'world' is humanly produced through a process termed 'externalization', attaining the character of an objective reality that confronts persons as an external 'facticity' outside of themselves. The social world is built up in the consciousness of a person or 'internalized' by conversation and interaction with 'significant others'. It is then able to provide a meaningful order, or 'nomos', for the separate experiences and meanings of individuals. The way this happens is that the meanings of the human world are projected into the universe itself, thereby investing them with cosmic significance. The relationship between society and cosmos is conceived on a microcosm / macrocosm basis, whereby there is a parallelism between the two spheres. Hence transcendent recognition and support for an individual's role or a community's stance produces a stabilizing effect. Suprahuman corroboration helps to allay potential anxieties or doubts created by hostility from outside forces. The importance of this aspect of society can be gauged by the psychological trauma experienced by individuals or communities who are plunged into *anomie* through the dissolution of familiar patterns of thought and life.<sup>65</sup>

Owing to the precarious nature of socially constructed worlds, the socialization of an individual into a given community needs to be reinforced by

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use of this model may be justified as a heuristic tool enabling comparisons between texts to be made and bringing new perspectives to bear.

<sup>65</sup> Berger, *Social Reality of Religion*, 31.



legitimation of its existing structures.<sup>66</sup> There are several levels at which this occurs, from the sheer fact of society's objective presences through to theoretical explanations of its various institutions. But the most effective method of legitimating a society is through an all-embracing *Weltanschauung* which integrates all the disparate elements within that society. Another term for this is 'symbolic universe', which provides order for all the varying experiences one may have by integrating them into 'an overarching universe of meaning'.<sup>67</sup> Such a symbolic world acts as a sheltering canopy by which discrepant sectors of life can be explained and harmonized. Furthermore, an individual is able to anchor his identity in a cosmic reality that is immune from the vicissitudes of life. It is thus 'conducive to feelings of security and belonging'.<sup>68</sup> Religious thought is particularly effective in legitimating or explaining the historical experiences of a group because it claims to link the tenuous realities of a social world with a 'sacred *realissimum* which by definition is beyond the contingencies of human meaning and human activity'.<sup>69</sup> Thus the symbolic universe or world view of a religious group acts to validate its attitudes and conduct by granting them ultimate, cosmic status.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Cf. Tidball, *Sociology of the New Testament*, 14. The term 'legitimation' is derived from Weber.

<sup>67</sup> Berger and Luckmann, *Social Construction of Reality*, 115.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid, 117.

<sup>69</sup> Berger, *Social Reality of Religion*, 41.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid, 44: 'Religious legitimation purports to relate the humanly defined reality to ultimate, universal and sacred reality. The inherently precarious and transitory constructions of human activity are thus given the semblance of ultimate security and permanence. Put differently, the humanly constructed *nomoi* are given a cosmic status.'

Now by unveiling the reality of a spiritual, heavenly dimension, an apocalypse develops a social world or symbolic universe for its readers/hearers which includes the horizons of another higher and future plane of existence. A true perspective on life must take into account the transcendent dimension which will thereby shape a person's symbolic universe. Access to the heavenly world shows it to be a present reality such that even the future is present now.<sup>71</sup> Furthermore, knowing the ultimate outcome of the course of history may radically affect one's perception of current circumstances.

The common thread in the various attempts to specify the sociological context of the burgeoning apocalyptic perspective is that it supplied an answer to the puzzling conditions facing the chosen people of God. Scholars have long recognized the influence of historical conditions on the composition of the apocalyptic writings,<sup>72</sup> in particular suggesting that they emerged in response to persecution.<sup>73</sup> The type of crisis experienced should not, however, be seen as confined to persecution;<sup>74</sup> there is evidence of other kinds of problems, such as cultural disruption in the Book of Watchers, the injustice of history in 4 Ezra, or the fear of death in the Testament of Abraham.

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<sup>71</sup> Thus Barrett, 'New Testament Eschatology', 138-9, has observed that 'these two mysteries, of heaven and the future, are very closely allied, since in apocalyptic the significant future is the breaking into this world of the heavenly world, and to know what now is in heaven is in consequence almost the same as knowing what will be on earth.'

Cf. von Rad, *Wisdom in Israel*, 273; Collins, 'Cosmos and Salvation', 137.

<sup>72</sup> Cf. Charles, 'Apocalyptic Literature', I: 110.

<sup>73</sup> Cf. Russell, *Method and Message*, 17; Frost, *Old Testament Apocalyptic*, 7; Collins, 'Symbolism of Transcendence', 8.

<sup>74</sup> Collins, 'Apocalyptic Technique', 110.



Much of the apocalyptic literature reflects the unsettled political, social and religious conditions that embroiled the Jewish people in the late Second Temple period. The Book of Daniel, the Testament of Moses, the Apocalypse of Weeks and the Animal Apocalypse of 1 Enoch all originate from the turbulent period of Antiochus IV. 4 Ezra, 2 Baruch and the Apocalypse of Abraham were written following the trauma of Jerusalem's destruction in 70 C.E., while other apocalypses not so easily datable also reflect circumstances of distress.<sup>75</sup> It is clear from several texts that the righteous were subject to various forms of oppression, be it political, social, economic or religious (cf. 1 En 9.1; 48.7; 61.12; 100.7; 4 Ez 6.57; 10.22; 2 Bar 80.7).

The particular spiritual stress experienced by such groups derives from the fact that their situation is *not what it ought to be*, since it contradicts expectations of what their rightful position should be as God's chosen people.<sup>76</sup> Thus, in psychological parlance, there is a problem of cognitive dissonance,<sup>77</sup> producing a need for a theodicy which can provide a satisfactory explanation of events. Hanson speaks of 'the crisis sociologists find at the base of every apocalyptic

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<sup>75</sup> Cf. Bilde, 'Gnosticism, Jewish Apocalypticism, and Early Christianity', 13, Grelot, 'Apocalyptic', 49; Ringgren, *RGG* I, 464; Sanders, 'Genre of Palestinian Jewish Apocalypses', 456, considers that the decisive element characterizing the Palestinian Jewish apocalypses is 'the combination of revelation with the promise of restoration and reversal'.

<sup>76</sup> Bilde, 'Gnosticism, Jewish Apocalypticism, and Early Christianity', 13.

<sup>77</sup> Meeks, *The First Urban Christians*, 173, observes that 'apocalyptic movements provide relief from cognitive dissonance'. Cf. Bilde, 'Gnosticism, Jewish Apocalypticism and Early Christianity', 23. The concept of 'cognitive dissonance' was developed by Festinger, Riecken, and Schachter in *When Prophecy Fails*. It was further elaborated by Festinger in *A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance*.



movement: the collapse of a well-ordered world view which defines values and orders the universe for a people, thrusting them into the uncharted chaos of anomie and meaninglessness'.<sup>78</sup>

A vital element of the apocalyptic writings, therefore, is to provide comfort and strength to those who are in the midst of turbulent times. For example, Baruch is able to strengthen his heart because the revelation given to him has provided 'many consolations which will last forever' (2 Bar 43.1). Accordingly, the letter he writes to his exiled compatriots is that they 'may find consolation with regard to the multitude of tribulations' (82.1). However, as well as by direct paraenesis, comfort is given by revealing a particular view of the world throughout the apocalypse. The cosmos is shown to be ordered, the course of history already predetermined, judgment assured, rewards and punishments for the dead stored up in the heavenly realms.<sup>79</sup>

In many of the apocalyptic writings the drama of world history is presented using the conception of predetermined epochs of history, drawn from the Hellenistic oriental environment,<sup>80</sup> whereby various empires would hold sway until finally Israel would be raised to its rightful position of supremacy. It is

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<sup>78</sup> Hanson, *Interpretation* 25, 455; idem, 'Introduction', 1. Cf. Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism*, 225.

<sup>79</sup> Luck, 'Das Weltverständnis in der jüdischen Apokalyptik', 295, has argued that the central objective of apocalyptic thought is 'Weltverständnis', the goal being to demonstrate 'daß die Welt in einer gerechten Ordnung gehalten ist', in spite of indications to the contrary.

<sup>80</sup> Cf. Flusser, 'The four empires', 148-75; Collins, *Apocalyptic Vision*, 37-40, mentions references to the four kingdom schema in the Roman chronicler Aemilius Sura, in the fourth Sybylline Oracle (Sib. Or. 4:49-101) and in the Persian Bahman Yasht. It is widely accepted that determinism constituted part of the *Zeitgeist* of the Hellenistic age.

likely that the political and social upheavals engulfing the Jews in the Second Temple period fostered a sense of needing a new interpretation of history that provided a rationale for the reversals suffered at the hands of more powerful kingdoms. The apocalyptic authors met the challenge of life's injustices by unveiling God's hidden plan that incorporated the negative aspects of the present into a larger scheme in which the final resolution would be a glorious vindication and triumph for the people of God.

The course of history is viewed as preordained by God and divided into a series of 'times' ultimately issuing in the eschatological era.<sup>81</sup> For example, in the Ten Weeks' Apocalypse (1 En 93.1-10 + 91.12-17) history is divided up into ten world weeks, seven of which belong to the ordinary flow of events and the last three relate to the inauguration of God's salvation consummated by a 'new heaven'. The aim is to create the impression that the flow of events is predetermined after an ordered fashion thereby reassuring the faithful of God's ultimate control and sovereignty.<sup>82</sup> 'All things which should be in this world, he foresaw and lo! It is brought forth' (TMos 12.5). This intention provides the reason why the accounts of past history are often in the form of *vaticinia ex eventu*<sup>83</sup> (Daniel 8, 11.1-30; 1 En 85-90, 91.12-17, 93; T Levi 16-18; T Jud 21-24;

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<sup>81</sup> Charles, *Future Life*, 183; Rowley, *Relevance*, 16; Gruenwald, 'Jewish Apocalyptic Literature', 91.

<sup>82</sup> Rössler, *Gesetz und Geschichte*, 60-65, contends that the historical schemata found in the apocalyptic literature reflect a deterministic theology of history, since the entire course of history from the creation to the *eschaton* is presented as the outworking of the divine plan of election.

<sup>83</sup> The author assumed not only the name but also the point of view of the pseudonym and 'included under the form of prediction both what to him was actually history of the past,



4 Ez 11-12; 2 Bar 35-40, 53-71; TMos 2-10 and the ApAb 27-32). The device creates the impression that history proceeds in accordance with a divine plan, despite appearances to the contrary.<sup>84</sup>

Accordingly, the apocalyptic seer need not 'be troubled by the times, for the Holy and Great One has designated (specific) days for all things' (1 En 92.2). Thus the archangel Jeremiel affirms to Ezra that God himself has 'weighed the age in the balance, and measured the times by measure, and numbered the times by number; and he will not move or arouse them until that measure is fulfilled' (4 Ez 4.37). While Ezra takes some convincing of this, by the end of his visions and dialogues with God's angelic emissaries the seer comes to a place where he is able to praise the Most High in the knowledge that 'he governs the times and whatever things come to pass in their seasons' (13.58).

Similarly, revelation of the cosmological secrets of the universe serves to show how 'the orderly operation of the heavenly spheres is intended to reassure the audience of God's sovereign lordship over all or reality'.<sup>85</sup> Enoch points to the order and harmony exhibited in nature as indicative of the unchanging purpose of God for humanity. He repeatedly exhorts the reader to 'examine' (1 En 2.1; 3.1 etc, tayyēqu, καταμύθετε) the works of God, to consider the 'appointed order'

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and what, in reality as well as in form, was prediction of the future.' Cf. Bloch, *Apocalyptic in Judaism*, 15; Barrett, *The Background of the New Testament: Selected Documents*. *Vaticinia ex eventu* are relatively frequent in the Hellenistic period, especially in Egypt e.g. the Demotic Chronicle and the Potter's Oracle.

<sup>84</sup> Davies, 'Apocalyptic and Historiography', 21, affirms that 'the effect of these passages is quite definitely to convey an interpretation of past history as having proceeded resolutely in accordance with a divine plan (despite any appearance to the contrary)'.

<sup>85</sup> Bockmuehl, *Revelation and Mystery*, 34.

of the seasons (2.1) and 'how all the work of God as being manifested does not change' (2.2). In sum the patriarch affirms that 'His work proceeds and progresses from year to year. And all his work prospers and obeys him, and it does not change; but everything functions in the way God has ordered it' (5.2).

The details of God's control of the universe demonstrate how 'le gouvernement divin s'étend aux moindres détails de la machine du monde et dispose toutes choses pour le grand bien des justes'.<sup>86</sup> The seer is taken behind the vicissitudes of time and hears the divine voice from the heavenly throne guaranteeing the right outcome for 'I created all the armies and all the forces. And there is no one who opposes me or who is insubordinate to me, for all submit to my sole rule and work my sole dominion' (2 En 33.5). Although the powers of evil appear to be controlling the course of history in 'this age', they are in fact subservient to the divine purpose that will be ultimately realized in spite of evidence to the contrary.<sup>87</sup>

The apocalyptic seer, by his presentation of a transcendent, heavenly sphere is, in effect, 'externalizing' a supra-human objective world which can be 'internalized' or absorbed into the consciousness of the hearers/readers. The heavenly reality then forms a new and expanded symbolic universe which both orders and legitimates the beliefs and actions of the participating group. The

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<sup>86</sup> Frey, 'Apocalyptique' 330.

<sup>87</sup> Vielhauer, 'Apocalypses', 591, contends that 'alongside dualism, the outstanding characteristic of the apocalyptic thought-world is determinism... all that happens happens precisely according to the fixed plan of God, which human plans and actions can neither advance nor hinder.' Cf. Charles, *Future Life*, 206; Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism*, 194; Von Rad, *Wisdom in Israel*, 268-77.



earthly stage is shown to be a partial and incomplete representation of reality. Behind the world of appearance is another spiritual and higher order of reality which enables the anomalies and inconsistencies on the earthly level to be explained and understood.

A common method employed, referred to as the 'apocalyptic technique' by Collins, involves 'the transposition of the frame of reference from the historical crisis experienced by the author to this transcendent world'.<sup>88</sup> The human events found to be so disruptive and upsetting are projected upon a cosmic canvas with the aim of providing an explanation that will alleviate the distress.<sup>89</sup> Resolution of the conflict on a macrocosmic scale brings assurance that an equally satisfactory outcome will ensue on the earthly plane.<sup>90</sup> The superhuman character of the *dramatis personae* elevates the situation to a sphere which transcends human control, instilling a deterministic frame of reference that serves to relieve anxiety.<sup>91</sup> Rowland therefore refers to the way the apocalyptic perspective *relativizes* the way things are by reference to another reality, whether heavenly or

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<sup>88</sup> Collins, 'Apocalyptic Technique', 111.

<sup>89</sup> Collins, *Apocalyptic Imagination*, 51, speaks of the apocalyptic device to transpose a problem to a mythological plane: 'by concealing the historical specificity of the immediate situation beneath the primeval archetype, the apocalyptic symbolism relieves anxiety.'

<sup>90</sup> Collins, *Apocalyptic Imagination*, 51. The effectiveness of this apocalyptic method has been illuminated by Lévi-Strauss's theory on the function of myth as a means of overcoming the problems of the present. Cf. Lévi-Strauss, *Structural Anthropology*, 186-205; Picard, 'Observations sur l'Apocalypse grecque de Baruch I', 87-90; Gager, *Kingdom and Community*, 54-55.

<sup>91</sup> Cf. Collins, 'Apocalyptic Technique', 100; idem, *Apocalyptic Imagination*, 51-2. Niditch, 'The Visionary', 153-79, elaborates on the theme of apocalyptic determinism as a relief mechanism.

eschatological: 'Apocalyptic insight is part of the way in which the impoverished character of existence and the injustices of the world are given a different perspective'.<sup>92</sup>

Although the two orders of reality are differentiated from each other, they are nevertheless related: 'As it is on high so also is it on earth: what happens in the vault of heaven happens similarly here on earth' (Asc Isa 7.10).<sup>93</sup> There is both interaction and correspondence between the two levels. Heavenly activity influences events on earth (Dan 10.13; 1 En 65.6), while earthly developments have repercussions in the heavenly world (Dan 8.10). The higher world forms a paradigm for the lower sphere, allowing order and meaning to be discerned in events which, from a merely human perspective, are mystifying. Insight into the heavenly or future world enables the apocalyptic seer to rationalize reversals that have beset the faithful.<sup>94</sup> The present can be viewed from the perspective of knowing what the final outcome will be, according to the divine purpose already established in heaven.<sup>95</sup> The seer is given an 'anticipatory glimpse' of the future eschatological salvation already laid up in heaven.<sup>96</sup> So, for example, Ezra is granted a vision of the heavenly city that will be finally established on earth (4 Ez 7.26, 10.27, 13.36).

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<sup>92</sup> 'Apocalyptic, God and the world', 240.

<sup>93</sup> Cf. Barrett, 'Eschatology', 138; Rowland, *Open Heaven*, 169.

<sup>94</sup> Caird, *Revelation of St John the Divine*, 9.

<sup>95</sup> Bauckham, *The Theology of the Book of Revelation*, 7.

<sup>96</sup> Bockmuehl, *Revelation and Mystery*, 39.



For a community whose beliefs and values are under strain, either from unfavourable events or hostile opponents, recourse may be made to a transcendent realm which will provide both validation for the group's position and expose the real, heavenly causes for what is happening. For example, the recipients of Daniel's apocalyptic message are reassured in the turbulent and confusing times of Antiochus IV Epiphanes that earthly events are actually following a predetermined course that will eventuate in a successful outcome. This conclusion is grounded in a supernatural revelation of the heavenly world and supplies the key to understanding events below. There is a correspondence between heavenly and earthly dimensions, with the former actually determining what transpires in the latter (Dan 7. 21-22; 10.12-14). In the Book of Watchers (1 En 1-36) earthly violence and disturbance is also shown to have a supernatural parallel. Indeed the root of mundane disorder is traced to celestial dissonance. Human wrongdoing has its counterpart, or prototype, in angelic disobedience.<sup>97</sup>

The Book of Dream Visions (1 En 83-90) likewise reveals the heavenly backdrop to human history. The real reason behind the suffering and misfortunes experienced by the chosen people is shown to reside in the unauthorized activity of the seventy shepherds charged with the responsibility of administering heavenly governance (1 En 89.59). They exceed the divine mandate by intensifying the retributive punishment meted out on the Jewish people (1 En 89.65-69).

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<sup>97</sup> Hartman, *Asking for a Meaning*, 143, remarks that 'a certain identification can be observed between the wicked and the fallen angels'.

However, the seer is able to provide reassurance to his hearers/readers that the tyrannical oppression of these angelic powers is coming to an end. He sees 'a great sword...given to the sheep' with which they are able to overthrow their enemies. Moreover, he also watches a throne being erected upon which the Lord of the sheep sits to administer judgment. He pronounces a guilty verdict upon the seventy shepherds and they are then cast into a fiery abyss (1 En 90.19-26).

The authoritative disclosure of heavenly reality functions to recreate the symbolic world of the recipients of an apocalypse. The revelation demonstrates that the promises of God haven't failed; the havoc wreaked by foreign powers is a reflection of cosmic disorder but, most importantly, is ultimately subservient to the sovereign plan of the Most High. Psychological order is thereby reimposed in the minds of those who have encountered a series of bewildering and perplexing developments. The unveiling of the future serves, then, not to satisfy idle curiosity, but to fortify the audience in their convictions. God is shown to be faithful and in control of the heavenly powers which determine the course of earthly events. The perpetrators of wickedness and oppression will be brought to justice and punished, while the conduct of the righteous will be vindicated and their loyalty rewarded in the eternal, transcendent realm. The certainty of future vindication and public verification of the position held by the righteous is guaranteed by the apocalyptic revelation. Accordingly as this is 'internalized', even while in the midst of distressing circumstances, it enables the present situation to be transcended.



The hidden world provides an ultimate reality which enables those who participate in it to transcend the problems of earthly existence. Such difficulties as persecution or rejection are explained from a cosmic perspective, thereby easing cognitive dissonance. It is not that mundane existence is ignored by escaping into celestial visions, rather it is framed in the wider context of the heavenly world. In the words of Rowland, the purpose of an apocalypse is 'to reveal that which is hidden in order to enable readers to understand their situation from the divine perspective'.<sup>98</sup> The higher perspective enables them to see things differently. A greater reality is invoked which both rationalises and resolves present turmoil.<sup>99</sup> The seer, and thereby his readers, are granted a heavenly perspective upon the earthly circumstances surrounding them. The way is opened up into God's throne-room in heaven where understanding of the secrets of the divine purpose may be received (1 En 14-16; 46; 60.1-6; 71; 2 En 20-1; ApAb 9-18). The effect of this is to open their world to divine transcendence, so that 'the world seen from this transcendent perspective, in apocalyptic vision, is a kind of new symbolic world'.<sup>100</sup>

Furthermore, access into the heavenly dimension invests the message received with ultimate authority that supports the belief system of the group over

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<sup>98</sup> 'Religion and Life of Second Temple Judaism', 207; idem, 'Apocalyptic and the New Testament', 46.

<sup>99</sup> Cf. the SBL definition of the function of an apocalypse: 'To interpret present, earthly experiences in the light of the supernatural world'. Similarly, Rowland, 'Apocalyptic, God and the world', 240, speaks of the way apocalyptic religion 'relativized the way that things are by reference to another reality whether heavenly or eschatological.'

<sup>100</sup> Bauckham, *The Theology of the Book of Revelation*, 8.

against competing views. The apocalyptic view of reality carries ultimate validation because it is legitimated by heaven itself. Thus, for example, the Book of Revelation presents Roman imperial ideology as a false reality in the light of the divine perspective. The author counters the dominant world view by creating a symbolic universe into which the readers (or hearers) may become so immersed that their perception of their situation may be shaped accordingly.<sup>101</sup>

The increased recognition among scholars of the need to take into account the function which the apocalyptic literature performed for its readers has led to the SBL definition of an apocalypse being variously supplemented,<sup>102</sup> but with a consensus agreeing that it is ‘intended to interpret present, earthly circumstances in light of the supernatural world and of the future, and to influence both the understanding and the behavior of the audience by means of divine authority.’<sup>103</sup> Accordingly, an apocalyptic perspective is one which views human events within the context of a transcendent reality, thereby creating a symbolic universe that allows a correct and authoritative interpretation of life to be made.

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<sup>101</sup> Bauckham, *The Theology of the Book of Revelation*, 10, 17. Cf. Rowland, ‘Apocalyptic, God and the World’, 240.

<sup>102</sup> Hellholm, ‘Problem of Apocalyptic Genre’, 27, proposes the addition: ‘intended for a group in crisis with the purpose of exhortation and/or consolation by means of divine authority.’ Aune, ‘Apocalypse of John’, 87, formulates the function of an apocalypse as follows: ‘(a) to legitimate the transcendent authorization of the message, (b) by mediating a new actualization of the original revelatory experience through literary devices, structures and imagery, which function to “conceal” the message which the text “reveals”, so that (c) the recipients of the message will be encouraged to modify their cognitive and behavioral stance in conformity with transcendent perspectives.’

<sup>103</sup> Yarbrow Collins, ‘Introduction: Early Christian Apocalypticism’, 7.



#### 4. *The Sociological Context and Function of the Fourth Gospel*

The bearing that this analysis of the sociological function and context of apocalypticism has on the Fourth Gospel can only be appreciated once we have examined the circumstances surrounding its composition. Until relatively recently these circumstances were shrouded in mystery. Ernst Käsemann in 1966 could write: ‘All of us are more or less groping in darkness when we are asked to give information about the historical background of this Gospel’.<sup>104</sup> Debate tended to concentrate on the particular ideas employed by the author, rather than the situation of those for whom it was written.<sup>105</sup> However, the historical and social context surrounding the composition of the Gospel has been elucidated by the proposal of J. Louis Martyn that it should be read on two levels.<sup>106</sup>

While at first glance the Gospel is an account of the life and works of Jesus in early first-century Palestine, beneath the surface one is able to detect evidence of a later situation in which some Jewish-Christian followers of Jesus faced a conflict of interests between allegiance to their new faith and the requirements of

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<sup>104</sup> *Testament*, 1.

<sup>105</sup> Cf. Rensberger, *Overcoming the World*, 17.

<sup>106</sup> *History and Theology*, 121: ‘The evangelist expands pieces of *einmalig* tradition into two level dramas, he produces what we may call a dynamic Christological *movement* portrayed in a story about (a) Jesus of Nazareth who (b) in John’s own day identifies with flesh-and-blood Christian witnesses and yet claims solemnly to be the Son of God’. Martyn’s proposals are not entirely new, since his central thesis was adumbrated by Wrede, *Charakter und Tendenz des Johannesevangeliums*, 40ff.

mainstream Judaism.<sup>107</sup> This insight arose from the observation that on three significant occasions John alludes to a decision by ‘the Jews’ to expel from the synagogue anyone who confessed Jesus to be the Messiah (9.22; 12.42; 16.2). Comparison with the other Gospels and Acts makes it clear that this record of events is anachronistic. During the lifetime of Jesus and in the first stages of the early Church, worship took place within the context of the Jewish faith (e.g. Acts 3.1). Although there was clearly friction and antagonism between the Jewish authorities and the disciples of Jesus, the debate took place within the ambit of Judaism.<sup>108</sup> Rather than instituting a completely new faith, Jesus was seen as the fulfilment of Jewish expectation. Only later in the first century did the implications of the Christian view and worship of Jesus render continued fellowship within Judaism impossible.

Martyn’s analysis assumes that several literary strata may be identified within the Fourth Gospel which reflect the shared interests, concerns and experiences of a single community that existed for a significant period of time.<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> Brown, *The Community of the Beloved Disciple*, 26, also presupposes that John can be ‘read autobiographically as the history of the Johannine community’.

<sup>108</sup> Dunn, ‘Let John be John’, 319-20, notes that in the period prior to the first Jewish revolt in 70 C.E. that, although ‘church and synagogue pulled apart in the Gentile mission, there is no indication of such a disruption with the Jewish mission.’ He also observes the lack of any reference by Josephus to a Jewish faction excluded from the synagogue.

<sup>109</sup> Lieu, ‘Anti-Judaism in the Fourth Gospel’, 107, expresses the literary device of the two-level drama as a means whereby ‘the narrative dynamic replicates the dynamic of recent historical experience for the community – which is here conceived as both generator and recipient of the tradition process’. However, it must be stressed that while the experiences of the community had a decisive influence on the shape of the Fourth



Three phases in the life of the community are discerned from a literary analysis of the Gospel. An early period saw the successful evangelization of Torah-observant Jews, probably undertaken within ‘the bosom of the synagogue’.<sup>110</sup> At this point the group of Jews who responded in faith to the Christian message were ‘clearly living within the theological, social, and cultural security of the synagogue’,<sup>111</sup> and therefore did not suffer any social dislocation or alienation from their heritage.

However, the rapid growth of the messianic group within the synagogue aroused the suspicions of the Jewish authorities, who thereupon began to demand that the claims being made about Jesus be substantiated by scriptural exegesis. There ensued a middle period characterized by a series of midrashic debates, the effect of which was to crystallise opinion concerning the status of Jesus, ranging from total allegiance (6.68), partial belief (2.23) to rank disbelief (7.12). This led the Messianic Jews to reflect further on their new faith in the light of their own dissenting background, thereby producing a widening and increasingly acrimonious divergence of opinion from the parent synagogue.<sup>112</sup>

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Gospel, this does not imply, *contra* Bauckham, ‘Audience of the Fourth Gospel’, 103, that this Gospel was therefore written solely for the community from which it emerged.

<sup>110</sup> Martyn, *ibid*, 97. The material reflecting this period equates with what source critics have termed a ‘Signs Gospel’ or ‘σημεία-source’.

<sup>111</sup> Martyn, ‘Glimpses’, 99.

<sup>112</sup> Brown, *Community*, 174, criticizes Martyn for not explaining why the Messianic Jews from the early period produced a christology which eventuated in their expulsion from the synagogue. He surmises that an influx of Jews with anti-Temple views together with their Samaritan converts acted as a catalyst in producing a higher christology which becomes the fulcrum for an intense conflict which broke out between the Messianic group and the parent synagogue.

It is important to recognize that these developments took place at a time when the Jewish community perceived a threat to its identity. Gentiles had recently destroyed the Temple, thereby liquidating the most sacred symbol of their faith which constituted the cultural and religious centre of Judaism.<sup>113</sup> Moreover, the new Christian faith seemed to be repudiating its Jewish heritage by welcoming Gentiles without insistence on observance of the Law. Jews who were part of this new movement were in danger of becoming assimilated into a largely Gentile world. If it were to survive, Judaism had to redefine its basic identity in contradistinction to other competing faiths. A new religio-cultural focus was needed which would coalesce the disparate strands of Jewish heritage. Therefore a programme of reform began to be implemented in the post 70 C.E. period in which the Jewish faith without the Temple was restructured.

This process of reconstruction has been termed 'formative Judaism',<sup>114</sup> emphasizing the inchoate nature of what was only later to become fully fledged rabbinic Judaism. The Pharisees played a leading role in the reorganization and consolidation of Judaism, supported by the scribal profession<sup>115</sup> and possibly other elements.<sup>116</sup> This emerging consensus recognized the need to unify the hitherto fragmented condition of Judaism if it were to survive in a hostile Gentile

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<sup>113</sup> Cf. Overman, *Matthew's Gospel and Formative Judaism*, 35.

<sup>114</sup> Neusner, 'The Formation of Rabbinic Judaism: Yavneh from A.D. 70-100', 3-42; idem, 'Judaism after Moore: A Programmatic Statement', 141-56.

<sup>115</sup> Neusner, 'Formation', 22.

<sup>116</sup> Cohen, 'The Significance of Yavneh: Pharisees, Rabbis and the End of Jewish Sectarianism', 42, considers that the Judaism of the post-70 C.E. period took the form of a coalition of various groups.



environment. The traditions surrounding the establishment of the council of Yavneh<sup>117</sup> arose in part to legitimate the position of the early rabbis as authority figures in the process of consolidation. They were central to the task of social construction undertaken in the post 70 C.E. period.<sup>118</sup> Thus a developing orthodoxy emerged from the welter of disparate streams of tradition which sought to unify and guard a distinctive Jewish society.

It is in this context that, according to Martyn, one must view the reference in 9.22 to the decision of the Jews to ‘put out of the synagogue’ (ἀποσυνάγωγος) anyone who confessed Jesus as Messiah. Martyn correlates this decision with external evidence of an attempt to streamline Judaism into a more monolithic faith. He postulates that the reformulation of the twelfth benediction of the *Shemoneh Esreh* in the Jewish liturgy (the so-called *Amidah*), the *birkat-ha-minim* (‘blessing against heretics’), was imposed in the Jabnean period of Gamaliel II by the now dominant Pharisaic party in order to root out Messianic followers of Jesus who still wanted to remain within the fold of their ancestral faith. The evidence for this action comes from *b. Ber.* 28b-29a which records Rabban Gamaliel II asking

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<sup>117</sup> Schäfer, ‘Die Flucht Johanan b. Zakkais aus Jerusalem und die Gründung des ‘Lehrhauses’ in Jabne’, 98, characterises the traditions concerning the foundation of the academy of Yavneh as ‘Grundungslegende’.

<sup>118</sup> Overman, *Matthew’s Gospel*, 41, has observed that ‘the formation and establishment of guidelines and authoritative figures or bodies would be part of a lengthy process of social construction within formative Judaism.’

for the formulation of a prayer against the heretics. This was supplied by R.Samuel the Small at some time between 85 and 95 C.E.<sup>119</sup>

Although this particular aspect of Martyn's thesis has been questioned,<sup>120</sup> the general point that toward the end of the first century C.E. formative Judaism took measures, whether official or *ad hoc*, to exclude various expressions of what was perceived as dangerous heterodoxy stands secure.<sup>121</sup> It is probable that the Johannine community was the subject of an initial stage of banning that was later formalized in the formulation of the twelfth benediction.<sup>122</sup> A further development which had a major impact upon the Johannine Christians was the decision of the Jewish authorities to resort to more severe measures against those whose teaching about Jesus constituted, in their view, a threat to monotheism. Martyn interprets such texts as 10.28 and 16.2 as implying that some of the

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<sup>119</sup> Martyn, *History and Theology*, 58. It is important to note that Martyn bases his reconstruction upon a Genizah fragment discovered by Solomon Schechter which also refers specifically to the *Notzrim* (Christians). This document, however, may be as late as the fifth century C.E.

<sup>120</sup> Kimelman, 'Birkat ha-Minim', 233, argues that this measure was directed against all Jewish heretics or sectarians, not just Jewish Christians. He warns against 'anachronistically overestimating the impact of Christianity on Judaism in the first two centuries'. Katz, 'Separation', 76, also argues that *minim* is not a term that applies exclusively to Jewish Christians and casts doubt on the status of the Genizah fragment which specifically singles out the *Notzrim* as objects of the curse. Cf. Finkel, 'Yavneh's Liturgy and Early Christianity', 240; Kohler, 'The Origin and Composition of the Eighteen Benedictions, 52-90; Schäfer, 'Die sogenannte Synode von Jabne', 45-64.

<sup>121</sup> Morton Smith therefore concludes that 'the *Birkat ha-Minim* is useable as an indication of *the sort of thing John had in mind*, but no more' (cited by Martin, *History and Theology*, 57 n.75). Talmud Yerushalmi refers to 'twenty-four types of heresy' while the Temple was still in existence (*y. Sanh.* 10.5). Cf. Casey, *Is John's Gospel True*, 104.

<sup>122</sup> Overman, *Matthew's Gospel and Formative Judaism*, 54.



Johannine evangelists were arrested and even executed as *messithim / planoi* (seducers) on account of their ‘ditheism’.<sup>123</sup>

The rupture with the synagogue was more than a religious altercation, since it also involved painful social and emotional dislocation for the Johannine Christians,<sup>124</sup> with potential economic hardship.<sup>125</sup> Ostracism by hitherto ‘significant others’ may have threatened ‘the entire universe of shared perceptions, assumptions, beliefs, ideals, and hopes that had given meaning to their world within Judaism’.<sup>126</sup> Those expelled are now cut off from the underlying *Weltanschauung* which had provided them with structure and identity. The traditions and associations provided by Judaism were now denied them, leaving the group ostracised and bereft of support. Rensberger surmises that ‘as a result of this loss, the group seems to have turned inward upon itself. Its own (Jewish-) Christian traditions and beliefs, its own fellowship, now became the source of a new sacred universe and a new social context’.<sup>127</sup> This is supported by the

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<sup>123</sup> Martyn, *History and Theology*, 66, believes that since expulsion from the synagogue failed to inhibit the Christian converts, ‘a step beyond excommunication was called for, and in the light of John 16.2 we have no alternative but to conclude that this step was the imposition of the death penalty on at least some of the Jews who espoused the messianic faith.’

<sup>124</sup> Meeks, ‘Man from Heaven’, 162, remarks that ‘coming to faith in Jesus is for the Johannine group a change in social location.’ Cf. Rensberger, *Overcoming the World*, 27.

<sup>125</sup> Klaus Wengst, *Bedrängte Gemeinde*, 59, refers to the total disruption created by separation from the synagogue: ‘Damit wurden alte Bindungen total zerschnitten, jeder persönliche und geschäftliche Verkehr unterbunden und jede Hilfe ausgeschlossen.’

<sup>126</sup> Rensberger, *Overcoming the World*, 27.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid*, 27.

observation that the Gospel reflects the development of a symbolic language, fully intelligible only to those on the 'inside'.<sup>128</sup>

The traumatic development made such a deep impression that the traditions they possessed concerning the earthly life of Jesus were now reshaped and modified to reflect the experience of the community that bore his name.<sup>129</sup> In the light of their own experiences the career of their rejected Lord was interpreted with new meaning and resonance, parallels being drawn and, indeed, often a merging between the events in the life of the historical Jesus and those experienced by his followers.<sup>130</sup> The figure of the Johannine Jesus is therefore influenced not only by traditions concerning the historical Jesus, but also by the experience of the living Jesus meeting the needs of the community.<sup>131</sup> It was during this period of deteriorating relations between the Johannine community and its parent synagogue that Martyn believes the roots of the Gospel's dualistic patterns of thought, together with the concomitant 'world-foreignness', probably originated.<sup>132</sup> From this time the Johannine group of Christian Jews becomes a

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<sup>128</sup> Martyn, 'Glimpses', 91: 'To a large extent the Gospel is written in the language of a community of initiates'. Cf. Meeks, 'Man from Heaven', 163: 'only a very rare outsider would get past the barrier of its closed metaphorical system. It is a book for insiders...'

<sup>129</sup> Aune, *Culting Setting*, 77, contends that 'the Johannine Jesus becomes comprehensible as a projection (or retrojection) of the religious needs and experiences of the Johannine community in combination with other more traditional historical and conceptual factors'. Cf. Gager, *Kingdom and Community*, 8.

<sup>130</sup> Cf. Cullmann, *The Johannine Circle*, 14.

<sup>131</sup> This does not imply, *pace* Bauckham, 'The Audience of the Fourth Gospel', 104, that the story of the historical Jesus is purely 'an encoded version of the history of [the] community'.

<sup>132</sup> Martyn, 'Glimpses', 106, states that 'the *heilsgeschichtlich* pattern of thought presupposed in the earlier christological trajectory from traditional expectations to their



community of Jewish Christians which takes on the character of the 'Stranger from the world above'<sup>133</sup>. The effect of alienation was to create a somewhat isolationist disposition.<sup>134</sup> Like their Lord, the community are 'not of this world', indeed they are hated by the world.

In the late period of the community's life, further reinforcement of the division from the synagogue takes place. It becomes clear that disciples of Moses and followers of Jesus are two mutually exclusive groups (9.28).<sup>135</sup> The Johannine community felt the need to establish and foster a distinctive Christian identity to the extent that one scholar sees this as taking on 'Gentile self-identification'.<sup>136</sup> This uncompromising stance proves too much for some believers in Jesus who are reluctant to make the public confession that will seal their alienation from the synagogue (12.42) and therefore 'turn back' (6.66). Dual allegiance to Moses and Jesus comes to be ruled out by the leaders of the Johannine community and those Jewish believers who try to remain loyal to both their ancestral heritage and new faith are stigmatised as prey to a diabolic lie. Equally, to the Jewish rabbis, the claims being made for Jesus were seen as a

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fulfilment in Jesus is now being significantly altered by the dualistic, above/below pattern.'

<sup>133</sup> Meeks, 'Man from Heaven', 164.

<sup>134</sup> Ashton, *Understanding the Fourth Gospel*, 172.

<sup>135</sup> Cf. Martyn, 'Glimpses', 113.

<sup>136</sup> Casey, *Is John's Gospel True*, 108, 111.

threat to the heart of the ancestral faith, namely, monotheism. Thus 'it had to become a choice between living as a Jew and affirming such claims for Christ'.<sup>137</sup>

In summary, the composition of the Fourth Gospel took place during and after a period of deteriorating relations between the Johannine community and the synagogue from which it was forcibly ejected. After the debacle of the Jewish war for independence (66-70 C.E.), which culminated in the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple, the Pharisees strengthened their position in determining the form and direction of the Jewish faith. From this period onwards there was a move to define more clearly the nature of genuine, authentic Judaism. Certain elements and trends within the broad faith were no longer tolerated, being perceived as having contributed to the national humiliation by the Romans. The rabbinic interpretation of the Torah became the standard by which all other beliefs and positions were judged. Formative Judaism therefore marshals the combined weight of its heritage, customs and institutions in opposition to the burgeoning Christian teaching.

The molten lava of fierce debate hardened into the granite of two distinct faiths whose self-definition rendered the other illegitimate. At stake was the validity not merely of religious interpretation, but the all-embracing social world which provided the mental and emotional security of its adherents. Wayne Meeks has already used certain insights from the sociology of knowledge to show how the Fourth Gospel develops a new symbolic universe which gives religious

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<sup>137</sup> Dunn, *Christology in the Making* (2<sup>nd</sup> edn), xxix.



legitimacy to the Johannine community's isolation from its parent group. He has argued that, by superimposing the experiences of the community upon the historical account of Jesus, the Fourth Gospel presents the story of the Stranger from heaven in such a way that it 'vindicates the existence of the community that evidently sees itself as unique, alien from its world, under attack, misunderstood, but living in unity with Christ and through him with God'.<sup>138</sup>

The conflict between the Johannine community and formative Judaism may therefore be conceived in terms of a clash between two diverging symbolic universes. Both groups were going through a process of self-definition which is reflected in the practice of expulsion, on the one hand,<sup>139</sup> and the denigration of 'the Jews' on the other hand.<sup>140</sup> The polemical tone pervading the Fourth Gospel shows us that two rival parties which had once shared much in common are now at pains to distance themselves from each other.<sup>141</sup> Each community claimed to constitute God's true people and endeavoured to legitimate this claim in the face of opponents who would dispute it. The Jewish leaders conceived of final authority as residing in the law, the centre of God's revelation, whereas the Johannine believers saw Jesus as the ultimate revelation of God, the Law simply

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<sup>138</sup> Meeks, 'Man from Heaven', 163.

<sup>139</sup> Overman, *Matthew's Gospel and Formative Judaism*, 52, notes that the 'sociological process of defining the community and adapting a process by which dissenters could be expelled would naturally be a protracted one.'

<sup>140</sup> For the author of the Fourth Gospel the 'Jews' become representative of the hostile and alien 'world' outside the Johannine community. Cf. Dunn, 'Let John be John', 321.

<sup>141</sup> Rensberger, *Overcoming the World*, 45, affirms 'Johannine Christianity is thus not merely a subculture but a counterculture within at least the local Judaism wherein it has precipitated so painful a conflict.' Moreover, he states that 'to abide in Jesus...meant to be distanced and isolated from the social world of the synagogue' (Ibid, 79).

bearing witness to him (1.45, 5.39,46).<sup>142</sup> The irreconcilable differences between the two parties meant that secession from the parent synagogue was inevitable. Esler comments that the Johannine community 'provides an excellent example of the way in which a sect may distance itself from the outside world by myth, symbolism and ideology, as much as by geographic space.'<sup>143</sup>

The act of separation will have engendered a degree of trauma, leaving members with a sense of bewilderment and disorientation. Some will still experience a residual loyalty to their former co-religionists and may be tempted or pressurized to return to the parent religion. It is therefore incumbent on the leaders to establish a set of alternative values and beliefs which will legitimate the new movement.<sup>144</sup> An illustration of how the apocalyptic perspective can be employed to imbue teaching with an authoritative status may be taken from the

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<sup>142</sup> Dunn, 'The Embarrassment of History', *Anti-Judaism and the Fourth Gospel*, 47, recognises that 'the key issue of dispute with "the Jews" was the claim, embodied in John's Jesus, to definitive *revelation*'. Cf. Dahl, 'The Johannine Church and History', 133.

<sup>143</sup> Esler, *First Christians*, 85. Although there has been debate over whether the Johannine community may be construed as a sect, it certainly fulfils the criterion of being a minority body in relation to a parent group which had previously dictated the pattern of social and cultural norms from which as a dissident group it is now alienated. Cf. Blenkinsopp, 'Interpretation and Sectarian Tendencies: An Aspect of Second Temple History', 2:1-26. Wilson, *Magic and Millenium*, 19, observes that a sectarian movement 'always manifests some degree of tension with the world'. This is certainly true of the Johannine community. Cf. Rensberger, *Overcoming the World*, 22, 27, 45; Meeks, 'Man from Heaven', 70; Käsemann, *Testament*, 38-40; Moody Smith, *Johannine Christianity*, 3-4; Segovia, 'The Love and Hatred of Jesus and Johannine Sectarianism', 258-72; Brown, *Community of the Beloved Disciple*, 14-17.

<sup>144</sup> Overman, *Matthew's Gospel and Formative Judaism*, 24, observes that 'the community must also legitimate its claim to be the true people of God in the face of its competition, who would obviously dispute this.' Casey, *Is John's Gospel True*, 2, recognises that in the light of the Johannine community's conflict with the synagogue 'the need for legitimation of specifically Christian rather than Jewish theology was especially important'.



field of Pauline studies. In Paul's letter to the Galatians he responds to the charge of violating the fundamentals of the Jewish faith by permitting Gentiles to join the community without requiring observance of the law. The apostle justifies his innovation by appealing to a revelation (ἀποκάλυψις) of Jesus Christ which he has received (1.12).<sup>145</sup> The gospel he therefore preaches is legitimated at the highest level and thereby possesses a superior authority to humanly mediated knowledge (1.11, 17).

We aim to show in this study that the perspective adopted in the Fourth Gospel reflects the symbolic world of the Johannine community; a perspective which can be termed apocalyptic because it seeks to reveal another, higher, heavenly order of reality providing a sense of divine legitimation in the face of Jewish hostility.<sup>146</sup> It will be argued that the Fourth Gospel adopts an apocalyptic perspective as a means of interpreting the 'present, earthly circumstances' faced by the community of which the author was a part.<sup>147</sup> Specifically, it enabled the conflict with formative Judaism to be understood within a bipartite framework of reality. A symbolic universe is developed which supports the legitimacy of the

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<sup>145</sup> Meeks, *The First Urban Christians*, 175, argues that 'in Galatians Paul uses apocalyptic categories as part of an effort to justify the innovative character of his mission as a whole in contrast to the traditional values of Judaism.'

<sup>146</sup> Cf. Gager, *Kingdom and Community*, 10: 'The process of generating a sacred cosmos or symbolic universe is always rooted in concrete communities of believers.'

<sup>147</sup> Cf. the revised SBL definition of an apocalypse in Yarbrow Collins, 'Introduction: Early Christian Apocalypticism', 7.

new faith.<sup>148</sup> It also functions to denigrate the institutions and activities of the old group, which is now depicted as passé, even evil.<sup>149</sup>

It has been observed that the ‘bipartite division of reality along several axes’ inherent in the apocalyptic viewpoint is commonly associated with the group experience of alienation or ostracism. From this may develop a ‘symbolic universe [which] leads to a sharp distinction between the elect and the wicked (1 En 5.6-7).’<sup>150</sup> This is what seems to have happened within the community of believers of which the author of the Fourth Gospel was a part. Accordingly, it has already been recognized that the language of the Fourth Gospel ‘reflects a dualistic world view related to apocalyptic understanding’<sup>151</sup> in that it assumes a ‘two-world *Weltanschauung*... consisting of coexistent worlds, “the above” (characterized by light, life, truth, spirit) and “the below” (characterized by darkness, death, error, flesh).’<sup>152</sup> Thus we find that Fourth Gospel presupposes that beyond the earthly

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<sup>148</sup> Rensberger, *Overcoming the World*, 28: ‘Jesus became the center of their new cosmos, the locus of all sacred things. Not only the messianic fulfillment of scripture but also judgment and eternal life, the religious observances now closed to them, and Deity itself were all centered on him.’

<sup>149</sup> Painter, *The Quest for the Messiah*, 22, observes that ‘the bitterness reflected in Jn reveals an urgent struggle between two groups each of which understood its very existence to be threatened.’

<sup>150</sup> Hanson, ‘Apocalypticism’, 30, 33. Plöger, *Theocracy and Eschatology*, 48 theorises that the apocalyptic dualistic outlook was particularly welcomed by circles that felt alienated from the dominant Jewish authorities in the post-exilic period. Cf. the contrast between the wicked (הַרְשָׁעִים) and the wise (הַמְּשָׁכִלִים) in Daniel (12.10).

<sup>151</sup> Painter, *The Quest for the Messiah*, 6, 38.

<sup>152</sup> Price, *John and Qumran*, 19. Charlesworth, ‘Dualism’, 402, notes the relation between John and 4 Ez 7.50: ‘The Most High has made not one world but two’, stating, ‘it appears that John received his two worlds from such thoughts in late biblical Judaism’. Böcher, *Der johanneische Dualismus*, 26, comments that ‘obgleich bei Johannes weithin das soteriologisch-eschatologische Interesse das kosmologische verdrängt hat, hält er mit



plane of existence lies a heavenly dimension, disclosed to the reader, which explains the reason for the opposition faced by the community.

In apocalyptic thought the supramundane order of reality may be conceived on a temporal or spatial basis, but in either case there is a level of existence that lies outside the purview of ordinary human experience and which must be supernaturally revealed in order to convey genuine knowledge of that realm. Both the future and the heavenly world remain the exclusive domain of God who alone retains the right to conceal or disclose the details of these spheres. Hence the apocalyptic mentality assumes the presence of divinely held secrets which cannot be fathomed by normal methods of enquiry or discovery, but must be unveiled and interpreted by heavenly agents. Ultimate authority is thereby attached to the beliefs of an apocalyptic community, superseding the canons of authority used by opponents. We intend to show that the Fourth Gospel adopts the apocalyptic notion that superior authority is attached to a revelation which emanates from the heavenly realm.<sup>153</sup> Furthermore, in so far as only Jesus has access to the heavenly secrets which he then reveals to his disciples, the

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überraschender Beharrlichkeit an der räumlichen Zweistufigkeit des ererbten jüdischen Weltbildes fest.'

<sup>153</sup> Cf. Brockington, 'The Problem of Pseudonymity', 19: 'the message of the apocalyptists was one that showed knowledge not only of this world but of a world beyond this - beyond it both in time and in space - the world of God. None but a denizen of that world would be capable of speaking with authority about it.'

superiority of the community of his followers, compared to other rivals, is clearly demonstrated.<sup>154</sup>

### *Methodological Approach of this Study*

For a community under pressure to refute the attacks of former associates, direct recourse to heavenly reality served to validate its position. In this thesis we will explore how the use of apocalyptic categories contributes to the shaping of a symbolic world which assures adherents of the rightness of their belief structure. Attention will be drawn to passages within Jewish apocalyptic literature that elucidate both the conceptual framework and individual motifs within the Fourth Gospel. A comparison of texts will highlight important points of contact between the two bodies of literature and provide cogent evidence for the thesis that Johannine thinking was profoundly shaped by apocalyptic ideas. While reference to apocalyptic texts belonging to a later period than the Fourth Gospel may be considered suspect methodologically, it should be recognized that later texts often contain earlier ideas.<sup>155</sup> Therefore, we consider it justifiable to refer to certain motifs that have been transmitted in writings that may be dated to a later age than the Fourth Gospel itself.

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<sup>154</sup> Grese, 'Heavenly Journey', 678, rightly perceives that 'only the Son of Man had access to the heavenly secrets, which he revealed to those in his community, demonstrating their superiority over those who surrounded them'. Carter, 'Prologue and John's Gospel', 37, has also argued that 'with its claims of authoritative and exclusive christological revelation, the Prologue (and Gospel) seeks to confirm its community's claim to a unique, divinely given identity and role as the locus of God's revelation'.

<sup>155</sup> Gieschen, *Angelomorphic Christology*, 46.



Accepting, as a working hypothesis, Ashton's distinction between sources, influences and background to the Fourth Gospel, apocalyptic thought may be placed within the category of a formative influence; it forms part of the 'dissenting Jewish tradition within which the seeds of the Gospel were first planted'.<sup>156</sup> However, it must not therefore be assumed that the Fourth Gospel was exclusively indebted to just one stream of thought, in a purely linear sense, from among the plethora of first-century influences.<sup>157</sup> Furthermore, no attempt will be made to argue for direct literary dependence upon the apocalyptic documents, rather we shall enquire into the way in which John utilized 'the basic framework of apocalyptic' in the presentation of his Gospel.<sup>158</sup> To this end we shall highlight various presuppositions, themes, motifs and ideas present within Jewish apocalyptic literature that help us understand the content and structure of the Fourth Gospel. In particular we shall employ the sociological concept of a 'symbolic universe' that underpins the belief system of a community, and which is particularly important when that community feels threatened by a different world-view adhered to by its rivals.

In the next chapter we shall see that the heavenly realm, which is disclosed in an apocalypse, is for the Johannine community found in the life of Jesus. He is

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<sup>156</sup> Ashton, *Understanding*, 128.

<sup>157</sup> Ashton, *ibid*, comments that 'if the concept of syncretism is required to explain the origins of the Gospel, it should be applied, I believe, not to the conscious eclecticism of the author but to the rich loam in which the message concerning Jesus was planted and in which it continued to thrive'.

<sup>158</sup> Rowland, 'Apocalyptic, Mysticism, and the New Testament', 423.

both witness to and the embodiment of transcendent reality.<sup>159</sup> Furthermore, because the revelation is directly received from heaven, it possesses an inviolable authority which supersedes all other claims to legitimacy. Crucially we will see how the presence of Jesus on earth heralds the realization of the eschatological age. However, since the revelation of Jesus is hidden to outsiders, in the following chapter we shall discuss how the role of the Spirit-Paraclete, modelled on that of the *angelus interpres*, is the essential factor in guaranteeing understanding of the ‘higher wisdom through revelation’,<sup>160</sup> vindication of the new faith of the Johannine believers community and also their permanent access into heavenly reality. In the fourth chapter it will be shown that the experiences of the community can be interpreted on the basis of heavenly exemplars. Taking the life of Jesus as the apocalypse from heaven, the community is able to find a paradigm for its own experiences of rejection and hostility. The opposition it encounters from former allies is seen to derive from a supernatural source, originating with evil powers of darkness. However, since the community of believers is indissolubly linked to the Johannine Jesus, disciples share in the eschatological victory that he has achieved in overcoming the world (John 16.33).

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<sup>159</sup> Barrett, *Gospel according to St John*, 31, contends that just as an apocalypse reveals the present facts of the life of heaven so the Fourth Gospel ‘may equally be looked upon as apocalyptic in the sense that it unveils present reality. Jesus can declare heavenly things (ἐπουράνια) because he is the Son of man, who is in heaven (3.12).’

<sup>160</sup> Cf. fn. 45 above.



We now proceed to consider how access into the heavenly dimension, which in apocalyptic is achieved by vision or celestial journey, is in the Fourth Gospel accomplished through Jesus.

## Chapter 2

### JESUS: THE DISCLOSURE OF TRANSCENDENT REALITY

Within the field of Johannine studies it is generally accepted that the Fourth Gospel presents Jesus as a revealer of heavenly truth. Bultmann considered the notion of revealer to be modelled on a Gnostic prototype,<sup>161</sup> but this idea is now discredited.<sup>162</sup> More recently, as we have seen, scholars have noted certain apocalyptic ideas that may have influenced Johannine thought.<sup>163</sup> In this chapter we shall explore the way in which the Fourth Gospel adopts an apocalyptic perspective in its presentation of Jesus. Like the apocalyptic visionary Jesus is a witness to transcendent reality and privy to its secrets, but, unlike the seer, heaven is Jesus' native sphere since he is 'from above' (Jn 3.31). Accordingly, he descends from heaven before ascending to where he once was (3.13; 6.62). Hence it is more apposite to liken his role to that of a celestial envoy who is

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<sup>161</sup> Cf. Bultmann's influential article 'Die Bedeutung der neuerschlossenen mandäischen und manichäischen Quellen für das Verständnis des Johannesevangelium', 100-146. For references to other works that posit a Gnostic background, see Moody Smith, 'Johannine Studies', 276-277.

<sup>162</sup> Charlesworth, *John and Qumran*, 76-106, has argued persuasively against Bultmann's thesis that John was influenced by gnostic thought by suggesting a line of development from the Qumran scrolls through the gospel to the Odes of Solomon. The latter gnostic source is most likely influenced by the gospel not vice-versa. Cf. Brown, *John*, I, liv-lvi; Kysar, *The Fourth Evangelist*, 136; Ashton, *Understanding*, 60-62.

<sup>163</sup> Martyn, *History and Theology*, 135; Ashton, *Understanding*, 383-406; Rowland, 'Apocalyptic, Mysticism, and the New Testament', 423.



commissioned from on high to fulfil the divine purpose. The numinous character of these heavenly beings is such that their very appearance constitutes a reflection of the divine glory (cf. Dan 10.6; Ap Zeph 6.11; Asc Isa 7.21; Rev 19.10). Jesus, too, bears the divine glory (Jn 1.14), indeed is the embodiment of glory, so that to see him is to behold the divine (12.45; 14.9). However, from the perspective of the Fourth Gospel, the glory radiates through his humanity and shines most brightly in the ignominy of death (12.23-24).

Within the angelic hierarchy certain figures are especially authorized to act as God's vice-regents, performing functions normally associated exclusively with deity. This is the case with Michael, Iaoel, Metatron, Melchizedek and, of course, the heavenly Son of Man. Among the most important of the functions delegated to these exalted personages is that associated with the advent of the coming eschatological aeon. This involves deposing evil heavenly powers, who have held sway during the present age, and implementing the divine judgment that will then open the way for the inauguration of an eschatological era of peace, joy and life (e.g. 1 En 5.10; 10.16-17; 47.2; 102.3).

Now in the Fourth Gospel the mission of Jesus means that the eschatological time 'is coming and now is' (4.24; 5.25). As the Father's envoy he is invested with authority to both pronounce judgment and bestow eternal life. Thus in the dispute with 'the Jews' over the status of his person, Jesus claims the right to exercise the divine prerogative of imparting eternal life (5.21). His further claim to possess the authority to adopt the judicial role reserved for God

himself is grounded in his status as the Son of Man (5.27: καὶ ἐξουσίαν ἔδωκεν αὐτῷ κρίσιν ποιεῖν, ὅτι υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου ἐστίν). By his life and death he initiates the *krisis* that results in the casting out of the ‘ruler of this world’ (12.31). However, this work is done at a transcendent level that is not perceived or recognised by everyone. Intrinsic to the character of the apocalyptic perspective is the notion that the heavenly dimension revealed to the seer remains hidden from the understanding of the uninitiated. This is precisely the case with respect to the Johannine Jesus. For unbelievers he presents an enigma; they are blind to the reality of who he really is (9.39).

In the first part of the chapter (§1:1-3) we proceed to discuss the idea that Jesus acts as a *witness* to a transcendent dimension hidden from human view. Secondly, we shall explore the notion that, as a heavenly agent, he is divinely authorized to inaugurate the eschatological era. In other words, the heavenly world, which may be mapped on both spatial and temporal axes, becomes a present reality in the person of Jesus (§2). Finally, however, it will be argued that this reality is hidden from outsiders (§3).

### 1. *Witness to Heavenly Reality*

In the apocalyptic worldview one of the primary methods for disclosing a revelation is for the seer to travel into the heavenly regions in order to witness transcendent reality that is ordinarily beyond the range of human perception. The essential aspect of the heavenly journey is that the seer travels into realms that are



not normally accessible to humanity. The biblical precedent for the translation of a seer from one place to another is found in the prophet Ezekiel (cf. 3.12, 14; 8.3; 11.1, 24; 37.1; 43.5). The idea is also found in Bel 36 (Theodotion) where we read: ‘The angel of the Lord took (ἐπελάβετο) Habakkuk by the crown of his head, and carried (βαστάσας) him by the hair of his head, and with the blast of his breath (ἐν τῷ ῥοιζῷ τοῦ πνεύματος αὐτοῦ) set him down in Babylon above the pit’. Traditions of heavenly ascents became fairly common by the time of the first century C.E.,<sup>164</sup> but particularly within apocalyptic writings.<sup>165</sup> In the celestial tour the visionary ascends to heaven, whether on a cloud (1 En 14.39), the wings of angels (2 En 3.1), the wing of a bird (Ap Ab 15.2), or a chariot (T Ab 10.1). Such ascents are claimed for Enoch (1 En 14.8; 39.3; 70-71; 2 En 3), Abraham (T Ab 10; Ap Ab 15), Adam (LAE 25-9), Levi (T Levi 2.5), Baruch (2 Bar 76; 3 Bar) and Isaiah (Asc Is 7).

By virtue of the heavenly ascent or celestial vision, the human seer possesses first-hand evidence of that which he subsequently relates or transcribes for his fellows. His testimony is therefore *true* and may command the credence of

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<sup>164</sup> Betz, ‘The Problem of Apocalyptic Genre’, 577-98, has demonstrated how otherworldly journeys were used by Greek philosophers from Plato to Plutarch to create a sense of φόβος and thereby imbue their philosophical teachings with emotional power. Newsom, ‘The Development of 1 Enoch 6-19’, 323-9, has put forward the suggestion that the idea of a heavenly tour is modelled on ancient Near Eastern diplomacy. This analogy illuminates the rationale of the tour to a degree, since God’s wisdom and power are certainly displayed, but it fails to account for the most important aspect of the heavenly tour, namely, its supernatural location. Cf. Luck, ‘Das Weltverständnis in der jüdischen Apokalyptik’, 283-305.

<sup>165</sup> Cf. Segal, ‘Heavenly Ascent’, 1352-89; Talbert, ‘Descending-Ascending Redeemer’, 418-40.

his hearers or readers (§1:1). The secrets revealed, which relate to both temporal and spatial matters, are valued on both a cognitive and emotional level. In the face of competing, and indeed conflicting, standards of religious authority, the one who has had direct access into the divine world is certain of what he relates; he *knows* that of which he speaks. Because apocalyptic revelation purports to be a disclosure from the heavenly realm, it is invested with ultimate authority which surpasses all other forms of knowledge.<sup>166</sup> The authority of apocalyptic teaching derives from the fact that it embodies ‘a wisdom that is accessible only through revelation’.<sup>167</sup> Moreover, as the second section will seek to demonstrate, the seer is given unique or exclusive access to the heavenly world (§1.2), allowing him to claim: ‘None among human beings will see as I have seen’ (1 En 19.3).

However, the ultimate sanction of his report is that the witness is himself a denizen of the heavenly realm, as attested by similarities with the principal angel traditions (§1.3). Thus, in Jubilees the narrator of the work is presented as the Angel of the Presence who both speaks to (Jub 2.1) and writes for Moses (1.27). At the beginning of the creation of the material world, the angel testifies: ‘we *saw* his works and we blessed him’ (2.3). He, with his fellow angels, takes an active part in the naming of the living creatures by Adam (3.1). Similarly he records

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<sup>166</sup>Cf. Collins, *Daniel with an Introduction to Apocalyptic*, 22: ‘The intention of an apocalypse then is to provide a view of the world that will be a source of consolation in the face of distress and a support and authorization for whatever course of action is recommended, and to invest this world view with the status of supernatural revelation.’

<sup>167</sup> Collins, *Apocalyptic Imagination*, 63. Cf. Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism*, I, 210; Rowland, ‘Apocalyptic, Mysticism, and the New Testament’, 422.



how ‘we appeared to Abraham at the oak of Mamre and we talked with him and we also caused him to know that a son would be given to him by Sarah’ (16.1).<sup>168</sup> Thus in the third section we will show that the Johannine portrait of Jesus is modelled on the heavenly beings who play such an important role in mediating apocalyptic revelation.

### 1.1 True Witness

The purported recipients of the heavenly revelation in apocalyptic texts are usually figures in Israel’s history who are noted for their piety and consequent intimacy with the divine world. While the context of scriptural references to Enoch, Isaiah, Baruch and Ezra is taken into account in the kind of material that is attributed to them,<sup>169</sup> the chosen person is recognised as possessing an authority which will lend weight to the writing that bears his name.<sup>170</sup> Various explanations have been proffered to account for the device of pseudonymous authorship prevalent among the apocalyptic documents,<sup>171</sup> although it was actually quite common in the

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<sup>168</sup> Betz, *Der Paraklet*, 67, observes that ‘Der Erzähler versäumt nicht, hervorzuheben, daß er selbst Augenzeuge der berichteten Ereignisse, ja, als Fürsprecher und Helfer an ihnen active beteiligt war’.

<sup>169</sup> Russell, *Method and Message*, 136; Rowland, *Open Heaven*, 65.

<sup>170</sup> Cf. Bloch, *On the Apocalyptic in Judaism*, 50.

<sup>171</sup> Charles, *Religious Development*, 42, argues that, owing to the growing status of the Law along with the closing of the prophetic canon, the only way new material could receive a hearing was by ascribing it to the name of a recognised figure whose stature ranked sufficiently highly to invest the contents with divine authority. By contrast, Rowley, *Relevance*, 39-40, traces pseudonymity to the attempt by the author of Daniel to connect the hero of the stories of chs. 1-6 with the visions recorded in chs. 7-12. Frost, *Old Testament Apocalyptic*, 12, argues that it was born out of a growing suspicion toward prophecy in the post-exilic period because of the incorporation of foreign material.

ancient world.<sup>172</sup> However, the fundamental rationale behind this formal aspect of an apocalypse is that it provided a way of investing the writing with a recognised authority.<sup>173</sup> Given the unfavourable climate in late post-exilic Judaism towards new revelation, owing to the growing fixity of the canon and the demise of the prophetic movement, pseudonymity was an attempt to legitimate fresh viewpoints. Furthermore, at a time when exposure to other religions of the Greco-Roman world raised spiritual and intellectual challenges for the Jewish faith, the elevation of a primary figure of the Jewish heritage signified that ‘the Jewish tradition represented the highest, most authentic, revelation of God’s purposes – indeed, the only genuinely valid tradition’.<sup>174</sup>

The literary message subsequently recorded in the apocalyptic document carries undisputed authenticity, because it is based on the direct experience of a revered ancestral figure who was taken into heaven itself. It is therefore clear that an important component of the apocalyptic mode of communicating truth is that the seer directly experiences heavenly realities, and is consequently able to vouch personally for the reality of that which he reports. The veil separating ordinary terrestrial experience from the spiritual world is temporarily drawn back, thus enabling the visionary to perceive the influence of the heavenly dimension on earthly reality. As a direct observer of the heavenly realm, the seer records events

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<sup>172</sup> Cf. Smith, ‘Pseudepigraphy in the Israelite Literary Tradition’, 191-227; Hengel, ‘Anonymität, Pseudepigraphie und ‘Literarische Fälschung’ in der jüdisch-hellenistischen Literatur’, 231-329.

<sup>173</sup> Cf. Collins, *Daniel with an Introduction to Apocalyptic Literature*, 5.

<sup>174</sup> Hurtado, *One God*, 66.



that he personally witnesses. This is emphasized in the apocalyptic narratives by the frequency of verbs of seeing used in the first person singular. For example, Daniel writes down what transpires before him, prefacing the account with such statements as 'I watched', 'I looked' (חזוה, חזיית, 7.4,9,11,13, 21), 'I saw' (ראיתי, 7.7; 8.4,7). The future course of history is thus verified by the apocalypticist's direct observation of the heavenly forces which find their counterpart in future earthly reality.

In the case of Enoch the biblical account of him being mysteriously 'taken' by God (cf. Gen 5.24b) meant that he was considered particularly qualified to be the recipient of heavenly mysteries.<sup>175</sup> His withdrawal from the normal concourse of human society, so that 'his dwelling place as well as his activities were with the Watchers and the holy ones' (1 En 12.2), equipped him for the role of apocalyptic seer. It is from the position of dwelling in the heavenly realm that he is sent on an errand to 'go and make known to the Watchers of heaven who have abandoned the high heaven' what their destiny shall be (1 En 12.4-6).

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<sup>175</sup> Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism*, 204, comments that he was 'the ideal mediator of revelation, since he was equally at home in the earthly and the heavenly worlds'. The Genesis Apocryphon mentions that Enoch 'shared the lot [of the angels], who taught him all things' (1QapGen 2.20-21); cf. Jub 4.21: 'he was therefore with the angels of God six jubilees of years. And they showed him everything which is on earth and in the heavens'. There appear to be parallels between Enoch and legendary Mesopotamian figures such as Enmeduranki and Utuabzu, and it is probable that his reputation was moulded by later Jewish thought as a superior counterpart to them. See further VanderKam, *Enoch and the Growth of an Apocalyptic Tradition*, 8. Cf. Grelot, 'La Légende d'Hénoch dans les apocryphes et dans la Bible', 5-26, 181-210; Borger, 'Die Beschwörungsserie Bit Meseri und die Himmelfahrt Henochs', 183-96; Segal, 'Heavenly Ascent', 1359.

Admission into the transcendent world qualified the seer to understand mysteries that would supply the key to the intractable issues facing the hearers or readers of the apocalypse. The Book of Jubilees preserves the tradition that Enoch was ‘the first who learned writing and knowledge and wisdom’ (Jub 4.17) and so accordingly ‘wrote a testimony and testified to the children of men...just as we [i.e. the angels of God] made it known to him. And he *saw* what was and what will be in a vision of his sleep as it will happen among the children of men in their generations until the day of judgment. He *saw* and *knew* everything and wrote his testimony and deposited the testimony upon the earth against all the children of men and their generations’ (4.18-19). A little later we are told that Enoch was ‘with the angels of God six jubilees of years’ during which time ‘they showed him everything which is on earth and in the heavens’ (Jub 4.21). Accordingly the seer is enabled to ‘bear witness’ against the Watchers and all the children of men. Thus in 4.22 we read: ‘And [he] bore witness to the Watchers, the ones who sinned with the daughters of men because they began to mingle themselves with the daughters of men so that they might be polluted. And Enoch *bore witness* against all of them’.

It is not surprising, then, to find that the corpus of 1 Enoch is introduced as a ‘holy vision from the heavens which the angels showed me: and I *heard* from them everything and I understood’ (1.2). His ‘eyes were open and he *saw*’ (1.2) all that he then subsequently recorded. In addition, the description of the ascent



emphasizes that he can empirically verify the report he is bringing. His personal experience is clearly intended to authenticate his message:<sup>176</sup>

‘And behold I *saw* the clouds: And they were calling me in a vision...the winds were causing me to fly and rushing me high up into heaven...<sup>13</sup> And I *entered* into the house, which was hot like fire and cold like ice...<sup>18</sup> And I *observed* and *saw* inside it a lofty throne - its appearance was like crystal and its wheels like the shining sun...<sup>20</sup> And the Great Glory was sitting upon it...<sup>21</sup> None of the angels was able to come in and see the face of the Excellent and the Glorious One; and *no one of the flesh can see him*...<sup>24</sup> And the Lord called me with his own mouth and said to me, “Come near to me, Enoch, and to my holy Word” (1 En 14.8-24; italics mine).

In this passage we are told that Enoch is lifted into another and higher dimension which is not usually accessible to human beings. From this celestial vantage point he is permitted a vision of spiritual reality that is beyond the reach of others, for ‘no one of the flesh can see him’. Proof of the reality of this heavenly realm is given by the vivid description of its environs, which appear to portray a palace or temple complex.<sup>177</sup> It is here, in the place of direct communion with God himself, that he is given the message to bring the Watchers (15.2-16.3). The vision of the Deity constitutes the prerequisite for Enoch’s mission (cf. Isa 6.1ff; 1 Kings 22.19;

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<sup>176</sup> Cf. Knibb, ‘The Ethiopic Book of Enoch’, 40.

<sup>177</sup> For evidence that Heaven is understood to be a temple, see Himmelfarb, ‘From Prophecy to Apocalypse’, 149-51.

Ez 1.1.ff).<sup>178</sup> Clearly, the special privilege of immediate proximity to the throne of the Great Glory invests his revelation with ultimate authority, while the uniqueness of this insight is constantly emphasized, for only Enoch can say, ‘I *saw* the vision of the end of everything alone; and none among human beings will see as I have seen’ (19.3).

His subsequent journeys through regions beyond human reach supply the evidence for the reality of what he then reports for the benefit of his readers. The nature of the issues disclosed embraces a wide range of subjects, from cosmetics (1 En 9) to cosmology (1 En 22).<sup>179</sup> Thus, in his tours of the heavenly environs Enoch is shown the ‘chambers of light and thunder in the ultimate end of the depth’ (17.3), the ‘storerooms of all the winds’ (18.1), ‘the souls carried by the clouds’, ‘the path of angels’ (18.5) and ‘the prison house for the stars and powers of heaven’ (18.14). Indeed he is able to view ‘all the secrets of heaven’ (41.1), mysteries hidden from human gaze, including ‘the future things’ (52.1). The important thing is that the seer can say: ‘with *my own eyes* I saw...’ (39.5).

The same theme of direct witness to heavenly realities is present in the other parts of 1 Enoch. Thus, in the Book of Heavenly Luminaries the seer is assured by the angel Uriel: ‘Behold, I have shown you everything, Enoch, and I have *revealed* everything to you’ (1 En 80.1). Once he has ‘understood everything’ (81.2), he is both equipped and authorised to pass on the heavenly

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<sup>178</sup> Rowland, *The Open Heaven*, 199.

<sup>179</sup> Cf. Stone, ‘Lists of Revealed Things’, 414-16.



truth: ‘Then the seven holy ones brought me and placed me on the ground in front of the gate of my house, and said to me, “Make everything known to your son, Methuselah, and show to all your children that no one of the flesh can be just before the Lord for they are merely his own creation. We shall let you stay with your son for one year, so that you may teach your children another law and write it down for them and give all of them a warning; and in the second year, you shall be taken away from (among) all of them”’ (1 En 81.6-7).

In the Apocalypse of Weeks<sup>180</sup> Enoch bases his instruction to posterity ‘according to that which was revealed to me from the heavenly vision, that which I have learned from the words of the holy angels, and understood from the heavenly tablets’ (1 En 93.2). He is endowed with the wisdom of divine disclosure which serves to corroborate the message he then imparts to those on earth. Hence Enoch addresses his children, ‘I shall make a revelation to you so that you may *know* that which is going to take place’ (1 En 91.18 italics mine). The message carries conviction because it takes the form of knowledge, guaranteed by supernatural revelation.<sup>181</sup>

In the Epistle of Enoch the community addressed has interpreted its own situation of privation and oppression according to the criteria espoused in Deuteronomic theology. Exacerbated by the taunts of the sinners (1 En 103.5-7),

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<sup>180</sup> The Apocalypse of Weeks in 1 En 93 is generally recognized as a distinct apocalypse, the conclusion of which is found in 1 En 91.11-17. Cf. Charles, *APOT*, 2:171; Dexinger, *Henochs Zehnwochenapokalypse*, 102; Black, ‘The Apocalypse of Weeks in the Light of 4QEn<sup>g</sup>’; idem, ‘The Book of Enoch’, 288.

<sup>181</sup> Collins, ‘Apocalyptic Technique’, 108.

this interpretation has fuelled the sense of bewilderment and discouragement experienced by those suffering for their faith. It is within this context, Nickelsburg observes, that 'the author counters the biblical authority of such a view by stressing the revelatory character of his own message and affirming its truth with an oath (104.1)'.<sup>182</sup> Thus the seer claims: 'I do know the mysteries of the holy ones; for he, the Lord, has *revealed* (them) to me and made me know' (106.19). He prefaces his announcement of the mystery with the imperative 'know!' (103.7), implying that the message is a divine revelation and therefore incontrovertible.<sup>183</sup>

This technique is particularly effective when the seer desires to counter another canon of authority by his own superior one. It establishes the legitimacy of his message, conveying a sense of divine authorization. The effect upon the recipients is to instil a greater sense of security since their belief system has been shown to be divinely authenticated. Thus when Lamech is puzzled over the meaning of the strange events that have surrounded the birth of his son, he asks Methuselah to approach Enoch 'and learn from him the truth, for his dwelling place is among the angels' (106.7). The seer's access to the heavenly realm gives his words the aura of authenticity that elicits the confidence of his hearers. The assurance of knowing the truth provides the readers with psychological fortitude in the face of an apparently contradictory set of circumstances.

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<sup>182</sup> *Resurrection, Immortality, Eternal Life*, 128.

<sup>183</sup> *Ibid*, 127. Cf. 1 En 91.5; 94.5; 2 En 40.1,2; T Levi 16.1; T Jud 17.2; T Zeb 9.5; T Dan 5.4; T Ash 7.2,5; T Jos 20.1.



In 2 Enoch the seer is given access to the various heavenly spheres, so that he might ‘*see* the highest realm’ and be an eye-witness to the Lord’s throne and the heavenly armies (1.1-6). Enoch therefore ascends through the several heavens attended by an angelic escort. During the journey the angels show him the variegated contents of the different heavens (6.1; 7.1) and the tour culminates in the tenth heaven with a vision of the face of the Lord (22.1). The patriarch is then brought to a position alongside God, where the divine secrets are explained and made known in a manner not even granted to the angels (2 En 24.3). Once the disclosure is completed, God commissions him as follows: ‘And you go down onto the earth and tell your sons all that I have told you and everything that you have *seen*, from the lowest heavens up to my throne’ (33.6). He is now equipped to be ‘a *witness* of the judgment of the great age’ (36.3).

On his return Enoch is thereby imbued with divine authority, for it is not from his own lips that he is reporting (39.5), rather he imparts heavenly instruction on the grounds that he gives to his children: ‘I know everything; for either from the lips of the Lord or else my eyes have seen from the beginning even to the end’ (40.1). His message is invested with the authority of one who reports directly from the seat of all truth. The hearers are therefore obliged to give it appropriate credence and respect. This means treasuring the books in Enoch’s handwriting, for although there are many books in the world, ‘not one of them will make things as plain to you as [the books in] my handwriting’ (47.1). Furthermore, they will

provide a repository of truth for posterity (48.6) since ‘no one can contradict my handwriting’ (53.3).

There is a similar emphasis on the seer’s visual and aural witness of transcendent reality in the book of Revelation. John begins his account with the assertion that God gave the revelation of Jesus Christ that he might ‘show’ (Rev 1.1, δεῖξαι) it to his servants. The ensuing document is the result of the seer’s ‘witness’ to the ‘testimony’ of Jesus Christ (1.2: ἐμαρτύρησεν τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τὴν μαρτυρίαν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ); in other words it is a record of ‘all that he *saw*’ (1.2: ὅσα εἶδεν). While ‘in the Spirit’ he hears a loud voice commanding him to write what he ‘sees’ (1.11: ὃ βλέπεις γράψον) and to communicate it to the seven churches. Heaven is opened for the seer and the same voice promises to ‘show’ him what must take place (4.1: δείξω σοι ὅσα δεῖ γενέσθαι). The visions recorded in the following chapters are presented as realities which John personally ‘saw’ (6.1,5,9; 10.1; 13.1,11; 15.1) and ‘heard’ (6.3,5; 16.1).<sup>184</sup> Moreover, when John is invited by the guiding angel to behold the fall of Babylon and see the Bride of the Lamb, it is with the words, ‘come, I will *show* you’ (Rev 17.1; 21.9, δεύτε δείξω σοι; italics mine).<sup>185</sup> Thus at the close of his work he emphasises that the contents of the book are a true record of

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<sup>184</sup> Bauckham, *Climax of Prophecy*, 178, notes ‘John’s repeated use of the stereotyped formulae of apocalyptic vision, his repeated ‘I saw’ and ‘behold’.

<sup>185</sup> Stuckenbruck, *Angel Veneration*, 246. It is worth noting, in parenthesis, that the angelic agents of revelation are ministering on behalf of the exalted Christ to whom ultimately the ‘revelation (ἀποκάλυψις)’ has been given that he might ‘show (δεῖξαι)’ it to his servants, albeit through angelic instrumentality (1.1). Cf. Bauckham, *Climax of Prophecy*, 254.



what he himself experienced: 'I John am he who *heard* and *saw* these things. And when I *heard* and *saw* them...' (22.8: καὶ γὰρ Ἰωάννης ὁ ἀκούων καὶ βλέπων ταῦτα. καὶ ὅτε ἤκουσα καὶ ἔβλεψα...). The adjectival clause ὁ ἀκούων καὶ βλέπων designates John as a 'hearer and seer' of heavenly mysteries. The repetition of this in the following clause is more than mere pleonasm, it emphasises his role as *witness* of an unfolding revelation.

Once the veil between heaven and earth has been drawn back for the seer so that he 'sees' and 'hears' transcendent mysteries, he is then in a position in which he may authoritatively report his experiences to others. Thus, once Baruch has stood in the divine presence and seen 'the glory of God...the resting place of the righteous' and so forth (3 Bar Slavonic, 16.4), the angel is commanded to 'bring Baruch down to the face of all the earth so that he will tell the sons of men that which he has *seen and heard* and all the mysteries you have shown him' (17.1).<sup>186</sup> Likewise, in the Life of Adam and Eve the account Adam gives to Seth of his rapture into the Paradise of righteousness is introduced with him saying: 'Listen, Seth my son, and I will pass on to you what *I heard and saw*' (LAE 25.1).

In these examples of heavenly journeys recorded in apocalyptic traditions we may see that the seer, often a respected figure or hero from Israel's past, is supernaturally elevated into a transcendent dimension in which he is able to survey matters beyond the scope of ordinary human enquiry, but which nevertheless

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<sup>186</sup> Hurtado, *One God*, 65, observes that 'the stories of heavenly ascents and revelations of heavenly secrets may have been intended to give assurance of the validity of the teaching conveyed in the documents that present the stories'.

directly impinge upon the condition of his hearers. The distinctive factor in the reception of apocalyptic revelation is that the seer personally experiences various facets of heavenly reality, thereby infusing his subsequent account with the validation of an eye-witness. Moreover, because of its heavenly provenance, his message is supremely authoritative and reliable, and may therefore command the confidence of those to whom it is conveyed. The seer transcribes what he has heard and seen at the command of the Lord or his angelic emissary with the result that the document becomes a ‘testimony [that] will be heard’ (Jub 1.8).

It is the seer’s admission into a transcendent dimension that supplies him with the validation of a credible and authentic witness in the eyes of his hearers. This is important because, while the circumstances surrounding the composition of the apocalypses are not always clear in detail, it is a fair generalization to say that the claim of a heavenly provenance for the writings is made in order to establish their authenticity in the face of opposing viewpoints.<sup>187</sup> Hurtado draws attention in this respect to the legitimating effect upon a religious tradition that originates in the heavenly realm witnessed by the apocalypticists. He states: ‘Ancient Jews would have seen the heavenly exaltation of their representative heroes as signifying that in the highest realm of reality, ultimate reality, their religious tradition had been given prominence’.<sup>188</sup>

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<sup>187</sup> Cf. Collins, *Apocalyptic Imagination*, 41.

<sup>188</sup> Hurtado, *One God*, 66.



The heavenly revelation invests the seer and his message with divine authority because he has been the recipient of a personal audience with the divine Majesty. The communities that treasure the apocalyptic documents are strengthened in their beliefs by the knowledge that the truth has been mediated to the authors in a supernatural manner. This truth is woven into the fabric of the belief system of the readers or hearers, thereby shaping the communal symbolic universe shared by the recipients of the message.

Now just as the apocalyptic seer narrates what is seen and heard in the heavens, so Jesus, according to the Fourth Gospel, comes from heaven bearing witness to what he has seen and heard (3.32: ὃ ἑώρακεν καὶ ἤκουσεν τοῦτο μαρτυρεῖν).<sup>189</sup> The message he therefore transmits takes the form of a testimony to what he has experienced in the heavenly sphere.<sup>190</sup> Like the seer his revelation derives from immediate perception, which therefore takes on the character of authentic testimony.<sup>191</sup>

The main purpose of the testimony is to establish the validity of his claim to be 'from God'.<sup>192</sup> This is necessary because, throughout the Gospel, Jesus is

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<sup>189</sup> The change from the perfect ἑώρακεν to the aorist ἤκουσεν has been interpreted as placing the stress on seeing (*BDF*, 152), but it is unlikely that there is any significance in the change.

<sup>190</sup> Kanagaraj, *Mysticism*, 251, notes that 'the witnessing of Jesus to what he had seen and heard with the Father in heaven is an important dimension in God's redemptive plan'.

<sup>191</sup> Dunn, 'Let John be John', 322, speaks of 'Jesus as the bearer of divine revelation - the Son of God who makes known the heavenly mysteries with authority, precisely because he has been sent from heaven and speaks of what he has seen and heard with his Father'.

<sup>192</sup> Berger, *Amen-Worte*, 108, contends that that the 'Ursprung des johanneischen μαρτυρεῖν' is partly rooted in 'apokalyptischem als zuverlässig bezeugen'.

vilified by his opponents as a pretender; a charlatan who makes bogus claims for himself and deceives the people (cf. 7.47). The religious authorities do not accept him or his message, because in their eyes he is guilty of blasphemy since he calls God his Father, 'making himself equal with God' (5.18). Although a mere mortal, he has the temerity to make himself God (10.33b), whereas, in their view, the reverse is the case; he has a demon (7.20; 8.48; 10.20), he is a despised outcast (8.48), in short, 'mad' (10.20). It is in this context of hostility that Jesus bears witness to heavenly truth. This witness is part of a lawsuit with the world, in which he is subjected to continual cross-examination by those who refuse to admit the validity of his claims.<sup>193</sup>

The structure of the Gospel may be seen to reflect a legal process in which testimony is adduced by witnesses on both sides, accusations are levelled at opponents, and judgment is pronounced.<sup>194</sup> The 'case' is developed in the series of disputes between Jesus and 'the Jews', reaching its apogee in the trial before Pilate. In this trial the principal witness is Jesus, yet he is himself attested by John the Baptist, by his works, by the scriptures, and by God himself (5.32-47). Nevertheless he also becomes the accused, because 'the world' refuses to accept his testimony or his attestation. Meeks observes that the forensic elements in the

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<sup>193</sup> Several commentators have drawn attention to the use of forensic terminology in John. See Bultmann, *John*, 58-59; Blank, *Krisis*, 64, Dahl, 'Johannine Church', 139; Preiss, *Life in Christ*, 9-31; cf. Harvey, *Jesus on Trial*; Trites, *Concept of Witness*; Neyrey, 'John III – A Debate over Johannine Epistemology and Christology', 127, and, more recently, Lincoln, *Truth on Trial*.

<sup>194</sup> Lincoln, *Truth on Trial*, 12, comments: 'On reading the Fourth Gospel, one encounters again and again the two notions of testimony (or witness) and judgment'.



Fourth Gospel have an important bearing on the way Jesus fulfils his role as a heavenly revealer. Because he ‘speaks what he has seen and heard’, his revelation is ‘formally analogous’ to the secrets received by the apocalypticists in heaven.<sup>195</sup> Unlike the apocalyptic seer, however, Jesus does not elaborate on cosmological mysteries of the heavenly realm,<sup>196</sup> rather ‘in the Johannine pattern the secrets constitute a μαρτυρία, a testimony which becomes God’s complaint against the world’.<sup>197</sup> However, the nature of the response given to the μαρτυρία determines the eschatological destiny of the hearers: either ζωὴ αἰώνιος or ἡ ὀργὴ τοῦ θεοῦ (3.36).

Harvey notes that in Hebrew law, and indeed in the Hellenistic world, the primary criterion governing the admissibility of a witness’s testimony is that ‘all testimony must be at first hand, and must consist of what a man has seen and heard himself’.<sup>198</sup> Now, like the apocalyptic seer, Jesus’ testimony is based on what he has *heard* in the presence of the Father (8.26: ἃ ἤκουσα παρ’ αὐτοῦ, ταῦτα λαλῶ

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<sup>195</sup> Meeks, *Prophet-King*, 303.

<sup>196</sup> Betz, *Der Paraklet*, 144, notes that ‘Jesus gibt keinen Bericht über himmlische Orte, Engel und Seelen wie Henoch, sondern ruft zum Glauben an der Offenbarer’. Knight, *Disciples of the Beloved One*, 140, observes that John does not offer any vision of the heavenly world, the reason being given in Jn 6.46, that because Jesus had seen the Father, ‘no further revelation was needed in view of the revelation that had been accomplished by Jesus’. Bultmann, *John*, 253, contends that the words spoken by Jesus never actually describe things he has seen or heard in the heavenly sphere. The phrases concerning the Son hearing, seeing, or being shown heavenly mysteries give expression to the same idea, namely, ‘that he is the Revealer in whom we encounter God himself speaking and acting’.

<sup>197</sup> Meeks, *Prophet-King*, 305. Neyrey, ‘John III – A Debate over Johannine Epistemology and Christology’, 124, observes that in Jn 3.32 ‘Jesus is explicitly described as a revealer of heavenly secrets’.

<sup>198</sup> *Jesus on Trial*, 94.

εἰς τὸν κόσμον; cf. 8.40). As the heavenly report that Enoch brings to his children is veridical because he has heard directly ‘from the lips of the Lord’ (2 En 40.1), so Jesus conveys the truth which he has heard from God (8.40: τὴν ἀλήθειαν ...ἣν ἤκουσα παρὰ τοῦ θεοῦ). Indeed, the very reason he has come into the world is ‘to bear witness to the truth’ (18.37: καὶ εἰς τοῦτο ἐλήλυθα εἰς τὸν κόσμον ἵνα μαρτυρήσω τῇ ἀληθείᾳ). The ἀλήθεια he bears witness to may well bear the sense of ‘mystery’ as found in the apocalyptic writings.<sup>199</sup> Indeed the hymnist at Qumran equates the two notions: ‘I praise thee, Lord, for thou hast made me understand thy *truth* and granted knowledge of thy marvellous *mysteries*’ (1QH 15. 26-27).

Equally, Jesus speaks of what he has *seen* with his Father (8.38: ἃ ἐγὼ ἑώρακα παρὰ τῷ πατρὶ λαλῶ). Bernard contends that this does not refer to the pre-incarnate life of the Son, but rather ‘to the perpetual vision which the Incarnate Son had of His Father’s will’.<sup>200</sup> This interpretation receives support from the interchange in the use of tenses by John. Thus not only has he ‘seen’ the Father (6.46), but he continues to ‘see’ (βλεπῇ) him during his earthly sojourn (5.19: ὅν μὴ τι βλέπῃ τὸν πατέρα ποιοῦντα). The use of the present tense indicates that

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<sup>199</sup> De la Potterie, ‘The Truth in Saint John’, 70, contends that the Johannine theme of ἀλήθεια is influenced by the wisdom and apocalyptic tradition, rather than a traditional Hebrew or Greek background. He argues that when Jesus says that ‘he is revealing the truth which he has ‘heard’ from the Father, his way of speaking is totally different from Hellenistic dualism; on the contrary it is much closer to apocalyptic’.

<sup>200</sup> *St John*, II, 310.



there is a continuing perception of the Father's presence.<sup>201</sup> Open access to the realm above is, in fact, the presupposition for whatever Jesus does below. Jesus embodies in himself the link by which the gap between the heavenly and earthly spheres is bridged. Even when on earth Jesus is in heaven, meaning 'he is in both places at once: the top and the bottom of the ladder'.<sup>202</sup>

Some commentators have argued from the use of the perfect tense of ἀναβαίνειν (ἀναβέβηκεν) in 3.13 (and the textual addition 'he who is in heaven')<sup>203</sup> that a constant inner communion of the Father and the Son is in view. Hence Rigg asserts: 'Living under our earthly conditions, Christ is still in heaven, since he is not alone because of his uninterrupted communion with the Father'.<sup>204</sup> It seems that Jesus operates in two dimensions at one and the same time. Indeed he is 'both in heaven and on earth'.<sup>205</sup> Physically he dwells on earth, but spiritually he is still part of the realm above.<sup>206</sup> Hence Jesus 'is represented as continually seeing on earth what the Father is doing in heaven, and as Himself

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<sup>201</sup> Pace Bultmann, 254, who contends that it makes no difference whether the present tense is used (5.19f, 30) or whether the past tense is used (5.36; 8.26). However, he himself admits that it is clear that the past tense refers to his pre-existence.

<sup>202</sup> Barrett, 'Paradox and Dualism', 110-111. This interpretation is supported by the long text Θ lat (cur) pesh **K** which adds 'who is in heaven (ὁ ὢν ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ)'.

<sup>203</sup> While this clause is absent from the codices Sinaiticus and Vaticanus, it is attested in the Peshitta, Syr<sup>h</sup>, the Itala versions and Cop<sup>bo</sup>.

<sup>204</sup> 'St John 3.13', 98-99; cf. Brun, 'Jesus als Zeuge'; Strachan, *Fourth Gospel*, 137-138.

<sup>205</sup> Barrett, *Gospel according to St John*, 187. Barrett contends that John is drawing upon the apocalyptic notion of a Son of Man; a heavenly being who through his descent from heaven sets up contact between the heavenly and earthly realms. Haenchen, *John*, I, 166, views this verse as evidence of the unbroken contact which Jesus has with the Father during his earthly sojourn.

<sup>206</sup> Fossum, *Image*, 150, contends that 'the author of the Fourth Gospel would even appear to go as far as saying that Jesus was in heaven at the same time as he was on earth'.

doing the same thing'.<sup>207</sup> He can only do what he sees the Father doing, and it is the Father's work that forms the pattern for Jesus' ministry. Thus, because the Father 'loves' the Son, he 'shows' (δείκνυσιν) him everything that he does,<sup>208</sup> thereby providing the basis for the latter's role of imparting life and pronouncing judgement (5.20: ὁ γὰρ πατήρ φιλεῖ τὸν υἱόν, καὶ πάντα δείκνυσιν αὐτῷ ὃ αὐτὸς ποιεῖ).

Since, like the apocalypticist, Jesus is privy to the higher realm above, his teaching is marked out as being of a different order from the usual type that comes through dint of natural learning (7.15). He disclaims any reliance on a chain of human authority which hands on the accumulated wisdom of previous generations. Rather his teaching is directly received from the throne of heaven (7.16: ἡ ἐμὴ διδαχὴ οὐκ ἔστιν ἐμὴ ἀλλὰ τοῦ πέμψαντός με; cf. 6.45). The authority for his teaching is therefore divine, but it is also delegated: ποιῶ οὐδέν, ἀλλὰ καθὼς ἐδίδαξέν με ὁ πατήρ, ταῦτα λαλῶ (8.28). It is because he has himself been taught by God that he is able as the Messiah to 'show...all things' (4.25: ἀναγγελεῖ ... ἅπαντα). Dunn rightly observes that 'probably the most consistent feature of John's Gospel is the emphasis on Jesus as the bearer of divine

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<sup>207</sup> Bernard, *St John*, I, 238.

<sup>208</sup> Schnackenburg, *St John*, II, 68, comments that for John the word 'show' is 'a term that occurs in the vocabulary of revelation. The visionary is 'shown' what will take place at the end of time (Rev 4.1; 17.1; 22.6)'. Note also the discussion earlier in this chapter.



revelation. What he says has the stamp of heavenly authority, because as Son of God, sent by the Father, he speaks what he has seen and heard from the Father'.<sup>209</sup>

We are not given details of how the direct disclosure of heavenly truth from the Father to the Son takes place. However, the evangelist does record an incident in which there is a public glimpse of the close interaction between Jesus and the Father. With the imminent approach of his crucifixion, Jesus confesses to being troubled in spirit, but nevertheless resolutely dismisses the idea of divine deliverance, preferring to pray rather: 'Father, glorify your name'. In response to this prayer we read: 'Then *a voice came from heaven* (ἦλθεν οὖν φωνὴ ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ), "I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again"' (12.28). Those standing by Jesus witness to something significant happening. But while some explain away the event as a natural phenomenon, remarking that 'it had thundered', others believe that 'an angel had spoken to him' (12.29: ἄγγελος αὐτῷ λελάληκεν).

This pericope contains some of the features typical of an apocalyptic mode of revelation, particularly the voice from heaven and the notion of an angel speaking (cf. 1 En 65.4; 2 Bar 13.1). It is the only occasion where the mode of Jesus' interaction with the heavenly world is made explicit. However, Jesus specifically states that this unique insight was given for the sake of those standing by: 'This voice has come for your sake, not for mine' (12.30). In other words, the

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<sup>209</sup> 'Embarrassment of History', 48.

event, as Harvey observes, serves to demonstrate ‘the credentials for Jesus’ claim to be acting and speaking with the authorization of God’.<sup>210</sup>

We may argue, therefore, that Jesus, like the apocalyptic seer, is privy to a heavenly reality which conveys supernatural knowledge that is beyond the scope of ordinary human enquiry. Heaven itself, the ultimate source of truth, is opened up giving access to the secrets otherwise hidden from mortal view. Access to this higher order of reality confers an authoritative interpretation of life which supersedes all earthly knowledge and thereby legitimates the position taken by believers of the revelation.<sup>211</sup> The authenticity of the deeper understanding is guaranteed by its heavenly provenance and provides confirmation of the superiority of their world-view over against that of their opponents.

## 1.2 Exclusive Witness

It is clear, then, that an apocalypse provides access into the eternal world which is normally shrouded from human sight. Whereas in early Hebrew thought religious enquiry is divinely limited to earthly matters,<sup>212</sup> apocalypticism introduced the

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<sup>210</sup> *Jesus on Trial*, 100.

<sup>211</sup> Davies, ‘Social World’, 254, suggests that the ‘basic function of the apocalypse, then, is the transmission of esoteric knowledge acquired (as it is claimed) not by human observation or reason but by revelation; the heavenly origin of the revelation and the pseudonymous attribution of the literary report to a venerable figure of the past imply to the recipient that the knowledge is both irrefutable and powerful.’

<sup>212</sup> For example, Ps 115.16: ‘The heavens are the Lord’s heavens, but the earth he has given to human beings’. Similarly Agur asks rhetorically, ‘Who has ascended to heaven and come down?’ (Prov 30.4; cf. Deut 30.12). Those who, like the king of Babylon (Isa 14.12-15) and the king of Tyre (Ez 28.12-19), aspired to ascend up to heaven were cast



notion of direct access to a heavenly order of reality.<sup>213</sup> The seer is privileged to receive divine revelation either by means of a dream-vision or a celestial tour.<sup>214</sup> This revelation is usually mediated by an 'otherworldly being' who is authorized to act as the agent of the Most High in disclosing hidden mysteries pertaining to the higher world. The distinctive feature of apocalyptic thought, evident in both modes of appropriating heavenly truth, is that a transcendent dimension is rendered supernaturally accessible to the visionary. He is 'brought up on to [the Lord's] height' (ApAb 28.2) so that in this elevated position he may be 'informed' of the divine secrets. In effect the privilege of the seer is to be reinstated to the position of direct communion with the divine world symbolised by the 'open heaven' originally created for Adam (cf. 2 En 31.2). He is admitted into a realm normally hidden from ordinary human perception on account of mankind's sin (2 En 71.28), and is thus able to witness first hand the heavenly realities.

In the Testament of Levi, for example, the patriarch sees the heavens opened and is bidden by an angel to enter: 'And behold, *the heavens were opened*, and an angel of the Lord spoke to me: 'Levi, Levi, *enter!*' (2.6; italics mine). In the schema adopted in this particular text heaven is structured into three tiers, the

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down for their overweening pride. Cf. Gruenwald, *Apocalyptic and Merkavah Mysticism*, 12.

<sup>213</sup> Rowland, *Open Heaven*, 17: 'Truths which are beyond man's capacity to deduce from his circumstances are revealed directly by means of the manifestation of the divine counsels.'

<sup>214</sup> The symbolic dream-vision is common in the 'historical' apocalypses. The symbolism is usually allegorical, in that the imagery of the vision does not correspond to actual realities of the heavenly world, but is rather a symbolic means of communicating truth, although it can be mythic-realistic. Cf. Rowland, *Open Heaven*, 60.

uppermost of which contains the 'Great Glory' (3.4). It is to this level that an angel opens the gates, allowing the seer to view the Most High sitting on the throne (5.1). Once Levi has been elevated to the position of standing 'near the Lord', he is equipped to 'tell forth his mysteries to men' (2.10). This example illustrates the more general point about apocalyptic revelation: namely, it is characterized by the opening of a heavenly realm that becomes supernaturally visible to the human visionary. The gulf separating heaven from earth, which Baruch likens to 'a river which no one is able to cross' (3 Bar 2.1, G), is temporarily bridged. Heavenly reality that is hidden from natural sense-perception becomes a compelling presence to the seer (cf. 2 Kgs 6.16-17; Dan 10.7).

Now if the ultimate goal of an apocalyptic tour undertaken by a human seer is to see the divine (1 En 14; 2 En 22; T Lev 3),<sup>215</sup> the Fourth Gospel makes it quite clear that only Jesus has beheld the Father (1.18; 3.13; 5.37; 6.46). While the role of Jesus bears resemblance to that of the apocalyptic seer, in that both testify to a heavenly dimension which they have experienced first hand, John is eager to restrict this privilege exclusively for Jesus. He is adamant that Jesus is not merely one revealer among others but rather the *only* revealer because he alone has seen God (1.18: Θεὸν οὐδεὶς ἑώρακεν πώποτε; cf. 5.37; 6.46).<sup>216</sup> No one

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<sup>215</sup> Cf. Rowland, *Open Heaven*, 84.

<sup>216</sup> Moloney, *The Johannine Son of Man*, 216, speaks of the 'central meaning of the Johannine Son of Man - the incarnate Logos who is at once the revealer and the revelation of God among men'. Dunn, 'Let John be John', 332, states that what Jesus



else, claims John, has ever seen God; the Son alone reveals ‘things hidden in God’<sup>217</sup> (1.18, ἐξηγεῖσθαι<sup>218</sup>), which is based on his direct and unique experience of God.<sup>219</sup>

Particularly important is the statement addressed by Jesus to Nicodemus in 3.13: οὐδεὶς ἀναβέβηκεν εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν εἰ μὴ ὁ ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καταβάς, ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου. Since the perfect tense of ἀναβαίνειν is placed on the lips of Jesus in the context of his earthly ministry prior to his ascension, some commentators view this as an anachronistic reflection of the Johannine church on the historical ascension of Jesus.<sup>220</sup> Thus Haenchen observes that the standpoint taken is that of the Christian, post-Easter community and that ‘the Evangelist often interchanges the perspective of the earthly Jesus with that of the exalted Jesus and thus combines the latter with the perspective of the community’.<sup>221</sup> However, Lindars notes that this is rather awkward in view of the timing of the discourse. He therefore suggests that the perfect tense expresses a general truth; the meaning

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reveals ‘is not information but, quite simply, God, that he is God in his self-revelation.’ This observation alludes to Bultmann’s comment in *Theology of the New Testament*, Vol II, 66: ‘Jesus as the revealer of God reveals nothing but that he is the revealer.’ Cf. Haenchen, ‘Der Vater, der mich gesandt hat’, 208-16.

<sup>217</sup> Schnackenburg, *St John*, vol. 1, 279.

<sup>218</sup> The verb ἐξηγεῖσθαι is a *hapax legomenon* in John. In Greek literature the word is used for the declaration or exposition of divine mysteries, while the LXX refers to the official interpreters of dreams in Gen 41.8, 41 as ἐξηγηταί. In Job 28.27 the wisdom that is hidden from human beings is spoken of as ‘declared’ (ἐξηγήσατο) by God.

<sup>219</sup> Carter, ‘Prologue and John’s Gospel’, observes that ‘the comprehensive negative statement of 1.18a (Θεὸν οὐδεὶς ἑώρακεν πώποτε) tolerates no other claimant’.

<sup>220</sup> Brown, *John*, 145, Bultmann, *John*, 149-51; Cullmann, *Christology*, 185; Schnackenburg, *St John I*, 393, claims that ‘it is the earthly Jesus seen in the light of his future power of salvation’.

<sup>221</sup> *Commentary*, I, 204.

is not that Jesus ascended before he descended, but that ‘whereas no one has ascended, *he* has come down bringing the knowledge of heavenly things’.<sup>222</sup> Jesus is not so much saying that he has ascended, but that no one (οὐδεὶς) has ascended. Kanagaraj argues that by positioning the prepositional phrase ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ between ὁ and καταβάς the verse emphasises the heavenly origin of the Son of Man, obviating the need for an ascent to heaven like other exalted human figures.<sup>223</sup>

Conversely, Borgen proposes that 3.13 forms a shortened exception clause in which the conditional clause εἰ μὴ ... leaves unexpressed the relevant part of the main clause ἀναβέβηκεν εἰς τὸν οὐρανόν. The completed formulation would therefore be:

οὐδεὶς ἀναβέβηκεν εἰς τὸν οὐρανόν εἰ μὴ ὁ ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καταβάς,  
ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου [ἀναβέβηκεν εἰς τὸν οὐρανόν].

This interpretation is to be preferred since, although the verse forms a strict denial of the idea that one could ascend to heaven to learn the divine secrets and then descend to earth to reveal them,<sup>224</sup> the εἰ μὴ points to a unique exception, namely the Son of Man (cf. a similar usage of εἰ μὴ in Rev 21.27). Moloney points to the grammatical structure of the verse in which the opposition between the οὐδεὶς and

<sup>222</sup> Lindars, *Gospel of John*, 156. Cf. Bultmann, *John*, 108, n. 3; BDF, para 344.

<sup>223</sup> Kanagaraj, *Mysticism*, 196. Bühner, *Der Gesandte und sein Weg*, 403, observes: ‘Er ist der Menschensohn, der exklusiv über das apokalyptische Wissen verfügt’.

<sup>224</sup> Cf. Odeberg, *Fourth Gospel*, 72-73, 94-98; Bultmann, *John*, 150; Dunn, ‘Let John be John’, 326-27; Kanagaraj, *Mysticism*, 199.



ὁ υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου is the point at issue: 'there is only one who can reveal the truth with ultimate authority, the one who descended, the Son of Man'.<sup>225</sup>

The emphatic denial that anyone has ascended into heaven but he who descended from heaven, the Son of Man may well be a polemic against the claims of apocalypticists to have experienced heavenly ascents.<sup>226</sup> Thus while important figures of Jewish history privileged to have received divine disclosures, namely Moses, Abraham and Isaiah, are specifically mentioned in the Fourth Gospel, their revelations are interpreted as having purely christological significance.

In some circles the giving of the law to Moses is placed in an apocalyptic framework. The nature of God's revelation to Moses in 4 Ezra is taken as paradigmatic for that which is delivered to the seer. Specific reference to the pattern of disclosure is made in the closing chapter of the apocalypse proper: 'I revealed myself in a bush and spoke to Moses when my people were in bondage in Egypt; and I sent him and led my people out of Egypt; and I led him up on mount Sinai, where I kept him with me many days; and I told him many wondrous things, and showed him the secrets of the times and declared to him the end of the times'

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<sup>225</sup> *The Johannine Son of Man*, 56.

<sup>226</sup> Odeberg, *Fourth Gospel*, 88-9, claims that Jn.3.13 'can scarcely be interpreted otherwise than as a strong refutation of some current and prominent doctrine or belief of the time concerning the possibility of ascent into heaven'. He suggests that the polemic was especially directed against Jewish *Merkabah* mysticism. Cf. Bultmann, *John*, 150, n.1; Borgen, *Bread from Heaven*, 185; Moloney, *The Johannine Son of Man*, 54-7; Segal, 'Ruler of this World', 255-6; Dunn, *Christology*, xxvii. Kanagaraj, *Mysticism*, 200, notes that 'for John the place where one can see the divine glory and can have communion with God is no more the throne as held by the *Merkabah* mystics of his time, but in the incarnate life of the Son of Man'. Cf. Carter, 'Prologue and John's Gospel', 44.

(14.3-5). In 2 Baruch during the time of the ‘fourth bright waters’ God ‘showed [Moses] many warnings together with the ways of the Law and the end of time...the likeness of Zion with its measurements. But he also showed him, at that time, the measures of fire, the depths of the abyss...the voice of thunders, the orders of the archangels, the treasures of light, the changes of the times, and the inquiries into the Law’ (59.4-11).<sup>227</sup> In Pseudo-Philo, moreover, God promises to show Moses ‘my covenant *that no one has seen*’ (9.8; italics mine). The book of Jubilees also describes its contents as a secret revelation given to Moses, but actually written down by the ‘angel of the presence’ (Jub 1.4, 27). In the light of this evidence Meeks observes that ‘the superiority of Moses to other prophets is emphasized by the tradition that God revealed all secrets to him, even that to the end of the ages’.<sup>228</sup>

It is possible that the Johannine evangelist is polemicising against members of the Jewish community who revered Moses as God’s mediator *par excellence*. They are those who ‘put their hope in Moses’ (5.45), believing in him (5.46) and are therefore his disciples (9.28). It may be possible to infer from the polemic expressed in 3.13 that the circle represented by the ‘teacher of Israel’ espoused the idea of heavenly ascent and vision, in which case they would value the tradition that, in ascending Mt Sinai, Moses was received into heaven.<sup>229</sup> In the biblical

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<sup>227</sup> Charles, *APOT*, II, 514, comments on this passage: ‘Here one of Enoch’s functions is for the first time transferred to Moses’

<sup>228</sup> Meeks, *Prophet-King*, 148.

<sup>229</sup> *Ibid.*, 299.



account of Moses climbing Mt Sinai the term ‘ascend’ (עָלָה, LXX ἀναβαίνειν) is used frequently (Ex 19.20, 23; 24. 1,2,9,13,18). Later Jewish exegesis interpreted this as implying that when Moses ascended he entered heaven itself.<sup>230</sup> Some Rabbinic sources interpret the account of Moses’ death in Deut 34 in the light of his ascent up Mt Sinai recorded in Ex 34. Thus *Siphre* on Deuteronomy §357 states: ‘Others declare that Moses never died. It is written here: “So Moses died there” [Deut 34.5]. But elsewhere it is written: “And he was there with his Lord” [Exod 34.28]. As in the latter passage it means standing and serving, so also in the former it means standing and serving’.<sup>231</sup> The word ‘there’ (שָׁם) is the hermeneutical key used to form a connecting link between the two ascents.<sup>232</sup>

Now the Deuteronomist gives the following account of the theophany at Horeb: καὶ ἐλάλησεν κύριος πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἐκ μέσου τοῦ πυρός· φωνὴν ῥημάτων ὑμεῖς ἠκούσατε καὶ ὁμοίωμα οὐκ εἶδατε, ἀλλ’ ἦ φωνήν (Deut 4.12, LXX). Thus while the Israelites did not see the form of God, they were supposed to have heard his voice. But, as Meeks observes, John does not allow even this concession: ‘All three aspects of the Sinai event ~ voice, vision, and abiding word ~ are denied to the opponents in John’.<sup>233</sup> Of particular significance is the allegation that Jesus makes against his antagonists in 5.37-38: οὔτε φωνὴν αὐτοῦ

<sup>230</sup> Philo, *Vita Mos* I, 158; Josephus, *Antiq.* III, 96; Pseudo-Philo, 12.1.

<sup>231</sup> Cf. also *B Sota* 13b; *Yal Shimoni* on Deut, paras 962, 965.

<sup>232</sup> Fossum, *Image of the Invisible God*, 73.

<sup>233</sup> *Prophet-King*, 300. Cf. Dahl, ‘Johannine Church and History’, 130.

πώποτε ἀκηκόατε οὔτε εἶδος αὐτοῦ ἐωράκατε, καὶ τὸν λόγον αὐτοῦ οὐκ ἔχετε ἐν ὑμῖν μένοντα.

However Moses, in distinction from the ordinary people, was supposed to have seen the ‘form’ of the Lord as stated in Num 12.8: ‘With [Moses] I speak mouth to mouth, clearly, and not in dark speech; and he beholds the *form* of Yahweh’. The LXX rendering of this verse reads: στόμα κατὰ στόμα λαλήσω αὐτῷ, ἐν εἶδει καὶ οὐ δι’ αἰνιγμάτων, καὶ τὴν δόξαν κυρίου εἶδεν. Here the ‘form’ (εἶδη) of the Lord is equated with his ‘glory’ (δόξα). The Fourth Evangelist interprets this tradition to mean that Moses did not see the Lord himself, but only his ‘form’ or ‘glory’ which, like Isaiah (12.41), refers to the pre-existent Jesus.<sup>234</sup> Indeed the value of the Mosaic revelation resides purely in its witness of Jesus (5.39: ἐρευνᾶτε τὰς γραφάς...αἱ μαρτυροῦσαι περὶ ἐμοῦ). More specifically, *Jesus is the object of the disclosure given to Moses*; thus Jesus can say to the Jews: ‘If you believed Moses, you would believe me, *for he wrote of me*’ (5.46: περὶ γὰρ ἐμοῦ ἐκεῖνος ἔγραψεν). Therefore Philip represents the believing community in his exuberant declaration that they had found the one whom Moses wrote about (1.45: ὃν ἔγραψε Μωυσῆς).

Second to Moses, it is arguable that Abraham was the most highly revered figure in the Judaism of the first century C.E. In the apocalypse that bears his name the patriarch is promised that he will be privy to the ‘guarded things’ and

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<sup>234</sup> Segal, *Two Powers*, 214 writes: ‘Since Moses was not allowed to see the face of God (for no mortal can see God and live), John proclaims that only a specific heavenly figure can have had a full vision of God ~ he who was from God, Jesus’.



told 'you will see great things which you have not seen' (9.6). Abraham is instructed to prepare himself for the heavenly disclosure by fasting and preparing a sacrifice on a high mountain.<sup>235</sup> God then promises that he will '*show*' him the secrets of creation and '*announce*' the future of mankind (9.7-10). To this end the patriarch ascends to 'the heaven that is fixed on the expanses' (15.4). Once elevated to this 'place of highness' (17.3), a voice bids him look at a picture depicting the course of human history from the beginning to its end. He is informed that whatever God had decreed to exist 'had already been outlined in this' (22.2). Accordingly, in order to discover the course of the future he simply has to '*look* at the picture' (23.1; 24.3; 29.4). Having done so he is assured that 'everything you saw will be so' (27.7).

The heavenly tour concludes with the injunction to '*see*, Abraham, what you have seen, *hear* what you have heard, know what you have known' (29.21). His journey into the heavens has equipped him with an authentic revelation that he has personally witnessed. Heavenly knowledge which is unattainable to unaided human enquiry is 'taught', 'shown' and 'made known' to the visiting seer (17.21). In Pseudo-Philo reference is made to the vision of Abraham recorded in Gen. 15.2-20 in which he is promised that his descendants will be as the stars of heaven, but here the Lord is represented as saying to his angels 'I will reveal everything I am doing to Abraham' (Ps-Philo 18.5). Similarly in 4 Ezra the seer alludes to this

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<sup>235</sup> Box, *Apocalypse of Abraham*, 44, notes that the account in Gen 15.9-10 which describes the circumstances of Abraham's revelation 'became a favourite theme for apocalyptic speculation'. The experience is also referred to in 4 Ez 3.14 and 2 Bar 4.4.

occasion in his prayer to the sovereign Lord: 'you loved [Abraham] and to him only *you revealed the end of the times*, secretly by night' (4 Ez 3.14, italics mine). While in 2 Baruch, it is the new Jerusalem that was 'showed...to my servant Abraham in the night between the portions of the victims' (2 Bar 4.4).

The author of the Fourth Gospel is obviously familiar with the tradition that Abraham was given access into the heavenly world which contained the secrets of the future.<sup>236</sup> However, he interprets the tradition christologically, applying the idea of Abraham's apocalyptic prescience to 'the day' of Jesus. Thus in his fierce dispute with 'the Jews' the Johannine Jesus appeals to the witness of Abraham by claiming that he 'rejoiced to see my day (τὴν ἡμέραν τὴν ἐμὴν), and he saw it and was glad' (8.56). Carter observes that this remark 'allies Abraham with Jesus against 'the Jews', as well as subordinating Abraham to Jesus by making Jesus the object of the visions and emphasizing Jesus' superior position'.<sup>237</sup>

It is debatable as to whether the content of Abraham's vision concerns the earthly life of Jesus or his pre-existence. The reference to 'my day' implies the former option, while the assertion that 'before Abraham was, I am' (8.58) supports the latter idea. Further evidence for the second possibility may be adduced from the Prayer of Joseph which speaks of the angel Israel as the firstborn (πρωτόγονος) of God's creation and specifically mentions his temporal priority

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<sup>236</sup> Hengel, 'The Old Testament in the Fourth Gospel', 387.

<sup>237</sup> Carter, 'Prologue and John's Gospel', 45. Cf. A.T. Hanson, *New Testament Interpretation*, 102-104.



over the patriarchs Abraham and Isaac.<sup>238</sup> Indeed the evangelist may be drawing upon both ideas thereby emphasizing the eternal existence and significance of Jesus. Either way John is making Jesus the object of Abraham's apocalyptic vision. The eschatological promise embodied in the revelation of the heavenly world, the last times, or the new Jerusalem, is focussed in the day of Jesus.<sup>239</sup> Thus he doesn't refute the idea of Abraham's heavenly vision but 'emphasizes Jesus' exalted and exclusive role in relation to that vision as the only revelation or manifestation of God'.<sup>240</sup>

The author of the Fourth Gospel also depicts Isaiah as a witness to the glory of Jesus. In summarising the effect of the public ministry of Jesus at the conclusion of the first part of his Gospel, John presents the unfavourable reception accorded to Jesus as a fulfilment of Isaiah's prophecy: 'Lord, who has believed our report, and to whom has the arm of the lord been revealed'. Indeed 'the Jews' were unable to believe because the Lord 'has blinded their eyes and hardened their heart...' (12.38-41). The unbelief of 'the Jews' is thereby shown to be consonant with the inscrutable plan of God who sovereignly chooses to withhold the light of revelation from those who would be expected to understand the divine purpose. It

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<sup>238</sup> Gieschen, *Angelomorphic Christology*, 278, argues that this text provides 'a religio-historical background for Jesus' claim' in Jn 8.56-58.

<sup>239</sup> Cf. Menken, 'Old Testament in the Fourth Gospel', 135.

<sup>240</sup> Carter, 'Prologue and John's Gospel', 45-46.

is likely, as Carter suggests, that the polemical context of ch.12 ‘reflects John’s response to synagogue claims and traditions about Isaiah as a revealer figure’.<sup>241</sup>

Now in 12.41 we read that the context of Isaiah’s prediction of unbelief was his vision of the Lord seated upon the throne (Isa 6.1-9): ταῦτα εἶπεν Ἡσαίας, ὅτι εἶδεν τὴν δόξαν αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἐλάλησεν περὶ αὐτοῦ. The probability is that, within the Jewish apocalyptic tradition, Isaiah’s vision would have been thought to imply a visionary ascent to heaven.<sup>242</sup> The prophet is transported into the heavenly sphere where he beholds the glory (כְּבוֹד) of God (6.3). The LXX emphasizes this central aspect of the vision by translating the Hebrew word ‘train’ (שׁוֹלִי) in 6.1 with the Greek word δόξα, ‘glory’.

The idea of Isaiah’s visionary ascent is consonant with the experience of the seer developed in the Ascension of Isaiah. In this work we read that the prophet is given a door into the upper world so that ‘the vision which he saw was not from this world, but from the world which is hidden from the flesh’ (6.15). He is ‘shown’ this vision by a ‘glorious angel’ who promises him: ‘where I take you up, *you will see*, because for this purpose *I was sent*’ (7.5, italics mine). Isaiah is escorted through the heavens until, in the seventh, he sees ‘one standing (there) whose glory surpassed that of all, and his glory was great and wonderful’ (9.27). Here he is invited to join in the heavenly worship of the glorious one and in so doing hears the voice of the Most High commissioning the Lord Christ to

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<sup>241</sup> Ibid., 46.

<sup>242</sup> Dahl, ‘Johannine Church and History’, 129.



‘Go out and descend through all the heavens...that you may judge and destroy the princes and the angels and the gods of that world’ (10.7-12). The prophet then witnesses the descent and subsequent ministry of the Beloved One on earth, culminating in his death and resurrection after which he reports: ‘I *saw* when he sent out the twelve disciples and *ascended*’ (11.22).

Now when John writes: ταῦτα εἶπεν Ἡσαίας, ὅτι εἶδεν τὴν δόξαν αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἐλάλησεν περὶ αὐτοῦ (12.41), the critical question facing the exegete is whether the pronoun αὐτοῦ refers to God or Jesus. From the syntax of the passage we may observe that the same pronoun is used of Jesus in v. 37 and v. 42. Furthermore in the light of John’s overall depiction of the pre-existence of Jesus as the eternal Logos (1.1), most commentators opt for Jesus as the referent. Isaiah’s vision of the Lord enthroned in his glory, placed in the context of the temple, is therefore interpreted by John as referring to none other than Jesus, witnessed prior to the incarnation (12.41).<sup>243</sup> Hence the glory he manifests is not a quality conferred on him temporarily, rather it inheres in his essential being. It belonged to him before the visible creation was established (17.5 πρὸ τὸν κόσμον εἶναι; 17.24 πρὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου). However, the vision of Yahweh’s glory may not be applied simply to the pre-existent Logos *asarkos*, but more significantly with the incarnate, crucified Jesus.<sup>244</sup> Indeed the unbelief of ‘the Jews’, prophesied by

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<sup>243</sup> Caird, ‘The Glory of God in the Fourth Gospel’, 269, speaks of the glory which the Logos participates in from eternity as ‘God’s essential worth, greatness, power, majesty, everything in him which calls forth man’s adoring reverence’.

<sup>244</sup> Dahl, ‘Johannine Church’, 131-32; Kanagaraj, *Mysticism*, 225.

Isaiah, is the very factor that leads to Jesus' crucifixion and therewith the ultimate manifestation of his glory.<sup>245</sup>

We can see from these examples that John does not allow the possibility of a direct revelation of God which is not mediated through Jesus. His polemic is, in all likelihood, directed toward Jewish claims of apocalyptic experience for such figures as Moses, Abraham and Isaiah. Thus in 6.46 Jesus reaffirms that no one has seen the Father except he who is from God: οὐχ ὅτι τὸν πατέρα ἑώρακέν τις, εἰ μὴ ὁ ὢν παρὰ τοῦ θεοῦ, οὗτος ἑώρακεν τὸν πατέρα. The emphatic position of οὗτος underlines the point that only Jesus has perceived the Father since he alone has continuously (ὁ ὢν) dwelt with him (παρὰ τοῦ θεοῦ) from eternity. Only through him can there be a true revelation of the Father, hence he states: ὁ θεωρῶν ἐμὲ θεωρεῖ τὸν πέμψαντά με (12.45). Meeks summarises succinctly the contention of the evangelist: 'No one else has ascended or can ascend, enter, and see, except through him'.<sup>246</sup> In so far as seers from the past had genuine apocalyptic experiences, these are interpreted christologically with the object of the revelation concentrated in the person of Jesus. As Menken observes: 'To John, the object of the glimpses into heaven that were granted to Isaiah and Abraham was not God himself, but Jesus in his pre-existence'.<sup>247</sup> The Fourth Gospel therefore places a definite polemical interpretation upon the Jewish

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<sup>245</sup> I am indebted to my supervisor, Dr C.H. Williams, for this insight.

<sup>246</sup> Meeks, *Prophet-King*, 299.

<sup>247</sup> Menken, 'The Old Testament in the Fourth Gospel', 136. However, it is probably incorrect to limit the revelation to the 'pre-existent' Jesus.



theophanic traditions: God has never been seen by anyone other than the Son who makes him known.

### 1.3 Heavenly Witness

While some commentators have drawn attention to a Johannine polemic against the claim of the apocalypticists that figures like Moses, Enoch, Abraham and Isaiah have penetrated the mysteries of the heavenly realm, others have observed that, notwithstanding this, the pattern of an apocalyptic journey is nonetheless used by John. Indeed one scholar has argued that ‘the Fourth Gospel views the activity of Jesus as an *inverted heavenly trip* replete with revelation’ [italics mine].<sup>248</sup> However, it is only inverted if one compares Jesus to the apocalyptic seer who ascends into the heavenly regions in order to receive a divine revelation. It is important to recognize that the Fourth Gospel presents Jesus as one who *descends* from the world above. Unlike the seer, he is not a temporary visitor to the heavenly realm, rather it is his true home where he has dwelt from the beginning (1.1-3; 17.4-5). This is reflected by the repeated assertion that Jesus is ‘from above’, ‘from heaven’ and thus ‘from God’. Therefore, it is more likely, as Warren Carter has argued, that John’s presentation of Jesus draws on features not only from a human apocalyptic seer but also from an otherworldly agent, unifying

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<sup>248</sup> Hall, *Revealed Histories*, 230.

these figures ‘into one being and recast[ing] the pattern’.<sup>249</sup> This approach is similar to that espoused by Ashton when he writes of ‘*a fusion of two mythological patterns, one angelic, starting in heaven..., the other mystical, starting from earth*’ [italics original].<sup>250</sup> An important aim of this chapter is to test the validity of this position by a close examination and comparison of Jewish apocalyptic and Johannine material.

The Fourth Gospel adopts the vantage point of heaven rather than earth when presenting the mission of Jesus. The ascent-descent pattern, which is appropriate from the perspective of the human seer, is overridden by a descent-ascent schema that presupposes the vantage point of an otherworldly being.<sup>251</sup> Borgen observes that ‘since the ascent in Jn 3.13-14 is denied to Moses, but applied to Jesus, *the point of departure is not that of a human, but of a divine being*. Thus, the concept of the Sinaitic ascent and descent is turned upside down, and is changed into the idea of descent and ascent’ (italics mine).<sup>252</sup> Jesus descends to earth in order to communicate the presence of God. In the Johannine

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<sup>249</sup> ‘The Prologue and John’s Gospel’, 45. Segal, *Two Powers*, 208, argues that within early Christianity Jesus was identified with both ‘human figures in heaven and angelic mediators’.

<sup>250</sup> *Understanding*, 355. In *Studying John*, 75, he refers to the similar conclusion of Bühner, *Der Gesandte und sein Weg*, 271, that the key to Johannine Christology is found in the ‘fusion or blending (Verbindung) of prophet and angel’.

<sup>251</sup> Carter, *ibid*, 45. It is interesting to note, however, that in the case of Enoch the role of seer and angelic being can be seen to merge. At the end of the Similitudes he is elevated to angelic status, apparently acquiring the title of the Son of Man (1 En 71.11-17). A similar experience is recorded in 2 Enoch whereby he is put into the clothes of God’s glory and becomes ‘like one of his glorious ones’ (22.10). In 3 Enoch we are given a detailed account of how Enoch undergoes an angelic metamorphosis, ending up as the archangel Metatron (3 En 15-16).

<sup>252</sup> ‘Jewish Exegetical Sayings’, 246.



thought-world Jesus is the fulfilment of the eschatological hope, given expression in 1 En 25.3, when the Lord himself ‘descends to visit the earth with goodness’ (ὅταν καταβῇ ἐπισκέψασθαι τὴν γῆν ἐπ’ ἀγαθῷ).

In the light of this, a complementary, and perhaps more apposite, model for the journey of the Johannine Jesus is that of the ‘otherworldly’ or angelic being who is sent from heaven to earth to fulfil the divine commission. Earlier scholarship had already suggested that the angelic figures Iaoel, Michael and Metatron, acting in the role of divine vice-regent influenced Christological development.<sup>253</sup> More recently, Hengel argued that these same superhuman beings may have formed the Jewish groundwork for the developing Christian understanding of the exalted nature of Jesus.<sup>254</sup> After a close examination of a number of apocalyptic texts, Hurtado has observed ‘a tendency to postulate a chief angel set by God over the entire heavenly hierarchy...a particular figure described as God’s grand vizier or chief servant’.<sup>255</sup> This may be particularly true in the case of certain senior angelic personages who seem to have a special place in representing deity.

Although they are created beings, angels have a ‘spiritual foundation’ (1 En 15.9); their home is in the ‘high, holy and eternal heaven’ (15.3). Therefore they

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<sup>253</sup> Box, *Apocalypse of Abraham*, xxxi.

<sup>254</sup> Hengel, ‘Son’, 44-46, 75-81.

<sup>255</sup> Hurtado, *One God*, 71.

are designated as the ‘glorious ones’ (2 En 21.3; 3 En 26.2-3),<sup>256</sup> extensions of deity, yet at the same time preserving the inviolable holiness of the supreme Majesty. While in the Hebrew Bible there is a rich terminology for angels,<sup>257</sup> the predominant term used is מַלְאָךְ, the participial form of שָׁלַח, meaning ‘to send’ or ‘to send on a commission’.<sup>258</sup> Hence the basic concept is that of a messenger.<sup>259</sup> This is illustrated in the episode recorded in Judges 13 in which the angel of the Lord comes (13.9: וַיָּבֹא; LXX καταβαίνειν) to Manoah and his wife, delivers a message and then ascends (13.20, עָלָה; LXX ἀναβαίνειν) in a flame of fire.

In the apocalyptic literature the idea of angels fulfilling the office of celestial delegates is developed. The angelic role is succinctly summarised by Bühner as follows: ‘Der מַלְאָךְ kommt als Gottesbote aus der himmlischen Welt, wird mit einem Auftrag vorübergehend auf die Erde geschickt und kehrt dann zu Gott in den Himmel zurück’.<sup>260</sup> For example, the glorious angel in Dan 10 addresses the seer as follows: ‘Daniel, greatly beloved, pay attention to the words that I am going to speak to you. Stand on your feet, *for I have now been sent to*

<sup>256</sup> Russell, *Method and Message*, 235, speaks of them as heavenly beings ‘who, in some ways, shared the nature, though not the being’ of God.

<sup>257</sup> For example, ‘sons of God’ (בְּנֵי הָאֱלֹהִים; cf. Gen 6.2; Ps 89.6); ‘holy ones’ (קְדוֹשִׁים; cf. Ps 89.6, 8); ‘mighty ones’ (אֲבִירִים; cf. Ps 78.25); ‘high ones’ (רָמִים; cf. Job 21.22); ‘ministers’ (מְשָׁרְתִים; cf. Ps 103.21).

<sup>258</sup> The root is not attested in the Hebrew Bible, but is found in Arabic, Ethiopic and Phoenician. Cf. BDB, 521.

<sup>259</sup> Newsom, ‘Angels’, *ABD*, I. 248; Heidt, *Angelology*, 8.9. Von Rad, “ἄγγελος”, TDNT I, 77, observes that it was only by the time of the Christian era that מַלְאָךְ and ἄγγελος came to refer to ‘a spirit who mediates in various ways between the human and divine realms’.

<sup>260</sup> *Der Gesandte und sein Weg*, 317.



*you* (כִּי עָתָה שְׁלַחְתִּי אֵלֶיךָ)...and I have come because of your words (וְאֵנִי בָאֲתִי בְּדִבְרֶיךָ) (10.11-12). In 2 Enoch two mighty angels appear before the seer with the message: ‘The eternal God has *sent* us to you. And behold, you will *ascend* with us to heaven today’ (1.8). After giving a brief instruction to his sons, he is then taken up ‘onto their wings’ and carried up through the heavens (3.1). Once Enoch has witnessed the various sights of these heavens and been presented before ‘the face of the Lord’ and received divine instruction, God commands the same angels: ‘Let Enoch *descend* onto the earth with you’ (38.1).

In the Book of Tobit ch.12.14-20<sup>261</sup> a principal angel by the name of Raphael relates how he has been sent to heal the family of Tobias: ‘And now God *sent me* (καὶ νῦν ἀπέστειλέν με ὁ θεός) to heal you and your daughter-in-law, Sarah. *I am* Raphael (ἐγὼ εἰμι Ῥαφαήλ) one of the seven holy angels...when I was with you, I was *not* acting *on my own will*, but by the will of God (ὅτι οὐ τῇ ἐμαυτοῦ χάριτι ἀλλὰ τῇ θελήσει τοῦ θεοῦ)...And now give thanks to God, for *I am ascending to him who sent me* (διότι ἀναβαίνω πρὸς τὸν ἀποστείλαντά με; *italics mine*)’.<sup>262</sup> The Testament of Job also gives evidence of a descending-ascending pattern, in that an angel, whether the מַלְאָךְ יְהוָה or an anonymous

<sup>261</sup> This work is dated to the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE.

<sup>262</sup> Gieschen, *Angelomorphic Christology*, 136, observes that because ‘of the early date of this document, it may have played a paradigmatic role for the descent-ascent patterns in later literature’. Bühner, *Der Gesandte und sein Weg*, 337, contends that this text is ‘der deutlichste Hinweis auf die Möglichkeit, daß die johanneische Christologie auch Momente der jüdischen Engellehre aufgenommen haben könnte’. Cf. Knight, *Disciples of the Beloved One*, 146-153.

archangel, comes (ἐλθών) to Job as a voice in a great light in order to bring salvation (3.1-7). He announces to the patriarch that ‘I am going to *show* you all the things which the Lord charged me to tell you’ (4.1). The angel then assures him of future compensation for all that Satan destroyed, and he gives him the promise of resurrection from the dead so long as Job perseveres: ‘And you shall be raised up in the resurrection’ (4.6-8). Then, after sealing Job, the angel leaves (5.2, ἀπελθόντες). The following chapters narrate that Job is able to withstand the assault of the adversary because of his assurance of the future hope which has been given him by the angel.<sup>263</sup>

In the Testament of Abraham we read how God summons another principal angel, this time the archangel Michael, and commands him to ‘go down to Abraham and tell him about his death’ (Rec A, 1.4). In the course of the narrative the archangel *descends* (2.1; 5.1; 9.1) and *ascends* (4.5; 8.1; 15.11) to heaven several times in the process of trying to persuade Abraham to yield to the plans of the Almighty. In order to achieve this aim, Isaac is given a dream about his father’s impending death, which he later recounts to his parents as follows: ‘I saw *heaven opened*, and I saw a light-bearing man *coming down out of heaven*,...and took the sun from my head, and *he went up into the heavens*, whence also he had come’ (7.3-4) (italics mine).

Now in the Fourth Gospel Jesus is depicted as a heavenly being whose true home is in heaven. In this respect we may trace links between the principal angel

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<sup>263</sup> Talbert, ‘Descending-Ascending Redeemer’, 425.

traditions and the Johannine Jesus. Although he becomes ‘flesh’ for the purposes of his earthly sojourn (1.14), the ‘spiritual foundation’ of the Johannine Jesus is heavenly.<sup>264</sup> He is ‘from above’ (8.23: ἐκ τῶν ὀνῶ) which may be equated with ‘from heaven’ (3.31: ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ)<sup>265</sup> and ultimately ‘from God’ (3.2: ἀπὸ θεοῦ; 9.33: παρὰ θεοῦ; cf. 17.8).<sup>266</sup> As the eternal Word, Jesus has been with God from the beginning (1.1b: καὶ ὁ λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν θεόν),<sup>267</sup> indeed ‘in the bosom’ of the Father (1.18b: ὁ ὢν εἰς τὸν κόλπον τοῦ πατρός),<sup>268</sup> a position of complete intimacy reserved for one’s closest confidant (13.25).<sup>269</sup> Moreover, the condition of being ‘with God’ (1.2: πρὸς τὸν θεόν) has been true from the beginning (1.1-2); indeed before the world was created Jesus shared in the Father’s glory (17.5). Thus in his pre-incarnational state the Son is in a position of closest communion with the Father.

It is from this position of union with the divine majesty that he ‘proceeded and came forth’ (8.42: ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ ἐξηλθὼν καὶ ἦκω,), although he specifically

<sup>264</sup> Daniélou, *Theology*, 117, introduced the term ‘angelomorphic Christology’ contending that Jewish Christians borrowed ‘terms...from the vocabulary of the (Jewish) angelology to designate the Word’.

<sup>265</sup> Schnackenburg, *St John*, I, 382, notes that ‘the expression εἶναι ἐκ brings out the two meanings of ἐκ, origin and type, with the origin determining the type.’

<sup>266</sup> Schnackenburg, *St John*, II, 434, notes that spatial categories are prominent in the Fourth Gospel. Thus the world ‘below’ is contrasted with the world ‘above’ (cf. 3.12, 13, 31; 6.33, 62; 8.23); the goal of salvation lies in the heavenly world (12.26; 13.33, 36; 14.2-3; 17.24).

<sup>267</sup> Bernard, *St John*, I, 2, notes that the imperfect ἦν, used in the three clauses of v.1 ‘is expressive in each case of continuous timeless existence’.

<sup>268</sup> ὢν speaks of eternal being (cf. 8.58). Cf. Bernard, *St John*, I, 32.

<sup>269</sup> Berger, *Die Auferstehung*, 585, notes that ‘“im Schoß” des Vaters oder des Offenbarers zu sein bedeutet nach einer verbreiteten apok. Tradition Garantie für die Authentizität der empfangenen Lehre’. Cf. Jub 22. 26: the blessing of Abraham is given to Jacob as ‘Jacob slept on the bosom of Abraham’ (cf. 23.2).



states that this was not on his own initiative (7.28: ἀπ' ἑαυτοῦ; cf. 8.42). Rather he is 'sent into the world' by his Father (10.36: ἀπέστειλεν εἰς τὸν κόσμον; cf. 3.17). Indeed, throughout his earthly ministry the Johannine Jesus is supremely conscious that he is 'the sent one'. A primary designation for him is 'he whom God sent' (ὃν ἀπέστειλεν ὁ θεός).<sup>270</sup> Moreover, on numerous occasions he refers to God using the periphrasis 'he who sent me' (ὁ πέμψας με or ὁ πέμψας με πατήρ).<sup>271</sup> In this capacity, as the one sent from God, he does not come ἀφ' ἑαυτοῦ (7.28; 8.42); equally, he does nothing 'from himself' (5.19, 30: ἀφ' ἑαυτοῦ οὐδέν). As in the case of an angel, fulfilling the divine will involves a change of location for Jesus,<sup>272</sup> as he 'tabernacles' (ἐσκήνωσεν 1.14) for a 'little while' (χρόνον μικρόν, 7.33).

Like an angelic emissary, the Johannine Jesus is portrayed as one who knows that he has been sent out from the heavenly realm to accomplish the divine purpose. Therefore, in all that happens he is conscious that a higher authority has planned the sequence of events that unfold before him. This becomes especially evident in the several references made to his 'time' or 'hour' that will prove to be of decisive significance. Thus his reply to Mary at the wedding in Cana, οὐπω

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<sup>270</sup> A form of this expression occurs in 3.17, 34; 5.36; 6.29, 57; 7.29; 8.42; 10.36; 11.42; 17.3, 8, 18, 21, 23, 25; 20.21. Cf. Rengstorf, *TDNT*, I,

<sup>271</sup> There are seventeen occurrences of the participial phrase ὁ πέμψας με, six of ὁ πέμψας με πατήρ, and fifteen corresponding statements in which the synonymous verb ἀποστελλω is used. de Jonge, *Jesus, Stranger from Heaven and Son of God*, 147, observes that 'no other single Christological expression appears so often in the Fourth Gospel'.

<sup>272</sup> Käsemann, *Testament of Jesus*, 20.

ἥκει ἡ ὥρα μου (2.4), shows his awareness that there is a specified time for the accomplishment of the Father's will. Later on the incitement by his brothers to take a more activist approach is resisted by Jesus with the assertion that his time had not yet come (7.6, ὁ καιρὸς ὃ ἐμὸς οὐπω πάρεστιν). Unlike his unbelieving brothers, for whom any time is right, Jesus displays his consciousness of being subject to the jurisdiction of his Father. While they are part of the world's system, Jesus acts from a completely different base; his duty is to respond to the Father's behest at the appointed time (7.8, ὅτι ὁ ἐμός καιρὸς οὐπω πεπλήρωται).

In the same way that the angel Raphael testifies 'I was *not* acting *on my own will*, but by the will of God (ὅτι οὐ τῇ ἐμαυτοῦ χάριτι ἀλλὰ τῇ θελήσει τοῦ θεοῦ)' (Tobit 12.18), Jesus likewise affirms that his mission is not to do his own will, but the will of the one who sent him (6.38: καταβέβηκα ἀπὸ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ οὐχ ἵνα ποιῶ τὸ θέλημα τὸ ἐμὸν ἀλλὰ τὸ θέλημα τοῦ πέμψαντός με; cf. 4.34; 17.4).<sup>273</sup> Thus he 'comes down' (3.13; 6.38, καταβαινω) from heaven to do the will of the one who sent him. He 'comes' into the world (10.10, ἐρχομαι) to give life, always knowing where he has 'come from' and where he 'is going' (8.14, ὑπάγω). For just as he has come, so he will go to the one who sent him (7.33,

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<sup>273</sup> Bühner, *Der Gesandte und sein Weg*, 335, notes: 'Da der ܡܪܝܢ im Himmel seine Heimat hat, muß er, wenn Gott ihn als Boten auf die Erde sendet, dorthin hinabsteigen und entsprechend nach beendetem Auftrag wieder in die himmlische Heimat hinaufsteigen'.

ὕπάγω πρὸς τὸν πέμψαντά με). Indeed one cannot help but notice a veritable plethora of verbs of movement used to describe his sojourn to earth.<sup>274</sup>

The knowledge that he has ‘come from God’ and ‘goes to God’ (13.3, ὅτι ἀπὸ θεοῦ ἐξηγήθε καὶ πρὸς τὸν θεὸν ὑπάγει) undergirds his work below and sustains him in carrying out the Father’s purpose. Thus on the eve of his crucifixion, assured that his mission is complete (17.4; cf. 19.30), Jesus views his impending death as the vehicle by which he returns to be with the Father. As he ‘came forth out of the Father’ and ‘came into the world’, so now he ‘leaves the world’ and ‘goes to the Father’ (16.28, ἐξηγήθον ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς καὶ ἐλήλυθα εἰς τὸν κόσμον· πάλιν ἀφίημι τὸν κόσμον καὶ πορεύομαι πρὸς τὸν πατέρα). With his mission completed Jesus knows that he can journey back to the Father, having succeeded in opening up the way for his disciples to make the same journey.

As the divine emissary *par excellence*, the words of Jesus are the words of the one who sent him (7.16, 18; 8.26; 12.49; 14.24). Because he has come down from heaven (6.38), Jesus has the right to speak of heavenly things (3.12 ἐπουράνια). Dunn rightly observes that ‘as the Son of Man, [Jesus] speaks with the authority of one who has descended from heaven; as one who is from above, his message outweighs in kind and quality anything said by him who is from

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<sup>274</sup> For example: ἐξέρχεσθαι, πορεύεσθαι, ὑπάγειν, μεταβαίνειν, ἀναβαίνειν. Cf. Schnackenburg, *St John*, II, 176; Woll, *Johannine Christianity in Conflict*, 28.



below'.<sup>275</sup> The true messenger from God is described as ἐπὶ πάντων in contrast with ὁ ὢν ἐκ τῆς γῆς (3.31). The essential point is that the man who is of the earth ἐκ τῆς γῆς λαλεῖ; only he who has come from heaven gives the authentic witness. Carter notes that 'his descent from heaven, from an exclusive, intimate relationship with God as the only one who has seen God (3.32; 5.37; 6.46; 8.38), provides the authoritative basis for his revelation (3.12-16)'.<sup>276</sup>

With respect to possible antecedents for the sending motif found in the Fourth Gospel, scholars have proposed various possibilities. Meeks argues that 'the Johannine Christ exemplifies the common rule of agency (שליחות) in Judaism: אדם כמוהו של שליחו ('the agent of a man is as himself').'<sup>277</sup> Ashton also draws on this background using the notion that 'an agent is like the one who sent him' (καθὼς...οὗτος) to shed light on the relationship between the Father and the Son.<sup>278</sup> It is certainly true that an essential feature characterising an agential relationship is stated twice in the passage 5.19-47. Both in v. 19 and v. 30 Jesus states : οὐ δύναται ὁ υἱὸς ποιεῖν ἄφ' ἑαυτοῦ οὐδέν. This unambiguously

<sup>275</sup> 'Embarrassment of History', 48. See also Brun, 'Jesus als Zeuge', 69: 'Der Spruch handelt vom Menschensohn als Mittler der Offenbarung, als Verkündiger himmlischer Dinge.'

<sup>276</sup> Carter, 'Prologue and John's Gospel', 41.

<sup>277</sup> *Prophet-King*, 301-305; 'Moses as God and King', 354-71. Borgen has also highlighted similarities with the halakhic principle of agency that 'an agent can appoint an agent' (*B Qid.* 41a; *B Git.* 29b).

<sup>278</sup> Ashton, *Understanding*, 314.

demonstrates that Jesus operates in the authority conferred upon him as God's agent.<sup>279</sup>

Bühner has also argued that the  $\Pi\lambda\psi$ -principle is an important factor for appreciating Johannine Christology. He detects three stages in the delegation of a messenger in antiquity: a) he is sent out, b) carries out the task, c) returns to the sender.<sup>280</sup> However, of particular relevance for our thesis is his argument that this model is a fitting description of how a heavenly angel operates.<sup>281</sup> In support of his contention he argues that the Johannine community was influenced by the idea of a heavenly being taking on human form, as illustrated in the case of the angel Israel in the Prayer of Joseph.<sup>282</sup> This is a first-century Jewish work quoted by Origen as follows: 'I, Jacob, who is speaking to you, am also Israel, an angel of God and a ruling spirit. Abraham and Isaac were created before any work. But, I, Jacob, who men call Jacob but whose name is Israel am he who God called Israel which means, a man seeing God, because I am the firstborn of every living thing to whom God gives life. And when I was coming up from Syrian Mesopotamia, Uriel, the angel of God, came forth and said that 'I [Jacob-Israel] had *descended* to earth and I had *tabernacled* among men (ὅτι κατέβην ἐπὶ τὴν γῆν καὶ κατεσκήνωσα ἐν ἀνθρώποις) and that I had been called by the name of Jacob'' (Prayer of Joseph, 1-4, italics mine). The terminology used here,

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<sup>279</sup> Meeks, *Prophet-King*, 303.

<sup>280</sup> Bühner, *Der Gesandte*, 118-37, 423-25.

<sup>281</sup> Dunn's criticism that the notion of angelic messengers is irrelevant for understanding the Johannine Jesus is surely wide of the mark. Cf. 'Let John be John', 329.

<sup>282</sup> Bühner, *Der Gesandte*, 425-29; cf. Hannah, *Michael and Christ*, 7.

κατεσκήνωσα ἐν ἀνθρώποις, bears significant resemblance to that used by the author of the Fourth Gospel in 1.14b: ἐσκήνωσεν ἐν ἡμῖν.<sup>283</sup>

Some scholars have traced the idea of an angel who occupies a position of special status back to accounts in the Hebrew Bible in which the מלאך יהוה plays a significant role in the narrative (e.g. Gen 16.3, 21.18, 22.11; Ex 14.19; Jud 13.3).<sup>284</sup> Thus, in his detailed examination of the occasions in which this angel figures in the Old Testament narrative, Gieschen finds that the angel represents God's visible form or voice in the epiphanies. Moreover, 'both God and the Angel of the Lord are often identified as the same being; they are presented as indistinguishable'.<sup>285</sup> The מלאך יהוה acts as God's deputy and may himself be referred to using the language of divinity.<sup>286</sup> On the one hand he is sent by God (e.g. Gen 19.1, 13) and yet on the other he is presented as God in action (Gen 22.11-18).<sup>287</sup> This leads Eichrodt to comment that as 'an emissary of Yahweh he [is] no longer distinguishable from his master, but in his appearing and speaking clothes himself with Yahweh's own appearance and speech...when the words of

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<sup>283</sup> Fossum, *Image of the Invisible God*, 122.

<sup>284</sup> While the root meaning of מלאך is 'one who is sent', hence 'messenger', the term came to designate 'a spirit who mediates in various ways between the human and divine realms'; see von Rad, 'ἄγγελος', *TDNT*, vol 1, 77.

<sup>285</sup> Gieschen, *Angelomorphic Christology*, 57. Hannah, *Michael and Christ*, 19, speaks of 'a curious oscillation between the angel and Yahweh; at times the מלאך יהוה speaks not as a messenger, but as if he is to be identified with Yahweh'.

<sup>286</sup> Rowland, *Open Heaven*, 94.

<sup>287</sup> Talbert, 'Descending-Ascending Redeemer', 422.



the מלאך in Gen 21.18 and 22.11 make use of the divine 'I', this is...a sign of the presence of God in the angel-phenomenon'.<sup>288</sup>

This tendency, as Lars Hartman has pointed out, is also found within the apocalyptic literature where sometimes the author does not 'necessarily distinguish very sharply between the messenger and the sender'.<sup>289</sup> For example, this is the case in the apocalypse 4 Ezra where one can detect a definite ambiguity concerning the source of the messages given to the seer. Sometimes the words of the angel, Uriel, seem to imperceptibly merge with those of God himself (cf. 5.31 with 5.40), so that it appears that God is speaking through the mouth of the angel (6.6; 8.47; 9.18-22).<sup>290</sup> At times also the angel is referred to by a name that would seem to be appropriate for deity (4.38; 5.41; 7.45, 58, 75). There is thus a certain fluidity between the person of God and his angelic agent, so that, as Ashton observes, 'no firm distinction can or should be drawn between God and his angel/messenger'.<sup>291</sup> In the light of this Ashton believes that 'the מלאך יהוה tradition provides the most plausible and obvious explanation of John's presentation of Jesus as the emissary of God'.<sup>292</sup> This position is a development

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<sup>288</sup> Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament*, Vol 2, 24. Barr, 'Theophany and Anthropomorphism', 33, notes that 'the voice and presence of the מלאך alternates in a number of stories so much with the voice and appearing of Yahweh'.

<sup>289</sup> *Asking for a Meaning*, 14.

<sup>290</sup> Knibb, *Books of Esdras*, 101, comments that 'sometimes...Uriel recedes into the background and it appears that God himself answers Ezra directly'. Cf. Stone, *Fourth Ezra*, 30.

<sup>291</sup> *Studying John*, 83. Cf. Tuckett, *Christology*, 166, n. 37, refers to Gen 21.17; 31.11-13; Ex 3, as texts which illustrate 'some interchange between the angel and God'.

<sup>292</sup> *Studying John*, 77.

of his earlier view in the direction of laying more weight on the angelic side of the equation.<sup>293</sup>

Within these מלאך יהוה traditions we find that the twin referents of 'name' (ὄνομα) and 'glory' (δόξα) are of primary significance in indicating the self-revelation of God. Now these attributes are predicated of the Johannine Jesus and, as such, are the object of the verb φανερώω (17.6; 2.11).<sup>294</sup> We shall therefore explore these ideas.

### 1.3.1 Name

A particularly important text for understanding the significance and role of the מלאך יהוה is Ex 23.20-23. In this passage God promises to send his angel in front of his people in order to protect them from their enemies and bring them into the land allocated for them. Special note should be drawn to the statement that 'my Name is in him (כִּי שְׁמִי בְקִרְבּוֹ)' (23.21). Commenting on this aspect, Fossum notes: 'The Angel of the Lord is an extension of YHWH's personality, because the proper Name of God signifies the divine nature. Thus, the Angel of the Lord has full divine authority by virtue of possessing God's Name'.<sup>295</sup>

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<sup>293</sup> Cf. *Understanding*, 351-2.

<sup>294</sup> Kanagaraj, *Mysticism*, 231.

<sup>295</sup> Fossum, *Name of God*, 86. Cf. idem, *Image of the Invisible God*, 120.

Accordingly we observe that the voice of the מלאך communicates the words of God: ‘if you listen attentively to *his voice* and do all that *I say*’ (Ex 23.22).<sup>296</sup>

However, Gieschen further observes that, in several texts of the Hebrew scriptures (e.g., Pss 20.1; 54.6-7; Joel 2.26), the phrases שם יהוה or שם אלהים or just שם signify something more than synonyms for יהוה, or instruments through whom he operates. Rather ‘they appear as independent subjects of divine action. In such cases the Name should be understood as an hypostasis’.<sup>297</sup> This assertion finds supporting evidence in some parts of the apocalyptic literature. Thus in a passage in Jubilees we find that Isaac requires his sons to swear by the Name which took part in the act of creation: ‘And now I will make you swear by the great oath ~ because there is not an oath which is greater than it, by the glorious and honoured and great and splendid and amazing and mighty *Name* which created heaven and earth and everything together ~ that you will fear and worship him’ (36.7).

A similar view is espoused in the, admittedly difficult, passage 1 En 69.14-25, in which Michael is commanded to reveal ‘the hidden name’, which is an oath by which the universe was formed: ‘This (satan) told to Michael to show him *the hidden name*, that they pronounce it in the oath, so that those who revealed all that was secret to the children of men might tremble before *that Name* and oath [15]

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<sup>296</sup> Eichrodt, *Theology of the OT*, 2.40, contends that: ‘the name is regarded as to such an extent an *expression of the individual character* of its owner that it can, in fact, stand for him, become a concept interchangeable with him’.

<sup>297</sup> Gieschen, *Angelomorphic Christology*, 71.



And this is the power of this oath, for it is powerful and strong, and he (God) placed this oath 'AKA' in the hand of Michael. [16] And these are the secrets of this oath: Through his oath the firmament and the heavens were suspended before the world was created and for ever...<sup>298</sup> The following verses (69.26-27) speak of the revelation of the name of the Man which points to a connection between the divine name and that of the Son of Man.<sup>299</sup> It is most likely that the hidden name refers to the divine name.<sup>300</sup> Thus Fossum contends that the only name equal to this task is the שם המפורש ('the Ineffable Name'): יהוה.<sup>301</sup>

In the Apocalypse of Abraham the fulfilment of God's promise to the patriarch that he should 'see great things' (9.6; cf. Jn 1.51) involves the commissioning of Iael who is sent 'through the mediation of my ineffable *name*' (10.3). His name is obviously a conflation of Yahweh and El,<sup>302</sup> thereby forming a literal fulfilment of the promise 'my name is in him' (Exod. 23.21), spoken about an angel who would guide the covenant people to the promised land.<sup>303</sup> Hurtado observes that, 'given the enormous significance of the name of God in ancient Jewish tradition, the description of Iael as indwelt by God's name suggests that this figure has been given exceptional status in God's hierarchy, perhaps superior

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<sup>298</sup> Translation by M. Black, *The Book of Enoch or 1 Enoch*.

<sup>299</sup> Cf. Gieschen, *Angelomorphic Christology*, 76. Segal, *Two Powers in Heaven*, 195-96, argues that the Name is a weapon of the Son of Man against the supernatural powers of evil.

<sup>300</sup> Black, *1 Enoch*, 248; Segal, *Two Powers*, 196-197; Hannah, *Michael and Christ*, 52.

<sup>301</sup> Fossum, *Name of God*, 257-59.

<sup>302</sup> Ιαώ is the Greek form of יהוה, and ελ transliterates אל.

<sup>303</sup> Box, *Apocalypse of Abraham*, xxv, considers the name to be a substitute for the tetragrammaton, which was too sacred to be written in full.

to all but God himself'.<sup>304</sup> Confirmation of this suggestion is found in Iaoel's speech which echoes the 'I am' proclamations that has characterized God's initial address to Abraham: 'Fear not, for I am Before-the-World and Mighty...I am the protector for you and I am your helper' (9.3). In introducing himself to Abraham he says: 'I am sent to you to strengthen you and to bless you in the name of God...I am Iaoel... I am ordered... I am the one... I am sent to you... I am assigned (to be) with you' (10. 6-16).<sup>305</sup> Thus we see that he comes to Abraham to strengthen and bless him 'in the name of God' (10.6) and to assure him of his continual presence with both him and his descendants (10.16).

It is interesting to note that later on the same name, Iaoel, is ascribed to God himself (17.3), which is consonant with God's address to the angel as 'Iaoel of the same name' (10.3). The divine appellation receives further confirmation from the Apocalypse of Moses where God is addressed by the angels both as 'Ιαήλ αἰώνιε βασιλεῦ (29.4) and as 'Ιαήλ ἅγιε (33.5). Furthermore, in 3 Enoch it is to be observed that at the head of the list of Metatron's seventy names stands 'Iaoel'. Hannah concludes from this evidence that 'Ιαωήλ 'was considered appropriate both for God and for that angel in whom the divine Name dwelt'.<sup>306</sup>

There are a number of features about Iaoel that bear a marked resemblance to the Johannine Jesus. He too has been given the divine name (Jn 5.43: ἐγὼ

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<sup>304</sup> Hurtado, *One God*, 80. Box, *Apocalypse of Abraham*, xxv, had previously argued that Iaoel is 'God's vice-regent, second only to God himself'.

<sup>305</sup> Ashton, *Understanding*, 143-44.

<sup>306</sup> *Michael and Christ*, 53.



ἐλήλυθα ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι τοῦ πατρός μου); thus the works he performs are accomplished in his Father's 'name' (10.25: τὰ ἔργα ἃ ἐγὼ ποιῶ ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι τοῦ πατρός μου). Indeed, in summarising his earthly ministry Jesus describes it as manifesting the 'name' of God, particularly to his disciples (17.6: ἐφανερώσά σου τὸ ὄνομα τοῖς ἀνθρώποις οὓς ἔδωκάς μοι; cf. v.26).<sup>307</sup> He further prays that they will be kept in the same divine 'name' which has been given to him (17.11: πάτερ ἅγιε, τήρησον αὐτοὺς ἐν τῷ ὀνόματί σου ᾧ δέδωκάς μοι), probably through the ministry of the Holy Spirit who will be sent in the 'name' of Jesus (14.26). In the light of this evidence, Daniélou argues that in the Fourth Gospel 'we are presented with a theological elaboration in which the Name has come to designate Christ. Christ manifests the Name of the Father (Jn 17.6), but this manifestation is his own person'.<sup>308</sup>

It is arguable that, in a way reminiscent to the מלאך יְהוָה or principal angels like Raphael and Iaoel, Jesus identifies himself as the hypostatized Divine Name. For example, following his assertion that 'the hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified' (12.23), Jesus prays 'Father, glorify *your name*' (12.28). One can infer from this parallel that the Son of Man is equated with the 'name' of God. Fossum reasons that 'an initiated reader of the Gospel would draw the conclusion that the Son of Man, that is, Jesus, is the Name of God'.<sup>309</sup> Thus when the Father glorifies the Son he is actually glorifying his Name. This conclusion is

<sup>307</sup> Cf, Ashton, *Studying John*, 81.

<sup>308</sup> Daniélou, *Theology of Jewish Christianity*, 149.

<sup>309</sup> *Image of the Invisible God*, 126; cf. Dodd, *Interpretation*, 95; Odeberg, *Gospel*, 334.



given further support by the two equivalent formulae: 'Father, glorify your name' (12.28: πάτερ, δόξασόν σου τὸ ὄνομα) and 'Father, glorify me (17.5: δόξασόν με σύ, πάτερ).

Additional evidence in favour of identifying Jesus with the hypostatized divine name comes from Dodd's suggestion that 'the name' refers to אֲנִי יְהוָה or אֲנִי יְהוֹשֻׁעַ, which is rendered by the LXX as ἐγώ εἰμι (cf. Isa 43.15; 45.18; 48.12).<sup>310</sup> This is the very phrase that is found on the lips of Jesus several times as a means of self-identification. For example in 8.28 he tells the Jews that when the Son of Man has been lifted up they will know that 'I am he' (γνώσεσθε ὅτι ἐγώ εἰμι). In a similar manner Jesus assures his disciples on the eve of his passion that the fulfilment of events as predicted by him will serve to strengthen their conviction that 'I am he' (13.19: ἵνα πιστεύητε ὅταν γένηται ὅτι ἐγώ εἰμι). In these passages there appears to be a clear reference to ἐγώ εἰμι as a divine self-designation, particularly as used in Deutero-Isaiah. So in Isaiah 43.10 we read: ἵνα γνῶτε καὶ πιστεύσητε καὶ συνῆτε ὅτι ἐγώ εἰμι. Dodd concludes that 'if the Name of God is the symbol of his true nature, then the revelation of the Name which Christ gives is that unity of the Father and Son to which He bears witness'.<sup>311</sup>

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<sup>310</sup> *Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, 96; 417. Barrett, *St John*, 505, however, argues that 'we are not to think of the revelation of a particular name'.

<sup>311</sup> *Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, 96.

It seems, therefore, that the Johannine Jesus bears a clear affinity to the highest order of heavenly beings in respect of bearing the divine name. We have seen that the name of God signifies the divine nature, carrying with it, therefore, full divine authority. However, the uniqueness of the Johannine perspective is that now, for the first time, the name of God has taken human form; in other words ‘the word became flesh’.

### 1.3.2 Glory

Associated with the revelation of the name of God is the manifestation of the glory of God. A common feature in accounts of the circumstances surrounding the disclosure of an apocalyptic vision is the appearance of a glorious heavenly being who mediates the ensuing heavenly vision. Upon first seeing him the seer may be overwhelmed with a sense of the numinous radiance that surrounds the divine emissary. For example, Daniel is overawed by the countenance of the angelic being who visits him on the banks of the Tigris, for ‘his body was like beryl, his face like lightning, his eyes like flaming torches, his arms and legs like the gleam of burnished bronze, and the sound of his words like the roar of a multitude’ (Dan 10.6). In 2 Enoch the seer is conducted through the heavens by two impressive beings named Samoila and Raguila, mighty angels, the like of which he had never seen on earth. ‘Their faces were like the shining sun; their eyes were like burning lamps; from their mouths fire was coming forth; their clothing was various singing; their wings were more glistening than gold; their hands were whiter than

snow (2 En 1.5). On seeing them Enoch bows down in a state of abject terror; only their word of exhortation restores his equilibrium. Again, in Joseph and Asenath, we read that ‘the heaven was torn apart...and a man<sup>312</sup> came to [Asenath] from heaven...his face was like lightning, and his eyes like sunshine, and the hairs of his head like a flame of fire of a burning torch, and hands and feet like iron shining forth from a fire, and sparks shot forth from his hands and feet’ (14.3-9).

The effect of these vivid descriptions is to convey a sense of the numinous majesty surrounding the angelic beings.<sup>313</sup> They are clearly depicted as belonging to a heavenly order of reality that far surpasses the earthly order in splendour and power. Even before the vision has unfolded or the tour has taken place, the seer senses that he is in the presence of a higher, heavenly reality. This numinous sense can be so overwhelming that the immediate reaction of the seer is to fall on his face in worship. Thus when Zephaniah is confronted with a great angel standing before him, ‘with his face shining like the rays of the sun in its glory’, he thinks that the Lord Almighty had come to visit him and thus falls down in worship. At this the angel says: ‘Take heed. Don’t worship me. I am not the Lord Almighty, but I am the great angel, Eremiel’ (Ap Zeph 6.11-15).

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<sup>312</sup> Fossum, *Image*, notes that one early MS reads ‘man of light from heaven (ἄνθρωπος φωτός ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ)’.

<sup>313</sup> Hurtado, *One God*, 76, suggests that ‘the impressive appearance of the figure may have been intended to indicate the genuineness of the information the figure delivers’. Likewise, Stuckenbruck, *Angel Veneration*, 89-90, notes that ‘the use of angels as mediating agents may have originally functioned either to certify the divine origin of a communication or to avoid facile assertions about “seeing” God directly’.



Similarly, in his vision on Patmos, John's natural response in the presence of his angelic guide is to fall at his feet and worship him. Only the angel's protestation that he is a fellow-servant and that worship belongs to God alone keeps him from doing so (Rev 19.10; 22.8-9; cf. Asc Isa 7.21-22).<sup>314</sup> The prohibition of worshipping these glorious angelic beings indicates that their splendour is a reflected glory.<sup>315</sup> As messengers of the Most High their duty is to represent him to mortal flesh. However, in fulfilling the heavenly mandate something of the divine radiance is mediated to the human recipient by virtue of the encounter. At times, as we have seen, the seer appears to think that he is beholding God himself, when in fact it is his celestial envoy (cf. Gen 32).<sup>316</sup>

While we can see that angelic beings of the heavenly court reflect something of the divine radiance, there is evidence that God's glory (כבוד) may be itself described in quasi-personal terms. In the Hebrew Bible the כבוד יהוה represents the visible presence of God.<sup>317</sup> The Pentateuch conceives of the glory of God as residing in the pillar of cloud or fire that led the Israelites through the wilderness (Ex 13.21-22; 14.24). Thus when Moses approaches the Lord to

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<sup>314</sup> In his study of the subject, Stuckenbruck, *Angel Veneration*, 99, asserts that 'it is hard to escape the conclusion that the angel's refusal to be worshipped reflects a development in which pure devotion to God vis-à-vis some angelic beings could not be assumed'.

<sup>315</sup> Like God, who is seen as a 'devouring fire' in Ex 33, angels are of a fiery substance (2 En 29.3; 2 Bar 21.6; 59.11). cf. Hannah, *Michael and Christ*, 28.

<sup>316</sup> Stuckenbruck, *Angel Veneration*, 102, comments that 'it would seem only proper that beings thought to have special proximity to the throne of "the Most High" would themselves mirror that glory'.

<sup>317</sup> Gieschen, *Angelomorphic Christology*, 78. Newman, *Paul's Glory-Christology*, 20-24, considers the כבוד to be a technical term that refers to the 'visible and mobile presence of Yahweh'.

receive the Torah we read that the כבוד יהוה settled on Mt Sinai in the form of a cloud and ‘the appearance of the glory of the Lord was like a devouring fire’ (Ex 24.17). A more anthropomorphic description of the כבוד is given later on in Exodus when Moses makes the request: ‘Show me your Glory’ (33.18). In this passage God makes reference to his ‘face’, ‘hand’ and ‘back’ (33.20-23): ‘but he said “you cannot see my face; for man shall not see me and live...while my glory passes by I will put you in a cleft of the rock, and I will cover you with my hand until I have passed by; then I will take away my hand, and you shall see my back; but my face shall not be seen”’. Concerning this episode Fossum observes that ‘the picture emerging from this story is that of the indistinguishability between the divine Glory and the anthropomorphous Deity. The relationship between God and his Glory is here thus comparable to that between God and the Angel of Yahweh, the human-like Messenger of God’.<sup>318</sup>

The notion of the כבוד taking on human form finds classic expression in the opening chapter of Ezekiel which recounts the seer’s vision of the heavenly Merkabah. In the account he sees above the throne ‘the likeness as the appearance of a man’ (MT: דמות כמראה אדם; LXX: ὁμοίωμα ὡς εἶδος ἀνθρώπου, Ez 1.26) resplendent in luminous incandescence; such was ‘the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord’ (Ez 1.28). In ch. 3, Ezekiel sees the כבוד again, but this time apart from the throne-chariot; while in ch. 8, if

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<sup>318</sup> Fossum, ‘Glory’, 661.



one equates the fiery man who appears to the prophet with the כַּבֹּד, it may, as Rowland suggests, signify ‘the separation of the form of God from the divine throne-chariot to act as a quasi-angelic mediator’.<sup>319</sup>

Even a cursory examination of the Fourth Gospel reveals that the motif of ‘glory’ is an integral element in John’s presentation of Jesus.<sup>320</sup> The δόξα of God, referring to the revelation of his greatness, uniqueness and splendour,<sup>321</sup> for the evangelist is disclosed supremely in Jesus.<sup>322</sup> He uses the term to summarise the impression that the Word made upon the disciples: ‘...we have seen his glory (τὴν δόξαν αὐτοῦ), the glory (δόξαν) as of the Father’s only-begotten (μονογενοῦς παρὰ πατρός) full of grace and truth’ (1.14). It may well be that the Prologue presents the Only-Begotten as ‘the glory’ (כַּבֹּד) whom religious figures in Israel’s history have seen.<sup>323</sup> The glory of the Johannine Jesus is not revealed in the transfiguration, as in the Synoptics, but is manifest in his person (1.14; 12.41; 17.24), his signs (2.11; 11.40; 17.4) and, significantly, in his death (12.23, 28; 13.32; 17.1, 5). Schnackenburg observes that the parousia statements of the Synoptics which predict the coming again of Jesus in the glory of his Father (Mk 8.38) or ‘in his glory’ (Mt 25.31; Lk 9.26) are ‘transposed into the present’.<sup>324</sup>

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<sup>319</sup> *Open Heaven*, 97. However, see Hurtado, *One God*, 87-88, for criticisms of this position.

<sup>320</sup> So Cook, ‘The “Glory” Motif’, 291-297; Käsemann, *Testament*, 7. The noun δόξα is used nineteen times, while the verb δοξάζω occurs twenty-three times.

<sup>321</sup> Brückner, ‘Word Study’, 42. Cf. Kittel, ‘δόξα’, *TDNT*, II, 232-55

<sup>322</sup> Bratcher, ‘What does “Glory” mean in relation to Jesus’, 401-408.

<sup>323</sup> Gieschen, *Angelomorphic Christology*, 273.

<sup>324</sup> *St John*, II, 406.



The Father glorifies Jesus as he accomplishes the divine purpose (8.54; 11.4). Therefore Jesus is able to say ‘Glorify the Son that the Son may glorify you’ (17.1).<sup>325</sup>

Throughout Jesus’ ministry the glory from beyond is always breaking through, transforming and transcending the earthly situation. The veil of humanity is constantly punctured by bursts of numinous displays of heavenly power. It is in this light that one must approach the significance of the ‘signs’ performed by Jesus since they reveal his glory (2.11: καὶ ἐφάνερωσεν τὴν δόξαν αὐτοῦ).<sup>326</sup> The purpose behind these signs is that they may serve as evidence of Jesus’ messiahship and divinity and thereby elicit faith (20.30-31; cf. 2.23; 4.48). Although this is not achieved for the benighted majority (12.37), the intention remains unchanged and therefore the signs are recorded by the evangelist (20.31). They form a series of revelatory episodes in which the divine world may be perceived operating through Jesus. In the successive accounts of his miraculous activity, one may discern the intention of revealing a glimpse of the divine breaking in onto the human stage. Each sign acts as an index of a greater heavenly reality present behind the earthly order of things.

Thus the miracles are not the wonders of a thaumaturgist or θεῖος ἄνθρωπος, as in the Synoptic traditions, but are the expression of the heavenly world at the cusp

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<sup>325</sup> Hall, *Revealed Histories*, 221, comments: ‘The glory of God and the glory of Jesus are two sides of the same coin. As Jesus glorifies God throughout the ministry, so God glorifies Jesus throughout the ministry as it is recorded in the Book of Signs’.

<sup>326</sup> Schnackenburg, *St John*, II, 522, observes that ‘the eschatological envoy of God does not yet bring the cosmic glory, but he gives glimpses of it in his signs’

with earthly existence.<sup>327</sup> Their designation as ‘signs’ shows that John presents them as pointing beyond themselves to a higher reality. They are the ‘works’ of the Father which he accomplishes through the Son (5.17, 36; 14.10) and, as such, reveal the divine glory.<sup>328</sup> The δόξα of God is specifically referred to in the episode of Lazarus’ resurrection which forms the climax to the signs narrative. Jesus specifically states that the reason for this incident is for the glory of God (11.4: αὕτη ἡ ἀσθένεια οὐκ ἔστιν πρὸς θάνατον ἀλλ’ ὑπὲρ τῆς δόξης τοῦ θεοῦ, ἵνα δοξασθῇ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ δι’ αὐτῆς). Hence Martha’s amazement at Jesus’ request to remove the stone of the tomb is tacitly rebuked by him: οὐκ εἰπόν σοι ὅτι ἐὰν πιστεύσης ὃψῃ τὴν δόξαν τοῦ θεοῦ (11.40).

However, the clearest, although most startling, exhibition of the divine glory comes through Jesus’ death on the cross (12.23,28; 17.4-5).<sup>329</sup> The episode in which Jesus cryptically alludes to his own body as the temple of God adumbrates this idea (2.21). The temple, like its forerunner the tabernacle, was instituted as the place where God’s people could meet with him in the act of sacrificial worship. As the earthly representation of heavenly reality (cf. Ex 25.9,40; 26.30), the Temple was seen as the location of כְּבוֹד יְהוָה, God’s manifest presence on earth, the place where God would commune with his people to speak to them (Ex 29.42-43; 1 Kgs 8.11) and therefore ‘the place where heaven and earth

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<sup>327</sup> Käsemann, *Testament*, 4.

<sup>328</sup> Cf. Barrett, *Gospel according to St John*, 259.

<sup>329</sup> Barrett, *St John*, 72, states that ‘for [John] the death of Jesus is at the same time his glory.’

coincided.’<sup>330</sup> In Johannine thought it is now Jesus who is the supreme revelation of God’s glory, the one through whom the hidden δόξα of God is disclosed.<sup>331</sup> Just as it was revealed to the apocalypticist that the reason given for the destruction of the Temple is that it may be ‘renewed in glory and...be perfected into eternity’ (2 Baruch 32.4), so Jesus predicts that the destruction of his body will be the catalyst for the full revelation of the glory of God.

The paradoxical, yet momentous, truth of the Gospel is that in the face of the world’s hostility and rejection (1.10), the heavenly reality is most clearly displayed.<sup>332</sup> His exaltation on the cross is the sign *par excellence* of the Father’s character and therefore of heavenly reality (3.14-16); it is the means by which all men (πάντας) will be drawn to the Son (12.32). The manner of Jesus’ ascent into the heavenly realm is presented by John in terms of his being ‘lifted up’ on the cross. It is through his lifting up on the cross that Jesus is truly exalted (cf. 3.14; 8.28; 12.32,34, where ὑψοῦν means both ‘to lift up on the cross’ and ‘to exalt in

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<sup>330</sup> Rowland, *Open Heaven*, 118.

<sup>331</sup> Brown, *John*, 91, states that ‘Jesus as the Son of Man has become the locus of divine glory, the point of contact between heaven and earth’. Schlier, ‘Der Heilige Geist als Interpret nach dem Johannesevangelium’, 173, remarks, ‘Er, der Geist, enthüllt ja die in Jesu Wort und Tat und Weg verborgene und doch wirksame *Doxa*’. Cf. Mußner, ‘Parakletsprüche’, 63.

<sup>332</sup> Barrett, ‘Paradox and Dualism’, 105, comments that ‘it is a paradoxical glory that we see, since it consists not in God’s self-assertive might but in his faithfulness and self-giving’.



glory').<sup>333</sup> The crucifixion is the mode by which he journeys back to the Father.<sup>334</sup>

The hour of Jesus' death is therefore also the hour of his glorification (12.23: ἐλήλυθεν ἡ ὥρα ἵνα δοξασθῇ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου).<sup>335</sup> The picture described in the Similitudes of the Elect One being glorified by the Lord of Spirits and sitting on his throne (1 En 51.3) is radically redrawn in the Fourth Gospel. Here the throne of Jesus by which he is exalted and glorified is none other than the cross. For Enoch the vision of God's glory on the throne is accompanied with the promise of eternal life (2 En 22.7), but in Johannine thought eternal life comes through beholding the divine glory 'revealed not on the heavenly throne with the angelic entourage, but on the earthly throne, the cross (cf. Col. 2.15), being surrounded by hostile forces'.<sup>336</sup> This perspective effectively removes the *scandalum crucis* by presenting what happened on the cross as the glorification of God or the enthronement of Jesus in heavenly glory.<sup>337</sup>

We can see that while John presents Jesus as the embodiment of the glory of God, the manifestation of this glory is radically reinterpreted taking a

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<sup>333</sup> Cf. Cullmann, 'Der johanneische Gebrauch doppeldeutiger Ausdrücke', 360.

<sup>334</sup> Schnackenburg, *St John*, II, 399-400, asserts that 'in the context of John's Son of man Christology the lifting up is regarded as a stage, and indeed the decisive turning point, in the 'journey' of the Son of man...the 'lifting up' is the visible aspect of his 'ascent' into the heavenly world'. Cf. Borgen, 'Jewish Exegetical Traditions', 247.

<sup>335</sup> Pamment, 'Meaning of *doxa*', 13-14.

<sup>336</sup> Kanagaraj, *Mysticism*, 205. Bühner, *Der Gesandte und sein Weg*, 410, n. 17, states: 'im Kreuz vollzieht sich die Inthronisation des Menschensohnes, und im Kreuz vollendet sich das ἔργον des Gesandten'.

<sup>337</sup> Cf. Schnackenburg, *St John*, II, 408. Kanagaraj, *Mysticism*, 212, rightly observes that for John 'the cross, which is the throne of the Son of Man, becomes paradoxically the locus of divine glory'.

‘cruciform’ shape. Men may still be overwhelmed by beholding the presence of the ‘I am’ (18.6), but the amazement that has continued through history is the peculiarly Johannine insight that God’s glory resides supremely in the one ‘lifted up’ on a cross of shame. It is this revelation of the character of God that has informed the highest expression of Christian belief down the ages.

## *2. Krisis: Turning Point of the Age*

So far the discussion of the connection between the worldview espoused in apocalyptic literature and that adopted in the Fourth Gospel has concentrated on the spatial dimension of transcendent reality. However, the co-ordinates of an apocalyptic perspective are mapped on a temporal or ‘horizontal’ axis as well as a spatial or ‘vertical’ axis.<sup>338</sup> Indeed the spatial and temporal dimensions are linked, in that events which still remain in the future from a human standpoint are seen as present realities in the heavenly world (1 En 48.6-7; Asc Isa 8.25-26; Rev 21.2).<sup>339</sup> While exhibiting differences of detail in eschatological outlook, there is broad agreement among the apocalyptic documents on the fundamental idea that this world is both spatially and temporally limited by God-imposed boundaries. In the later writings the notion of a differentiation between the present, transient

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<sup>338</sup> Fossum, *The Image of the Invisible God*, 1, differentiates between ‘vertical’ apocalypticism which deals with the mysteries of the heavenly world and ‘linear’ apocalypticism which involves eschatological matters.

<sup>339</sup> Cf. Barrett, ‘New Testament Eschatology’, 138.



age<sup>340</sup> (ὁ αἰὼν οὗτος, *hoc saeculum*; 4 Ez 8.1; Pseudo-Philo 19.7; 30.2) and the coming age (ὁ αἰὼν μέλλων, *futurum saeculum*; 4 Ez 7.113) which is eternal and imperishable, is clearly crystallized.<sup>341</sup>

It is important to point out that the distinction between the two ages is not merely temporal, rather their whole character and ethos are diametrically opposed. The evil character of this age is illustrated by the response given to Wisdom in the Book of Similitudes: 'Wisdom went out to dwell with the children of the people, but she found no dwelling place'. By contrast, 'Iniquity went out of her rooms, and found whom she did not expect. And she dwelt with them' (1 En 42.2-3.). For Ezra the present age is deemed to be 'full of sadness and infirmities' (4 Ez 4.27) and he bemoans the fact that 'our years are few and evil' (4.33). 2 Baruch, written at the same period in the aftermath of the Roman sacking of Jerusalem, reveals that 'with regard to the righteous ones...*this world* is to them a struggle and an effort with much trouble' (15.8). Thus the seer laments that 'if only this life exists which everyone possesses here, nothing could be more bitter than this' (21.13). The Apocalypse of Abraham also distinguishes between 'the age of impiety' and 'the age of justice' (29.13). The present age of injustice, wickedness

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<sup>340</sup> 2 Bar 85.10: 'For the youth of this world has passed away, and the power of creation is already exhausted, and the coming of the times is very near and has passed by. And the pitcher is near the well, and the ship to the harbour, and the journey to the city, and life to its end.'

<sup>341</sup> 2 En 66.6-10; 4 Ez 4.11, 36; 6.20; 2 Bar 44.9, 12; 54.21; T Mos 1.18; 12.4. Cf. Vielhauer, 'Apocalypses', 588; Rowley, *Relevance*, 35; Schmithals, *Theology of the First Christians*, 4; Barrett, 'New Testament Eschatology', 141; Volz, *Die Eschatologie*, 66



and suffering is contrasted with a future age of equity, righteousness, peace and joy.

The reason why the present aeon is seen as characterized by evil, pain and injustice is that it is in the grip of angelic powers of darkness which are in revolt against God and are causing misery and suffering for humanity, especially the elect. Thus in the Book of Watchers, which narrates the story of Asa'el, leader of the fallen angels who descended to earth to procreate with women, we may discern the 'first, dim image of the devil'.<sup>342</sup> In this apocalypse we are presented with a picture of the earth being corrupted by fallen angels, thereby causing pain and disorder (1 En 6-9). These fallen beings are punished for their sin by being temporarily imprisoned, however, in some parts of the literature this does not prevent them from continuing to exercise an evil influence over the earth.

In the Book of Dream Visions Israel's misfortunes are directly linked to the ill-will of the seventy angelic 'shepherds' who have been given temporary control over the fate of the nation (1 En 89.74). God is seen to be somewhat removed from his creation, while responsibility for this evil world is handed over to the evil forces of darkness.<sup>343</sup> Similarly the revelation given to John on Patmos underscores the idea that evil powers are allowed to exercise dominion upon the earth for a season. The army of locusts under the leadership of 'the angel of the

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<sup>342</sup> Sacchi, *Jewish Apocalyptic*, 212.

<sup>343</sup> Bilde, 'Gnosticism, Jewish Apocalypticism, and Early Christianity', 14; Schmithals, *Die Apokalyptik*; 73-77; Ménard, 'Littérature apocalyptique juive et littérature gnostique', 301-08.

bottomless pit', Abaddon or Apollyon, are able to inflict pain and suffering. Both the dragon and its vice-regent, the beast, are permitted to 'make war' upon the saints and even conquer them (12.17; 13.7).

It is clear, therefore, that the antithetical character of the two ages or worlds is rooted in the nature of the supernatural powers in authority over each aeon. Accordingly the inauguration of the coming age will involve a seismic power shift in which there is a decisive transition of power from evil to good. The dividing point separating the present and future aeons will be a divine judicial act in which good triumphs over evil and the injustices and evils of this life are redressed as the righteous and wicked receive their respective verdicts (cf. Ap Ab 29.13-15). A great heavenly Assize will take place in which the injustices and evils of this life will be redressed as the righteous and wicked receive their just deserts.<sup>344</sup> For example, Ezra is told that 'the day of judgment will be the end of this age and the beginning of the immortal age to come (*futuri immortalitatis temporis*)' (4 Ez 7.113).

In the prophetic literature impending judgment is brought to the attention of the hearers as a warning against disobedience and an incentive for repentance that alone can avert the coming wrath (e.g. Jer 18.7-10). However in apocalyptic thought, where the future is already decreed and not contingent upon human

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<sup>344</sup> Burkitt, *Jewish and Christian Apocalypses*, 2, believes that 'the doctrine of the Apocalypses is the doctrine of the Last Judgment.' Andrews, 'Apocalyptic Literature', 432, also considers the notion of judgment as central in apocalyptic thought: 'Apocalyptic arose out of prophecy by developing and universalising the conception of the day of the Lord'.

choice, the main purpose of developing the theme of judgment is to provide reassurance to the faithful that the perpetrators of evil will be punished and that the injustices which they have endured will be redressed. A universal and public inauguration of the rule of God would entail a final judgment in which the righteous are rewarded with eternal bliss while the wicked are condemned to eternal punishment.<sup>345</sup>

Thus the corpus of I Enoch is introduced with a vivid description of the judgment-theophany that will mark the arrival of the eschatological era: ‘The blessing of Enoch: with which he blessed the elect and righteous who would be present on the day of tribulation at (the time of) the removal of all the ungodly ones [and the righteous will be saved]’ (1.1). There follows a description of ‘the day of tribulation’ (ἡμέρα ἀνάγκης), which is modelled on OT accounts of divine theophanies (cf. Mic. 1.1-3). The purpose of the theophany is to bring ‘judgment upon all’ (1.7: κρίσις κατὰ πάντων), followed by God’s blessing for the righteous when he gives them peace (εἰρήνη), mercy (ἔλεος) and light (φῶς) (1.8).

In the Epistle of Enoch the seer predicts that although sin, oppression, injustice and iniquity shall increase upon the earth, the ‘holy Lord shall emerge with wrath and plague in order that he may execute judgment upon the earth. In those days, injustice shall be cut off...oppression together with deceit; they shall be

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<sup>345</sup> Nickelsburg, *Resurrection, Immortality, and Eternal Life*, 42, contends that ‘judgment speaks to the present crises’. Cf. Andrews, *Peakes*, 432; Burkitt, *Jewish and Christian Apocalypses*, v.



destroyed from underneath heaven' (1 En 91.7-8). In this passage the message of judgment, ostensibly directed against the sinners, serves to comfort and support the disheartened, persecuted minority. The knowledge that justice will ultimately prevail enables those who are being ill-treated to maintain their integrity in the face of current inequity. The consolatory intention is apparent from the context where exhortations to 'fear not' (102.4; 103.4; 104.2,6) and to 'be hopeful' (96.1; 102.4; 104.4) intersperse the narrative.<sup>346</sup>

In 2 Enoch the seer is able to give first hand witness to the reality of the 'frightful place and various tortures' which are already 'prepared for those who do not glorify God' (2 En 10.4). He can therefore exhort his offspring to bear with equanimity 'every assault and every persecution and every evil' for the Lord's sake and to refrain from attempting to avenge themselves because the Lord himself will administer the necessary and appropriate retribution 'on the day of the great judgment' (2 En 50.3-4). Furthermore, the knowledge of future reward for the righteous inspires continued faithfulness in spite of the suffering they incur at present. Hence Enoch assures his children that if they live a generous and righteous life they will have a '*reward* on the day of judgment' (2 En 51.3).

The prospect of a final judgment satisfies the twofold need for vengeance and vindication. From the point of view of this life it might seem that the wicked escape censure and the righteous are deprived of justice, but the promise of a

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<sup>346</sup> Nickelsburg, 'Apocalyptic Message', 312, emphasises the aspect of consolation; cf. Lebram, 'Piety', 196.

coming divine tribunal in which ‘truth shall stand’ (4 Ez 7.33) and ‘the names of the righteous will become manifest, and the deeds of the ungodly will be disclosed’ (4 Ez 14.35), gives assurance that there will be a final and public triumph of justice. The character of the present age is flawed by the evils of deceit, darkness, death and division. However, the apocalyptic seer witnesses to the reality of a higher world or coming age in which all wickedness and imperfection is eradicated. The purpose of the Most High will prevail, meaning that ‘every iniquitous deed will end, and the plant of righteousness and truth will appear forever’ (1 En 10.16). No longer will the righteous be smeared with the taunts and lies of their enemies (1 En 98.14-15). Those who have been unjustly vilified for their loyal adherence to their faith in God will be vindicated as the supreme judge reveals the truth of human conduct (cf. Dan 5-6).

Traditionally the prerogative of judgment is reserved for God himself, but there is evidence within the apocalyptic literature that this task may sometimes be delegated to a viceroy. In the Psalms of Solomon the ‘hope’ of the righteous is directed toward a Messiah who will inaugurate the eternal reign of God by implementing judgment upon the heathen (17.3b: ‘And the kingdom of our God is forever over the nations *in judgment*’; ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα ἐπὶ τὰ ἔθνη ἐν κρίσει). This Messiah will administer the judgment upon Israel’s oppressors (17.21-25), that will involve ‘condemning sinners’ (17.25: ἐλέγξει ἁματωλούς). He will then ‘faithfully and righteously shepherd the Lord’s flock’, and ‘lead (καταστήσει) them in all holiness’ (17.40-41).

3 Enoch, although a somewhat late document,<sup>347</sup> bears witness to the tradition of a principal angel who is seen as the special representative of deity. The work describes how Enoch is transformed into the angel Metatron and elevated to the position of vice-regent in the heavenly realm, being dignified with the name 'the lesser Yahweh' (3 En 12.5). His unique status is confirmed by the authority bestowed upon him to exercise jurisdiction over other heavenly powers: 'I sat upon a great throne at the door of the seventh palace, and *I judged* all the denizens of the heights on the authority of the Holy One' (3 En 16.1).<sup>348</sup>

The Qumran literature also provides evidence of the role of a heavenly being which is pivotal in the establishment of the eschatological age. Thus the War Scroll refers to the advent of the coming aeon which involves the overthrow of 'the kingdom of wickedness...by the might of the princely Angel of the kingdom, Michael' (1QM 17.6-8). In the fragmentary Melchizedek document found in Cave 11 we find the writer interprets Ps 82.1-2 as a prediction of Melchizedek's eschatological activity in which he acts as the divine judge. In fact he is identified with the Elohim who presides in judgment over other angelic beings.<sup>349</sup> The fragment reads: "...it is written concerning him in the hymns of David, who says, '*The heavenly one standeth in the congregation of God; among the holy ones he judgeth*', and concerning him he says, '*Above them return thou on*

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<sup>347</sup> Rowland, *Open Heaven*, 110, argues that 3 Enoch 'merely reinforces ideas which were already present in Judaism before the Christian era'.

<sup>348</sup> Ibid, 111.

<sup>349</sup> Ibid, 109.



*high; God shall judge the nations.*’ And that which he says: ‘*How long will ye judge unjustly and accept the persons of the wicked? Selah*’: its interpretation concerns Belial and the spirits of his lot...”.<sup>350</sup> In this passage Melchizedek is depicted as an exalted angelic being who is accorded the title of ‘god’, while those designated as ‘gods’ and ‘sons of the Highest’ probably refers to fallen angels who have disgraced their office by judging unfairly.<sup>351</sup>

An important feature of apocalyptic thought that must be emphasized is the connection between the arrival of the ‘time of the Anointed One’ (2 Bar 72.2) and the decisive defeat of Satan and his minions ensuring that the reign of God is established in a clear, public and universal manner. In the words of the Testament of Moses: ‘Then his kingdom will appear (tunc parebit regnum illius) throughout his whole creation. Then the devil will have an end (tunc zabulus finem habebit). Yea, sorrow will be led away with him’ (TMos 10.1). In this apocryphon an angel or messenger (nuntius), possibly Michael, will come forth at this time and will bring vindication to the oppressed nation (T Mos 10.2).<sup>352</sup>

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<sup>350</sup> This translation is by de Jonge and van der Woude, ‘11Q Melchizedek and the New Testament’, 303.

<sup>351</sup> Emerton, ‘The Interpretation of Psalm 82 and John 10’, 332, argues that this fragment elucidates the background of the appeal made by the Johannine Jesus to Ps 82.1-2 in the dispute with the Jews over his own identity in John 10. Thus if angels, whether or not fallen, could be referred to as ‘gods’, then this title may certainly be legitimately ascribed to Jesus. In referring to these verses, Ashton, *Understanding*, 149, comments that ‘in the Fourth Gospel the whole heavenly court is encapsulated in the person of Jesus’. Cf. Hurtado, *One God*, 79.

<sup>352</sup> Hannah, *Michael and Christ*, 37, notes that Michael performs a similar function in Dan 12.1. Cf. Charles, *Assumption*, 39; Rowley, *Relevance*, 94.

The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs predict the coming of an eschatological priest (T Lev18.6), who will 'bind Beliar' (18.12) and reopen the gates of paradise by removing the sword that has prevented entrance, thereby enabling 'the saints to eat of the tree of life' (18.11). The theme of a cosmic triumph over the powers of evil is clearly stated in the Testament of Dan: 'And there shall arise for you from the tribe of Judah and (the tribe of) Levi the Lord's salvation. He will make war against Beliar; he will grant the vengeance of victory as our goal. And he shall take from Beliar the captives, the souls of the saints' (5.10-11).

In the Book of Watchers it is Raphael who is commanded to 'bind Azazel hand and foot (and) throw him into the darkness' (1 En 10.4).<sup>353</sup> Another tradition assigns the task to the archangel Michael who is authorized to 'bind' Semyaza and his companions for 'seventy generations underneath the rocks of the ground until the day of their judgment and of their consummation, until the eternal judgment is concluded' (1 En 10.12). A similar role is assigned to the Angel of the Presence in Jubilees. He and his fellow angels received authority to bind the evil spirits who were corrupting the sons of Noah so that 'all of the evil ones, who were cruel, we bound in the place of judgment' (10.11). The promised eschatological era is then pictured as one in which the righteous will 'live in peace

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<sup>353</sup> Hartman, *Asking for a Meaning*, 129, observes that the idea of judgment 'belongs to the God-as-King field of association' in which his royal power is publicly displayed for all to recognize.



and rejoicing and there will be no Satan and no evil (one) who will destroy' (23.29).

In the Fourth Gospel Jesus is presented as the divine agent who inaugurates the eschatological era through his victorious confrontation with the powers of darkness, represented by the 'ruler of this world'.<sup>354</sup> The war in heaven which is depicted in the book of Revelation resulting in the defeat and consequent throwing down of the devil and his angels (Rev 12.7-9), is enacted in the earthly arena in the Fourth Gospel, but the outcome is the same: Satan is cast out.<sup>355</sup> While John states unequivocally at the outset of his Gospel that God, through the Word, is the creator of the universe (1.3), he also makes clear that darkness has infiltrated the cosmos (1.5). Without elucidating in mythological terms the background to this state of affairs, the Gospel presupposes that in coming 'to his own', the incarnate Word enters enemy terrain, encountering opposition and rejection (1.10-11). Paradoxically the hostility finds primary expression in the attitude of 'the Jews', that is, those who traditionally have been the custodians of salvation (4.22). However, the paradox is resolved when we are informed later that, despite their religious heritage, 'the Jews' are now instruments of a supernatural malign will;

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<sup>354</sup> Werner, *Formation*, 125, contends that 'for Primitive Christianity, Christ was, in terms of late-Jewish apocalyptic, a being of the high celestial angel-world, who was created and chosen by God for the task of bringing in, at the end of the ages, against the daimonic-powers of the existing world, the new aeon of the Kingdom of God'. Although his thesis, embodied in his work *Die Entstehung des christlichen Dogmas*, that early Christology developed from Jewish angelology met with scepticism when first propounded, his views are now looked upon more favourably.

<sup>355</sup> Kovacs, 'Jesus' Death as Cosmic Battle', 233, summarises as follows: 'The story this Gospel has to tell concerns the battle between God and Satan ~ a battle acted out in the sphere of human history'.



indeed their father is ‘the devil’ (8.44). We will develop this notion in the final chapter; for now, however, it is sufficient to recognize that the cosmic backdrop to the events narrated in the Gospel implies a spiritual battle taking place in the ministry of Jesus.

The perspective of the Gospel presupposes the notion which finds succinct expression in I John, namely that ‘the whole world is in the power of the evil one’ (1 Jn 5.19b: ὁ κόσμος ἐν τῷ πονηρῷ κεῖται). In the Gospel, Satan is termed ‘the ruler of this world’ (12.31; 14.30; 16.11), a title which we will consider in detail in a later chapter but which clearly implies a certain authority over human activity. Johannine thought recognizes that the work of Jesus involves confronting and deposing a diabolic power that somehow has tried to usurp the divine authority in the world. This notion is similar to that found in the Ascension of Isaiah where the seer hears the voice of the Most High, ‘the Father of my Lord’, commissioning the Lord Christ to descend through the heavens ‘that you may *judge* and *destroy* the princes and the angels and the gods of that world’ (Asc Isa 10.12). The idea of conflict between Christ and an angel of death is found in which ‘the god of this world’ succeeds in crucifying Jesus, but ‘without knowing who he is’ (9.15). However, by his death the Lord ‘has plundered the angel of death’ and will rise together with ‘many of the righteous [who] will ascend with him’ (9.16-17).

For John, it is actually through his death that Jesus succeeds in establishing the eschatological rule of God, achieving the defeat and expulsion of the powers of

darkness.<sup>356</sup> Again, I John distils the essence of the Johannine perspective: ‘The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil’ (3.8: εἰς τοῦτο ἐφανερώθη ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ, ἵνα λύσῃ τὰ ἔργα τοῦ διαβόλου). Thus, on the eve of his crucifixion, Jesus informs his disciples, ‘now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be driven out’ (12.31: νῦν κρίσις ἐστὶν τοῦ κόσμου τούτου· νῦν ὁ ἄρχων τοῦ κόσμου τούτου ἐκβληθήσεται ἔξω).<sup>357</sup> As in apocalyptic thought the decisive transition to the coming eschatological age involves a ‘judgment’ which results in the defeat and expulsion of an evil spiritual regime. The Paraclete can be authorized to convict the world of judgment because through the work of Jesus ‘the ruler of this world *has been judged*’ (16.11: ὁ ἄρχων τοῦ κόσμου τούτου κέκριται).

In particular it is as the Son of Man that Jesus has been given authority to execute judgment (5.27), which he exercises on the Father’s behalf (5.30; 8.16). The specific wording of 5.27 is significant: καὶ ἐξουσίαν ἔδωκεν αὐτῷ κρίσιν ποιεῖν, ὅτι υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου ἐστίν. Whereas elsewhere in his Gospel John uses both definite articles in the title ‘the Son of Man’ (ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου), here the phrase is anarthrous. It is likely that in so doing the evangelist is deliberately

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<sup>356</sup> *Contra* Nicholson, *Death as Departure*, 128, who views the death of Jesus as ‘only a means to an end, a stage that takes him back to the Father’. Barrett, *St John*, 469, observes that ‘the passion itself may be regarded as a conflict between Jesus and Satan’. Kovacs, ‘Jesus Death as Cosmic Battle’, 228, argues that it is the decisive event which ‘brings about the judgment of and victory over Satan’.

<sup>357</sup> Bultmann, *John*, 431, tersely comments on this verse: ‘The turn of the ages results now’. Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St John*, vol. 1, 321, observes that ‘what is a vision of the future in the Synoptics is already present in John’.



alluding to Dan 7.13 which speaks of one ‘like a son of man’ (ὥς υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου).<sup>358</sup> Moreover, in Dan 7.14 reference is made to authority being given to this figure, specifically ἐδόθη αὐτῷ ἐξουσία.<sup>359</sup> Whether or not this figure was intended by the author only as a symbol of the Jewish people or had independent existence in the heavenly realm, his arrival before the Ancient of Days signifies the demise of the heathen empires that had exercised such oppressive jurisdiction in the present aeon and the corresponding elevation of the chosen people to a position of dominion and authority in the new world order that is established.

Although from a purely philological standpoint the original phrase, ‘son of man’, refers simply to an ordinary human being,<sup>360</sup> it is probable that by the Christian era the phrase had taken on a more specialized, technical meaning.<sup>361</sup> Certainly in the Similitudes of Enoch the Son of Man is clearly individualized, referring to an exalted heavenly being who would play a key role in the events of the eschaton. He has been concealed in the presence of the Lord of the Spirits from before the creation of the world (1 En 48.6; cf. 49.2), but he will be revealed at the appointed time in order to implement the judicial purpose of God which will inaugurate his kingdom. The judgment that is passed by him has all the authority

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<sup>358</sup> Cf. Barrett, *St John*, 262.

<sup>359</sup> Smalley, *NTS* 15, 292, comments that Jesus judges ‘as vindicated Son of Man’.

<sup>360</sup> Cf. Ps. 8.4; 80.18; Es 2.1; Dan 8.17; Collins, *Apocalyptic Vision*, 124; Goldingay, *Daniel*, 145.

<sup>361</sup> Mowinckel, *He that Cometh*, 373, comments: ‘the paradox of ‘the Man’ is that, in spite of his name, he is not only a pre-existent, heavenly being, but also a divine being’.



of God, since it is God's throne upon which he sits (1 En 51.3: 'In those days, (the Elect One) shall sit on my throne').

The judgment itself is construed in forensic terms including accusation, conviction and condemnation (cf. 1 En 49.4; 61.8; 62.2-4), although occasionally it is seen as the means of acquitting the righteous (1 En 45.3; cf. 4 Ez 13.13). It is also universal and cosmic, affecting heaven as well as earth, angelic beings and humanity alike: 'He placed the Elect One on the throne of glory; and he shall judge all the works of the holy ones in heaven above, weighing in the balance their deeds' (1 En 61.8). As a result iniquity will pass away 'for that Son of Man has appeared and has seated himself upon the throne of his glory; and all evil shall disappear from before his face' (1 En 69.29). In this passage it is clear that the Son of Man is central to the unfolding of God's eschatological purpose; indeed, he performs the eschatological functions usually reserved for God alone.<sup>362</sup>

Now in Jn 5.22 we read that 'the Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son' (οὐδὲ γὰρ ὁ πατήρ κρίνει οὐδένα, ἀλλὰ τὴν κρίσιν πᾶσαν δέδωκεν τῷ υἱῷ). Here Jesus claims that he is invested with the authority to exercise the judicial activity (κρίνειν) which is recognized as being the prerogative of deity. However, the uniqueness of the Johannine presentation consists in the notion that the judgment is inaugurated in Jesus' death. The triumph over 'the ruler of this world' is achieved as Jesus is 'lifted up' (ὑψωθῶ) from the earth (12.32); the cross, signifying apparent defeat, is actually the

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<sup>362</sup> Hurtado, *One God*, 53.

moment of victory. Therefore Jesus affirms that, as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, ‘so must (δεῖ) the Son of Man be lifted up’ (3.14). Ironically, this victory is accomplished through the agency of those described as the devil’s instruments, ‘the Jews’. Thus Jesus says to them: ‘When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am he’ (8.28: ὅταν ὑψώσητε τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, τότε γνώσεσθε ὅτι ἐγώ εἰμι). Thus, the act of crucifying Jesus actually becomes the means of his enthronement as the Son of Man (ὑψώσητε τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου), invested with the authority to exercise judgment on behalf of God himself (ἐγώ εἰμι). This is the moment, from the Johannine perspective, when ‘that Son of Man has appeared and has seated himself upon the throne of his glory; and all evil shall disappear from before his face’ (1 En 69.29).

This aspect of the work of the Johannine Jesus may seem to contradict those passages which deny that he came to judge the world (cf. 3.17; 8.15; 12.42). Harmonizing such apparently contradictory statements can, however, be achieved by recognizing that the primary intention of God’s revelation in Jesus is to bring eschatological salvation. Yet this brings with it a call to decision; there must be a response, either of faith or unbelief.<sup>363</sup> The coming of Jesus involves a κρίμα leading to a division among the people; his presence serves as a catalyst which brings about a separation between believers and unbelievers. Thus, for John, both

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<sup>363</sup> Schnackenburg, *St John*, I, 391, comments that ‘all decision is transposed into the present...The hour of decision which has been brought about for all men by the coming of the eschatological Saviour, becomes for the unbeliever the hour of condemnation, which the future judgment will only make manifest (5.29)’.

κρίσις and κρίμα have the double sense of ‘judgment’ and ‘sunderance’.<sup>364</sup> So, for example, the drama in ch. 9 of the healing of the man born blind closes with the battle lines clearly drawn between those who accept and those who reject the claims of Jesus, particularly in his office as Son of Man (9.35). The division is made explicit at the close of the episode when Jesus concludes; ‘For judgment (κρίμα) I came into this world, that those who do not see may see, and that those who see may become blind’ (9.39).

The presence of Jesus on earth accomplishes the division between the righteous and unrighteous that is assigned to a future judgment in apocalypticism. Thus, for example in the Testament of Abraham we are given an elaborate description of a post-mortem judgment of souls that determines their eternal state. The patriarch undertakes a celestial tour, under the auspices of the archangel Michael, during which he is brought ‘toward the east, to the first gate of heaven’ where he observes ‘the *judgments* and the *recompenses*’ (τὰς κρίσεις καὶ ἀνταποδόσεις) so that he may have mercy for sinners (11.1; 10.15). Here he views two ways leading to two gates, the narrow and the broad. Into the latter portal the angels are driving many souls to their destruction (ἀπώλεια). Michael and Abraham follow these souls through the gate but, unexpectedly, do not find the place of eternal punishment (κόλασις αἰώνιος), but rather the place of judgment.<sup>365</sup> At this point they witness a judgment scene in which he sees a

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<sup>364</sup> Bultmann, *Theology*, II, 38.

<sup>365</sup> Nickelsburg, ‘Eschatology’, 41, notes the obvious literary seam at this point.



terrifying throne of crystal, flashing like fire. Now whereas the occupant of the throne of crystal in 1 En 14.18 is ‘the Great Glory’, here we read that it is ‘the wondrous *man* who sat on the throne was the one who judged and sentenced souls (ἐκρίνευ καὶ ἀπεφώνηνατο τὰς ψυχάς)’ (T Ab 12.11). The figure on the throne turns out to be righteous Abel and ‘he sits here to judge the entire creation, examining (ἐλέγχειν) both righteous and sinners. For God said, “I do not judge you, but every man is judged by man”’ (13.3).

The judgment ‘by man’ assigned to the future in the preceding passage is one that takes place in the present in the Fourth Gospel. Those who encounter Jesus are not only faced with a decision whether to believe or not, but have immediate judgment passed on them in the light of their choice. A positive response means passing beyond judgment into life: ‘He who hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life; he does not come into judgment (κρίσιν), but has passed from death to life (5.24). Salvation or ‘eternal life’ becomes an immediate reality through Jesus, because ‘in him’ (3.15) is the source of life (6.57; 14.19).<sup>366</sup> However, conversely, refusal to believe invokes immediate condemnation: ‘he who does not believe is condemned already’ (3.18: ὁ μὴ πιστεύων ἤδη κέκριται; cf. 8.24). The word of Jesus, which is intended to bring salvation, becomes the judgment on unbelief (12.48: ‘the word I have

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<sup>366</sup> Schnackenburg, *St John*, I, 390, comments that ‘salvation is present in Christ to the believer, the divine life is immediately accessible in him’.

spoken will be his judge').<sup>367</sup> It is like the sword issuing from the rider's mouth (Rev 19.15) which divides and brings a separation. Thus we read toward the close of Jesus' public ministry: 'There was again a division (σχίσμα) among the Jews because of these words (διὰ τοὺς λόγους τούτους)' (Jn 10.19; cf. 7.43; 9.16).

Through the person and work of Jesus, then, the eschatological future is realized in the 'now' of his abiding presence.<sup>368</sup> The words ἔρχεται ὥρα καὶ νῦν ἐστὶν point to the arrival of the eschatological age in which the physical Temple gives place to the immediate presence of God.<sup>369</sup> Thus, the events that John of the apocalypse assigns to the future: 'And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb' (Rev 21.22), become a present reality in the Fourth Gospel. Here Jesus is also presented as the temple (2.21) in which the glory of God dwells (2.11; 14.10), but he lives with his disciples in the present time, with the result that the realities which apocalyptic thought ascribed to the coming age, like judgment (5.25), resurrection (11.25) and pure spiritual worship, are already taking effect in him (4.23).

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<sup>367</sup> Schnackenburg, *St John*, II, 427.

<sup>368</sup> This does not mean, *pace* Bultmann, *The Gospel of John*, 219, that the consistent or futuristic eschatology found in 6.39, 40, 44 and 54 to be attributed to an ecclesiastical redactor,

<sup>369</sup> Barrett, *St John*, 237, notes that the phrase ἔρχεται ὥρα καὶ νῦν ἐστὶν enables the evangelist to 'emphasize by means of his oxymoron that in the ministry, and above all in the person, of Jesus they [judgment, resurrection and true worship] were proleptically present'.



Unlike traditional apocalyptic eschatology in which the age to come is established only once the present age is dissolved, Johannine thought juxtaposes both present and future reality at one and the same time. Although elements of traditional eschatological thought are still present within John (e.g. ‘the last day’: 6.38, 40, 54; 12.48; bodily resurrection: 5.28), the concentration of his theology is on the *Christus praesens*.<sup>370</sup> With the coming of Christ the future age becomes a present reality. Rather than two separate and succeeding aeons, there is a ‘contemporaneity of this world and the world to come with respect to Jesus Christ and to the Christian community.’<sup>371</sup> This means that there is a ‘dialectical interdependence’ between realized and futuristic eschatology since Christians have on the one hand entered into eschatological salvation, but on the other hand await its final consummation.<sup>372</sup> Using the analogy of Venn diagrams, the present age and the age to come may each be represented by a circle. The coming of Jesus causes the intersection of the two circles, meaning that believers live in the area of overlap. While in early Christianity eschatology largely determines Christology,

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<sup>370</sup> Schnackenburg, *St John*, I, 160, observes that ‘in John, Christ is really the “eschatological present”’. He operates in God’s ‘eternal present’ (vol 2, 223).

<sup>371</sup> Fiorenza, ‘The Phenomenon of Early Christian Apocalyptic’, 312. Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism*, 253, notes that even in Jewish apocalyptic thought ‘salvation in the present and the expectation of salvation in the future do not form exclusive opposites’

<sup>372</sup> Stählin, ‘Zum Problem’, 258 as translated by A. Corell, *Consummation Est*, 81, observes that ‘alongside and interwoven are the ‘already now’ and the ‘not yet’. The life in the ‘now’ and the life ‘looked forward to’ in the future belong together.’ Cf. Perrin, ‘The Literary *Gattung* Gospel’, 7: ‘in his [John’s] narratives the past of Jesus’ ministry, the present of the reader and the future of the Eschaton tend to be swallowed up as he dramatizes a kind of eternal, divine present’.



this relation is reversed in the Fourth Gospel.<sup>373</sup> Ricca has coined the phrase ‘personalisierte Eschatologie’ to describe the Christocentric nature of John’s eschatological teaching. He writes: ‘Die joh. Eschatologie ist ganz in der Person Christi, des präexistenten, inkarnierten, gekreuzigten, auferstandenen und in Himmel wie auf Erden durch sein *alter ego*, den Geist, lebenden, zentriert und zusammengefaßt’.<sup>374</sup>

The preceding discussion indicates that the apocalyptic judgment, forming the turning point of the ages, in the Fourth Gospel is realized in the person of Jesus. The eschatological denouement occurs in the crucifixion of Jesus, accomplishing the casting out of the ‘ruler of this world’ and the introduction of a cosmic *krisis* which brings division now between those who accept and those who reject the Son of Man.

### 3. Esoteric disclosure

We have seen that the Fourth Gospel affirms the transcendence and inaccessibility of God apart from through the Son (1.18; 6.46).<sup>375</sup> Jesus is the only way in which the Father may be known for ‘no one comes to the Father, but by me’ (14.6: οὐδεὶς ἔρχεται πρὸς τὸν πατέρα εἰ μὴ δι’ ἐμοῦ). However, it is equally true

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<sup>373</sup> Käsemann, *Testament of Jesus*, 16: ‘Christology determines eschatology and eschatology becomes an aspect of Christology.’ Cf. Blank, *Krisis*, 38, 124.

<sup>374</sup> Ricca, *Die Eschatologie*, 128.

<sup>375</sup> A fundamental tenet of Judaism was that no one could see God with his physical eyes while still on earth (cf. Ex 33.20; 19.21; Isa 6.5). It was held that the immediate vision of God was reserved for the age to come (cf. F. Nothger, *Das Angesicht Gottes*, 170).

that no one can come to Jesus unless the Father draws him (6.44: οὐδεὶς δύναται ἐλθεῖν πρὸς με ἢ ἂν μὴ ὁ πατήρ ὁ πέμψας με ἐλκύσῃ αὐτόν). Although Jesus descends into the human sphere as the revealer of the Father who inaugurates the eschaton as the Son of Man, he remains unrecognised by the majority.

This paradox runs like a thread through the Gospel; Jesus, the revealer, is himself unrecognised by the world; although ‘in the world’, the world ‘knew him not’ (1.10: ὁ κόσμος αὐτὸν οὐκ ἔγνω) and his words are incomprehensible to outsiders (8.27, 43; 10.6).<sup>376</sup> In other words God’s revelation cannot be grasped by ordinary human perception, rather it must be supernaturally mediated.<sup>377</sup> This is exactly the case with respect to an apocalyptic disclosure. Indeed, intrinsic to the nature of an apocalypse is that it deals with matters beyond the purview of natural human thought. Daniélou rightly observes that ‘the very word apocalyptic denotes the unveiling by which, for the seer, the veil that covers the supernal or infernal realities is drawn aside, and he is enabled to contemplate the secrets of the cosmos and of history’.<sup>378</sup> Thus, for example, the vision that Isaiah saw ‘was not from this world, but from *the world which is hidden from the flesh*’ (Asc Isa 6.16, italics mine).

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<sup>376</sup> Haenchen, *Gospel of John*, 96, comments on the fact that ‘the earthly life of Jesus...is not yet the time when his true being is recognized’.

<sup>377</sup> Schnackenburg, *St John*, I, 511, observes that ‘the self-revelation of Jesus - or God’s revelation of himself in Jesus - is far more than any human knowledge, no matter how striking’.

<sup>378</sup> Daniélou, *Theology of Jewish Christianity*, 173.

Fundamental to the apocalyptic perspective is the notion that ordinary methods of human enquiry are inadequate for perceiving ultimate truth. Empirical investigation proves inadequate for obtaining insight into the fundamental questions facing those who perceive the fragile and uncertain nature of their existence.<sup>379</sup> Without supernatural aid humanity is unable to fathom the mysteries of God's ways.<sup>380</sup> Thus Baruch asks: 'O Lord, my Lord, who can understand your judgment? Or who can explore the depth of your way? Or who can discern the majesty of your path? Or who can discern your incomprehensible counsel? Or who of those who are born has ever discovered the beginning and the end of your wisdom?' (2 Bar 14.8-9). Enoch also questions, 'what kind of a person is he that can (fully) understand the activities of heaven?' (1 En 93.12). The possibility of such knowledge is not altogether ruled out, 'but only of its availability to ordinary men under ordinary circumstances'.<sup>381</sup>

Likewise, in the Fourth Gospel, as Kanagaraj observes, the testimony of the believing community ἐθεασάμεθα τὴν δόξαν αὐτοῦ (1.14), 'presupposes a sense of hiddenness, which was divulged to John and his associates'.<sup>382</sup> Even John the

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<sup>379</sup> This feature marks a distinction from the older wisdom approach which relied upon observation and reflection in understanding the world. Cf. Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism*, 206: 'Apocalyptic wisdom was marked off from other forms of wisdom by the fact that it rested on special revelations of God and therefore was granted only to a few elect.'

<sup>380</sup> Gruenwald, *Apocalyptic and Merkavah Mysticism*, 15, observes that 'knowledge does not come as a direct result of the inquisitive curiosity and efforts of man, but as a special supernatural revelation.' Cf. Rowland, 'Apocalyptic, God and the world', 239; idem, 'Apocalyptic and the New Testament', 47.

<sup>381</sup> Stone, 'Revealed Things', 425.

<sup>382</sup> Kanagaraj, *Mysticism*, 222.



Baptist is dependent on divine illumination if he is to recognize the supreme revelation of God, to which indeed he is called to bear witness.<sup>383</sup> He readily admits to not perceiving the identity of the Son, stating on two occasions: ‘I myself did not know him’ (1.31,33: καὶ γὰρ οὐκ ᾔδειν αὐτόν), until he sees the Spirit descend from heaven in the form of a dove and alight upon him.

In apocalyptic literature the hidden character of heavenly truth is emphasized by the esoteric nature of the revelation.<sup>384</sup> The element of mystery is fostered by ‘the tissue of symbols’ employed in the literature which allows ‘the author’s thought to be rendered in code-language.’<sup>385</sup> Hence Koch observes that the esoteric aspect of the writings is heightened by language which ‘takes on a concealed meaning by means of *mythical images rich in symbolism*.’<sup>386</sup> For example, although the seven letters to the churches in Asia Minor contained within Revelation imply that the book was intended for public dissemination, the cryptic symbolism and esoteric formulae evidently function to conceal its meaning from those who are uninitiated.<sup>387</sup>

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<sup>383</sup> Berger, *Die Aufstehung*, 573, notes that ‘als vom Himmel gesandter ist Jesus verborgen ~ auch für Johannes den Täufer’.

<sup>384</sup> Rowley, *Relevance*, 14; Russell, *Method and Message*, 107; Volz, *Eschatologie*, 5; Rowland, *Open Heaven*, 21-2. Adler, *Jewish Apocalyptic Heritage*, 12, suggests that the Christian communities which transmitted this literature ‘identified the concept of secret wisdom as a defining feature of the Jewish apocalypses.’

<sup>385</sup> Grelot, ‘Apocalyptic’, 50.

<sup>386</sup> Koch, *Rediscovery*, 26. Russell, *Method and Message*, 122, remarks on the flamboyant use of imagery, much of which has mythical roots, in an attempt to create scenes depicting heavenly realities. Cf. Bloch, *Apocalyptic in Judaism*, 4.

<sup>387</sup> Adler, *Jewish Apocalyptic Heritage*, 16. Aune, ‘Apocalypse of John’, 87, refers to the ‘literary devices, structures and imagery’ of an apocalypse which function to *conceal* the message which the text reveals

We find the principle of esotericism is also applied in the Fourth Gospel. So, for example, Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews, is told that he is incapable of understanding even the rudiments of the new faith (3.10), unless he is born from above (3.3,7, ἄνωθεν), that is ‘of the Spirit’ (3.5, 8, ἐκ τοῦ πνεύματος).<sup>388</sup> His mind operates on the lower plane of human reasoning and fails to apprehend the spiritual import of Jesus’ message. Grese observes that ‘the heavenly journey set before Nicodemus is not a trip through the heavens to God, but through the enigmas and riddles that surround the heavenly revelation made available in Jesus’.<sup>389</sup> Jesus can only be accepted by those who are incorporated into the higher realm through faith (8.47); to others he remains opaque.<sup>390</sup>

The inability of Nicodemus to comprehend the message of Jesus represents the failure of the Jewish religious establishment to understand Jesus. Indeed throughout the Gospel the religious rulers and authorities are presented as groping in the dark in their attempt to fathom the mystery of Jesus.<sup>391</sup> The Son confronts them as an enigma, giving rise to repeated questioning and misunderstanding concerning his origin, location and identity. The baffled religious leaders are

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<sup>388</sup> Meeks, ‘Man from Heaven’, 57, refers to the dialogue of Jesus with Nicodemus as a ‘parody of a revelation discourse. What is revealed is that Jesus is incomprehensible’. Neyrey, ‘John III - A Debate over Johannine Epistemology and Christology’, 118-121, sees Nicodemus as representative of those who do not truly understand because they are flesh and not born ἄνωθεν.

<sup>389</sup> Grese, ‘Heavenly Journey’, 689.

<sup>390</sup> Carson, *John*, 130, draws attention to the hiddenness of divine glory in the incarnate Logos, since it is apparent only to those who believe; cf. Thompson, *The Humanity of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel*, 118-19.

<sup>391</sup> One of the characteristic stylistic traits of the Fourth Evangelist is the frequent use of the motif of misunderstanding in which the ignorance of an interlocutor provides the opportunity for the ensuing discourse. Cf. Aune, *Cultic Setting*, 70.



depicted as searching for an answer as to whence (πόθεν), where (ποῦ), and who (τίς) he is? We shall now consider these questions in more detail.

The question of whence (πόθεν) Jesus or his gifts come is raised continuously throughout the Gospel (cf. 2.9; 4.11; 7.27; 8.14; 9.29; 19.9), indicating that a 'deeper meaning' is attached to the question.<sup>392</sup> The evangelist makes ironic play of the issue of Jesus' origin, presenting it as a conundrum which defeats the understanding of 'the Jews' (7.27-29, 41, 52; 8.14, 23; 9.29; 19.9). While there is some evidence that the Messiah's origin was conceived in terms of Davidic descent and birth at Bethlehem (7.42), elsewhere there seems to be an awareness of the type of speculations concerning the hiddenness of the Messiah alluded to in apocalyptic works (cf. I En 48.6-7; 62.7; 4 Ez 7.28; 12.32; 13.26,32,52; 2 Bar 29.3; 39.7). In fact some of the people argue that Jesus could not be the Christ since they know where he is from, thus conflicting with the tradition that the Christ is of unknown origin (7.27: ὁ δὲ χριστὸς ὅταν ἔρχηται, οὐδεὶς γινώσκει πόθεν ἐστίν).

In apocalyptic thought the heavenly figures who will take a major role in the drama that will unfold at the dawn of the eschatological age are also hidden from view until the appointed time. Thus it is recorded of the Son of Man that he 'was *concealed* from the beginning' in the presence of the Most High, before he was then revealed publicly (1 En 62.7; cf. 48.6: 'For this purpose he became the Chosen One; he was *concealed* in the presence of (the Lord of the Spirits) prior to

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<sup>392</sup> Schnackenburg, *St John*, I, 333.



the creation of the world, and for eternity'). In like manner the angel accompanying Isaiah through his tour of the heavens informs him that when the Lord Christ descends into the world in the last days 'his descent...will be *concealed* from the heavens so that it will not be known who he is' (Asc Isa 9.15). In spite of the miraculous circumstances attending the birth of the heavenly infant 'they were all blinded concerning him; they all knew about him, but they did not know from where he was...*it was hidden* from all the heavens and all the princes and every god of this world' (11.14-16). So also in 4 Ezra the reason that the seer witnesses the son of the Most High as a man coming up from the heart of the sea is that 'just as no one can explore or know what is in the depths of the sea, so no one on earth can see my Son or those who are with him, except in the time of his day' (13.52).

The Fourth Gospel treats the subject of Jesus' origin dialectically. In a superficial, worldly sense people know where he is from, and yet, in reality, they do not know (8.14).<sup>393</sup> Although he is apparently from Galilee (1.45; 7.41, 52) and has human parents (6.42), in reality he is of a higher origin. Therefore Jesus informs the Pharisees that they do not really know where he has come from (8.14: πόθεν ἔρχομαι); they judge according to the flesh (8.15: κατὰ τὴν σάρκα), that is by worldly standards, devoid of spiritual insight. Later on, at the close of the interrogation of the man healed from blindness, the authorities admit that they don't know where he is from (9.29: τοῦτον δὲ οὐκ οἶδαμεν πόθεν ἐστίν). This

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<sup>393</sup> Schnackenburg, *St John*, I, 428.

confession of ignorance over Jesus' origin strikes the healed man as incomprehensible, since to him it is quite obvious that unless he were from God (παρὰ θεοῦ), the miracle just performed could not have happened (9.33). But the Pharisees have compounded their own spiritual blindness (cf. 9.39) by prejudging the issue on the basis of their law, concluding that Jesus could not be from God (9.16, παρὰ θεοῦ) because he does not keep the Sabbath.

The motif of Jesus' origin is used by John as the criterion by which it may be judged whether someone has spiritual illumination or is still in darkness. The true answer to the question of the provenance of Jesus is that he is from above (8.23: ἐγὼ ἐκ τῶν ἄνω εἰμί) and is therefore above all (3.31: ὁ ἄνωθεν ἐρχόμενος ἐπάνω πάντων ἐστίν). However, this answer forms an insuperable stumbling block to the unbelieving Jews (6.60);<sup>394</sup> yet only the one who accepts it is able to grasp the true, authentic revelation from God.<sup>395</sup> At the climax of their concourse with Jesus the disciples express their conviction that he has come from God (16.30, ἀπὸ θεοῦ ἐξηλθες; cf. 17.8). In contrast, Pilate represents the failure of human judgment in comprehending the true significance of Jesus. By this time in the narrative the opportunity to respond to the revelation is passed and Jesus makes no reply to the question of his origin (19.9, πόθεν εἶ σύ;)

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<sup>394</sup> Dunn, 'Let John be John', 321, speaks of 'its offensiveness to Jewish ears'; the question of Jesus' origin being 'one of the main contentious points'.

<sup>395</sup> Meeks, 'Man from Heaven', 58, comments that the ascent/descent motif is always applied to Jesus 'in a context where the primary point of the story is the inability of the men of "this world", preeminently "the Jews", to understand and accept Jesus.'

The mystery of where Jesus is from is reinforced by the theme of his hidden whereabouts, illustrated by a number of instances in which his presence is deliberately withdrawn from the public gaze. Like the apocalyptic seer, Jesus operates on a plane that is beyond the reach of ordinary human experience. At times he withdraws by himself (John 6.15), and yet becomes miraculously present to the believing few (6.20). It is interesting to note that once Enoch is accorded the signal privilege of access into the eternal mysteries concealed from other mortals, he is himself hidden from them so that 'no one of the children of the people knew by what he was hidden and where he was' (1 En 12.1). In 2 Enoch the seer warns his children that since he is to ascend to heaven in order to receive divine revelation, 'no one must search for me until the Lord returns me to you' (2.4). Similarly the Johannine Jesus tells the Jews 'you will seek me and you will not find me; where I am you cannot come' (Jn 7.34).

While the genuine believer finds Jesus (1.39; 6.37), those who suspend belief find him elusive.<sup>396</sup> Thus, after healing the paralysed man at the pool of Bethesda Jesus recedes into the background, withdrawing his presence (5.13b: ὁ γὰρ Ἰησοῦς ἐξένευσεν). Again he foils the attempt of the crowds to make him king after he has performed an outstanding miracle, departing by himself to pray (6.15, ἀνεχώρησεν). Hence the Jews are depicted as searching for him (7.11, ποῦ ἐστὶν ἐκεῖνος;) only to be finally told that the search will be fruitless. To

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<sup>396</sup> Stibbe, 'The Elusive Christ', 232, boldly asserts: 'The fourth evangelist's characterisation of Jesus focuses primarily on his mysterious elusiveness'.



their chagrin they are not permitted to experience the living presence of the Son (7.34, ὅπου εἰμὶ ἐγὼ ὑμεῖς οὐ δύνασθε ἐλθεῖν). At a later point Jesus initiates a dialogue with the Jews with the stark announcement that his departure will remove any possibility of ongoing contact with them (8.21, ὅπου ἐγὼ ὑπάγω ὑμεῖς οὐ δύνασθε ἐλθεῖν; notice the same phraseology as 7.34, with the substitution of ὑπάγω for εἰμὶ). The reason given for this is the radical divide that separates those who are from below from the one who is from above (8.23), although the bald assertion that the Jews would die in their sin is softened by an exemption clause respecting those who will exercise faith (8.24). The same question concerning the location of Jesus is once again raised in the account of the healing the man born blind (9.12, ποῦ ἐστὶν ἐκεῖνος;), once more showing that the Jews are themselves alienated from him.

It is in this light that one should interpret the references to Jesus hiding himself (8.59; 12.36) together with the repeated refrain that, in spite of several attempts to arrest him, no one laid hands on him (7.30: οὐδεὶς ἐπέβαλεν ἐπ' αὐτὸν τὴν χεῖρα; cf 7.44; 10.39). A superficial reading might suggest that Jesus is simply taking evasive action in order to foil the plan of the Jewish authorities to remove him, thereby securing his freedom until the arrival of 'his hour'. However, it is possible to find a deeper meaning in these verses. Although Jesus is eternally present for his followers, to the unbelieving world his revelation is veiled.

Similarly the heavenly dimension opened up to the apocalyptic seer remains hidden to others. Thus Daniel reports: 'I alone saw the vision; the people who were with me did not see the vision' (Dan 10.7). The companions of Daniel do not see what he sees; although palpably affected by the heavenly disclosure in that 'a great trembling fell upon them', they are not privy to the vision. A New Testament example of the same phenomenon is found in Luke's account of the revelation of the risen Jesus which Paul received on his journey to Damascus where he recounts that 'those who were with me saw the light but did not hear the voice of the one who was speaking to me' (Acts 22.9).

In the Fourth Gospel it seems that knowledge of where Jesus abides is reserved for those who are prepared to believe, while those who obstinately refuse to commit themselves remain alienated from the revelation of God. Hence the repeated injunction to respond while the light is present (12.35,36, ὥς τὸ φῶς ἔχετε), the implication being that a decision for or against the revelation cannot be postponed. Once the authorities have formally ratified the rejection of Jesus, it is recorded that he no longer went about openly (παρρησίᾳ) among the Jews, withdrawing into the enclosed fellowship of his disciples (11.54). The Jews are left looking for Jesus, but in vain (11.56). Immediately after the close of his final public discourse in ch.12, Jesus is represented as withdrawing and hiding himself (12.36b, καὶ ἀπελθὼν ἐκρύβη ἀπ' αὐτῶν: lit, 'was hidden'). This is followed by a summary of the unbelief of the people in spite of the signs performed by Jesus. The import of this section may be understood as showing that once the opportunity

to respond to Jesus has been spurned, he is hidden from further view.<sup>397</sup> The revelation is withdrawn; the opportunity missed (12.39-40).

The shocking corollary of the decision to reject Jesus is that the Jews thereby exclude themselves from the genuine, authentic revelation of God. They are left in ignorance of the Father (8.19a, ποῦ ἐστὶν ὁ πατήρ σου;) because only through Jesus can the true knowledge of God be gained (8.19b, εἰ ἐμὲ ᾗδειτε, καὶ τὸν πατέρα μου ᾗδειτε). Searching the scriptures in an attempt to derive life apart from Jesus is futile, because their overriding purpose is to bear witness to him (5.39). The same is true concerning the vain appeal to revered figures in the Jewish religion (9.28-29).

For those outside the circle of the apocalyptic seer's disciples, the heavenly disclosure is often treated as hidden knowledge to be handed down in secret until the appointed time.<sup>398</sup> Thus, Daniel is told to shut up the vision (8.26; דָּנִיֵּל), since it is to be sealed until the time of the end (Dan 12.4; דָּנִיֵּל; LXX: καλύπτω). Likewise, Ezra is told to write his visions in a book and put it in a secret place (4 Ez 12.37). In 1 Enoch the seer announces that his revelation is for a future generation (1.2), while in 2 Enoch the writings are committed to the care of Michael until the last age (33.10f.). The content of the seer's knowledge is

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<sup>397</sup> Schnackenburg, *John*, II, 1, comments that after 12.36, giving a final exhortation to believe, 'Jesus goes away from them and hides from them, but no longer to escape from them (cf. 8.59; 10.39; 11.8, 54), but because from now on his discourse of revelation to the world falls silent and his signs cease (cf. 12.37)'.

<sup>398</sup> Dunn, 'Apocalyptic Christianity', 311.



designated a 'mystery' (1 En 103.2; 104.10,12), a divine eschatological secret<sup>399</sup> ascertained from the 'tablets of heaven' (1 En 81.1;103.2; 106.19; 108.7) and is therefore only open to view by those who inhabit this sphere, either permanently, in the case of heavenly beings, or temporarily, as in the case of the apocalyptic visionary.

The paradox of the Johannine Jesus is that although he forms the supreme revelation of God, this revelation is presented as a mystery. We have seen that the origin (πόθεν) and location (ποῦ) of Jesus constitute a mystery to outsiders, but so does his true identity (τίς). From their own earthbound vantage point 'the Jews' think they know Jesus (6.42). However, as they continue to observe his works and listen to his words, the inadequacy of their perception becomes apparent. Finally they are forced to ask outright who Jesus is (8.25, σὺ τίς εἶ;).

The theme of incomprehension in the face of a heavenly encounter is quite common in apocalyptic literature. So, for example, in T Ab (Rec B) 2.2 we read: 'Then when Abraham saw the archangel Michael, he arose from the ground and welcomed him, *not knowing who he was* (μὴ εἰδώς τίς ἐστίν)...'. Similarly, in 2 Enoch when Michael is commanded to 'go down onto the earth' to Nir the priest (72.1), he appears to him yet 'Nir did not realize who was speaking to him' (72.4). In Tobit the angel Raphael manifests himself in human form to Tobias yet is

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<sup>399</sup> Cf. Brown, 'The Semitic Background of the New Testament *Mysterion*', *Biblica* 39, 426-48; *Biblica* 40, 70-87, for discussion of ἱε / μυστήριον as an item of divine eschatological information now known and revealed.

undetected by others (5.4: καὶ οὐκ ᾔδει καὶ οὐκ ἔγνω ὅτι ἄγγελος τοῦ θεοῦ ἐστίν), until the point of revelation when he departs from them (12.15).

In the Fourth Gospel, appreciation of the revelation is dependent upon faith. The man healed of blindness asks who the Son of Man is (9.36: τίς ἐστίν), in order that he may believe (ἵνα πιστεύσω εἰς αὐτόν;). By contrast the unbelieving crowd receive no reply to the same question: ‘Who is this Son of Man?’ (12.34: τίς ἐστίν οὗτος ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου;). The Jews represent the old order which tries to comprehend the significance of Jesus using its traditional religious categories; Jesus is a ‘teacher’ from God (3.2), or possibly a ‘prophet’ (7.40). These titles may be accorded him without threatening their control over the developing Jewish orthodoxy. Jesus could perhaps be incorporated into the existing religious framework, subsumed within the ancestral tradition. But the claim to unique Sonship of the Deity presents an intolerable challenge to the basis of authority underpinning the Jewish faith.<sup>400</sup>

When Jesus rhetorically asks them ‘why do you not understand what I say?’, he himself supplies the answer, ‘it is because you cannot accept my word’ (8.43). The reason they ‘cannot’ is because they are ‘from below’ and are ‘of this world’ (8.23), locked into a mundane level of understanding, enslaved by sin (8.34), alienated from the Father (8.19), and consequently the truth he sent (8.32; 14.6). Hence the accuracy of the unwitting prophecy of Caiaphas in predicting

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<sup>400</sup> Käsemann, *Testament*, 22, referring to the incomprehension of the Jews in respect to ‘the stranger from the world above’, states that it is because ‘the world below continuously seeks to capture him in the net of its own categories and experiences’.

Jesus' death may be extended to include his verdict upon the understanding of the Pharisees and chief priests: 'You know nothing at all' (11.49). Ironically it is out of the mouth of their own chief representative that the verdict of spiritual ignorance is passed on them. Thus the public ministry of Jesus is closed with the quotations from Isaiah referring to the unbelief, blindness and hardened understanding of these hearers. The world remains in darkness then because it rejects God's revelation in Jesus and therefore cannot receive the spirit of truth since 'it neither sees him nor knows him' (14.17). It is therefore clear that the crowning revelation of God in Jesus is hidden from those who will not believe.

In the light of the preceding discussion we contend that the idea of an apocalyptic disclosure remaining hidden from those on the outside is incorporated into the symbolic universe of the Johannine community. It serves to rationalise the misunderstanding and rejection of Jesus by former Jewish comrades. Woll comments astutely: 'The obscurity and misunderstanding encountered by Jesus' teaching is a sign, not of its inferior, earthly character, but of its heavenly, otherworldly origin'.<sup>401</sup> Literary devices such as irony, symbolism and misunderstanding convey an ethos of truth that is veiled from the uninitiated.<sup>402</sup> Culpepper notes that a definite result of the Johannine misunderstandings is a 'marked distinction between 'insiders' and 'outsiders', between those who

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<sup>401</sup> *Johannine Christianity in Conflict*, 101.

<sup>402</sup> Cf. Duke, *Irony*; Culpepper, *Anatomy*, 151-202; Carson, 'Understanding Misunderstandings', 59-91; MacRae, 'Theology and Irony', 103-13; O'Day, *Revelation in the Fourth Gospel*.



understand Jesus and those who do not'.<sup>403</sup> The apocalyptic disclosure is reserved for those chosen for heavenly enlightenment. The kind of wisdom imparted is of a heavenly type not capable of being received by the darkened minds of the unbelieving world. Kanagaraj observes that 'only those who believe in Jesus are able to perceive the hidden reality and for others, that is, the unbelievers and the enemies of Jesus, it remains hidden'.<sup>404</sup> They have not had their eyes opened to the truth; unbelief prohibits them from perceiving the heavenly revelation. Even the disciples, before the gift of the Spirit, are only able to perceive a small measure of the full revelation that is embodied in Jesus. Although present with him the revelation is closed until the illumination of the Spirit is granted.<sup>405</sup>

### *Summary*

In this chapter an attempt has been made to demonstrate that the Johannine Jesus, like the apocalyptic seer, is a witness of the heavenly realm, hidden from ordinary human perception, but which he has personally observed and experienced. His words therefore carry all the authority of one who reports directly from the seat of all truth. Jesus comes from heaven bearing witness to what he has seen and heard (3.32: ὁ ἑώρακεν καὶ ἤκουσεν τοῦτο μαρτυρεῖ) and so his message takes the

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<sup>403</sup> Culpepper, *Anatomy*, 164; cf. Duke, *Irony*, 146.

<sup>404</sup> Kanagaraj, *Mysticism*, 307.

<sup>405</sup> Painter, *John*, 64; Culpepper, *Anatomy*, 49; Haenchen *John* 2, 139. Käsemann, *Testament*, 6, considers Jn ch.17 as couched in the form of 'a secret instruction to the disciples' because the truth revealed is reserved for 'the enlightened and the elect and is therefore communicated in the form of a secret discourse'.

form of a testimony to what he has experienced in the heavenly sphere. However, while the role of Jesus resembles that of the apocalyptic seer, in that both testify to a heavenly dimension that they have experienced first hand, John reserves this privilege exclusively for Jesus. He alone has seen God (1.18: Θεὸν οὐδεὶς ἑώρακεν πώποτε; cf. 5.37; 6.46). In so far as seers from the past had genuine apocalyptic experiences, these are interpreted christologically with the object of the revelation concentrated in Jesus. Of crucial importance is the recognition that, unlike the human seer, Jesus is ‘from above’, ‘from heaven’ and thus ‘from God’. Therefore a more apposite model for the Johannine presentation of Jesus is found in that of a heavenly being, in particular as embodied in the מלאך יהוה traditions. Like this figure, Jesus embodies both the ‘name’ and ‘glory’ of God, paradoxically displaying these divine qualities most clearly in his death.

Now the co-ordinates of an apocalyptic perspective are mapped on a temporal as well as a spatial axis. So, in the Fourth Gospel, Jesus is presented as the divine agent who ushers in the eschatological era. The decisive transition to this future age requires a ‘judgment’ which involves the defeat and expulsion of ‘the ruler of this world’, achieved as Jesus is ‘lifted up’ from the earth (12.32). However, the subsequent drawing of all to himself is shown to be a divine act (cf. 6.44) which leaves others groping in the darkness of misunderstanding. Jesus, the revealer, is unrecognised and rejected by those devoid of spiritual insight, showing that God’s revelation cannot be grasped by ordinary human perception; it must be

supernaturally mediated. Indeed, it pertains to the very nature of an apocalyptic disclosure that it is hidden from those on the outside. For the followers of Jesus this helps explain the misunderstanding and rejection of Jesus by former Jewish comrades and is therefore incorporated into the symbolic universe of the Johannine community.



## Chapter 3

### THE SPIRIT-PARACLETE: ANGELUS INTERPRES

In the previous chapter we argued that the Johannine Jesus is presented as one who both witnesses to the heavenly realm and inaugurates the eschatological period. However, we showed that his revelation is closed to the understanding of many who encounter him (John 12.37-40). Indeed, even his followers only partially grasp the significance of his disclosure. In the light of this state of affairs it is therefore advantageous that Jesus should ascend to where he was before (6.62), in order that he can send another divine envoy (14.16; 16.7), who will lead them into all truth (16.13).

Now in respect of his actual physical presence, Jesus is only a temporary visitor to earth,<sup>406</sup> but, in ascending to the Father, he transmits to the disciples his own *alter ego* by the act of breathing upon them (20.22; cf. 7.38; 19.30).<sup>407</sup> According to the Fourth Gospel, prior to the resurrection Jesus is the sole possessor of the Spirit (7.39), to whom it is given without measure (3.34: οὐ γὰρ ἐκ μέτρου δίδωσιν τὸ πνεῦμα). John the Baptist is a ‘witness’ to this fact, proclaiming: ‘I saw the Spirit descend (καταβαῖνον) as a dove from heaven, and

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<sup>406</sup> Ashton, *Understanding*, 352; cf. Dunn, ‘Let John be John’, 313; Tuckett, *Christology*, 166 n. 38.

<sup>407</sup> Barrett, *St John*, 75; Bampfylde, ‘John xix.28: a case for a different translation’, 245-60, contends that παρέδωκεν τὸ πνεῦμα in 19.30 means ‘he handed over the (Holy) Spirit’.

it remained (ἔμεινεν) on him' (1.32). However, Jesus promises that there will come a time when he will impart the Spirit to all those who believe in him (7.38). By doing this he will fulfil the prophecy of the ideal ruler, as predicted in the Testament of Judah, upon whom 'the heavens will be opened', with the result that he will be able 'to pour out the spirit as a blessing of the Holy Father' (T Jud 24.2).

Allusion has already been made to the principle of agency, expressed in the Mishnah (but certainly of much earlier origin) that 'an agent may appoint an agent'.<sup>408</sup> This principle is applied in the Fourth Gospel in the commission of the Spirit to abide 'with' and 'in' the believer (14.17: ὅτι παρ' ὑμῖν μένει καὶ ἐν ὑμῖν ἔσται). Like Jesus, the Spirit is also presented as a heavenly agent who is sent from above in order to continue the work of revelation. Indeed the Spirit is 'inseparably bound to Jesus Christ...he thus becomes Jesus' representative and in this way continues his revelation of salvation within the community and makes it effective and fruitful'.<sup>409</sup>

It is through the Spirit's indwelling that the promise of Jesus is realized that both the Son and the Father 'will come to him and make our home with him' (14.23: καὶ πρὸς αὐτὸν ἐλευσόμεθα καὶ μονὴν παρ' αὐτῷ ποιησόμεθα). Thus, by means of the Spirit, Jesus comes to his followers (14.18) and is therefore able

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<sup>408</sup> Cf. b. Gittin 29b; Qid 41a.

<sup>409</sup> Schnackenburg, *St John*, III, 149.

to continue speaking and working in the community.<sup>410</sup> Käsemann summarizes the situation by affirming that ‘in John, the Spirit is nothing else but the continual possibility and reality of the new encounter with Jesus in the post-Easter situation as the one who is revealing his Word to his own and through them to the world’.<sup>411</sup> The farewell promise that ‘in a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me’ (14.19) may be interpreted as referring to more than the resurrection appearances of Jesus to his disciples. It has in view the ongoing spiritual apprehension of the Son by means of the ministry of the Holy Spirit. In this way the temporary and localized presence of Jesus is turned into a permanent and ubiquitous presence, transcending spatial and temporal boundaries.

The first question we must consider is the significance of the title accorded to the Spirit in the Johannine Farewell Discourses, namely ὁ παράκλητος. A study of the etymology of the word παράκλητος does not provide us with one clear line of thought, but rather indicates several complementary shades of meaning. From the passive form of παρακαλεῖν the meaning may be ‘one called alongside to help’, suggesting the idea of an advocate or defending counsel (cf. 1 Jn 2.1). Thus Liddell~Scott gives the meaning of παράκλητος as ‘called to one’s aid in a court of justice’, with the substantive being equated with ‘legal assistant,

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<sup>410</sup> Müller, ‘Die Parakletenvorstellung’, 37, notes that ‘der Paraklet führt das weiter, was Jesus in seinem Erdendasein gewirkt hat’. Barrett, *St John*, 90, speaks of the Spirit as ‘the eschatological *continuum* in which the work of Christ, initiated in his ministry and awaiting its termination at his return, is wrought out’.

<sup>411</sup> *Testament*, 45-46.



advocate'.<sup>412</sup> The active sense of the same word indicates the notion of intercessor, mediator or spokesman (cf. Rom 8.26). Alternatively, some have argued for the retention of the A.V. translation 'comforter',<sup>413</sup> pointing out that the context of the passages where the title occurs in John is one of sorrow at the impending departure of Jesus; it is only in the farewell discourses that the particular title appropriated by the evangelist for the Spirit is ὁ παράκλητος.<sup>414</sup> Finally the related noun παράκλησις is found in other NT passages which refer to the exhortation and encouragement attendant upon the apostolic witness (Acts 4.36; 9.31; 13.15). Probably all these nuances of meaning were suggested by the one word παράκλητος, thus leading Raymond Brown to state: 'the concept of the Paraclete, like love, is a many-splendoured thing: the Paraclete is a *witness* in defence of Jesus and a *spokesman* for him in the context of the trial of Jesus by his enemies; the Paraclete is a *consoler* of the disciples; more important, he is their teacher and guide and thus, in an extended sense, their *helper*.'<sup>415</sup>

There is no obvious Hebrew or Aramaic title that corresponds to the Greek term παράκλητος; indeed the Greek word only appears as a loan word in later Jewish literature (e.g. Philo, *Vit Mos.* II, 134; *Spec. Leg.* I, 237).<sup>416</sup> However, Burge has observed that although the word παράκλητος does not appear in the

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<sup>412</sup> *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 1313.

<sup>413</sup> Davies, 'Meaning of ΠΑΡΑΚΛΗΤΟΣ', 35-8.

<sup>414</sup> Cf. Windisch, *Spirit-Paraclete in the Fourth Gospel*, 3; Schnackenburg, *St John*, III, 144.

<sup>415</sup> 'The Paraclete in the Fourth Gospel', 118.

<sup>416</sup> Johnston, *Spirit-Paraclete*, 99.

LXX, 'it does enjoy conceptual familiarity with the OT idea of religious intercessory advocates'.<sup>417</sup> These intercessors include Abraham (Gen 18.23-33), Moses (Ex 32.11-14), and other prophets (Amos 7.2-6; Jer 14.7-9). But in the apocalyptic literature we find that angels are accorded this role (cf. Zech 3.1-10; 1 En 47.2).

Until recently Johannine scholarship had not enquired closely into the possible apocalyptic roots of the figure of the Spirit-Paraclete. Some scholars proposed Gnostic<sup>418</sup> or Hellenistic<sup>419</sup> antecedents, but neither of these commanded general assent. However, a Jewish background to the idea of the Spirit-Paraclete was proposed by the Scandinavian scholar Sigmund Mowinckel and further developed by Nils Johansson. They investigated the idea that the intercessory angels found in the literature of Second Temple Judaism formed a convincing backdrop to the role of the Johannine *Paraclete*. Mowinckel suggested that the 'guardian spirits' (Schutzgeister) common in Babylonian-Persian literature may have been the source from which these spiritual intercessors were derived, but he also argues that  $\gamma\iota\lambda\mu$  is the most probable Hebrew antecedent to  $\pi\alpha\rho\acute{\alpha}\kappa\lambda\eta\tau\omicron\varsigma$ .<sup>420</sup> Johansson provided evidence to support this idea, observing that the Targum on Job translates  $\gamma\iota\lambda\mu$  by the Greek loan-word  $\pi\alpha\rho\acute{\alpha}\kappa\lambda\eta\tau\omicron\varsigma$ .<sup>421</sup> In the book of Job

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<sup>417</sup> *The Anointed Community*, 13.

<sup>418</sup> Cf. Bultmann, 'Die Bedeutung', 100-146; idem, *John*, 570-71.

<sup>419</sup> Cf. Dodd, *Interpretation*, 415; idem, *The Apostolic Preaching*, 57-78.

<sup>420</sup> 'Die Vorstellung des Spätjudentums vom heiligen Geist als Fürsprecher und der johanneische Paraklet', 97-130.

<sup>421</sup> *Parakletoi*, 27.

the patriarch is presented as saying: 'If there be for him an *angel* (מלאך), a *mediator* (מליץ) one of the thousand, to declare to man what is right for him...Then man prays to God, and he accepts him...' (33.23, 26). We notice that the 'mediator' (מליץ) is specifically said to be an angel (מלאך, cf. 1QH 6.13-14).

This fruitful avenue of enquiry received support from the discovery of the Qumran literature in the mid twentieth century. It was soon recognised that the Scrolls possess a broad conceptual similarity with the thought world of the Fourth Gospel as well as some significant linguistic parallels. Common to both was a dualistic framework in which light and darkness, truth and falsehood, God and Satan stood in stark opposition.<sup>422</sup> Humanity itself was divided into two camps, each being under the aegis of a supernatural personage, either the Angel of Darkness or Spirit of Truth. In his study of the Qumran material Otto Betz relates the archangel Michael to the spirit of truth (1QS 3.13-26; cf. 1QM 13.10;17.6). He proposes that the Fourth Gospel bases the promise of the Paraclete on Michael, the angelic advocate who helps the elect in their battle with evil, personified in Belial or Satan, the prince of darkness.<sup>423</sup> However, his thesis has not won general support, with few being able to accommodate his detailed reconstruction of the Michael-Paraclete identification.<sup>424</sup> Among the criticisms of Betz are his presumption of a direct link between the Qumran material and the Fourth

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<sup>422</sup> Cf. the discussions in Charlesworth (ed.), *John and Qumran*.

<sup>423</sup> *Der Paraklet*, 117-224.

<sup>424</sup> Cf. Johnston, *The Spirit-Paraclete*, 102-118; Burge, *The Anointed Community*, 16-23.



Gospel;<sup>425</sup> assuming that the personal traits attributed to the Paraclete must derive from the identification with Michael;<sup>426</sup> and the precarious nature of the argument based on the book of Revelation.<sup>427</sup>

Nonetheless, it does seem that the distinction between angels and spirits in the Second Temple Judaism had become somewhat indeterminate. Ps 104.4 (LXX 103.4) equates ‘angel’ with ‘spirit’ in a direct way that probably influenced later writers. Thus the psalmist declares: ‘He makes his angels spirits’ (MT: עֲשֶׂה מַלְאָכָיו רוּחוֹת; LXX: ὁ ποιῶν τοὺς ἀγγέλους αὐτοῦ πνεύματα). When the writer of Jubilees enumerates the various categories of angelic beings, he introduces the list by speaking of ‘the spirits’ who minister before the Lord (2.2-3). In the Prayer of Joseph (1.1) the angel Israel styles himself both as ‘a ruling spirit’ and ‘an archangel of the power of the Lord’. Gieschen also observes the parallel usage of ‘angels’ and ‘spirits’ in the Qumran literature. Thus in the War Scroll we read: ‘The heroes of the army of his angels (צבא מלאכים) are listed with us; the war hero is in our congregation; the army of his spirits (צבא רוחיו) with our infantry and our cavalry’ (12.8-9). Volz summarises the position as follows: ‘Sofern die Engel alle Geschäfte der übersinnlichen Welt besorgen, berühren sich ihre Funktionen teilweise mit denen des Gottesgeistes; sie sind Vermittler der göttlichen Offenbarung und des Zukunftswissens und sie befördern das Gute im Menschen. In manchen Funktionen tritt der Engel an die Stelle des Geistwesens,

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<sup>425</sup> Quispel, ‘Qumran, John and Jewish Christianity’, in *John and Qumran*, 148.

<sup>426</sup> Brown, ‘The Paraclete’, 126.

<sup>427</sup> Burge, *The Anointed Community*, 20.

namentlich wo es sich um altertümliche Geistvorstellungen handelt, wie bei der ekstatischen Entrückung oder bei der Belebung des gelähmten Ekstatikers. Mitunter übernimmt der heilige Geist ein Amt, das gewöhnlich dem Engel zugewiesen wird'.<sup>428</sup>

Once the identification between angels and spirits had occurred, it was natural that a particular angelic figure could be referred to as 'the spirit'. So in the Community Rule the angelic prince of lights is identified both as 'the angel of his truth' (1QS 3.24) and as 'the spirit of truth' (1QS 3.19; 4.21). An important passage in the Hebrew Bible exemplifying this link is found in Isaiah 63.9-10, where we read: 'In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the Angel of His Presence [וּמִלְאָךְ פָּנָיו הוֹשִׁיעֵם; LXX: οὐ πρέσβυς οὐδὲ ἄγγελος] saved them...[10] But they rebelled and grieved his holy Spirit [וְאֶת־רוּחַ קֹדֶשׁ; LXX: τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον αὐτοῦ]'. Here we have a tacit identification of the 'Angel of His presence' with the 'holy Spirit'. The title מִלְאָךְ פָּנָיו probably combines the tradition of the angel bearing the divine name (Ex 23.20-23) with the later passage (Ex 33.14) in which God promises that his 'presence' [פָּנָיו] would accompany the Hebrews. Gieschen comments: 'Through this identification, the Spirit of the Lord is depicted as the angel who is distinguished from God: he possesses the Divine name by which he guards, guides, speaks, and punishes.'<sup>429</sup>

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<sup>428</sup> Volz, *Der Geist Gottes*, 184.

<sup>429</sup> Gieschen, *Angelomorphic Christology*, 118. Cf. Levison, 'Angelic Spirit', 492-493, who contends: 'Discussions of the spirit of God in Early Judaism and Christianity,



The fact that, in view of his impending return to heaven, Jesus prays that the Father will give the disciples ‘another Paraclete’ (John 14.16, ἄλλον παράκλητον),<sup>430</sup> implies that he was himself the first Paraclete, that is, their counsellor, companion and protector.<sup>431</sup> Many studies have indeed noted the significance of the fact that within the Fourth Gospel the Spirit-Paraclete is spoken of in terms that correspond closely to those predicated of Jesus.<sup>432</sup> As the Father ‘gave’ (ἔδωκεν) the Son (3.16), so he ‘will give’ (δώσει) the Paraclete at Jesus’ request (14.16). Hence like the Son, the Paraclete ‘comes’ (ἔρχομαι) into the world (5.43; 16.28; 16.13); he also ‘proceeds’ from the Father (15.26: ὁ παρὰ τοῦ πατρὸς ἐκπορεύεται; cf. 8.42). Both the Paraclete and the Son are ‘sent’ by the Father (14.26; 3.17), and as Jesus came in the Father’s name (5.43) the Paraclete will be sent in Jesus’ name (14.26). However, just as outsiders do not know where Jesus comes from or where he is going (8.14: ὑμεῖς δὲ οὐκ οἴδατε πόθεν ἔρχομαι ἢ ποῦ ὑπάγω), the same proves true of the activity of the Spirit (3.8: οὐκ οἶδας πόθεν ἔρχεται καὶ ποῦ ὑπάγει).

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therefore, ought to consider that interpretations of the spirit as an angelic presence are not necessarily the product of a growing hypostatisation of the inner spirit or breath of God, as appears to be the case in texts such as Jud. 16.14; the ΠΝΗ or πνεῦμα of God could also be, and often was, interpreted as an angelic emissary of God’.

<sup>430</sup> Brown, ‘The Paraclete in the Fourth Gospel’, 115. Johnston, *Spirit-Paraclete*, 84, observes that in 14.16 the words ἄλλον παράκλητον are adjectival to τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς ἀληθείας.

<sup>431</sup> Windisch, *The Spirit-Paraclete in the Fourth Gospel*, 5.

<sup>432</sup> Moody Smith, *John*, 49, comments that ‘it is by no means unreasonable to surmise that the specific function of the Spirit-Paraclete as described in the fourth gospel is actually represented in the figure and work of the Johannine Jesus.’ Cf. Haacker, *Die Stiftung des Heils*, 153.



Furthermore, as the world did not accept Jesus (1.11; 5.43) and would soon forfeit the opportunity of seeing him (16.16), so it cannot receive the Paraclete or even see it (14.17). : Like the Son, the task of the Spirit is to communicate heavenly truth, which he himself hears (16.13). So as the Son only conveys what the Father gives him (12.49), equally the Spirit does not speak from himself (16.13, ἀφ' ἑαυτοῦ), but declares that which he has received from the Son (16.14). Further, just as Jesus testified against the world (7.7), the Paraclete will prove the world wrong concerning the trial of Jesus (16.8). In the light of these parallel descriptions, Brown states that 'as "another Paraclete" the Paraclete is, as it were, another Jesus...Since the Paraclete can come only when Jesus departs, the Paraclete is the presence of Jesus when Jesus is absent'.<sup>433</sup>

The office of the Spirit in the Fourth Gospel, therefore, is to render 'der Christus prolongatus';<sup>434</sup> through the agency of the Paraclete, Jesus will come to his disciples and be with them 'for ever' (14.16).<sup>435</sup> In apocalyptic terminology Jesus may be likened to the *angelus revelatus* who conveys revelation directly without necessarily interpreting it.<sup>436</sup> By contrast it will be proposed that the Spirit-Paraclete interprets a revelation already given and is therefore modelled on the *angelus interpretes*. In this chapter we will discuss three aspects of the Spirit-Paraclete's commission to continue the work of Jesus. In each case it will be seen

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<sup>433</sup> 'Paraclete in the Fourth Gospel', 128.

<sup>434</sup> Betz, *Der Paraklet*, 24.

<sup>435</sup> Martyn, *History and Theology*, 145: 'The Paraclete makes Jesus present on earth as the Son of Man who binds together heaven and earth (1.51)'.

<sup>436</sup> Cf. Hartman and DiLella, *The Book of Daniel*, 10.

that there are significant similarities to the role of the *angelus interpretis* as depicted in apocalyptic literature. First, the Spirit interprets the heavenly revelation mediated by, and indeed, contained in the person of Jesus (§1). Secondly, as the ‘other Paraclete’, the Spirit acts as plaintiff in pursuing the lawsuit against the world, demonstrating its guilt and consequent liability to divine judgment (§2). Thirdly, like the angelic companion assigned to an apocalyptic seer, the Spirit-Paraclete guides believers into the realm of God’s presence, along the way made open by Jesus (1.51; 14.6); this is continuously realized in successive ages by means of eschatological worship ‘in spirit and truth’ (4.24) (§3).

### 1. *Interpreter of Mysteries*

The apocalyptic mode of transmitting heavenly truth involves two phases. The revelation disclosed in the first stage of the process, either by means of a dream-vision or guided tour of the heavens, is not fully comprehensible to unaided human cognition.<sup>437</sup> The divine mysteries remain hidden until they are supernaturally interpreted for the visionary.<sup>438</sup> While aware that what he observes on a transcendent level is of utmost significance, the visionary is unable to fathom the meaning of what he has seen and heard. A second stage is therefore necessary in

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<sup>437</sup> Collins, ‘Cosmos and Salvation’, 139, speaks of ‘the discontinuity between apocalyptic revelation and the normal cognitive process’; idem, *Apocalypticism in the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 3. Cf. Grelot, ‘Apocalyptic’, 48: ‘The revelation furnished by this literature bears on all the mysteries which are inaccessible to man’s natural knowledge’.

<sup>438</sup> Bockmuehl, *Revelation and Mystery*, 30, observes that in apocalyptic literature the nature of revelation ‘involves interpretation, whether of visions, dreams or scripture’.



which a supernatural emissary of the deity is sent to render the revelation intelligible to the seer. In apocalyptic literature the role of the angels is crucial in explaining the mysteries of the heavenly realm to one who is from the earth. It is not enough for the seer to be admitted into the celestial dimension; he must also be instructed as to the meaning of what he sees.<sup>439</sup> Now it is our contention that, in performing the role of interpreting an esoteric revelation, the Spirit-Paraclete in the Fourth Gospel is modelled upon the angelus interpres who is assigned to the apocalyptic visionary in order to enable him to understand what he has seen or heard.<sup>440</sup>

The dream-vision, common in many of the apocalypses, is an extension of the mode of revelation that developed in prophetic circles in which a particular visual image is impressed on the consciousness of the prophet and which is then shown to have a special meaning.<sup>441</sup> For example, Jeremiah's vision of the almond tree and the pot tilting away from the north is given an interpretation that possesses direct significance for the chosen nation (Jer 1). By the time of the prophet Zechariah the images have developed a 'cinematic' quality; the seer observes, and may even participate in, a sort of motion picture that takes place before him. The visionary does not grasp the meaning of what he sees, but now,

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<sup>439</sup> Cf. von Rad, *Theologie*, 2.321: 'überhaupt wird man die geistige Leistung der Apokalyptiker ziemlich erschöpfend mit dem Begriff 'Interpretation' umschreiben können'.

<sup>440</sup> Both Windisch (*Spirit-Paraclete* 18) and Schnackenburg (*St John*, Vol III, 146) compare the Paraclete with the interpreting angels of the apocalypses.

<sup>441</sup> Lindblom, *Prophecy in Ancient Israel*, 122-137; cf. Knight, *The Hebrew Prophetic Consciousness*, 44.



instead of a direct word from the Lord, we find the presence of angelic personnel who are on hand to provide illumination. Thus in his visions, Zechariah is accompanied by ‘the angel who talked with [him]’ (1.9). The prophet’s characteristic question to his angelic companion when shown a succession of mysterious scenes is ‘what are these?’ (1.9, 19; 4.4,12; 6.4).<sup>442</sup> Indeed the element of human inability to comprehend the significance of the heavenly vision is emphasized in the narrative. So in response to the prophet’s question in 4.4, ‘the angel answered me, “Do you not know what these are?”, I said, “No, my Lord”’. The same pattern is repeated in Zech 4.13. However, once the point has been made the angel is ready with the promise: ‘I will show you what they are’ (LXX 1.9: ἐγὼ δείξω σοι τί ἐστὶν ταῦτα; cf. 4.14; 6.5). The subsequent message that the prophet is commanded to bring to the people is clearly based upon, and validated by, the angel’s interpretation of the dream-visions he has received (1.14; 2.4; 4.6).

Turning to the book of Daniel we find that the role of the *angelus interpres* is an established feature in the apocalyptic mode of communicating heavenly revelation.<sup>443</sup> Thus when the seer receives his night vision of the four terrifying beasts who come out of the sea and exercise dominion in the earth until the arrival of the one like a human being (7.1-14), he is left ‘troubled’ until he approaches

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<sup>442</sup> Hannah, *Michael and Christ*, 22, observes that this מַלְאָךְ יְהוָה ‘shares far more with angels of Jewish apocalyptic literature than with earlier portions of the OT. He functions as an angelic interpreter and guide (1.9) answering the prophet’s queries’.

<sup>443</sup> Willie-Plein, ‘Geheimnis’, 60, views the angel as virtually a hypostasis of interpretation.

one of the heavenly attendants ‘to ask him the truth concerning all this’. In response to this plea the angel ‘said that he would disclose to me the interpretation of the matter’ (7.16). The same pattern is adopted in the next chapter, which records Daniel’s vision of the male goat with a horn between its eyes charging the ram and trampling him underfoot. While he is trying to understand what he has seen, he hears a voice calling ‘Gabriel, help this man *understand* the vision’ (8.16) (LXX: Γαβριήλ συνέτισον ἐκεῖνον τὴν ὅτασιν). It is this same Gabriel who responds to Daniel’s prayer of confession, coming to him ‘in swift flight at the time of the evening sacrifice’ with the words ‘Daniel, I have now come out to give you wisdom and understanding (LXX: Δανεήλ, νῦν ἐξῆλθον συμβιβάσαι σε σύνεσιν). At the beginning of your supplications a word went out, and I have come to *declare* it (דַּבַּר רַבִּי וְאֲנִי בָאֲחֵי לְחַגִּיד)’ (9.21-23). Similarly, the glorious being described in 10.6 is sent to the seer to help him ‘understand’ what is to happen to the people of God at the end time (10.14).<sup>444</sup>

In 1 Enoch the dialogue between the seer and the accompanying angel follows a characteristic pattern whereby the former is amazed or perplexed by what he is shown, and therefore asks the latter for an explanation of the heavenly sights. For example, Enoch asks Raphael details concerning the supplication of the righteous dead, in particular Abel’s making suit for heavenly recompense: ‘At

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<sup>444</sup> The *angelus interpres* is not specifically named as Gabriel in Dan 7.16-27 or 10.5-12.13. However the same description given to both Gabriel in 8.15 and the glorious angel in 10.16 (‘one having the appearance of a man’) makes the identification of the figures a reasonable conjecture. Cf. Collins, *Daniel*, 373-374; Fossum, *Name of God*, 279.



that moment, I raised a question regarding him and regarding the judgment of all, “For what reason is one separated from another?”” (22.6-8). He also asks Raguel: “What is this (thing) which has no rest?” (23.3). Likewise, Uriel is asked about the purpose of the ‘accursed valley’ (27.1). Insight into the heavenly mysteries is only achieved as the heavenly agents reveal or ‘show’ the human seer their true meaning. Thus Enoch witnesses the details of the stars of heaven: ‘their names, their ranks, their seats, their periods, their months, as Uriel the holy angel who was with me, *showed* me’ (33.3). Indeed ‘he *showed* me all things and wrote them down for me’ (34.4).

In the Similitudes, Enoch views an innumerable multitude of the heavenly host, understanding their names, ‘which the angel who came with me revealed to me; and he (also) *showed me all the hidden things*’ (40.2, italics mine; cf. 43.3). These ‘hidden things’ include ‘what is first and last in heaven, above it, beneath the earth, in the extreme ends of heaven, the extent of heaven’ (60.11). However, again the seer is depicted as asking his guide to explain the meaning of the heavenly sights and sounds: ‘And after that, I asked the angel of peace, who was going with me and showed me everything that was hidden, “Who are these four faces which I have seen and whose voices I have heard and written down?”’ (40.8). He is not only given the answer to his question, but also shown further mysteries, indeed ‘all the secrets of heaven’ (41.1).

The ‘secret visions’ vouchsafed to Enoch occur as he is ‘carried off in a wind vehicle...[his] eyes saw there all the secret things of heaven and the future



things' (52.1). But this revelation is not sufficient on its own; the disclosure remains incomprehensible, but for the presence of the accompanying angel who alone is able to elucidate the meaning of the wondrous visions: 'And I asked the angel who was going with me, saying, "What are these things which I have seen in secret?"' (52.3). Further in his celestial tour Enoch enquires concerning for whom the great iron chains were being prepared (54.4), about the destination of the angels of punishment (56.2), and the reason for the angels taking measurements (61.2). We may see from these examples that it is necessary for further illumination to be provided by the *angelus interpretes* in order for the visionary to understand the full import of the heavenly scenes.

In 2 Enoch the seer is taken on a journey through a series of discrete heavens during which the angels 'show' him heavenly phenomena such as 'the treasures of dew' (6.1), solar and lunar movements (11.2; 16.1) and the fallen angelic beings who are imprisoned in darkness (18.3). This latter feature in particular awakens the curiosity of the seer, who accordingly plies his guides with questions as to the cause of their parlous condition: '*What is the explanation that these ones are so dejected?*' (18.2). In response his angelic guides give an account of the apostasy of the Grigori, who, together with their prince Satanail, turned away from the Lord (18.3) and acted lawlessly upon the earth. We can see, therefore, that on his journey through the heavens, carried by angels (19.1), Enoch is instructed in matters that lie beyond the purview of ordinary human perception. At the culmination of his journey we read that the Lord summons Vrevoil, one of

his archangels, *to instruct* Enoch for thirty days and thirty nights about ‘all the things of heaven and earth’ (23.1-4).

The same theme of human incomprehension in the face of heavenly revelation is found in the first-century apocalyptic writing of 4 Ezra. In this pseudonymous document we are given an account of Ezra’s ongoing quest for an understanding of matters that perplex almost to the point of overwhelming him.<sup>445</sup> During his soul-searching odyssey, the seer is accompanied by his angelic guide and teacher Uriel, who, while ready to hear his complaints, endeavours to lead him to a clearer understanding of the ways of the Most High. In a series of dialogues the earthbound understanding of Ezra is contrasted with the superior heavenly wisdom evinced by his angelic mentor. Indeed the purpose behind the three riddles posed to Ezra is precisely to demonstrate the limitations of human knowledge.<sup>446</sup> This ploy is successful, eliciting his response, ‘who is able to know these things except he whose dwelling is not with men?’ (5.38: *quis enim est qui potest hoc scire, nisi qui cum hominibus habitationem non habet?*). Here Ezra is shown to recognise his need of angelic aid if he is to solve the perplexities that confront him.

Of great importance is Uriel’s explanation as to why unaided human reasoning fails to understand spiritual truth. It is because ‘those who dwell upon

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<sup>445</sup> Stone, *Fourth Ezra*, 32, views the extant work as a literary transcription of ‘the odyssey of Ezra’s soul’

<sup>446</sup> Stone, *Ibid*, 26, comments: ‘Ezra’s understanding, the angel asserts, is human, limited and corruptible (4.11, 20) and he cannot comprehend the heavenly realm’.



earth (*qui super terram inhabitant*) can understand only what is on earth, and he who is above the heavens (*qui super coelos*) can understand what is above the height of the heavens' (4.21).<sup>447</sup> This succinctly expresses a primary apocalyptic motif, namely that heavenly truth is unattainable for mere mortals to grasp without supernatural help. Therefore, in order for the meaning of heavenly things to become perspicuous, Ezra is instructed by the angel to 'stand at my right side, and I will show you the *interpretation* of the parable (*demonstrabo tibi interpretationem similitudinis*)' (4.47). He is also commanded to fast for periods of seven days (5.20; 6.31; 9.27), after which the angel visits him and instructs him concerning such matters as the division of the times and the type of signs that will herald the end of this age.

The earthbound nature of the seer's percipience is further illustrated in the pivotal vision of the woman transformed into an established city, which leaves the seer 'like a corpse' and 'deprived of understanding' (10.30). Feeling destitute of divine help and 'forsaken' by the angel, Ezra laments: 'Behold I saw, and still see, *what I am unable to explain*' (10.32: *et ecce vidi et video quod non possum enarrare*). In giving Ezra a revelation of the true glory of Zion hidden behind the circumstances of disgrace, God shows him truth that surpasses human

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<sup>447</sup> Stone, 'Lists of Revealed Things in Apocalyptic Literature', 419-20, notes that the questions posed by Uriel (4.5-8) presuppose that unaided human understanding is unable to grasp the knowledge imparted by apocalypses. This is certainly true, however Stone's inference that the author of 4 Ezra is therefore engaging in a polemic against apocalyptic understanding is surely wrong. Cf. Collins, *Apocalyptic Imagination*, 160, 168.



perception.<sup>448</sup> The seer is granted an understanding that transcends the ordinary channels of knowledge: 'I have seen what I do not know, and I have heard what I do not understand' (10.34-35). He therefore entreats his angelic companion not to forsake him, but to 'give your servant an *explanation* of this bewildering vision' (10.37). Acquiescing with this request, Uriel promises that if he listens to him, 'I will inform you, and tell you about the things which you fear, for the Most High has revealed many secrets to you' (10.38).

The same principle of a revelatory vision followed by divine interpretation is applied throughout the remainder of the book. The Most High 'reveals' (*revelavit*) or 'shows' (*ostendet*) Ezra, by means of dream-visions, what he will do in the last days (10.59). The effect of the revelation, however, always results in 'great perplexity of mind' or 'great fear' (12.3; 13.14). This, in turn, evokes a plea for understanding of what he has witnessed in a supranormal manner: 'You have shown your servant these wonders...now *show me also the interpretation* of this dream' (13.14-15; cf. 12.8). The seer's bewilderment is only allayed by divine interpretation and explanation (13.21).

The need for supernatural aid in understanding apocalyptic revelation is further exemplified in 2 Baruch. The work is roughly contemporaneous with 4 Ezra and aims to provide a theodicy or resolution to the same problem of apparent

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<sup>448</sup> Hall, *Revealed Histories*, 104, n. 3, remarks that 'such knowledge is not merely cognitive but also experiential. Almost all of the factual content of the last four visions has already been imparted by Uriel to Ezra, but not the emotional impact.' Cf. Stone, 'Reactions to the Destruction of the Second Temple', 202; Hayman, 'The Problem of Pseudonymity in the Ezra Apocalypse', 56.

injustice concerning the treatment of the elect nation. This seer also undertakes a series of seven-day fasts as preparation for receiving divine revelation. While Jeremiah is told to support those taken into captivity, Baruch is commanded to remain 'in the desolation of Zion' where the Lord will '*show*' him 'what will happen at the end of days' (2 Bar 10.3; cf. 14.1). In anticipation, he stands on Mount Zion until 'a voice came from the high heavens' instructing him what to say to those who might gloat over the Jews' discomfiture. While Baruch bewails the fate of the holy city, praying amidst the ruins of the temple, he falls asleep and has the vision of the forest, the vine, the fountain and the cedar. On awaking he solicits the Lord to 'show [him] *an explanation* of the vision' (38.3).

The major vision of the work is the apocalypse of the clouds, a series of twelve alternating black and bright waters that inundate the earth. After this portentous revelation, the seer is affrighted and immediately prays for understanding: 'You showed this vision to your servant; *open to me its exposition also*' (54.6, italics mine). Later he reiterates this request: 'O Lord, *explain* to me what you have revealed to me. And inform me about that which I asked you' (54.20). In response to this plea Ramael is sent, 'the angel who is set over true visions' (55.3). He relates his mission directly to the seer's request for enlightenment: 'Since you have asked the Most High to reveal to you the *explanation* of the vision which you have seen, *I have been sent*' (56.1). However, at other times Baruch is granted direct communication with the Lord. Thus, at the close of the third fast, God promises: 'I shall reveal myself to you, and



I shall speak to you true things, and I shall command you with regard to the course of times' (20.6).

In 3 Baruch, as the seer bemoans the apparently hopeless state of the righteous nation, he sees an angel of the Lord coming to him and informing him: 'the Lord...*sent me* before you in order that I should *proclaim* and *disclose* to you all things of God' (1.4, Greek). The apocalypse is the fulfilment of this promise, being prefaced with the further invitation to 'come and I will show you greater mysteries' (2.6, Greek). It is this angel, as he accompanies the seer on his tour of the heavens, who is then greeted by Michael as 'our brother, *interpreter of revelations* to those who pass through life rightly' (11.7 Greek, italics mine). This key role assigned to Michael is once again in view in the Greek version of the Life of Adam and Eve, also known as the Apocalypse of Moses, which begins as follows: 'The narrative and life of Adam and Eve the first-made, revealed by God to Moses his servant when he received the tablets of the law of the covenant from the hand of the Lord, after *he had been taught by the archangel Michael* (διδασθεὶς ὑπὸ τοῦ ἀρχαγγέλου Μιχαήλ)' (Ap Mos 1.1). The passage clearly indicates that, while the Lord imparts the law of the covenant to his servant Moses, there is the further necessity for the patriarch to be 'taught by the archangel Michael'.

The importance of the role given to angels for instructing mankind receives corroboration from the tradition found in 1 Enoch that certain angels, known as 'Watchers', illicitly divulged heavenly secrets to mere mortals. Among the range



of subjects, 'they *taught* them magical medicine, incantations, the cutting of roots, and taught them (about) plants' (1 En 7.1). The somewhat diverse 'curriculum' was administered by various angelic mentors. So Azazel '*taught* the people (the art of) making swords and knives' (8.1). Amasras '*taught* incantation and the cutting of roots', Tam'el '*taught* the seeing of stars' and Asder'el '*taught* the course of the moon' (8.3). This illicit instruction evokes the complaint from Michael, Sariel and Gabriel: 'You see what Azaz'el has done; how he has taught all (forms of) oppression upon the earth. And *they revealed eternal secrets which are performed in heaven* (and which) man learned' (1 En 9.6). Although they taught human beings without divine authorization, the fact that they could do so indicates that they were exercising a divinely ordained ministry, although perverting it for their own unlawful ends. Thus we are told that in the time of Jared 'the angels of the Lord, who were called Watchers, *came down* to the earth in order to *teach* the sons of man, and perform judgment and uprightness upon the earth' (Jub 4.15).

From the foregoing analysis we can see that, within apocalyptic literature, there is evidence of a two-stage impartation of revelation. The initial disclosure of heavenly truth often leaves the seer bewildered and in need of an interpretation that will clarify the meaning of what he has seen and heard. To this end a supernatural being is sent in order to resolve the mystery that would otherwise defeat the seer's understanding. In the Book of Heavenly Luminaries (1 En 72-82), Enoch refers to the presence of his angelic guide as the reason why his

teaching is divinely validated: 'True is the matter...of that which has been recorded; for Uriel - whom the Lord of all the creation of the world has ordered for me (in order to explain) the host of heaven - *has revealed to me and breathed over me concerning...*' (82.7) [italics mine]. It is interesting to correlate this angelic breathing upon the seer recorded in the astronomical section of 1 Enoch with the opening verses of the epistle in which Enoch, again speaking to Methuselah, asks that his family be gathered to him, because '*the spirit is poured over me* so that *I may show you* everything that shall happen to you forever' (91.1). In this final section of the corpus of 1 Enoch there is no longer any reference to an angelic accompaniment. We may infer from this that the role previously undertaken by angels is now accomplished through the outpouring of the Spirit upon the seer. Further evidence of this development is provided toward the close of 4 Ezra (14.22) where the role previously performed by the interpreting angel Uriel is now taken over by the Holy Spirit.<sup>449</sup>

This principle of a two-stage process in the mediation of a divine revelation may also be discerned, albeit in modified form, in the documents belonging to the Qumran community.<sup>450</sup> The basic understanding of revelation espoused by these sectarians is that all things are regulated according to the 'mysteries of God' (1QS

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<sup>449</sup> Cf. Stone, *Fourth Ezra*, 411.

<sup>450</sup> Although it did not produce an apocalypse judged by strictly formal-literary criteria, the thought-world of the Qumran community bears enough affinity to the apocalyptic literature to justify the title of an 'apocalyptic community'. Cf. Cross, *The Ancient Library of Qumran*, 76-8; Collins, *Apocalypticism in the Dead Sea Scrolls*; Smalley, *Thunder and Love*, 25.



3-4; 1QM 14.14; 1QH 9.11-12).<sup>451</sup> Scholars have noted the importance of a whole raft of concepts expressing the idea that divine revelation is needed if the mysteries of Scripture are to be elucidated.<sup>452</sup> Hence, coordinate with words for mystery (רִז)<sup>453</sup> and counsel (סֹד), knowledge, insight and wisdom (רֵעָה, רֵעָה, שִׁל, חִכְמָה, בִּינָה, שִׁל), we find such expressions as ‘reveal’ (גִּלָּה)<sup>454</sup> and ‘enlighten’ (הֲאִיר).<sup>455</sup>

For the Qumran sectarians the advent of the new covenant did not involve setting up a rival body of scriptures, but rather the implementation of special methods for discovering the inner and true meaning of the existing canon.<sup>456</sup> Thus a second stage of revelation involved the disclosure of the true inner meaning

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<sup>451</sup> Collins, *Apocalyptic Imagination*, 150; C. Rowland, *Open Heaven*, 113-20; Koch, *Rediscovery*, 24. Cf. Bloch, *Apocalyptic in Judaism*, 4: ‘They profess to reveal a secret or inner knowledge which is not contained in Scripture history’.

<sup>452</sup> Dan 9 provides the clearest example of how the apocalyptic writers regarded themselves as the interpreters of the prophets. Cf. Schreiner, *Alttestamentliche-jüdische Apokalyptik*, 166; Collins, ‘Jewish Apocalyptic against its Hellenistic Near Eastern Environment’, 30-31; Willie-Plein, ‘Das Geheimnis der Apokalyptik’, 66-8, 76-81; Betz, *Offenbarung und Schriftforschung in der Qumransekte*, 73-81; Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism*, 222.

<sup>453</sup> Bockmuehl, *Revelation and Mystery*, 53, finds 65 occurrences of this word in the Scrolls.

<sup>454</sup> E.g., 1 QH 1.21; 6.4; 11.17.

<sup>455</sup> E.g., 1 QS 2.3; 4.2; 1 QH 3.3; 4.5, 27.

<sup>456</sup> Fitzmyer, ‘The Use of Explicit Old Testament Quotations in the Qumran Literature and in the New Testament’, 36, designates this type of interpretative process as ‘modernization’; a technique which enabled the community to pronounce itself as the intended object of a passage of Scripture. Fitzmyer finds this process at work in the following passages: CD 1:13-14; 4:12-18; 6:11-14; 7:15-16, 18-21; 8:9-12, 14-16; 19:1; 4Q Flor 1:2-3, 14-16, 16-17. Scholem, *Zur Kabbala und ihrer Symbolik*, 49-51, observes that Jewish groups who propagated dissident views tended to justify their ideas by claiming an exclusive revelation of the true meaning of Scripture. Collins, ‘Jewish Apocalyptic against its Hellenistic Near Eastern Environment’, 32, remarks that this procedure was not exclusive to Judaism, but practised in such works as the Egyptian Demotic Chronicle and the Potter’s Oracle.



of the text exclusively to the members of the community (1QpHab 7.1-2).<sup>457</sup> It was believed that scripture contained mysteries, the meaning of which had been disclosed to the Teacher of Righteousness. This is evident from the *peshar* on Habakkuk 7.3-4: 'And as for that which He said, *That he who reads may read it speedily*: interpreted this concerns the Teacher of Righteousness, to whom God made known all the mysteries of the words of His servants the Prophets [כול רזי עבדיו הנבאים].' The import of the passage is that the scriptural text requires a higher revelation to elucidate its true meaning.<sup>458</sup> So in the *Pesharim*, biblical verses are interpreted in the light of events either present or believed to be in the near future.

Only members of the community were granted insight into this meaning, since God 'has *concealed* the teaching of the law from the men of falsehood, but shall impart true knowledge and righteous judgement to those who have chosen the Way' (1QS 9).<sup>459</sup> The wise man is the one to whom God has revealed the

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<sup>457</sup> Collins, 'Jewish Apocalyptic against its Hellenistic Near Eastern Environment', 32, observes that this contrasts with prophecy in which 'revelation consisted of the direct transmission of the word of God.' Cf. Gruenwald, 'The Jewish Esoteric Literature', 37-40. Sanders, 'The Covenant as a Soteriological Category', 40, remarks that 'the Old Testament text, which originally had a reference to some event in the contemporary scene at the time it was written, nevertheless was vague enough to be applied to some new event in the history of the Qumran sect.'

<sup>458</sup> Collins, *Apocalyptic Imagination*, 152; Gruenwald, *Apocalyptic and Merkavah Mysticism*, 22, writes, 'Scripture is considered as a code, the indications for the decipherment of which are given in a special revelation. As such, it is a classic example of an esoteric text.'

<sup>459</sup> Bockmuehl, *Revelation and Mystery*, 53, states that 'through the Teacher of Righteousness and its exegetes, the community has been granted a disclosure of such mysteries...but it must guard them from outsiders unable or unworthy to understand'. See further Vermes, *DSS*, 79. In 1QS 11.3 the hymnist claims: 'For my light has sprung

mysteries of knowledge through his Spirit. It is the Spirit who is integral to the process of revealing the mysteries of God. Thus the hymnist offers thanksgiving to God that 'I, the Master, know Thee O my God, by the spirit which Thou hast given to me, and *by Thy Holy Spirit I have faithfully hearkened to thy marvellous counsel*' (1QH 12.11-12). A little later he repeats the same sentiment: 'And I, Thy servant, *I know by the spirit* which Thou hast given me' (13.18-19; cf. 1QS 4.2-6). Here the writer, in all likelihood the Teacher of Righteousness, has been endowed with the special charisma of the Spirit that enables him to interpret the true meaning of scripture for the community. Betz highlights the importance of this function as follows: 'Die Offenbarung ist für die Sekte an die Schrift gebunden und Werk des heiligen Geistes, der den Menschen reinigt, erleuchtet, stärkt und mit Gott verbindet.'<sup>460</sup>

We shall now endeavour to demonstrate that the apocalyptic principle of a two-stage process in the transmission of heavenly revelation is also adopted in the Fourth Gospel.<sup>461</sup> There are two phases in Jesus' teaching of his disciples: a pre-resurrection period characterised by limited comprehension on the part of the disciples and a post-resurrection period characterised by the illuminating presence of the Spirit-Paraclete.<sup>462</sup> Thus in 14.25-26 Jesus distinguishes between the words

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from the source of His knowledge; my eyes have beheld His marvellous deeds, and the light of my heart, the mystery to come.'

<sup>460</sup> Betz, *Offenbarung*, 149. Cf. Bockmuehl, *Revelation and Mystery*, 50.

<sup>461</sup> Thüsing, *Die Erhöhung und Verherrlichung Jesu im Johannesevangelium*, 203-4, observes that the one work of Jesus is realized in two phases or 'stages'.

<sup>462</sup> Olsson, *Structure and Meaning*, 271.



spoken during his earthly ministry (ταῦτα λελάληκα ὑμῖν παρ' ὑμῖν μένων) and the forthcoming advent of the Spirit (ὁ δὲ παράκλητος, τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον ὃ πέμψει ὁ πατήρ ἐν τῷ ὀνόματί μου). Since this promise is given in the context of the farewell discourse, it is reasonable to assume that ταῦτα refers to the entirety of Jesus' spoken revelation on earth. His teaching was imparted to the disciples while he was with them (παρ' ὑμῖν μένων), constituting the ὁ λόγος ὃν ἀκούετε (14.24) deriving from the Father. But, as Olsson observes, the introductory δέ of 14.26 'denotes a certain distance between Jesus' earthly activity and that of the Paraclete'.<sup>463</sup> Jesus recognizes that the words he speaks to the disciples while he is physically with them need to be elucidated by the Paraclete in order to bring out their full meaning.

In 16.12-13 Jesus also speaks of a future phase yet to be fulfilled in the two-part drama of revelation: ἔτι πολλὰ ἔχω ὑμῖν λέγειν, ἀλλ' οὐ δύνασθε βαστάζειν ἄρτι· ὅταν δὲ ἔλθῃ ἐκεῖνος, τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς ἀληθείας, ὁδηγήσει ὑμᾶς ἐν τῇ ἀληθείᾳ πάση. The presence of the temporal markers ἔτι, ἄρτι, ὅταν, together with the future tense of ἔρχομαι once again indicate two periods of time within the whole revelatory activity of Jesus. At first sight the reference to πολλὰ in 16.12 may seem to contradict what Jesus said in 15.15b: 'All (πάντα) that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you'. However, this latter statement does allow for the possibility that there is yet more that Jesus *will*

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<sup>463</sup> Olsson, *Structure and Meaning*, 268.



hear from the Father. Not only is it true that Jesus ‘has heard’ from the Father (8.26; 15.15), it is also the case that he is *still* hearing in the present. Thus in 5.30 he says: ‘As I hear (καθὼς ἀκούω), I judge’; here the verb is in the present tense.

Moreover, the promise of further disclosure in 16.12-14 can be understood to mean that, while the revelation of Jesus is complete in itself, this remains to be elucidated to the disciples. De la Potterie believes that the triple occurrence of ἀναγγελεῖ ὑμῖν is ‘no ordinary repetition’. He argues that the phrase belongs to the ‘literary genre of apocalyptic’ in which the meaning is ‘to announce or reveal something which up to now has been unknown or secret’. It is used in the Theodotion translation of Daniel (2.4, 7, 9, 11, 16, 24, 25, 26, 27; 5.12, 15) and in 3 Baruch 1.<sup>464</sup> The specific use of the verb in these cases is with reference to the interpretation of mysteries *already communicated* in dreams or visions.<sup>465</sup>

In 16.25 we may also discern a reference to the two stages in Jesus’ revelatory activity. Thus Jesus has spoken (λελάληκα), but also he will speak (λαλήσω, ἀπαγγελῶ). By analogy with 14.25, it is probable that ταῦτα λελάληκα refers to Jesus’ earthly revelation. Thus De la Potterie speaks of ‘deux grandes périodes dans l’économie de la revelation, la première étant constituée par sa propre parole, la seconde par l’enseignement de l’Esprit’.<sup>466</sup> The earthly ministry of Jesus is presented as the first phase of this process. However, just as

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<sup>464</sup> De la Potterie, ‘The Truth in Saint John’, 77.

<sup>465</sup> Brown, *John*, II, 709, argues that ἀναγγέλλειν is used by the evangelist with the same meaning as in classical and LXX Greek where the prefix ἀνα implies a reiterative pronouncement. Cf. Schniewind, *TDNT* 1, 64.

<sup>466</sup> De la Potterie, ‘Le Paraclet’, 90; idem, ‘The Truth in Saint John’, 77.

the meaning of an apocalyptic vision or the significance of heavenly reality is shrouded from mortal understanding, so the import of the divine disclosure in Jesus is hidden to the uninitiated.<sup>467</sup> The revelation of Jesus, while complete, still remains to be interpreted or expounded for the disciples.<sup>468</sup> Hall observes that although ‘Jesus brings perfect revelation, it is closed to all unless further revelation enables eyewitnesses to grasp what they have seen’.<sup>469</sup>

While on earth, Jesus deliberately employs cryptic symbolism, or *παροιμία*, in communicating with the disciples.<sup>470</sup> Thus his words are characterised by mystery and a certain unintelligibility,<sup>471</sup> prompting Stibbe to remark that ‘John’s Jesus is the deity who speaks a heavenly language consisting of demanding word-pictures and figurative riddles’.<sup>472</sup> Often there are two meanings that may be attached to a phrase or event, the plain and the esoteric. For example, the reference to the raising up of the temple (2.19-22) is a riddle, since the verb *ἐγείρειν* is the usual word for erecting a building, apart from being used by the evangelist to denote Jesus’ resurrection. For the first hearers of Jesus the

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<sup>467</sup> Hall, *Revealed Histories*, 230, observes: ‘As apocalyptic visions frequently reveal little without further revelation to interpret them, so the perfect disclosure in Jesus requires further revelation’.

<sup>468</sup> Cf. Ch.2, section 3, above.

<sup>469</sup> *Revealed Histories*, 232; cf. Painter, *John*, 9, 64; Culpepper, *Anatomy*, 49.

<sup>470</sup> For in-depth studies of the Johannine use of ambiguous expressions and double entendres, see Wead, *Literary Devices in John’s Gospel*; Leroy, *Rätsel und Missverständnis*.

<sup>471</sup> Brown, *John*, 734 refers to the ‘inevitable mystery presented by one from above when he speaks to those who are on the earth.’

<sup>472</sup> ‘The Elusive Christ’, 238. Ashton, *Understanding*, 415, observes that the ‘riddling discourse’, which permeates the Fourth Gospel, reflects the ‘two levels of understanding’ that operate throughout the work.



former meaning would be the most obvious way in which to understand his words; only the later believers with the help of the Holy Spirit would be able to pick up the deeper meaning. Similarly, the Samaritan woman at the well of Sychar interprets Jesus' offer of living / running water in a literal way (4.11). The disciples make the same mistake later on in the passage when Jesus refers to food that they know nothing about. They assume that someone has brought him natural food without their knowledge (4.33). Even at the end of Jesus' earthly ministry the meaning of the exchange between Jesus and Judas is hidden from the comprehension of the disciples (13.28-29), as is also the reference to 'a little while' which Jesus makes concerning his temporary parting from them (16.16-24).<sup>473</sup>

In the episode of the foot-washing Peter fails to appreciate the significance of Jesus' action, and yet is nevertheless promised, '*later* (μετὰ ταῦτα) you will understand (γνώση)' (13.7). Similarly in 14.20 Jesus promises the disciples: '*In that day* (ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ) you will know that I am in the Father and you in me and I in you'. What 'day' is this? The context of the passage shows that it is the day when Jesus 'comes' to his own (14.18). However, this coming will be in the person of the Paraclete (14.16), hence the 'later' refers to the post-resurrection coming of the Spirit who will be sent in order to facilitate a deeper and progressive insight into the spiritual truth that derives from Jesus. While Jesus was on earth, the disciples possessed only limited insight into this revelation. It was therefore to

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<sup>473</sup> Cf. also 20.14; 21.4; 6.6, 64; 7.39; 11.13.



their advantage that the physical presence of the earthly Jesus should give way to his spiritual presence through the agency of the Spirit (16.7).<sup>474</sup> Not until after 'the hour' with the coming of the Paraclete are the secrets revealed, meaning that the teaching of Jesus is now ἐν παρησίᾳ.

Full comprehension of Jesus' person and ministry, therefore, is not attained during the period of his earthly life.<sup>475</sup> Müller rightly observes: 'Die Botschaft des irdischen Jesus hatte noch nicht zum rechten verstehen und zum Glauben geführt'.<sup>476</sup> It is only through the ministry of the Spirit in the life of the disciples after the resurrection that the meaning of Jesus' words and works is fully understood.<sup>477</sup> Indeed, if the world, symbolised by the unbelieving Jews, is blind to the truth of God, the disciples themselves have only limited understanding during the time of Jesus' ministry on earth. As far as they were concerned, prior to the ascension of Jesus 'there was no Spirit (οὐπω γὰρ ἦν πνεῦμα), because Jesus was not yet glorified' (7.39).<sup>478</sup> Although there is obviously some appreciation of the special significance of Jesus, it awaits the advent of the Spirit

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<sup>474</sup> Wescott, *St John*, Vol 2, 182, asserts that 'The revelation of Christ in his person and word was absolute and complete, but without the gradual illumination of the Spirit it is partly unintelligible and partly unobserved.'

<sup>475</sup> Barrett, 'The Holy Spirit in the Fourth Gospel', 5.

<sup>476</sup> 'Die Parakletenvorstellung', 47.

<sup>477</sup> Müller, 'Die Parakletenvorstellung', 47, observes: 'Erst als der Geist nach der Verherrlichung Jesu gegeben wird, verstehen sie seine Worte und die Schrift, die von ihm zeugt (2.22; 12.6; 20.9)'.

<sup>478</sup> Ashton, *Understanding*, 421-22. Cf. Olsson, *Structure and Meaning*, 263-64.

to be brought to consummation.<sup>479</sup> Betz rightly observes that ‘auch die Fragen der Jünger in den Abschiedsreden verraten den Abstand zwischen dem vom Himmel gekommenen Jesus und seinen Schülern, die nur ein begrenztes Verständnis besitzen’.<sup>480</sup>

Now as the interpreting angel provides the key to mysteries hidden in the heavenly world, so the Holy Spirit, known also as the Spirit of Truth and the Paraclete, illuminates secret truths hidden in the words and deeds of Jesus.<sup>481</sup> It is important to realize that the revelation elucidated by the Paraclete is not really new, but ‘vom Geist ausgelegte, eingefürte, vertiefte und von den Aposteln neu erkannte, neu verstandene Christusoffenbarung, und das in ihrer Totalität’.<sup>482</sup> Thus Olsson is correct in affirming that while ‘Christ alone is *the* Revealer, with the definite article’, it is equally true that ‘the Paraclete is the Teacher and Interpreter’.<sup>483</sup> Although the revelation is complete and entire in Christ, who is himself the ἀληθεία, the Paraclete leads into this revelation: ὁδηγήσει ὑμᾶς ἐν τῇ ἀληθείᾳ πάση (16.13).

Thus, while in the apocalyptic literature the celestial dimension is the source of higher revelation, the Fourth Gospel presupposes that the locus of

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<sup>479</sup> Johnston, *Spirit-Paraclete*, 89, comments: ‘There seem to be certain elements in the truth about Jesus that had to remain unknown or unclear until after the Crucifixion...Full disclosure is attributed to the interpreter-spirit’.

<sup>480</sup> *Der Paraklet*, 102.

<sup>481</sup> Aune, *Cultic Setting*, 70-2; Schnackenburg, *St John*, Vol 3, 83.

<sup>482</sup> Kothgasser, ‘Die Lehr-, Erinnerungs-, Bezeugungs-, und Einfuhrungs-funktion des Johanneischen Geist-Paraklet gegenüber der Christus-Offenbarung’, 33.

<sup>483</sup> Olsson, *Structure and Meaning*, 269.



revelation is Jesus. It is clear that for the Johannine community the actions and words of Jesus constitute a mine of revelation waiting to be drawn upon.<sup>484</sup> Therefore, it is rightly affirmed that ‘everything the Spirit will reveal is contained *in nuce* in the words and deeds of Jesus. Jesus’ ministry is a storehouse of revelation waiting to be unpacked by the Spirit of truth’.<sup>485</sup> Accordingly, in asserting that ‘everything the Father has is mine’ (16.14-15), Jesus is claiming to be the repository of all possible revelation and it is the work of the Spirit, acting as an interpreting angel, to disclose progressively the deeper meaning that inheres in his words (16.14, ὅτι ἐκ τοῦ ἐμοῦ λήμψεται καὶ ἀναγγελεῖ ὑμῖν).<sup>486</sup> Mussner emphasizes that the Paraclete ‘is not a figure parallel to Jesus who is to complete Jesus’ revelation or even (as a rival) to replace it by a new and better one, but is the instrument of the glorified Christ, who preserves Jesus’ words and work for the Church, renders them present and interprets them’.<sup>487</sup>

One significant way in which the Spirit interprets the Christ-revelation is by bringing to remembrance events from the earthly life of Jesus and then teaching

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<sup>484</sup> Cf. Hall, *Revealed Histories*, 239: ‘John views the ministry of Jesus as the locus of revelation *par excellence*.’

<sup>485</sup> Hall, *Revealed Histories*, 217. Cf. also Martyn, *History and Theology*, 150: ‘John can say in his prologue “we beheld his glory” not only because the Christian church possesses tradition about Jesus’ *einmalig* revelation of the Father, but also because the Paraclete is even now showing Jesus in his glory.’

<sup>486</sup> Schnackenburg, *St John*, I, 524, contends that the revelation of Jesus as historical and eschatological event ‘is closed, and it only remains to explain it further, disclose its riches and explicate its full truth’.

<sup>487</sup> *The Historical Jesus*, 61. Cf. De la Potterie, ‘The Truth in Saint John’, 78: ‘It is clear then that in the economy of revelation the role of the Spirit remains essentially subordinated to that of Christ, who is the only revealer; the task of the Spirit will be to cause the message of Jesus to penetrate into the hearts of the faithful, to give them the understanding of faith’.



the disciples their deeper meaning and relevance for the contemporary situation (14.26: ἐκεῖνος ὑμᾶς διδάξει πάντα καὶ ὑπομνήσει ὑμᾶς πάντα ἃ εἶπον ὑμῖν ἐγώ).<sup>488</sup> The importance of the Spirit's work in bringing the words of Jesus to the remembrance of the disciples may be implied in two episodes in the main body of the Gospel.

First, the Johannine account of the cleansing of the Temple (2.13-22) supplies two significant allusions to the post-resurrection remembrances of the disciples. In 2.17 the evangelist interjects his narrative with the comment that 'his disciples remembered (ἐμνήσθησαν) that it was written, "Zeal for thy house will consume me"'. Later we are told that even the disciples themselves do not appreciate the complete significance of Jesus' words ('Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up') until after the resurrection, when they 'remembered' his words: 'When therefore he was raised from the dead, his disciples *remembered* (ἐμνήσθησαν) that he had said this; and they believed the scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken' (2.22). Thus only later do the disciples come to understand the true meaning of Jesus' act of cleansing the Temple in the light of Ps 69.9.<sup>489</sup> The remark 'when therefore he was raised from the dead' is not only a

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<sup>488</sup> The question of whether 'reminding' and 'teaching' denote the same or different activities receives varying answers. Those who distinguish the two include Windisch, *The Spirit-Paraclete*, 7; Mußner, 'Parakletsprüche', 60; Nicol, *The Semeia in the Fourth Gospel*, 126. On the other hand, the two functions are held together by Bultmann, *John*, 626, n. 6; Brown, *John*, 650; Woll, *Johannine Christianity*, 100. Haacker, *Die Stiftung des Heils*, 154, keeps the two together while allowing that new information may be disclosed through the ministry of the Spirit.

<sup>489</sup> Olsson, *Structure and Meaning*, 265.

temporal signifier, but also supplies us with the reason why the disciples could exercise believing remembrance. After the resurrection the Spirit would be sent in the name of Jesus to ‘teach’ (διδάξει) and ‘bring to remembrance’ (ὑπομνήσει) the significance of Jesus’ words and deeds (14.26).

A second example of the significance of the post-resurrection reminiscence of the disciples is found in the account of Jesus’ triumphal entry into Jerusalem (12.12-19). The passage records how the pilgrims who had come to the festival welcome Jesus in the words of the Hallel: ‘Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord’ (Ps 118.25-26). Jesus then finds a young ass upon which to ride, thereby fulfilling the prophecy of Zechariah ‘Fear not daughter of Zion; behold your king is coming sitting on an ass’s colt’. After this quotation the evangelist inserts the following editorial comment: ‘These things the disciples did not understand (ἔγνωσαν) at first (τὸ πρῶτον), but when Jesus was glorified then they remembered (τότε ἐμνήσθησαν) that these things were written concerning him and that they did these things to him’ (12.16).<sup>490</sup> Now what exactly do the disciples fail to understand? The answer is given by the ὅτι clause: Jesus was the fulfilment of the messianic predictions given in prophecy. True understanding came as they later ‘remembered’ certain scriptural texts and realized their application in the events of Jesus’ earthly ministry.<sup>491</sup>

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<sup>490</sup> Ashton, *Understanding*, 417, observes that ‘Jesus’s deeds as well as his words remain obscure until after the resurrection, when they are recollected by the believing community’.

<sup>491</sup> Olsson, *Structure and Meaning*, 264.



The above pericopae highlight two vital points germane to the Johannine presentation of the gospel. First we note the pre-resurrection lack of understanding by the disciples: 'These things the disciples did not understand *at first*'. Secondly, the enlightened remembrance comes after the resurrection which is facilitated by the work of the Holy Spirit in '*reminding*' the disciples of what Jesus said.<sup>492</sup> Mussner has observed that in Johannine thought the post-Easter knowledge of the life of Jesus is conceived as a 'process of anamnesis'. The remembrance of the disciples not only focuses on the historical events surrounding Jesus of Nazareth, it is 'directed to the hidden meaning of this history which is disclosed in a knowing and believing anamnesis'.<sup>493</sup> The role of the Paraclete is to interpret Jesus' sayings to the disciples, thus giving rise to new insights and experiences. Therefore, it is only then, when endowed with the Spirit, that the disciples are able to interpret correctly the meaning of Jesus' ministry. Furthermore, as Cullmann observes, the 'remembering' of the disciples is not confined simply to the material facts, but 'includes alongside of this that understanding of the facts which is first granted through the Holy Spirit'.<sup>494</sup>

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<sup>492</sup> Lieu, 'Scripture in John', 152, asserts that 'neither Jesus nor the narrator relates the activity of the spirit to the interpretation of Scripture' and she criticises those interpreters who correlate the later 'remembering' of the disciples with the work of the Paraclete. However, this criticism fails to take into account that the promise of Jesus that the Paraclete will not only 'teach' the disciples, but 'bring to remembrance' (ὁπομνήσει) all that he has told them (14.26). Moreover, as Hall, *Revealed Histories*, 219, observes: 'Specifying that this memory occurs after the resurrection or after Jesus was glorified locates it squarely in the period of the Paraclete's activity'. Cf. Müller, 'Die Parakletenvorstellung', 46.

<sup>493</sup> *The Historical Jesus*, 85.

<sup>494</sup> *Early Christian Worship*, 49.



An illuminating comparison has been drawn between the Johannine farewell discourse and some of the 'Abschiedsreden' found in parts of the apocalyptic literature from the Second Temple period, in that both form the literary deposit of the Spirit's activity.<sup>495</sup> The problem facing the Jewish patriarch or revered leader is how to ensure the continued welfare of his children or followers in his absence. This is crystallized well by the departing Ezra: 'Then I answered and said, "Let me speak in your presence, Lord. For behold, I will go, as you have commanded me, and I will reprove (*corripiam*) the people who are now living; but who will warn (*commonebit*) those who will be born hereafter? For the world lies in darkness, and its inhabitants are without light. For your Law has been burned, and so no one knows the things which have been done or will be done by you"' (4 Ez 14.19-21). While he himself lives Ezra is able to fulfil the divine mandate for the people, which involves a threefold task: to 'reprove your people; comfort the lowly among them, and instruct those that are wise' (14.13). However, once he is gone who will fulfil this duty?

The solution to this problem is found in the ensuing request that the seer makes. Ezra asks the Lord to send the Holy Spirit to him in order that he might write out the Law afresh under supernatural inspiration: 'If then I have found favour before you, *send the Holy Spirit to me (immitte in me spiritum sanctum)*, and I will write everything that has happened in the world from the beginning...' (14.22). The presence of the Spirit ensures that Ezra is enlightened with 'the lamp

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<sup>495</sup> Müller, 'Die Parakletenvorstellung', 30-60.

of understanding (*lucernam intellectus*)' (14.25). When the actual bestowal of the Spirit is described, it is in terms of a drink that Ezra imbibes which confers understanding, wisdom, utterance and a retentive memory: "Ezra, open your mouth and drink what I give you to drink". Then I opened my mouth, and behold, a full cup was offered to me; it was full of something like water, but its colour was like fire. And I took it and drank; and when I had drunk it, my heart poured forth understanding, and wisdom increased in my breast, *for my spirit retained its memory (nam spiritus meus conservabat memoria)*' (14.38-40).

The Testament of Levi offers an interesting parallel to the reminding work of the Spirit. Levi is given the honour of the priesthood among the children of Jacob and as such has the Law of the Lord shown to him by an angel. However the patriarch Isaac finds it necessary to *remind* his grandson, Levi, of the Law that was originally revealed by the angel: 'And Isaac kept calling me continually *to bring to my remembrance* the Law of the Lord, just as the angel had shown me (καὶ ὁ Ἰσαὰκ ἐκάλει με συνεχῶς τοῦ ὑπομνῆσαι με νόμον Κυρίου, καθὼς ἔδειξέ μοι ὁ ἄγγελος)' (T Lev 9.6). Thus we see in this passage that although Levi has already received the Law from heaven through the mediation of an angel, he is still in need of it being brought to his remembrance. Likewise the Angel of the Presence in Jubilees illumines the understanding of Moses, enabling him to write a truly inspired and authoritative account of the history of Israel from the beginning to the end (Jub 1.27). Betz makes the insightful comment that for the reader of the work in Second Temple Judaism, Jubilees is a 'reminder' of the



sacred history ‘aber es zeigt sie in neuem Licht, enthüllt ihren himmlischen Hintergrund und offenbart den eigentlichen Sinn’.<sup>496</sup>

This same principle may be applied to the Fourth Gospel since it can itself be seen as the embodiment of promise that Jesus makes in 14.26 that the disciples would be taught and have brought to their remembrance the words of Jesus. Thus Müller contends that the Fourth Gospel is ‘eine Äußerungsform des johanneischen Parakleten...durch die Abfassung des Evangeliums wird also das Weiterwirken von Jesu Worten gewahrt’.<sup>497</sup> Similarly Mussner observes that ‘Jesus’s voice remains present and audible through the Paraclete in the apostolic kerygma, *as part of which John’s gospel itself in particular is to be reckoned*’.<sup>498</sup> Believers are divinely authorized to interpret further the significance of God’s act of revelation through Jesus, since the Spirit will guide (ὁδηγήσει) them into all truth (16.13).<sup>499</sup>

The notion of ‘reminding’ provides a control on the limits of novelty that can be introduced. We see this to be the case with the *angelus interpretes* who only possesses a delegated authority. As an intermediary he is constrained by a superior authority that has imposed limits on the knowledge he can reveal. So

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<sup>496</sup> Betz, *Der Paraklet*, 185.

<sup>497</sup> Müller, ‘Die Parakletenvorstellung’, 55. Windisch, *The Spirit-Paraclete in the Fourth Gospel*, 9, states that the promise that the Spirit ‘will bear witness to me’ can ‘comprehend the entire content of the (Johannine) Gospel’.

<sup>498</sup> *The Historical Jesus*, 26.

<sup>499</sup> Windisch, *Johannes und die Synoptiker*, 148, drew attention to the way John ‘hat die Kühnheit besessen, die Offenbarungen des durch den Geist zu ihm sprechenden Christus in seine Beschreibung der geschichtlichen Erscheinung Jesu mit aufzunehmen’. Schnackenburg, *St. John*, Vol 3, 144 and Painter, ‘The Farewell Discourses and the History of Johannine Christianity’, 526, 539-40, both consider the passage in Jn 16.12-15 as a reworking of the promise of the Paraclete given in 14.26. Bammel, ‘Jesus und der Paraklet in Johannes 16’, 207-8, believes the reworking to be the other way round.



Uriel informs Ezra: ‘Concerning the signs about which you ask me, I can tell you in part; but I was not sent to tell you concerning your life, for I do not know’ (4 Ez 4.52; cf. 2 Bar 55.3; 63.6). A similar scenario is depicted in the Apocalypse of Zephaniah when heaven is opened to the seer on the occasion of the great angel blowing the golden trumpet, allowing him to observe the various conditions of the departed souls. However, because the revelation is only partial, Zephaniah questions the angel why this should be so, to which he receives the reply ‘*I do not have authority to show them to you until the Lord Almighty rises up*’ (Ap Zeph 10.2). In this respect we see a correlation between the ministry of the *angelus interpres* and that which Jesus assigns to the Spirit-Paraclete (16.13-15).

In the Fourth Gospel the ministry of the Paraclete provides the necessary assurance that the written tradition of the believing community is veridical. Although in 16.13 we are told that the Spirit will declare ‘things to come’ (τὰ ἐρχόμενα), this revelation will not be independent from Jesus (‘*he will not speak on his own authority*’: οὐ γὰρ λαλήσει αὐτὸν), but based on what he hears (ὅσα ἀκούει). Accordingly, Burge states: ‘The revelation of Jesus will still continue in the community, and the Spirit-Paraclete will be his authoritative channel. But these revelations must not depart from the original revelation of the historical Christ’.<sup>500</sup>

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<sup>500</sup> *The Anointed Community*, 215. Windisch, *The Spirit-Paraclete in the Fourth Gospel*, 7-9, contends that the promise that the disciples will be strengthened in their powers of recollection serves to guarantee the inspired transmission of the evangel. Thus subsequent believers are ‘assured (a) that everything Jesus said is known and preserved,

We have argued that the pattern of revelation followed by angelic interpretation is one that is adopted in both apocalyptic literature and the Fourth Gospel. In both cases the resultant knowledge possesses an inviolable authority because it bears the stamp of a heavenly *imprimatur*. The recipients of such authoritative teaching thereby have their symbolic universe or world-view strengthened since they are assured of its divine provenance. Alternative or conflicting perspectives are seen to be inferior, or invalid, because only the privileged members of the believing community have access to the truth. Thus the *angelus interpres* Uriel informs Ezra of his unique privilege in receiving understanding concerning the nature of the day of judgment and the advent of the new age, for 'to you *alone* have I shown these things' (7.44; cf. 12.36; 13.53). Understanding of the divine disclosure has not been 'shown to all men, but *only* to you and a few like you' (8.62). The 'many secrets' of the Most High (9.38) are shown to Ezra so that he may teach 'the wise' among his people, 'whose hearts you know are able to comprehend and keep these secrets' (12.38). Here we see that the seer is associated with a community who, like him, are admitted into the meaning of mysteries that remain locked up to those on the outside.

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and (b) that the extant tradition of the teaching of Jesus is genuine and trustworthy'. Robinson, 'The Use of the Fourth Gospel for Christology', 67, therefore cautions: 'Nor is 'to remember', however creatively, to invent...For John has a profound reverence for history, for happenedness. As the locus of incarnation, it cannot be treated lightly or wantonly: it is holy ground'.



The final section of the apocalypse closes with an instruction from the Most High to the seer regarding which of the books he has written should be made public. The first twenty-four, which would comprise the Hebrew Bible, could be accessible to both 'the worthy and the unworthy'. However the remaining seventy books are to be kept secret and only revealed to the wise, for 'in them are the springs of understanding, the fountains of wisdom, and the river of knowledge' (14.47). The import of this injunction is that the apocalyptic mysteries possesses a value and authority that supersedes even that which is attached to the Torah. In consequence of this the community that treasures the words of the visionary can be confident that their beliefs and observances are sanctioned from above. Adler notes that sectarian communities employed the esoteric material found in the apocalypses to 'call attention to the privilege conferred upon those who receive and understand their mysteries'.<sup>501</sup>

The closing remarks of the angel to Daniel underline this same apocalyptic principle: 'None of the wicked shall understand, but those who are wise shall understand' (12.10). This is evident in the traditions forming the first part of the book of Daniel. Here Jewish wisdom is shown to be superior to that of its heathen competitors. Thus while the Babylonian 'wise men' are defeated by Nebuchadnezzar's challenge to reveal both the content and meaning of his dream, in contrast we read that 'the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a vision of the night' (2.19). This champion of the Jewish faith is able to boast that 'no wise

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<sup>501</sup> Adler, *Jewish Apocalyptic Heritage*, 17.



men, enchanters, magicians or diviners can show to the king the mystery that the king is asking, *but there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries*' (2.27-28). The result of his signal success in elucidating the hidden meaning withheld from other would-be interpreters is that he is seen to be 'endowed with a *spirit* of the holy gods' (4.8; 5.11) for whom no mystery is too difficult since he is equipped with an 'excellent spirit' enabling him to interpret dreams, explain riddles and solve problems (5.12-16).

It is important to note that the effect upon those who are granted an apocalyptic disclosure is that they are raised above others who remain darkened in their understanding. Adler once again observes that 'since legitimately received divine revelations were the property of a select few, esotericism functioned in part to heighten the prestige of those in possession of this secret learning'.<sup>502</sup> Thus the apocalyptic principle that a revelation remains veiled until a divine interpretation is issued, serves the sociological purpose of elevating the status of those who have been so enlightened. In the case of the Johannine fellowship the abiding presence of the Paraclete in the worshipping community assures believers of the ultimate truth of their beliefs. Knowledge of the authenticity of their belief system is built into the symbolic universe of the community providing the necessary intellectual and spiritual security in the face of opposition and intimidation.

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<sup>502</sup> Adler, *Jewish Apocalyptic Heritage*, 15.

## 2 Legal Protagonist

Within apocalyptic literature there is evidence that a special relationship may exist between a heavenly being and the righteous ones upon earth, with the former acting as the heavenly guardian of the latter. Thus, in the Ethiopic text of 1 Enoch 20.5 we read: ‘Michael, one of the holy angels, namely the one put in charge of the best part of mankind, in charge of the nation’, while the Greek text reads Μιχαήλ, ὁ εἰς τῶν ἁγίων ἀγγέλων ὁ ἐπὶ τῶν τοῦ λαοῦ ἀγαθῶν τεταγμένος καὶ ἐπὶ τῷ χαῶ. Normally the phrase τοῦ λαοῦ refers to the people of Israel, indicating that the archangel Michael has special responsibility for Israel. In the Animal Apocalypse, which gives an account of how the Lord of the sheep turns over the sheep to seventy shepherds, we find a reference to God appointing ‘a Watcher, one of the seven white ones’ (1 En 89.61), who will serve as the nation’s heavenly protector (90.14-22). This may well refer to Michael, acting as attorney for Israel against the seventy shepherds before the Lord of the Sheep.<sup>503</sup>

Another example of this role is found in Dan 10.13 which mentions ‘one of the chief princes’ [MT: אַחַד הַשָּׂרִים הָרִאשִׁימִים; LXX: εἰς τῶν ἀρχόντων τῶν πρώτων], loyal to the divine bidding (Dan 10.21). In 10.13, 20-21 it is stated that he fights (לְהִלָּחֵם; מִתְחַזֵּק) against the ‘prince of the kingdom of Persia’ in order that his fellow angel will be able to interpret the vision given to Daniel. He is depicted as a warrior or commander, charged with the special responsibility of

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<sup>503</sup> Hannah, *Michael and Christ*, 39.

protecting Israel (הַעֲמִד עַל Dan 12.1). Lacocque offers three possible meanings of הַעֲמִד עַל: a) 'to lead as chief'; b) 'to protect or defend'; c) 'to judge'.<sup>504</sup> Hannah draws attention to the military nuance of this phrase,<sup>505</sup> while Collins interprets it in a judicial sense, referring to the legal context of Dan 7.13-14.<sup>506</sup> However it seems clear that an important function of the angelic guardian involves acting in the capacity of legal advocate and opponent of hostile supernatural powers.

The task of engaging in heavenly conflict on behalf of the chosen people finds expression in the title ἀρχιστράτηγος accorded to Michael in several texts. In 2 Enoch (J) 22.6 he is designated 'the Lord's archistratig'<sup>507</sup> (cf. 33.10; 71.28; 72.5). This same term is used in recension A of the Testament of Abraham (1.4; 2.2-12), and is translated by Sanders as 'Commander -in-chief'<sup>508</sup> (cf. 3 Bar 11.6; JosAsen 14.7). In the Apocalypse of Abraham it is Iael who is the heavenly being, commissioned by God 'through the mediation of my ineffable name' to 'consecrate' and 'strengthen' the patriarch (10.3). Moreover, he is 'assigned to be

<sup>504</sup> Lacocque, *Daniel*, 240.

<sup>505</sup> Hannah, *Michael and Christ*, 41.

<sup>506</sup> Collins, *Daniel*, 390; cf. Goldingay, *Daniel*, 274; Montgomery, *Daniel*, 240.

<sup>507</sup> This is the Slavonic word. Recension A has the variant 'greatest archangel', probably taken from Dan 11.1. Cf. F.I. Anderson, *OTP*, 1, 138. Charles, *Secrets of Enoch*, 28, notes the reference in 1 En 40.9 in which Michael is described as the chief of the archangels. He also states that 'as being the angel set over Israel, 1 En 20.5, he is naturally the chief captain'.

<sup>508</sup> Sanders, 'Testament of Abraham', *OTP*, 1, 882, thinks that the title is Egyptian Jewish, originating in the title that the LXX confers upon the figure holding the sword who appears to Joshua as the captain of the Lord's army (Josh 5.13-15). The Hebrew סֵרָצְבָא יְהוּה is translated in the LXX as ὁ ἀρχιστράτηγος κυρίου. Cf. Delcor, *Testament*, 91; Philonenko, *Joseph et Aseneth*, 178.



with' Abraham and his descendants (10.16). Like Michael, he is the guardian of the chosen race (10.17) and is empowered to subjugate 'the attack and menace of every reptile' (10.10).

The gift of a spiritual guardian is promised in the Epistle of Enoch for the holy people to keep them in the face of adversity. Thus while 'the Most High will arise on that day of judgment in order to execute a great judgment upon all the sinners', at the same time '*he will set a guard of holy angels over all the righteous and holy ones*, and they shall keep them (Gk: 'they shall be kept', τηρηθήσονται) as the apple of the eye until all evil and all sin are brought to an end' (1 En 100.4-5). Protection from hostile forces, on both natural and supernatural levels, is also assured for the righteous in the Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs. Thus it is stated of the intercessory angel in the Testament of Dan that he 'shall stand in opposition to the kingdom of the enemy' (6.3). Those under the angel's protection are therefore exhorted to 'draw near to God and to *the angel who intercedes for you*, because he is the mediator between God and men for the peace of Israel' (ἐγγίσατε τῷ θεῷ καὶ τῷ ἀγγέλῳ τῷ παραιτουμένῳ ὑμᾶς. ὅτι οὗτος ἐστι μεσίτης θεοῦ καὶ ἀνθρώπων). Furthermore, Dan promises his children that '*this angel of peace will strengthen Israel* so that it will not succumb to an evil destiny' (αὐτὸς γὰρ ὁ ἄγγελος τῆς εἰρήνης ἐνισχύσει τὸν Ἰσραὴλ μὴ ἐμπεσεῖν αὐτὸν εἰς τέλος κακῶν) (6.5).

In similar manner Levi is assured by his angelic guide in T Lev 5.6: 'I am the angel who makes intercession for the nation Israel (ἐγὼ εἰμι ὁ ἄγγελος ὁ

παραιτούμενος τὸ γένος Ἰσραήλ) *that they might not be beaten* (τοῦ μὴ πατάξαι αὐτούς)'. In T Nap 8.4 the patriarch promises his children that their obedience will ensure angelic support in the war against evil: 'If you achieve the good, my children, men and angels will bless you; and God will be glorified through you among the gentiles. The devil will flee from you (ὁ διάβολος φεύξεται ἀφ' ὑμῶν); wild animals will be afraid of you, *and the angels will stand by you* (καὶ οἱ ἄγγελοι ἀνθέξονται ὑμῶν)'. With respect to Joseph the heavenly support is designated as 'the spirit of God' who is 'within him' (T Sim 4.4) and it is specifically stated that it is for this reason that Beliar was unable to 'conquer' him (cf. T Reub 4.11).

From the preceding analysis we can see that heavenly beings occupied an important role in protecting the interests of the believing community on earth. Now in the light of the trials facing the Johannine community, it would provide welcome comfort to know that, in Johnston's words, 'there is and will be for ever a divine presence, a spirit, a protagonist that assures the faithful about God and about victory'.<sup>509</sup> The promise of the presence of Jesus in the form of the Paraclete, in the face of apparent vulnerability to the hostile intentions of the Jewish authorities, is of vital significance to the Johannine community. It will inspire fortitude in those believers who are being persecuted for their commitment to Jesus (John 9.22; 12.42; 16.2).

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<sup>509</sup> *Spirit-Paraclete*, 74.

We shall argue that the important role played by members of the divine court, both angels and the spirits, in providing protection by securing divine justice finds a parallel in that performed by the Paraclete in the Fourth Gospel. Throughout the earlier chapters Jesus is depicted as involved in a legal battle with the unbelieving world (3.19; 5.22, 30; 8.16, 26; 9.39). However, the lawsuit between Jesus and the world that began in his earthly ministry is later continued via the agency of the Spirit once Jesus has been glorified. Bultmann argues that ‘even if παράκλητος did not become a technical term for the counsel in a court of law (as was the case with the Latin *advocatus*), the concept is hall-marked by the juridical sphere: παράκλητος means the one who speaks before the judges in favour of the accused; it means intercessor and helper’.<sup>510</sup> Like the angels referred to in the apocalyptic material previously cited, the Spirit-Paraclete stands alongside, interceding for the chosen ones so that they will be kept safe from the hostilities of their enemies.

This idea accords with the post-resurrection ministry of Jesus envisaged in 1 John in terms of advocacy performed in heaven before the throne of God. Here we read that ‘if anyone sins we have an advocate (παράκλητον) with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous’ (2.1). Windisch sees the role of the Paraclete as a ‘double’ of Jesus, reflecting the latter’s intercessory function in heaven. Hence he maintains that ‘according to John...the church has two intercessors, one in heaven and one on earth ~ the one, the friend at court who stays at the court and intercedes

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<sup>510</sup> Bultmann, *John*, 568.



there for his protégé, and the other friend from court who is sent by the court and appears as mediator, admonitor, teacher, and ambassador'.<sup>511</sup>

However, in the Fourth Gospel the prospect held before the disciples is not so much of a παράκλητος in *heaven* as one on *earth*: 'I will pray the Father, and he will give you another *Paraclete*, to be with you for ever' (14.16).<sup>512</sup> Harvey observes that John is not the only NT writer to depict the role of the Spirit using legal conceptual language, since Paul had already spoken of the Spirit interceding for the saints in accordance with God's will (Rm 8.27). But 'the originality comes when this Paraclete leaves, so to speak, the heavenly court and is 'sent' to appear on behalf of the disciples on earth'.<sup>513</sup> Accordingly he is *sent* by the Father *in the name* of Jesus (14.26), or, in an alternative formulation, Jesus promises that he will *send* him to the disciples (15.26).

We will now consider two of the logia which develop the forensic aspect of the Spirit-Paraclete's ministry. In 15.26-27 we read: ὅταν ἔλθῃ ὁ παράκλητος ὃν ἐγὼ πέμψω ὑμῖν παρὰ τοῦ πατρὸς, τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς ἀληθείας ὃ παρὰ τοῦ πατρὸς ἐκπορεύεται, ἐκεῖνος μαρτυρήσει περὶ ἐμοῦ· καὶ ὑμεῖς δὲ μαρτυρεῖτε, ὅτι ἀπ' ἀρχῆς μετ' ἐμοῦ ἐστε. The context of Jewish hostility taking the form of active persecution and punitive sanctions against believers indicates that the witness may well be required in a court of law. Certainly the

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<sup>511</sup> The *Spirit-Paraclete*, 20.

<sup>512</sup> Harvey, *Jesus on Trial*, 111, comments: 'As so often, this writer takes concepts and images which belong traditionally to the world to come and boldly applies them to the world of the present.'

<sup>513</sup> Ibid, 112.

evidence from the Synoptic Gospels would support this possibility. Thus in Mk 13.9-11 (cf. Mt 10.20; Lk 21.14) we have a logion that describes the work of the Holy Spirit in a forensic setting. Brown believes that the forensic description of the Spirit attested in the Synoptic tradition was introduced into the Farewell Discourse, but given a new Johannine orientation in which the Paraclete becomes the accuser of the world, rather than just defending the disciples.<sup>514</sup> In the light of 15. 22-24 the testimony of the Paraclete will expose the unbelief of the world and find it guilty. He suggests that the work of proving that the world is wrong is conducted for the benefit of the disciples: 'The proof of the world's guilt is directed to the disciples, but the forum is internal...the courtroom is not in some apocalyptic Valley of Jehoshaphat (Joel 3.2, 12) but in the mind and understanding of the disciples'.<sup>515</sup> De la Potterie also argues that the witness of the Spirit is an 'inner witness' in the hearts of the disciples that will enable them to witness effectively before the world. The witness is 'a completely interior action...conducted in a juridical context of opposition and crisis'.<sup>516</sup> This idea would then be similar to that propounded in the book of Jubilees where the Angel of the Presence says to Moses: 'Therefore, I shall command you and I shall bear witness to you so that you may bear witness to them' (6.38).<sup>517</sup>

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<sup>514</sup> *John*, II, 700.

<sup>515</sup> *Ibid*, 712.

<sup>516</sup> 'The Truth in Saint John', 75-6.

<sup>517</sup> Cf. Berger, *Die Aufstehung*, 488.

However, it would be wrong to restrict the Paraclete's role of witnessing to that which he accomplishes in the disciples.<sup>518</sup> The bearing witness of the Spirit is also oriented toward those outside the community, as may be seen from the fact that the disciples themselves are also called upon to bear witness.<sup>519</sup> Bultmann also recognises the forensic overtones present here (in his view taken over from the source), suggesting that μαρτυρήσει means 'he will make accusation'.<sup>520</sup> Now there is evidence in apocalyptic writings that angels may undertake this type of legal function. For example, in the Book of Dream Visions the improper use of their authority by the heavenly 'shepherds' does not escape the notice of the 'Lord of the sheep'. He commands another group of angelic beings to '*write down* every destruction that each and every shepherd causes, against their records. And *read aloud before me* each particular case' (1 En 89.62-63). On the basis of this written evidence of ill-treatment by the shepherds, the heavenly scribe approaches the Lord of the sheep and '*pleaded* to him and begged him on account of the sheep, while manifesting to him the deeds of the shepherds and *giving testimony* before him against all the shepherds' (89.76-77).

The role of angels in acting on behalf of the righteous is alluded to in the Epistle of Enoch. We find that the evil deeds of the wicked are written down for the day of their judgment. Thus: 'all your evil deeds are *revealed* in the heavens...being written down every day in the presence of the Most High. From

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<sup>518</sup> Pace Barrett, *St John*, 487.

<sup>519</sup> Schnackenburg, *St John*, III, 142.

<sup>520</sup> *John*, 562.



now on do know that all your injustices which you have committed unjustly are *written down* every day until the day of your judgment' (98.6-8; cf. 104.7: 'all your sins are being written down every day'). It seems to be the angels that do the writing (cf. 99.3; 100.10);<sup>521</sup> in effect they compile a register of the wrongdoings which will be read out in the heavenly tribunal (97.6). The Ethiopic text speaks of the woe to sinners because 'the records are evil against you (97.7), but the Greek recension is clearer still: πάντες οἱ λόγοι τῶν ἄνομιῶν ὑμῶν, which Black translates as 'the complete account of your iniquities'.<sup>522</sup> It is clear, as Reiser observes, that in these passages 'a forensic judgment scene' is presupposed.<sup>523</sup>

In the account given in Jubilees of the murder of Abel an important postscript is appended concerning the role of angels in exposing the sin of human beings. Thus the Angel of Presence tells Moses: 'Therefore when we come before the Lord our God *we will make known all of the sins* which occur in heaven and earth and which are in the light or in the darkness or in any (place)' (Jub 4.6). This forensic task, assigned to angelic officers within the heavenly court, is again alluded to by Laban as he justifies why he deceived Jacob in giving him his elder daughter instead of the younger one. Laban maintains that he had to do this because 'it is ordained and written in the heavenly tablets that no one should give his younger daughter before the elder...*and they will write it down as sin in*

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<sup>521</sup> Reiser, *Jesus and Judgment*, 64.

<sup>522</sup> *1 Enoch*, 90.

<sup>523</sup> *Jesus and Judgment*, 64.

*heaven concerning the man who acts thus*' (28.6). The referent 'they' obviously refers to the work of angelic personnel in the heavenly court, among whose tasks is the recording of human deeds (cf. 1.27). This office of writing down in heaven the works of those on earth provides a guarantee that the divine recompense will be established. Hence the Angel of the Presence declares that Levi's zeal for the Lord has ensured that he and his sons 'will be blessed forever'. This can be relied upon because 'a blessing and righteousness will be *written (on high) as a testimony* for him in the heavenly tablets before the God of all' (30.18-20).

In the judgment scene described in the Testament of Abraham in which Abel is sitting on a crystal throne judging human souls and sentencing them, we find that 'two angels on the right and on the left recorded. The one on the right recorded righteous deeds, while the one on the left (recorded) sins' (T Ab 12.12: οἱ δὲ δύο ἄγγελοι οἱ ἐκ δεξιῶν καὶ ἀριστερῶν ἀπεγράφοντο· ὁ μὲν ἐκ δεξιῶν ἀπεγράφετο τὰς δικαιοσύνας, ὁ δὲ ἐξ ἀριστερῶν τὰς ἁμαρτίας). Their office seems to be a heavenly version of the scribes in the Sanhedrin (*m. Sanh.* 4.3) or the two *notarii* in a Roman judicial court.<sup>524</sup> We can see from this evidence the importance of heavenly beings in securing ultimate justice in the heavenly assize that will resolve cosmic inequity.

A more elaborate description of the heavenly assize is given in the later work of 3 Enoch. Here the angel Metatron, the prince of the divine presence, describes for R. Ishmael the scene of heavenly judgment: 'When the Holy One,

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<sup>524</sup> Cf. Reiser, *Jesus and Judgment*, 125.

blessed be he, sits on the throne of judgment (כסא הדין), the angels of mercy (מלאכי רחמים) stand on his right, the angels of peace (מלאכי שלום) on his left, and the angels of destruction (מלאכי חבלה) stand facing him. A scribe (סופר) stands below him and a scribe stands above him (33.1-2). It is clear that ministering angels of the heavenly court may bring accusations before the Holy One. Thus Metatron recounts how in response to his divine exaltation, 'elevated over all potentates in sovereignty, greatness and glory' (4.1), three of the ministering angels ('Uzzah, 'Azzah, and 'Aza'el) came 'and *laid charges* against me in the heavenly height (והיו מסטיחים עלי בשמי מרום) (4.6).

We are also introduced to Samma'el who is given the title 'Prince of the Accusers (שר המסטינים)' (14.2). Together with Dubbi'el and Satan 'they *write down* the sins of Israel on tablets (וכתבו עוונותיהם של ישראל על פנקסאות) and give them to the seraphim to bring them before the Holy One. However, the seraphim, knowing that it is the will of God that Israel should not fall, burn the tablets so that they should not come into the presence of the Holy One, 'when he sits upon the throne of judgment and judges the whole world in truth (יושב על כסא דין ודן את כל העולם כלו באמת) (26.12). Once again it is worth noting that, as well as performing the negative role of recording all the works of wrongdoing, angels can also undertake the positive task of recording the good behaviour of human beings. Thus we read of Zakzaki'el, 'the prince who is



שהוא ממונה לכתוב זכיוֹתָן של ישראל) appointed to record the merits of Israel (הַשֵּׁר (18.17).

In the Testament of Judah we are informed that ‘two spirits await an opportunity with humanity: the spirit of truth and the spirit of error (δύο πνεύματα σχολάζουσιν τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ, τὸ τῆς ἀληθείας καὶ τὸ τῆς πλάνης) (20.1). A little later on the role of the former spirit is elaborated as follows: ‘The spirit of truth *testifies* to all things and *brings all accusations* (καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς ἀληθείας μαρτυρεῖ πάντα καὶ κατηγορεῖ πάντων). He who has sinned is consumed in his heart and cannot raise his head to face the judge’ (20.5). In this passage the Spirit of truth is conceived primarily as a κατήγορος. But he is also a *witness* who ‘testifies to all things (μαρτυρεῖ πάντα)’. It would seem, therefore, that he exposes the wicked deeds of the sinners, bringing them into the light of God’s judgment.

From the preceding survey of apocalyptic material it appears that angels can play an important role in the process of establishing divine eschatological judgment. They are officers of the heavenly court who marshal the necessary evidence which can lead to either conviction or acquittal. Now, like the angelic officers of court in apocalyptic literature, the Paraclete plays a vital role in the juridical procedure by which Jesus is vindicated and the world brought to judgment. Barrett even goes so far as to characterize the activity of the Paraclete as that of ‘judge and prosecuting counsel in one. The Spirit, that is to say, places

the world in the position which it will occupy at the last judgment'.<sup>525</sup> Certainly it can be asserted that as well as being cast as a defence counsel in this conflict, the Paraclete also operates as a prosecuting counsel. Thus Schnackenburg states: 'Having been counsel for the disciples' defence in human lawsuits, the Paraclete now becomes the plaintiff in God's judgment against the world'.<sup>526</sup> He acts as κατήγωρ as well as συνήγωρ.<sup>527</sup> As we have seen this is exactly the role undertaken by angels in the apocalyptic evidence we have cited above, particularly exemplified in the activity of the πνεῦμα τῆς ἀληθείας in the Testament of Judah.

The forensic context of the Paraclete's commission becomes quite explicit in the second Johannine passage we shall consider. In the second recension of the Farewell Discourse Jesus explains why it is to the advantage of the disciples that he goes away:

16.7b: ἐὰν γὰρ μὴ ἀπέλθω, ὁ παράκλητος οὐκ ἐλεύσεται πρὸς ὑμᾶς·  
ἐὰν δὲ πορευθῶ, πέμψω αὐτὸν πρὸς ὑμᾶς (8) καὶ ἐλθὼν ἐκεῖνος  
ἐλέγξει τὸν κόσμον περὶ ἁμαρτίας καὶ περὶ δικαιοσύνης καὶ περὶ  
κρίσεως (9) περὶ ἁμαρτίας μέν, ὅτι οὐ πιστεύουσιν εἰς ἐμέ (10) περὶ  
δικαιοσύνης δέ, ὅτι πρὸς τὸν πατέρα ὑπάγω καὶ οὐκέτι θεωρεῖτέ με  
(11) περὶ δὲ κρίσεως, ὅτι ὁ ἄρχων τοῦ κόσμου τούτου κέκριται.

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<sup>525</sup> *St John*, 90.

<sup>526</sup> Schnackenburg, *St John*, III, 143.

<sup>527</sup> Cf. Mowinckel, 'Die Vorstellungen des Spätjudentums', 104. Bultmann, *John*, 562, speaks of 'a lawsuit of cosmic dimensions, taking place before the court of God. The world is accused, and the Paraclete is the prosecutor'.<sup>527</sup>

An analysis of this passage will highlight some interesting connections between the terminology and concepts present in the apocalyptic material and those applied in the Fourth Gospel. First we shall consider the meaning of ἐλέγχειν, a word that is actually used in relation to the forensic role of the heavenly agents in the apocalyptic material we have considered. Secondly, the Paraclete's work of vindicating Jesus, 'proving righteous', will be illuminated by the account of Enoch's ascension in the Similitudes.

Of importance to our inquiry is the meaning which we assign to ἐλέγχειν. In the LXX ἐλέγχειν is used to translate a number of Hebrew words, although mainly the root נָדָה which denotes: 'the disciplining and educating of man by God as a result of his judicial activity'. Büchsel argues that this sense carries over into the NT, so that ἐλέγχειν does not only mean 'to blame' or 'to reprove', 'to convince' or 'to expose', but also 'to set right', 'to show someone his sin and summon him to repentance'. Thus it would seem to imply 'educative discipline'.<sup>528</sup> The examples cited by Trites of where the dominant nuance of ἐλέγχειν is 'to convince' (cf. Gen 21.25; Lev 19.17; Job 13.3), provide further evidence for this notion, illustrated in the NT in Mt 18.15 where the aggrieved party in a dispute is exhorted to 'convince' (ἐλεγξον) the other of his fault.

However, it is important to note that the Hiph'il form of the verb (חִכִּיחַ) often possesses a forensic connotation (cf. Gen 31.37; Job 9.33; 16.21; 32.12). In

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<sup>528</sup> ἐλέγχειν, *TDNT*, II, 474.



Ps 50 the scene of God's judgment is portrayed whereby in his capacity as judge (LXX: ὅτι ὁ θεὸς κριτὴς ἐστίν), Yahweh both 'testifies' and 'convicts' (50.8, 21, כִּי; LXX: ἐλέγξω σε)' Israel.<sup>529</sup> Mowinckel therefore argues that the meaning of the Hebrew is 'den Beweis gegen einen antreten, einen widerlegen, einen eines Irrtums oder einer Sünde überführen bzw. Einen tadeln (Vorwürfe machen), rügen; (mit Worten) strafen, züchtigen'.<sup>530</sup> Moreover the LXX also uses ἐλέγχειν to translate קָרָן (Prov 18.17) which has the sense of 'to test' or 'to examine; and also גַּעַר (Isa 50.2) and נִאֲצָה (Isa 37.3) with the meaning of 'to rebuke' or 'to shame', while in Job 15.6 the sense of 'condemn' or 'convict' is required by עָשָׂה.

In his commentary Lindars attempts to limit the force of ἐλέγχειν περί to mean 'to expose in regard to'. He then interprets the passage as 'to expose (the world) for a verdict of guilty (ἁμαρτία), a verdict of innocent (δικαιοσύνη), a verdict one way or the other (κρίσις)'.<sup>531</sup> The problem with this approach is that it assumes that ἐλέγχειν is used in a neutral way without implying the guilt of the world. Now, although the object of God's love (3.16), ὁ κόσμος is, in Johannine thinking, the realm characterised by darkness (1.9) and at enmity with the truth

<sup>529</sup> Reiser, *Jesus and Judgment*, 35, notes that a situation in which Yahweh is both accuser and judge 'is typical of the fundamental form of כִּי'.

<sup>530</sup> 'Die Vorstellung des Spätjudentums', 105. Cf. In 1QH 1.25 we read: 'What shall a man say concerning his sin (חַטֹּאת = ἁμαρτία)? And how shall he plead (חֲכִי = ἐλέγχειν) concerning his iniquities? And how shall he reply to righteous (קָדָשׁ = δικαιοσύνη) judgment (פְּשָׁע = κρίσις)'

<sup>531</sup> *The Gospel of John*, 500-504; cf. idem, 'Δικαιοσύνη in Jn 16.8 & 10', 275-285.

(15.20) and therefore in need of salvation (1.29). It is better to argue, with Trites, that ‘John is saying that the Holy Spirit will act as an advocate would act in a Hebrew court of law’.<sup>532</sup> Thus, while the disciples are witnesses in court, the primary responsibility for the defence lies with the Paraclete who alone can open the heart and substantiate the evidence. He will prove that the world’s understanding of Jesus is wrong, and that in not believing in him they are guilty of the gravest sin (cf. 9.41; 15.22-24). In this case the basic meaning of ἐλέγχειν περὶ is ‘to prove (the world) wrong about’.

This is the connotation that is present in the opening passage of I Enoch. Here the advent of the Lord is envisaged as a time when ‘he will arrive with ten million of the holy ones *in order to execute judgment* upon all (ποιῆσαι κρίσιν κατὰ πάντων). The process of judgment means that the Lord will destroy the wicked ones and *censure* all flesh (καὶ ἐλέγξει πᾶσαν σάρκα) on account of everything that they have done, that which the sinners and the wicked ones committed against him’ (1.9).<sup>533</sup> It is this passage that Jude specifically refers to in his letter in the NT. He quotes Enoch, the seventh from Adam, as saying: ‘Behold, the Lord came with his holy myriads, to execute judgment (κρίσιν) on all, and to convict (ἐλέγξει) all the ungodly of all their deeds of ungodliness...’ (Jude 1.14-15). This text clearly envisages a forensic situation in which the

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<sup>532</sup> *Concept of Witness*, 119; cf. Snaith, ‘The meaning of “The Paraclete”’, 47-50.

<sup>533</sup> Hartman, *Asking for a Meaning*, 14-15, argues that chs. 2-5 elaborates upon the ἔλεγχος of God that is referred to in 1.9,

accused are proven guilty and therefore justly condemned by the righteous judgment of God.<sup>534</sup>

In the Testament of Benjamin the searchlight of divine holiness directed to the Gentiles applies equally rigorously to the chosen nation. Here the patriarch's prediction of Israel's judgment implies a forensic situation in which the holy nation will be exposed or 'convicted' (ἐλέγχειν) before 'the chosen gentiles' (10.10). The Wisdom of Solomon also provides evidence of the convicting work, often undertaken by angels of the heavenly court, but here accomplished by the Spirit of God. Hence we read in the opening chapter: 'Because the Spirit of the Lord has filled the world, and that which holds all things together knows what is said, therefore those who utter unrighteous things will not escape notice, and justice, when it punishes (ἐλέγχουσα), will not pass them by. For inquiry will be made into the counsels of the ungodly, and a report of their words will come to the Lord, to convict (ἐλεγχος) them of their lawless deeds' (1.7-9). Mowinckel states: 'Insofern ist der Geist ein ἐλέγχων, was hier sachlich einem κατήγωρ entspricht'.<sup>535</sup> These examples from apocalyptic literature adumbrate the role of the Paraclete, illuminating the wider apocalyptic context that formed an important part of the background to the Fourth Gospel.

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<sup>534</sup> Cf. Schnackenberg, *St John*, III, 128, who refers to this text in his discussion of Jn 16.8 on the grounds that 'ideas which may throw light on the background to the Johannine text are found in [1 Enoch] and related documents.

<sup>535</sup> 'Die Vorstellung des Spätjudentums', 106.



Turning now to our second question, an interesting insight into the meaning of the Paraclete's convicting of righteousness (16.10: περὶ δικαιοσύνης δέ, ὅτι πρὸς τὸν πατέρα ὑπάγω καὶ οὐκέτι θεωρεῖτέ με) is given by Otto Betz. He asks the question: 'Was hat Jesu Hingang zum Vater mit der Gerechtigkeit zu tun?'<sup>536</sup> The answer, he argues, is to be found in the account of the raptures of the apocalyptic seers, especially Enoch. Thus in 1 Enoch it is stated that 'his living name was raised up before that Son of Man and to the Lord from among those who dwell upon the earth; it was lifted up in a wind chariot and it disappeared from among them' (70.1-2). In the following chapter Enoch testifies: 'My spirit passed out of sight and *ascended* into the heavens' (71.1). This is the divine seal upon his righteousness, confirmed by the greeting of the angel who addresses him thus: 'You, son of man, who art born in righteousness and upon whom righteousness has dwelt...' (71.14). Betz comments: 'Diese Entrückung ist Lohn und Beweis für seinen frommen Wandel und seine beispielhafte Gerechtigkeit inmitten eines gottlosen Geschlechts'.<sup>537</sup> Similarly, the ascension into heaven of Jesus, like that of Enoch, serves to vindicate him, proving to the world that he is righteous before God. A further example is found in Pseudo-Philo 48.1, where the ascension of Phineas is promised on account of the righteous zeal he displayed for the Lord of hosts: 'And afterward you will be *lifted up* into the place where

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<sup>536</sup> *Der Paraklet*, 199.

<sup>537</sup> *Ibid*, 200.

those who were before you were lifted up (*Et postea elevaberis in locum, ubi elevati sunt priores tui*), and you will be there until I remember the world’.

Given that the prevailing idea is that of a lawsuit, the primary meaning of δικαιοσύνη is not moral rectitude but ‘innocence’, in the forensic sense of being vindicated as right, that is, ‘winning one’s case’.<sup>538</sup> The one who is justified before God is therefore the victor in the lawsuit with the world. For example, in Trito-Isaiah the eschatological glorification of Israel is expressed by being clothed with the ‘mantle of righteousness’ (61.10: מעיל צדקה), while in the Odes of Solomon the notion of being accounted righteous is equated with the crowning of the victor and his ascending: ‘Then I was crowned by my God, and my crown is living. And I was justified by my Lord...and he who knew and *exalted me* is the Most High in all his perfection’ (17.1-7; cf. 29.4; 31.5).

Now, as we have seen, Jesus is involved in a legal dispute with the world. ‘The Jews’ considered him to be a sinner, deceiver and blasphemer (5.18; 7.12; 9.24; 10.33) and their trial of him was with the purpose of showing that he was guilty (19.7). However, the Paraclete proves that the death of Jesus was the means whereby the Father glorified him, raising him up into his immediate presence once more (17.5). Thus, in effect, the Paraclete is reversing the decision

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<sup>538</sup> Bultmann, *John*, 564, n.2, alludes to the forensic meaning of δικαιοσύνη in the OT. Thus, for example, in the Book of the Covenant the צדיק refers to the one who is right in court, and הוציא צדיק means ‘to let a man gain his case’.

of the world in its condemnation of Jesus.<sup>539</sup> The charge that Jesus ‘ought to die’ as an ‘evildoer’ (John 18.30; 19.7) is proved to be erroneous by his resurrection. Hoskyns concludes: ‘The return to the Father is God’s imprimatur upon the righteousness [justice] manifested in the life and death of His Son’.<sup>540</sup> Thus, the evidence of Jesus’ righteousness is in his glorification and ascension to the Father; indeed the work on the cross, far from being the result of wrongdoing (18.30), brings about the judgment of the ruler of this world.<sup>541</sup>

In the light of all this ‘what seemed to [the disciples] a reason for λύπη is in fact a reason for joy: the fact that they no longer see him’.<sup>542</sup> Through his elevation on the cross Jesus secures cosmic victory over the powers of darkness. His death, which seemed to spell defeat, was actually the means by which the judgment of God was established and the prince of this world ‘cast out’ (12.31). For this reason the disciples could be of good cheer for although they still faced tribulation in the world, Jesus had already overcome the opposition (16.33: θαρσεῖτε, ἐγὼ νενίκηκα τὸν κόσμον).

For the believing community of a later generation who face the same type of hostility encountered by Jesus the assurance is given that the Spirit-Paraclete

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<sup>539</sup> Kovacs, ‘Jesus’ Death as Cosmic Battle’, 231, observes: ‘In a reversal of the Jews’ attempt to “convict” Jesus of sin (8.46, where the same verb ἐλέγχειν is used), the Paraclete will “prove the world wrong” and show how sin, righteousness, and judgment are brought to light in Jesus’ death and exaltation’.

<sup>540</sup> *John*, 485.

<sup>541</sup> Cf. Westcott, *The Gospel according to St John*, 228; Bultmann, *John*, 561-66; Blank, *Krisis*, 335-39.

<sup>542</sup> Bultmann, *John*, 565.



stands alongside. As a legal attorney, he will both defend his charge from the accusations of a discredited opponent and move onto the attack by exposing and condemning the machinations of the antagonists. Equally, the Spirit-Paraclete will prove that Jesus, and therefore his disciples, are vindicated by the highest court of judgment, that is, the heavenly one. The mantle of condemnation is placed firmly where it belongs: on the enemies of the community, represented by the prince of this world.

### 3. *Guide into the Divine Presence*

While in the ‘historical’ apocalypses the role of the *angelus interpres* relates mainly to explicating the meaning of the symbols and images in the visions that are impressed on the consciousness of the seer, in the ‘otherworldly’ apocalypses angels are assigned to the seer in order to guide him in his journey through the heavens. The celestial tour would not be possible for a mortal human being to contemplate without the divine commissioning of an angelic escort. Betz correctly states: ‘Die Engel sind jedoch vor allem die Führer bei den Himmelsreisen, die Mystagogen in die geheimnisvolle überirdische Welt, in die der Mensch von sich aus nicht eindringen kann’.<sup>543</sup> It is therefore an essential precondition that for the human seer to experience the heavenly realm he must be escorted by an angelic guide. Thus, Enoch refers to Uriel, who accompanies him

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<sup>543</sup> *Der Paraklet*, 101.

during his tour of the extra-terrestrial regions reserved for judgment, as ‘one of the holy angels...who was with me, *guiding* me’ (1 En 21.5).

It is not surprising, given the close association between various types of heavenly beings, that the role undertaken by angels in the matter of elevating the seer into the divine world (2 En 3.1; ApAb 15.1-4) may sometimes be attributed to a spirit. Thus the role of guiding the seer into heavenly truth assigned to the *angelus interpretes* is also attributed to the spirit given to the prophets: ‘By his powerful spirit he [Isaiah] looked into the future’ (Sirach 48.24). In the Odes of Solomon the bard records: ‘I rested on the Spirit of the Lord, and she raised me up to heaven’ (36.1). In the case of the apocalypse given to Zephaniah, the seer recounts how ‘a spirit took me and brought me up into the fifth heaven’ (ApZeph A). Baruch records that as he was grieving over the fate of Zion, suddenly a ‘strong spirit’ lifts him up and carries him ‘above the wall of Jerusalem’ (2 Bar 6.3). Likewise, in the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs the account of Levi’s translation into heaven is prefaced with a note of how, as he was tending the flocks in Abel-Maoul, ‘a spirit of understanding from the Lord came upon me (πνεῦμα συνέσεως Κυρίου ἦλθεν ἐπ’ ἐμέ)’ (T Lev 2.3).

In the visions accorded to the Shepherd of Hermas the writer testifies: ‘a spirit took me and bore me away (ἔλαβεν καὶ ἀπήνεγκε) through a pathless tract, through which no man could pass... the heaven was opened’ (Vis. I, 1.3-4). A little later on we read: ‘And again a spirit took me (αἶρει) and carried me away (ἀποφέρει) to the same place’ (Vis. 2, 1.1). This same idea is present in the

conclusion to the New Testament account of the conversion of the Ethiopian eunuch through Philip: ‘The Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away (ἥρπασεν); the eunuch saw him no more, and went on his way rejoicing. But Philip found himself at Azotus’ (Acts 8.39-40).

The account of Enoch’s translation into heaven given in the epilogue to the Similitudes provides further evidence of the role of a spirit in transporting a seer into the divine presence. 1 En 70.1-3a: ‘And it happened after this that his living name was raised up before that Son of Man and to the Lord from among those who dwell upon the earth; it was lifted up in a wind chariot and it disappeared from among them. From that day on, I was not counted among them’. Thus we read that he ‘was lifted up in a *wind* chariot (ba-saragalāta manfas)’ (1 En 70.2). This is Isaac’s rendering of the text, although he does append a footnote giving the option of ‘*spirit* chariot’.<sup>544</sup> Knibb prefers this option translating: ‘he was lifted on the chariots of the spirit’.<sup>545</sup> Bauckham suggests that ‘the ambiguity of wind / Spirit and the association of Spirit and fire might well have suggested the agency of the Spirit in the translation to heaven’.<sup>546</sup>

The motif of riding to heaven on a chariot is based on the account of Elijah’s translation to heaven in a chariot of fire and a whirlwind (2 Kgs. 2.11). Later apocalyptic literature drew on this tradition, thus in the Testament of Abraham the archangel Michael is commanded to ‘go down and take the righteous

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<sup>544</sup> OTP, 49 n. 70 b.

<sup>545</sup> *The Ethiopic Book of Enoch*, 165.

<sup>546</sup> *Climax of Prophecy*, 156.



Abraham on a *chariot of cherubim* and lift him up into the air of heaven so that he may see all the inhabited world' (T Ab 9.8). Likewise in the Life of Adam and Eve, Adam narrates to his son Seth: 'I saw a chariot like the wind and its wheels were fiery. I was carried off into the Paradise of righteousness, and I saw the Lord sitting and his appearance was unbearable flaming fire' (LAE 25.3). The imagery of the Spirit acting as a heavenly chariot in bringing a chosen one into the presence of God seems to have been known in Christian circles. Thus Gregory of Nyssa could say: 'Like Elijah, our mind is taken up in the chariot of fire and carried through the air to the glories of heaven ~ by fire we understand the Holy Spirit' (*In Cant.* 10).

In 2 Enoch the seer is admitted to the heavenly realm through the mediation of two mighty angels, Samoila and Raguila, who take him up onto their wings (3.1). Once Enoch reaches the edge of the seventh heaven Samoila and Raguila take their leave of the seer. From this point Gabriel and Michael take over the work of preparing Enoch for a vision of the Almighty himself. On entering the presence of the Lord, God calls to Enoch and says to him: 'Enoch, sit to the left of me with Gabriel' (2 En 24.1). It is instructive here to note that the position at the left hand side of the Lord is occupied by the angel of the Holy Spirit in the Ascension of Isaiah. In other words, the role of introducing someone to the heavenly court, ascribed to angelic personnel in 2 Enoch, is specifically attributed to 'the angel of the Holy Spirit' in the Ascension of Isaiah. Thus we read: 'And I rejoiced very much that those who love the Most High and his Beloved will at

their end *go up there through the angel of the Holy Spirit*' (7.23). A little later, as the seer sees this angel at the left hand side of the Lord, he is bidden: 'Worship him, for this is the angel of the Holy Spirit who has spoken in you and also in the other righteous' (Asc Isa 9.36). It seems, therefore, that a comparison with 2 Enoch shows that the depiction of the angel of the Holy Spirit may well derive from the tradition concerning Gabriel.<sup>547</sup>

The preceding passages also point to another important aspect of an apocalyptic experience. This is the fact that the apex of the spiritual journey granted to the apocalyptic seer is beholding the glory of the Lord and joining the angelic host in the act of worship (Rev 1.17; 2 En 22.7; Ap Ab 17.2-4; Asc Isa 9.27-32). Furthermore, it is often at the point of worship that divine revelation is received. An illustration of this is found in the way Isaiah is caught up in ecstasy to heaven and thereby enabled to bring a report concerning the ascent and descent of Jesus. In Asc Isa 6.1-17 we see Isaiah as the chief prophet surrounded by forty prophets to whom he imparts the spirit of prophecy by the laying on of hands. As Isaiah speaks with Hezekiah, 'they all heard a door opened and the voice of the Holy Spirit' (6.6).<sup>548</sup> The Lat2 and Slavonic translation of this verse is slightly different: 'the Holy Spirit came upon him, and they all saw and heard the words of

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<sup>547</sup> Daniélou, *Theology of Jewish Christianity*, 129, contends that 'the Angel of the Holy Spirit in the Ascension is a christianisation of the Jewish Gabriel theme'.

<sup>548</sup> This translation is based on the Ethiopic text which at this point seems to be influenced by v. 9 and is probably secondary (cf. Knibb, 'Martydom and Ascension of Isaiah', *OTP* II, 164, n. h).

the Holy Spirit' (Spiritus Sanctus supervenit in eum et omnes videbant audiebantque verba Sancti Spiritus).

A little further in the passage we find that hearing the voice of the Spirit *is associated with the act of worship*: 'And when they all heard the voice of the Holy Spirit (et cum audierunt vocem Sancti Spiritus), they all worshipped on their knees, and they praised the god of righteousness, the Most High, the One who (dwells) in the upper world and who sits on high, the Holy one, the One who rests among the holy ones' (6.8). Thus the others with Isaiah are granted access into the worshipping community in heaven among whom God is enthroned. This reflects a situation in which heavenly trips are granted to the community's prophets, one of whom is the author of the work (10.7-15).

Likewise, the revelation of heavenly mysteries was unveiled to John on Patmos when he was 'in the Spirit' (ἐν πνεύματι) (Rev 1.10). As well as conversing with angels who help him understand what he witnesses in the heavenly realm, the divine disclosure is received as he is caught up 'in the spirit'. Thus he enters through the open door in heaven 'in the Spirit' (ἐν πνεύματι, 4.2)<sup>549</sup> and, while in this condition, he 'hears' the heavenly voice and 'sees' the transcendent world. On two occasions an angel reveals to him what is to come and this involves carrying him away 'in the spirit' (17.3: καὶ ἀπήνεγκέν με εἰς ἔρημον ἐν πνεύματι; 21.10: καὶ ἀπήνεγκέν με ἐν πνεύματι). In the light of

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<sup>549</sup> Bauckham, *Climax of Prophecy*, 152, contends that in these verses 'the expression γενέσθαι ἐν πνεύματι, though not precisely attested elsewhere, is best understood as a technical term for the visionary's experience of "rapture" by the Spirit.'



parallels that can be found in other apocalyptic texts, we can be fairly certain, *contra* the NRSV, that the phrase does not denote the seer's human spirit but rather the Spirit of God.<sup>550</sup> Thus twice reference is made to the voice of the Spirit, probably to be seen as speaking through John (Rev 14.13; 22.17). Indeed, it has been suggested that the role of the Spirit in the book of Revelation is to give 'the visionary experience which enables John to receive the revelation'.<sup>551</sup>

In the Fourth Gospel apprehension of spiritual reality is also dependent upon supernatural agency. The dialogue between Nicodemus and Jesus illustrates this point. Although a 'teacher of Israel' (3.10), Nicodemus is clearly obtuse in his understanding of spiritual things. As with the uncomprehending seer when shown the sights of the heavenly world, he is forced to ask questions that will clarify the meaning of what he sees and hears.<sup>552</sup> Jesus makes it plain that unless he is 'born from above' he cannot even 'see' that which he desires to understand (3.3: ἐὰν μή τις γεννηθῇ ἄνωθεν, οὐ δύναται ἰδεῖν τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ Θεοῦ).<sup>553</sup> The Greek word ἰδεῖν is a term that can be used with the meaning of

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<sup>550</sup> Ezek. 3.12, 14; 8.3; 11.1, 24; 37.1; 43.5; 2 Bar 6.3; Hermas, Vis. 1.3; 5.1. However, in 1 Enoch 71.5, the seer does report that 'He [Michael] carried off my spirit, and I, Enoch, was in the heaven of heavens'.

<sup>551</sup> Bauckham, *Revelation*, 116.

<sup>552</sup> Meeks, 'Man from Heaven', 148, comments that 'perhaps the closest parallels to the present dialogue are to be found in the dialogues between the seer and the interpreting angel in apocalypses'.

<sup>553</sup> This verse appears to be a Johannine reformulation of a traditional dominical saying found in Mt 18.3 (cf. Mk.10.15; Lk 18.17). Cf. Bultmann, *John*, 135, n. 4; Barrett, *St John*, 206. Schnackenburg, *St John*, I, 367, observes that, linguistically, ἄνωθεν can mean a) from above, b) from the beginning, c) once more; again. However, he concludes that 'according to the usage of ἄνωθεν elsewhere in John (3.31; 19.11, 23) and his doctrine of 'birth from God' (1.13; 1 Jn 2.29; 3.9; 4.7; 5.1), the only justifiable

participating in salvation (3.36; cf. Acts 2.27; 1 Pet 3.10); significantly it corresponds to the Hebrew  $\text{רָאָה}$  which, as we have seen, is used in the apocalyptic book of Daniel (8.4,7) for experiencing celestial realities. Indeed Meeks has suggested that the phrase ‘to see the kingdom of God’ (3.3) implies having a vision of God reigning in heaven and ‘can only refer to “heavenly-journey” tradition’. Furthermore, the idea of entering the kingdom is ‘reinterpreted to refer to an *ascent to heaven*’ (italics original).<sup>554</sup>

In Johannine terms, access into the heavenly world is conditional upon the regenerating work of the Spirit. In 3.5  $\text{\text{ἐξ \text{ὕδατος καὶ πνεύματος}}$  is substituted for  $\text{\text{ἀνωθεν}}$  in v.3, so we may assume that the two terms are essentially equivalent in meaning.<sup>555</sup> The juxtaposition of  $\text{\text{ὕδατος καὶ πνεύματος}}$  suggests an allusion to water-baptism, although the prediction of John the Baptist of one who would baptize with the Holy Spirit (1.33:  $\text{\text{οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ βαπτίζων ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ}}$ ) shows that water-baptism alone is insufficient for entry into the Kingdom of

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translation is “from above”. Similarly, Böcher, *Der johanneische Dualismus*, 26, suggests: ‘Dadurch wird es möglich, das  $\text{\text{ἀνωθεν}}$  in Joh. iii.3 und iii.7 nicht nur temporal (“wiederum”), sondern auch lokal, im Sinne des “von oben”, zu verstehen.’<sup>553</sup> The Aramaic word corresponding to  $\text{\text{ἀνωθεν}}$  is  $\text{\text{ܐܠܝܢܐ}}$  which has only a spatial, not temporal, meaning. Cf. Str.-B., *Kommentar*, II, 420.

<sup>554</sup> Meeks, ‘Man from Heaven’, 147; cf. idem, *Prophet-King*, 298.

<sup>555</sup> Barrett, *St John*, 208. *Contra* Bultmann, there is no textual basis for regarding  $\text{\text{ὕδατος καὶ}}$  as an interpolation by an ecclesiastical redactor. We know that, traditionally, water had been used as a symbol of the Spirit (e.g. Ezek 36.25-26)’. In 1QS 4.20-21 it is stated: ‘God will then purify every deed of man with His truth...He will cleanse him of all wicked deeds with the spirit of holiness; *like purifying waters He will shed upon him the spirit of truth*’. Cf. Lindars, *John*, 152.



God.<sup>556</sup> The realm of the spiritual, heavenly kingdom can only be experienced by those who have been born ‘of the spirit’ or ‘from above’.

The reason Jesus gives Nicodemus for the necessity of a spiritual transformation is in terms of the radical divide between flesh and spirit (3.6: τὸ γεγεννημένον ἐκ τῆς σαρκὸς σὰρξ ἐστίν, καὶ τὸ γεγεννημένον ἐκ τοῦ πνεύματος πνεῦμά ἐστιν). The words σὰρξ and πνεῦμα point to the human and divine spheres respectively,<sup>557</sup> drawing the contrast ‘between the transitory existence of the human creature on earth and the inviolable power of the absolute, spiritual life of God’.<sup>558</sup> By nature mankind belongs to the region of σὰρξ with the divine, heavenly realm beyond reach. Therefore, as Scott asserts: ‘Man requires to undergo a radical change not in heart merely, but in the very constitution of his nature. Until he possesses himself of the higher, diviner essence there can be no thought of his participating in the life of God’.<sup>559</sup> In terms of spiritual matters the flesh counts for nothing; it is only the Spirit who can give life (6.63: τὸ πνεῦμά ἐστίν τὸ ζωοποιοῦν, ἡ σὰρξ οὐκ ὠφελεῖ οὐδέν).<sup>560</sup> Only

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<sup>556</sup> Thus the meaning of ἐξ ὕδατος in this passage seems to imply a contrast rather than a duplication of the concept of πνεῦμα.

<sup>557</sup> Barrett, *St John*, 210.

<sup>558</sup> Schnackenburg, *St John*, I, 372.

<sup>559</sup> *Fourth Gospel*, 258.

<sup>560</sup> Schnackenburg, *St John*, I, 267, observes that in Johannine terms σὰρξ ‘expresses that which is earth-bound (3.6), transient and perishable (6.63), the typically human mode of being, as it were, in contrast to all that is divine and spiritual’.



those who are born of the spirit can become spiritual in nature and consequently enter the higher (3.7), heavenly (3.13), divine sphere.<sup>561</sup>

Thus for the fourth evangelist, the vision of God's kingdom is not achieved by an apocalyptic ascent into heaven, but rather through birth ἄνωθεν or ἐξ πνεύματος. It is not the *ascent* of the seer but rather the *descent* of the Son of Man who mediates the heavenly vision (cf. 1.51) by imparting the Spirit upon his followers (1.33; 20.22). Indeed, it may be that the archetype of the man born ἄνωθεν is Jesus himself. As we have seen in the last chapter, Jesus has been uniquely privileged to witness divine realities, the ἐπουράνια, which were, of course, the object of the apocalyptic seer's purported vision. No one else has 'seen' the things of God, the ἐπουράνια, which form the content of his μαρτυρία (cf. 3.11, 32). However, the prospect held out to the would-be disciple of Jesus is that, through being 'born of the Spirit', the believer may experience the heavenly realities previously reserved for Jesus alone.

As God's heavenly agent, the Son of Man appoints another agent, the Holy Spirit, to effect the continued realization of the eschatological vision of God.<sup>562</sup> To be 'born of the spirit' (3.8, γεγεννημένος ἐκ τοῦ πνεύματος) facilitates entrance into the heavenly realm above, which is the domain of the Son of Man himself. Living in the realm of the Spirit then performs a similar function as the

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<sup>561</sup> Grese, 'A Heavenly Journey', 685, notes that 'entrance into, or a vision of, the kingdom of heaven is not possible for those who are in the flesh. It is only possible for those who have replaced the flesh with spirit'.

<sup>562</sup> Cf. Borgen, 'God's Agent', 72-74, who refers to the halakhic rule that 'an agent can appoint an agent' (*bQiddushin* 41a).

heavenly journey for the apocalyptic seer.<sup>563</sup> Like the seer the believer has entry into the kingdom of God (3.3,5), ‘the heavenly realm on high’,<sup>564</sup> and is therefore qualified to speak about what he has seen and heard.<sup>565</sup>

In particular, the journey through the heavens to behold deity is now possible for the believer through the *act of worship* ‘in spirit’. The hour ‘is coming and *now is*’ (ἀλλὰ ἔρχεται ὥρα καὶ νῦν ἐστὶν) when the ‘true worshippers’ (οἱ ἀληθινοὶ προσκυνηταὶ) can worship the Father ‘in spirit and in truth’ (ἐν πνεύματι καὶ ἀληθείᾳ).<sup>566</sup> However, only those who are ἐκ τοῦ πνεύματος γεγεννημένοι can worship ἐν πνεύματι now (4.23). They are able to see and understand spiritual realities because they are now part of the spiritual, heavenly realm that is embodied in Jesus.<sup>567</sup> Odeberg asserts that ‘a true worship of God can only be performed by one who has, at least, taken the first step towards the ascent into God’s world’.<sup>568</sup> The cultic activity of Jerusalem or Gerizim is

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<sup>563</sup> Kanagaraj, *Mysticism*, 267, observes that ‘just as the guidance of angels is integral to Merkabah visions, the Paraclete, as the indweller and guide, is integral to the disciples’ perception of Jesus and in him God’.

<sup>564</sup> Schnackenburg, *St John*, I, 366.

<sup>565</sup> Meeks, ‘Man from Heaven’, 147, argues that ‘seeing’ and ‘entering’ the kingdom of God refers to a *Himmelreise* tradition. Kanagaraj, *Mysticism*, 203, observes that by means of the Spirit the believer is granted access to the heavenly realm ‘to see God as king and to experience the heavenly realities, including eternal life’.

<sup>566</sup> Kanagaraj, *Mysticism*, 231, opines: ‘it is probable that the ‘Johannine’ community, as a ‘mystical community’, used to see God’s glory in Jesus Christ also at the time of worship’. Cf. Bühner, *Der Gesandte*, 49, who speaks of the community viewing Jesus with ‘mystische Verehrung’.

<sup>567</sup> Odeberg, *The Fourth Gospel*, 169, relates this passage to the dialogue with Nicodemus, arguing that ‘both discourses point to a spiritual world as a reality, of which nobody can obtain knowledge except by becoming a spiritual being, by being “in the Spirit”’.

<sup>568</sup> *Ibid*, 170.



rendered superfluous in the light of this superior, and indeed uniquely admissible, form of worship. This type of worship is ἐν πνεύματι καὶ ἀληθεία which does not primarily imply an ‘inward form of worship’ but rather means ‘eschatological worship’.<sup>569</sup>

The association of ‘spirit and truth’ may point to the context in which the unfolding disclosure concerning the significance of Jesus is received in the Johannine community.<sup>570</sup> Since Jesus is full of grace and truth (1.17), testifies to the truth (18.37), indeed is the truth (14.6), the task of the Spirit is to take what is in Jesus and ‘announce’ it to successive generations of disciples. The poet whose words are recorded in the Odes of Solomon could say: ‘I went up into the light of Truth as into a chariot, and the Truth led me and caused me to come’ (38.1). This is also the experience of the Johannine believers made possible by the Spirit of truth as he ‘leads’ the disciples into Jesus who is the truth (16.13; cf.14.6).

This leading into all truth may be done primarily in the context of corporate worship. Perhaps it is no coincidence that the setting of the injunction to worship in spirit and truth is at the conclusion of the episode in which Jesus has supernaturally revealed the secrets of the Samaritan woman’s heart. Is this a model for the worshipping community, which by the power of the Spirit, has supernatural insight into divine truth? It is interesting to note that the type of

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<sup>569</sup> Bultmann, *John*, 190; cf. Brown, *The Gospel according to John*, I, 180; Lindars, *John*, 189.

<sup>570</sup> Brown, *John*, I, 180, regards ‘spirit and truth’ as a virtual hendiadys equivalent to ‘Spirit of Truth’.



worship Paul envisages in the Corinthian congregation includes the reception of a ‘revelation’ (1 Cor 14.26, ἀποκάλυψις). In particular he describes how the exercise of the prophetic gift may result in an outsider being convicted (ἐλέγχεται) as the secrets of his heart are disclosed, leading him to fall on his face and worship God, convinced that God is in the midst of the worshipping congregation (1 Cor 14.24-25).<sup>571</sup>

At the close of the encounter at the well the woman is presented as reflecting on the coming of the Messiah, making a reference to his role whereby ‘he will show us all things’ (4.26, ἀναγγελεῖ ἡμῖν ἅπαντα). Now the word translated ‘show’, ἀναγγελλω, is the same word used to describe the role of the Spirit-Paraclete in the post-resurrection era. The spirit of truth will ‘declare’ the coming things to the disciples (16.13, καὶ τὰ ἐρχόμενα ἀναγγελεῖ ὑμῖν).<sup>572</sup> If we accept the theory that, in his presentation of the material within the Gospel, John adopts a two-level principle of application, this episode may be another example of the type of thing that happened within the Johannine community, perhaps in the act of worship.<sup>573</sup> The heavenly Jesus continues, via the agency of the Paraclete, to speak the truth into the lives of his followers through the exercise of a prophetic gift (cf. Rev 2-3).

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<sup>571</sup> Boring, ‘The Influence of Christian Prophecy’, 119, argues that this passage supports the idea that the Paraclete operates through the medium of the Christian prophet.

<sup>572</sup> Kothgasser, 1972, 44. observes that ἀναγγέλλειν / ἀπαγγέλλειν not only denotes ‘to narrate, to mediate, to pass on’, but in apocalyptic texts also ‘ein erklärendes Enthüllen eines vorliegenden Geheimnisses’.

<sup>573</sup> Cf. Ashton, *Understanding*, 182.

It seems clear, then, that those who have been born ἄνωθεν or ἐξ ὕδατος καὶ πνεύματος fulfil the condition for entrance into the Kingdom of God and thereby become qualified to speak with authority on heavenly matters (τὰ ἐπουράνια). For this reason some scholars view the Johannine believers as forming a prophetic community.<sup>574</sup> Thus Hall contends that the promises given to the disciples in the farewell discourses ‘invest the members of the Johannine community with a derivative prophetic experience.’<sup>575</sup> Hans Windisch has argued that, as well as incorporating various units of tradition, John utilizes new creations based on prophetic experience. He emphasizes the role of the Spirit in not only producing inspired interpretation of the historical Jesus, but also conveying new thoughts and formulations from the risen Christ.<sup>576</sup> Thus the words spoken need not be limited to those handed down in the tradition, written or oral, but may include fresh revelations to the community through the ministry of the Holy Spirit. The character of the words uttered by Jesus is specifically termed as ‘spirit and life’ (6.63). Müller argues concerning this passage that ‘der Standpunkt des hier

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<sup>574</sup> Ashton, *Understanding the Fourth Gospel*, 181-9. The influence of early Christian prophecy on the Gospel of John is touched on by several commentators. Cf. Barrett, *Essays on John*, 117; *The Gospel According to St John*, 143; Brown, ‘The Paraclete in the Fourth Gospel’, 129; Schnackenburg, ‘Die johanneische Gemeinde und ihre Geisterfahrung’, 289.

<sup>575</sup> Hall, *Revealed Histories*, 212. Wescott, *The Gospel According to St John*, Vol 1, Lxxxv, cx, cxii-cxiii, cxxix, first propounded the idea of a prophetic origin for the Gospel to account for the fact that one who had known Jesus after the flesh could produce such high christology.

<sup>576</sup> Windisch, *Johannes und die Synoptiker*, 135-50. Käsemann, *Testament*, 38, argues that tradition is subordinate to the living voice of Jesus ‘which is to lead the community ever anew into all truth’.



Redenden nicht mehr der irdische Jesus, sondern bereits der Erhöhte'.<sup>577</sup> It is significant that Jesus is presented as saying: 'the words I *have* spoken to you are spirit and life'.

The Spirit resides within the community of believers enabling it to continue the ministry of Jesus and thereby become the locus of revelation.<sup>578</sup> With Jesus believers may declare that ὁ οἶδαμεν λαλοῦμεν καὶ ὁ ἑώρακαμεν μαρτυροῦμεν (3.11).<sup>579</sup> David Aune therefore suggests that there is some evidence in support of the idea that within the Johannine community the prophetic phenomenon was accompanied by visions and auditions.<sup>580</sup> Further insight into this phenomenon may be found in an important apocalyptic text that elucidates the nature of the Spirit's utterance. In Rev 19.10 we read that 'the witness of Jesus is the Spirit of prophecy (ἡ γὰρ μαρτυρία Ἰησοῦ ἐστὶν τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς προφητείας)'. The phrase 'the witness of Jesus (ἡ μαρτυρία Ἰησοῦ)' has already occurred in 1.2, 9; 12.17. It is probable that the genitive is subjective, thereby referring to Jesus as *the one doing the witnessing* rather than the object or content of the witness. This interpretation is confirmed in 1.5 which speaks of 'Jesus Christ the faithful witness (Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ὁ μάρτυς ὁ πιστός)', and in 3.14 where Jesus speaks as 'the faithful and true witness (ὁ μάρτυς ὁ πιστὸς καὶ ἀληθινός)'. Thus we may

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<sup>577</sup> 'Die Parakletenvorstellung', 47.

<sup>578</sup> Schnackenburg, *St John*, I, 43, comments that for the evangelist 'the earthly Jesus is understood as the Christ who continues to be present in his community; in its preaching, worship and sacraments he is the *Christus praesens*.'

<sup>579</sup> Schnackenburg, *St John*, I, 375, comments: 'It is first-hand and certain knowledge, which is derived from the immediacy of vision'.

<sup>580</sup> Aune, *Cultic Setting*, 89; cf. Lindblom, *Gesichte und Offenbarungen*.



presume that the witness of Jesus finds expression in Spirit-inspired prophecy. Bauckham concludes that ‘the Spirit of prophecy speaks through the Christian prophets bringing the word of the exalted Christ to his people on earth’.<sup>581</sup>

This contention receives support from the way in which the letters to the seven churches are presented as the words of the exalted Christ dictated to his servant John. Significantly the message from the risen Jesus is identified with the voice of the Spirit to the church. It is possible that the words were originally spoken in a context of the worshipping church, similar to that presupposed in the Corinthian congregation (cf. 1 Cor 14). The literary structure of each letter follows a similar pattern. Thus each message is introduced as ‘the words of (τάδε λέγει)’ Jesus, who is described in terms of the vision of him that John has seen (‘him who holds the seven stars’; ‘the first and the last’; ‘him who has the sharp two-edged sword’; etc). However, each letter is concluded with the exhortation: ‘He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches (ὁ ἔχων οὖς ἀκουσάτω τί τὸ πνεῦμα λέγει ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις)’ (2.7, 11, 17, 29; 3.6, 13, 22). We may deduce from this observation that the words of the exalted Christ are equated with what the Spirit says to the churches.

The identification of the present ‘witness of Jesus’ (ἡ μαρτυρία Ἰησοῦ) with ‘the spirit of prophecy’ (τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς προφητείας) that we have noted in Revelation may well be an established feature in the community of which the author of the Fourth Gospel was a member. The Christian prophets, among

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<sup>581</sup> *Climax of Prophecy*, 160.

whom may by the Fourth Evangelist, operate as vehicles for the Spirit to impart the ongoing revelation of the exalted Jesus. They are thereby equipped with the same authority that Jesus received from the Father to speak forth the words of God (12.49). Just as at the inception of his public ministry Jesus is anointed with the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit (1.32-33), so his followers are likewise equipped to continue the same mission through the reception of the same Spirit (20.22). Therefore the Fourth Gospel itself may be understood as the fruit of the Spirit's activity which finds permanent literary expression since 'sein Evangelium ist das geistgewirkte Zeugnis über Jesus, es erinnert wie der Geist an die Worte und Taten Jesu. Es ist damit die legitimierte Form der Offenbarung über Jesus.'<sup>582</sup>

The possibility of receiving heavenly truth in a direct and authoritative manner by means of spirit-inspired revelation will augment the self-esteem of a worshipping community that had been battered by the criticisms of former friends, now turned foes. No doubt worship 'in spirit' was a regular feature of the life of the Johannine fellowship and therewith provided a constant reinforcement to its self-image as custodian of the truth. This assurance would be woven into the fabric of the community's social world or symbolic universe, supporting and legitimating its stance in worshipping the Son of Man (9.38).

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<sup>582</sup> Müller, 'Die Parakletenvorstellung im Johannesevangelium', 50.

## *Summary*

In this chapter we have argued that the role of the Spirit-Paraclete in the Fourth Gospel bears significant resemblance to that of the *angelus interpretes* found in apocalyptic literature. He elucidates the revelation embodied in the historic Jesus so that successive generations of believers may progressively understand the full import and meaning of the Jesus-revelation. Furthermore, the Spirit-Paraclete acts as a transcendent legal attorney for a community exposed to the accusations and persecutions of erstwhile colleagues who have become implacable enemies of the new faith. Not only does the heavenly companion continue the lawsuit against ‘the world’, demonstrating its guilt and liability to divine judgment, he establishes the innocence of Jesus by proving that the Son’s ascent to the Father confirms his vindication. Just as the seer’s translation into the heavens provided proof of his authenticity, so the exaltation of Jesus to where he was before (6.61) demonstrates his legitimacy. Moreover, the Spirit-Paraclete is the one who enables the believer to be born into the same heavenly realm as the Son inhabits and by inspiring true worship causes the transcendent, heavenly realm to become a present reality in the experience of the worshipping community.



## Chapter 4

### THE JOHANNINE FELLOWSHIP: HEAVENLY COMMUNITY ON EARTH

Central to the thought-world of the Fourth Gospel is the belief that Jesus is still operating in the present via the agency of the Holy Spirit who dwells in the community of believers.<sup>583</sup> In the light of this it is not surprising that the experiences of believers are presented as being of a similar nature to those encountered by the earthly Jesus.<sup>584</sup> Indeed the evangelist superimposes events and debates pertaining to the community of which he is a member on to his account of the historical Jesus.<sup>585</sup> The experiences of the Johannine community are understood using the life of the earthly Jesus as a paradigm of interpretation. This chapter will endeavour to demonstrate that, by doing this, John is adopting an apocalyptic perspective (§1). Moreover, the dualistic framework inherent in this perspective is applied to the opposition encountered by both Jesus and later followers; accordingly the hostility is shown to derive from the malign activity of a supernatural foe operating through earthly agents (§2). However, the Johannine

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<sup>583</sup> Meeks, *Prophet-King*, 298, observes that 'the life of the Christian, through the mediation of the Spirit, participates in the movement of Jesus' own life'.

<sup>584</sup> Cullmann, *The Johannine Circle*, 14, argues that 'in each individual event of the life of the incarnate Jesus the evangelist seeks to show that at the same time the Christ present in his church is already at work. Thus from each narrative he draws out the line leading to the risen Christ who is at work in every activity of his community: in worship, in mission, in the struggle with unbelieving Jews and heretics.'

<sup>585</sup> Martyn, *History and Theology*, 89, argues that John's major concern 'was to bear witness to the essential integrity of the *einmalig* drama of Jesus' earthly life and the contemporary drama in which the Risen Lord acts through his servants'.

community is assured that, by participating in the life of Jesus, ultimate vindication and eternal felicity are guaranteed, being already stored up in the heavenly realm of which they are now members (§3).

### 1. *Apocalyptic Paradigm*

An important characteristic of apocalyptic thought is the belief that underlying patterns may be delineated through different historical events that enables a sense of coherence and order to be imposed on to the vicissitudes of life. A typological view of history is adopted in which one set of circumstances may act as a filter through which later crises may be viewed.<sup>586</sup> Jonathan Z. Smith finds the origins of this method in the techniques of the scribal class, which he argues was instrumental in the emergence of distinctively apocalyptic writing. Scribes were particularly interested in classifying and cataloguing events into categories that would serve as precedents or paradigms by which new situations could be interpreted. Smith observes that for ‘the scribe, if events have significance largely in terms of their precedent, then the same text may be used to describe two widely separated historical events so long as their pattern, their “value” was perceived to be the same.’<sup>587</sup> He culls examples from Babylonian and Egyptian

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<sup>586</sup> Cf. Collins, ‘Apocalyptic Technique’, 99-100: ‘The emphasis is not on the uniqueness of historical events but on recurring patterns, which assimilate the particular crisis to some event of the past, whether historical or mythical’; idem, *Apocalyptic Imagination*, 40.

<sup>587</sup> Smith, ‘Wisdom and Apocalyptic’, 104; the scribal knowledge thus accrued has the character of what Alt has termed *Listenwissenschaft*. Cf. Alt, ‘Die Weisheit Salomos’,



literature to show how a text reflecting the circumstances of one historical era may provide a pattern for interpreting events that may be quite distant both spatially and temporally. His research leads him to assert: ‘This paradigmatic (or, if you prefer, typological) ideology leads to what I would term an *apocalyptic situation*’.<sup>588</sup> It was the paradigmatic concern of the scribes that led to the evolving of exegetical techniques that aimed to apply the precedent or archetype to any new situation that might materialize. Hence ‘texts are used and reused, glossed, interpreted and reinterpreted in a continual process of “updating” the materials.’<sup>589</sup>

Furthermore, what has been termed the ‘essential multivalence of apocalyptic symbolism’<sup>590</sup> is such that there may be fresh application of the stories to new historical situations. For example, in the first dream of the Book of Dream Visions (I Enoch 83-90),<sup>591</sup> Enoch witnesses the destruction of the earth on account of the sins perpetrated by the wicked. It is clear that here the real author

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139-44. Collins, ‘Apocalyptic Technique’, 96, notes that ‘the association of wisdom with cosmic order is a commonplace in ancient Near Eastern wisdom’. Cf. von Rad, *Wisdom in Israel*, 144-76; Gese, *Lehre und Wirklichkeit*, 33-44.

<sup>588</sup> Smith, ‘Wisdom and Apocalyptic’, 104-5. Cf. North, ‘Prophecy to Apocalyptic via Zechariah’, 47-71, has compared the interpretation of the concrete events of history in the classical prophets with ‘history as pattern’ in apocalypticism.

<sup>589</sup> Smith, ‘Wisdom and Apocalyptic’, 108. Authoritative reinterpretation of the sacred texts is a common practice among the apocalyptic writers. So the author of Daniel 9 reinterprets aspects of the prophecy of Jeremiah, and the Teacher of Righteousness, under the inspiration of the Spirit, elucidates the true eschatological meaning latent in the prophetic writings.

<sup>590</sup> Collins, *Apocalyptic Imagination*, 51.

<sup>591</sup> This section of 1 Enoch is usually treated as a unity; cf. Charles, *The Book of Enoch*, 179; VanderKam, *Enoch and the Growth of an Apocalyptic Tradition*, 161.



of the apocalypse is drawing a parallel with conditions in his own time,<sup>592</sup> and the prayer of Enoch is his own prayer as he sees judgment falling on the wicked and righteous alike in the Antiochene persecution (84.6). Thus the author delineates a pattern in the pre-diluvian history that forms a framework by which present events may be interpreted. As angelic evil perpetrated by the ‘watchers’ had precipitated divine judgment in the time of Noah, so God will judge the angelic shepherds in the present age (1 En 90.17-26). Another example of this technique may be found in the book of Jubilees in which the account of the battles of Israel may be seen as a retrojection of the Maccabean conflicts occurring in the author’s own time.<sup>593</sup> The earlier battles are used as templates that provide the patterns upon which later hostilities may be modelled.<sup>594</sup> The theology informing this schematization of history is encapsulated in Enoch’s statement that ‘the deeds of the people were also shown to me, *each according to its type*’ (1 En 90.41) [italics mine].

A similar approach is adopted in the book of Daniel as the author seeks to delineate a series of patterns that are used to interpret the anomalous circumstances of the time.<sup>595</sup> For example, the reigns of the Medo-Persian kings, Alexander the Great, and Antiochus IV Epiphanes are depicted in imagery that emphasises the recurring cycle of the rise, temporary activity and fall of each

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<sup>592</sup> It is likely that the author of this section wrote during the Maccabean crisis. Cf. Charles, *The Book of Enoch*, 182; Milik, *The Books of Enoch: Aramaic Fragments of Qumran Cave 4*, 44.

<sup>593</sup> Vanderkam, *Textual Studies*, 217-41.

<sup>594</sup> Hall, *Revealed Histories*, 45.

<sup>595</sup> Ibid, 82.

successive kingdom (Dan 7-12). The underlying message is that the hubris of human endeavour always provokes the nemesis of divine judgment. Thus the reader may be fortified with the knowledge that, although the present power of Antiochus IV Epiphanes may appear to be on the ascendancy,<sup>596</sup> the judgment meted out to previous powers will inexorably take place in this case too.<sup>597</sup> Hall observes that ‘patterns echoing the present are revealed in the past so that what happens in the past can serve as a model for what happens in the present and future...As angelic powers frustrated all earlier kings so they will frustrate Antiochus IV’.<sup>598</sup>

In the Book of Watchers we find that the specific historical occasion is disguised by transposing human problems onto a mythological plane.<sup>599</sup> Thus, while on one level the Watchers are warned of the reality of judgment, since the place of judgment is already *in situ*, on another level those people who are surrounded by the violence and disorder, expressed by the story of the Watchers, are assured of a just final outcome. Although there have been various suggestions

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<sup>596</sup> Collins, *Apocalyptic Vision*, 139-40, contends that Antiochus IV Epiphanes actually engages in conflict with the heavenly host. However, Beasley-Murray, ‘The Interpretation of Daniel 7’, 53, contests this view.

<sup>597</sup> Hall, *Revealed Histories*, 95, observes that ‘Daniel employs revealed history to establish a recurring pattern within a puzzling and distressing period. The pattern, once established for the past, undergirds the apocalypticist’s interpretation of the present and his expectations for the future’.

<sup>598</sup> Ibid, 119.

<sup>599</sup> Insight into the function of the mythological element within apocalyptic thinking has been achieved through the work of Mircea Eliade. He has shown that the cosmogonic myth acts as a paradigm, or exemplary model which describes the structure of the cosmos as it is experienced in the present. Cf. Eliade, *Myth and Reality*, 45; Smith, ‘Birth Upside Down’, 284.



that the Šemiḥazah material reflects the wars of the Diadochoi,<sup>600</sup> or the sexual sin of the Jerusalem priesthood,<sup>601</sup> it is difficult to be sure of any identifiable referent implied by the apocalyptic allegory of the Watchers. This observation leads Collins to state: 'By telling the story of the Watchers rather than of the Diadochoi or the priesthood, 1 Enoch 1-36 becomes a paradigmatic model which is not restricted to one historical situation but can be applied whenever an analogous situation arises.'<sup>602</sup> Hence Saachi argues that the intention of the work is to provide a paradigm for the origin of sin and evil by explaining the human situation in mythic terms.<sup>603</sup>

In addition to the idea that past earthly events may provide a paradigm by which later historical circumstances can be evaluated, the apocalyptic literature also provides examples of how the earthly realm is construed as modelled upon heavenly reality. Integral to apocalyptic thought is the notion of a bipartite structure of reality in which two distinct, yet related, dimensions parallel one another.<sup>604</sup> Caird observes that 'the writers believed that every earthly person, institution, and event had a heavenly equivalent, so that a seer, transported to

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<sup>600</sup> Nickelsburg, 'Apocalyptic and Myth', 391. Scholars are agreed that the book in its present form is composite, comprising smaller units from earlier stages of tradition. Various sources have been woven together to form a unified whole. Thus it is possible to identify a Šemiḥazah tradition which views the primary sin as angelic intercourse with humans producing giants who terrorize the earth, and an 'Asa'el tradition where the root of the earth's evils is traced to improper revelation.

<sup>601</sup> Suter, 'Fallen Angel, Fallen Priest', 124-31.

<sup>602</sup> Collins, 'Apocalyptic Technique', 98.

<sup>603</sup> *Jewish Apocalyptic*, 72-87.

<sup>604</sup> Böcher, *Der johanneische Dualismus*, 26, speaks of a 'räumlichen Zweistufigkeit' (two-storied space) based on a mythological framework which divides the universe into the two realms of heaven and earth.



heaven in ecstatic rapture, could see enacted in the symbols of heavenly drama the counterpart of earthly events, past, present, and future'.<sup>605</sup> Therefore as well as being modelled on historical precedents, earthly events may be correlated with activity in the heavenly realm.<sup>606</sup> In the words of the writer of the Book of Dream Visions: 'all things upon the earth *shall take place from heaven*' (1 En 83.9; italics mine). The author of the Ascension of Isaiah puts it like this: 'And as above, so also on earth, for the likeness of what (is) in the firmament is here on earth' (Asc Isa 7.10). Bietenhard has amplified this aspect of apocalypticism as follows: 'Der Grundgedanke der altorientalischen Weltanschauung ist die Lehre von der Entsprechung zwischen Himmel und Erde. Alles, was auf Erden ist, hat sein Ur- und Vorbild am Himmel. Jedes irdische Sein und Geschehen ist in einem himmlischen Sein und Geschehen präfiguriert. Dabei ist alles, was am Himmel ist und geschieht, dem Irdischen gegenüber primär'.<sup>607</sup>

The 'homology' between the heavenly and earthly worlds in ancient Near Eastern thought reflects the mythical view in which reality is governed by the interplay between human and divine forces.<sup>608</sup> Whereas modern thought

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<sup>605</sup> Caird, *Revelation of St John the Divine*, 9-10.

<sup>606</sup> Rowland, *Open Heaven*, 91, commenting on 1 En 89 states that 'the picture emerges here of earthly events being reflections of heavenly realities'. Smalley, *Thunder and Love*, 59, observes that the author of Revelation shares the view of previous Jewish apocalyptists that 'in heaven there exists a transcript of earthly reality'. Cf. Hall, *Revealed Histories*, 85.

<sup>607</sup> Bietenhard, *Die himmlische Welt*, 13. Von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, II, 288, asserts that 'everything on earth, particularly if it had sacral value, had its corresponding archetype in the world above'.

<sup>608</sup> Collins, *Apocalyptic Imagination*, 52, notes that 'the tendency to explain the human situation in mythic terms is characteristic of apocalyptic literature.'

considers that the mythological realm is merely a human projection, the ancient world assumes the paramount reality of the transcendent realm and regards earthly affairs as reflecting this greater reality.<sup>609</sup> This homology is evident in Dan 10-12, which purveys the conflict between Jews and Greeks as a battle between their respective angelic patrons. Behind the human conflicts of the Hellenistic age there is heavenly warfare between the angelic patron of Israel and the celestial ‘princes’ of Persia and Greece. The angel who speaks to Daniel informs him that the prince of Persia had impeded his progress until Michael, ‘the great prince’<sup>610</sup>, the protector<sup>611</sup> of your people’ (Dan 12.1), had provided the necessary reinforcement. Thus the course of earthly history is directly influenced by the outcome of heavenly warfare. In the Similitudes, Enoch observes the angels of the plague ‘preparing all the chains of Satan’ (1 En 53.3), prompting him to enquire from the angel of peace accompanying him who the chains are being prepared for. The angel replies that they are for ‘the kings and potentates of this earth’ (53.5). This answer demonstrates that the heavenly powers are paralleled by earthly counterparts and vice versa. The worldly rulers who are perpetrating the oppression of the righteous are recognized as being the agents of superhuman evil forces and may therefore be designated as the ‘armies of Azazel’ (54.5).

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<sup>609</sup> Cook, *Prophecy and Apocalypticism*, 24, n. 16, notes that ‘the earth’s problems can be dealt with by actions (such as celestial battles) in the heavenly plane’.

<sup>610</sup> The term  $\text{רש}$  is used for the commander of an army (1 Sam 17.55; 1 Kg 4.13).

<sup>611</sup> This is the participial form of  $\text{רמ}$ , a verb often occurring in judicial contexts (Deut 19.17; Josh 20.6; Ezek 44.24). In Zech 3.1 Satan stands to accuse Joshua (cf. Jub 48.9). In Jub 18.9, the defending angel stands before God and the accuser.



They carry out their activity as ‘messengers of Satan’ (54.6). A comparable perspective is found in the Qumran *War Scroll*, where we read that God ‘will raise up the kingdom of Michael in the midst of the gods, and the realm of Israel in the midst of all flesh’ (1QM 17.6-8).

The author of the book of Jubilees also models earthly reality upon heavenly patterns.<sup>612</sup> Thus the sacred history of the chosen race is placed within the context of the heavenly realm in which supernatural agents are seen to determine the outcome of earthly events. For example, the evil angel Mastema questions Abraham’s faithfulness and asks that he be put to the test (17.16). At the climax of the scene the Angel of the Presence intervenes at the Lord’s bidding to stop Abraham from slaying his son. The same two angels are juxtaposed in the narratives of the exodus when Mastema tries to kill Moses, but is prevented from doing so by the Angel of the Presence (48.2-4). Again, the Exodus is portrayed as a battle between these two otherworldly beings and their entourages. The angelic narrator records that ‘Prince Mastema was bound and shut up from (coming) after the children of Israel so that he might not accuse them. And on the nineteenth day *we released them* so that they might help the Egyptians and pursue after the children of Israel’ (48.15-17). This passage clearly evinces the belief that earthly events are influenced by the actions of heavenly forces.

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<sup>612</sup> Gruenwald, *Apocalyptic and Merkavah Mysticism*, 24, observes that in contrast to the canonical account, Jubilees discloses meaningful details and ‘inner ideological patterns’: ‘only with the disclosure of those patterns and ideas the scriptural story was believed to receive its true meaning and perspective.’



In the same work Moses is depicted as receiving a revelation on Mt Sinai from the aforesaid Angel of the Presence (2.1: מלאך הַפְּנִים) which makes clear that the law has been established in heaven written on heavenly tablets.<sup>613</sup> The various earthly institutions are therefore a copy or reflection of what exists in the heavenly realm. For example, the Sabbath is portrayed as a heavenly celebration for both the highest orders of angels and the children of Jacob (2.17-21). The fact that this feast has been instituted in heaven provides supreme evidence of its importance for subsequent generations. Moreover, its observance is construed as participating with the angels in the joint worship of heaven and earth. However, while the heavenly institution of a feast usually precedes the earthly observance, sometimes the order is reversed (18.19; 34.18). Hall comments that ‘the past earthly and heavenly components of these revelations so thoroughly intertwine showing how necessary an understanding of heavenly events is to an understanding of past earthly events and how necessary an understanding of past earthly events is to heavenly. Heaven and earth belong to the same world’.<sup>614</sup>

A similar perspective is adopted in the Apocalypse of Abraham. The underlying premise of the book is that a true understanding and explanation of the history of the chosen people can only be achieved by means of heavenly revelation. The vantage point of this higher realm is the *sine qua non* for correct

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<sup>613</sup> Hall, *Revealed Histories*, 43: ‘The historical material reveals how the law is inscribed in heaven and built into the fabric of history and creation’.

<sup>614</sup> Hall, *Revealed Histories*, 35. Cf. *ibid*, 44, where it is stated that the worldview of the author is that the ‘universe, whether heavenly or earthly is a unity’.

interpretation of earthly events. Accordingly the patriarch is supernaturally lifted up to the seventh heaven to see a picture that represents the plan of God for the world (22.2). In the picture past, present and future are all laid out before the view of the heavenly onlooker. While from an earthly viewpoint the series of reversals encountered by the people of God is to be lamented, the heavenly perspective reveals that God's ultimate purpose is served. The demise of the Temple defiled by idolatry opens up the way for a new pure Temple to be established after an interim hundred-year period. Moreover, the advent of a new idol in human form put forward by Azazel serves to differentiate genuine from counterfeit Hebrews (29.13). The purified children of Abraham are brought into blessing through rejecting idolatry as their revered ancestor had done (chs. 6-8). Similarly in 2 Baruch the seer is raised to a spiritual dimension for he is now able to perceive the supernatural backdrop to the earthly events that distress him. He sees that the real agents initiating the temple's destruction are angels fulfilling their divine commission. The spiritual perspective accorded to the seer allows him to see that human hostility is actually subservient to the divine purpose (2 Bar 6.3).

The book of Revelation presents a drama, couched in a series of visionary images, which is enacted on two distinct yet related planes. The seer is granted privileged access into what lies behind and indeed controls the forces of history. The enigmas of earthly existence are solved by the disclosure of the ultimate, heavenly reality. The beast with seven heads and ten horns, which represents a

world power (the *Imperium Romanum*), is shown to receive its power from the dragon, the ancient snake, i.e. the Devil (13.1-4). Thus the suffering experienced by the Christian community is seen to derive from a superhuman enemy (12.17). So, for example, the risen Jesus informs the church in Smyrna that the slanderous behaviour of the so-called Jews evinces their true character as a 'synagogue of Satan' (2.9). Moreover, the impending tribulation predicted for the church is traced to its malign supernatural origin. Behind the hostile religious or political authorities stands '*the devil*' (ὁ διάβολος) who is 'about to throw some of you into prison' (2.10). The experience of persecution is interpreted as a reflection of the battle between the Spirit and Satan evidenced in the earthly ministry of Jesus.<sup>615</sup> Conversely, although comparatively small attention is paid to the earthly life of Jesus, it is through his death on earth that the Lamb of God conquers in heaven (1.5; 7.14; 12.11).

We may observe that Jesus is shown to provide the pattern for the type of experiences encountered by his followers. So in the description of the heavenly warrior Lord, the seer notes that from his mouth 'issues a sharp sword with which to smite the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron' (19.15). Not only is this predicated of the male child in the earlier symbolic account of the advent of the Messiah (12.5), it is promised to the faithful disciple. Thus Jesus pledges that 'he who conquers and who keeps my works to the end, I will give him power over

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<sup>615</sup> Robinson, *The Problem of History in Mark*, 63. Cf. Laws, 'Can Apocalyptic be Relevant?', 100.



the nations, and he shall rule them with a rod of iron' (2.26-27). Moreover Jesus has the right to confer this authority to his followers on the grounds that he has himself received it from his Father (2.28: ὡς καὶ ἐλάλησα παρὰ τοῦ πατρός μου).

In his earthly life he endured suffering, humiliation and death, but finally triumphed over all adversity. He is therefore the archetype of those who overcome and thereby inherit final victory. Thus at the close of the circular letter to the seven churches Jesus promises his faithful ones that 'he who conquers, I will grant him to sit with me on my throne, as I myself conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne' (3.21). The conquest of the Lamb becomes both the pledge and the pattern for the ultimate triumph of his followers. Believers are therefore assured of final deliverance through the victory of Christ, the Son of Man (1.13; 14.14). Thus they are given the title of 'victor' (3.12; cf. 2.11; 15.2) and 'witness' (2.13; cf. 20.4), which, of course, is predicated of the Lamb who had overcome and is the faithful witness (5.5-6; 1.5). Laws states that 'because the Lamb's victory is seen to be achieved through his death, there is a move towards giving the death of the martyr, too, a positive evaluation in terms of an imitation of or sharing in that victory.'<sup>616</sup>

It has been argued that apocalyptic literature provides evidence for the principle by which historical precedents on earth and also events in the heavenly realm are used to interpret present circumstances. It is the contention of this

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<sup>616</sup> Laws, 'Can Apocalyptic be Relevant?', 99.

thesis that the Johannine evangelist presents the earthly life of Jesus both as a historical and heavenly paradigm that illuminates the history of the community. In the opening chapter attention was given to Martyn's thesis that John's presentation of his Gospel as a two-level drama is based on an apocalyptic understanding of reality in which there are dramas taking place both on the heavenly stage and on the earthly stage.<sup>617</sup> Moreover, these dramas correspond, or even determine, one another, although as Charlesworth recognizes, 'the primary world is the 'world above' (ἄνωθεν) which is both the region from which the angels descend and to which they ascend...and the realm from which all emanates'.<sup>618</sup> We aim to show that the correspondence between type and antitype or the heavenly and the earthly realms, which characterizes apocalyptic thought, is applied in the Fourth Gospel to the association between Jesus and his disciples.<sup>619</sup> In other words, the evangelist presents the life of the incarnate Son as an exemplar or pattern for the Johannine community.

We have alluded, in the previous chapter, to the fact that the archetype of the man born ἄνωθεν is Jesus himself. He alone has witnessed heavenly reality,

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<sup>617</sup> Cf. *History and Theology*, 136.

<sup>618</sup> Charlesworth, 'Dualism', 402. Charlesworth notes the relation between John and 4 Ez 7.50 ('The Most High has made not one world but two') stating that 'it appears that John received his two worlds from such thoughts in late biblical Judaism.' Gammie, 'Dualism', 360, prefers to see this text as referring to temporal or eschatological dualism. Lindars, *Behind the Fourth Gospel*, although conceding the use of 'spatial terms' cautions against seeing 'a more radical dualism between the heavenly and the earthly' since the 'dualism never really goes beyond the form of dualism known to be current in the Judaism of the time' (pp. 64,67, 72). But, as we shall see, the apocalyptic dualism of John's day was often conceived in a spatial manner.

<sup>619</sup> Burge, *Anointed Community*, xvi, notes that for the Johannine community 'the experience of Christ was paradigmatic'.



the ἐπουράνια which were the contents of the seer's vision. However, the prospect for the follower of Jesus is that, through being 'born of the Spirit', he or she may experience the heavenly realm above. In Johannine thought the believer has been 'born from above' (3.3,7) or 'born of God' (1.13: ἐκ θεοῦ ἐγεννήθησαν; cf. 1 Jn 3.9) and therefore shares the experiences previously reserved for Jesus alone. Those who come to Jesus have been 'given' to him by the Father (6.39), becoming 'his own' (13.1: οἱ ἱδιοὶ) and are thereby drawn under the canopy of his protection and shelter (17.6; 10.28-19).

The picture (παροιμία) of the good shepherd illustrates the closeness of the bond between Jesus and his disciples (10.1-18), while the imagery of the vine and the branches (15.1-8) points even more strongly to the solidarity between them. As the branches are in the vine, so the disciples are to abide in Jesus, the true vine, and he will abide in them (15.4: μέννατε ἐν ἐμοί, κἀγὼ ἐν ὑμῖν). Pollard observes that the 'reciprocity or mutuality of relationship between the Son and believers' finds expression in the way in which the preposition ἐν is used.<sup>620</sup> For example, in the eucharistic discourse found in ch. 6 Jesus promises that the one who eats his flesh and drinks his blood 'abides in me and I in him' (6.56: ἐν ἐμοὶ μένει κἀγὼ ἐν αὐτῷ). Moreover, the disciples are to remain in Christ's word (8.31: ἐν τῷ λόγῳ τῷ ἐμῷ) and his words in them (15.7: τὰ ῥήματά μου ἐν ὑμῖν). The coming of the Paraclete affords the strongest indication of the union between Jesus and his followers, for 'in that day' they will know that 'I am in my Father,

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<sup>620</sup> Pollard, 'The Father-Son and God-Believer Relationships', 368.



and you in me, and I in you' (14.20: ἐγὼ ἐν τῷ πατρὶ μου καὶ ὑμεῖς ἐν ἐμοὶ καὶ ἐγὼ ἐν ὑμῖν). Here we are informed of the remarkable fact that 'the unity of the Father and the Son is extended to *include* believers in the reciprocal relationship'.<sup>621</sup>

It has already been argued in ch. 2 that the Johannine Jesus is presented as a heavenly agent of the Father. According to Jewish ideas of agency, the principle can be applied whereby 'an agent may appoint an agent'. Furthermore, as Harvey observes, 'it was not always necessary for the principal to recall an agent before appointing another in his place; an agent could be authorized to appoint his successor'.<sup>622</sup> Now in his high-priestly prayer, Jesus prays to the Father: 'As you have sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world' (17.18). This sentiment is repeated after the resurrection when Jesus commissions his disciples saying: 'As the father has sent me, so I send you' (20.21). This means that, in Harvey's words, 'the role of the disciples in the world will be in many respects that of Jesus himself. They are the agent's appointed agents'.<sup>623</sup>

An important corollary to the principle of agency just mentioned is that 'an agent is like the one who sent him'. This implies that the reception given to the agent should reflect that which would be accorded the sender. Jesus adduces this tenet in his controversy with the Jews (cf. 5.23; 12.45). Moreover, he applies it to the disciples whom he is sending out. Thus: 'he who receives anyone whom I

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<sup>621</sup> Idem, 368.

<sup>622</sup> *Jesus on Trial*, 106.

<sup>623</sup> Idem.

send receives me, and he who receives me receives him who sent me' (13.20). The treatment that the disciples would receive from the world would mirror that given to Jesus (15.18-19).

Through faith in Jesus, believers are integrated into his person. Therefore, there is a legitimate merging of the life-situations of servant and master (13.13-16). Hence, in the dialogue with Nicodemus the words of Jesus can merge imperceptibly with those of his later followers: 'Truly, truly, I say to you, *we* speak of what we know, and bear witness to what we have seen' (3.11). We can see here that the evangelist uses the *pluralis ecclesiasticus* to signify the solidarity of Jesus and his later followers. This coalescing of two discrete entities also explains the interchangeable use of the first person singular and plural in the declaration: '*We* must work the works of him who sent *me*' (9.4). Meeks expresses this feature of Johannine Christianity as follows: 'In short, the life of the Christian, through the mediation of the Spirit, participates in the movement of Jesus' own life'.<sup>624</sup> Thus Jesus can say to his disciples: 'because I live, you will live also' (14.19: ὅτι ἐγὼ ζῶ καὶ ὑμεῖς ζήσετε). He, and therefore they belong to a heavenly reality that is ultimately more significant than the transient world below (cf. 1 Jn 2.17).

We saw earlier in this study that Jesus, like the apocalyptic seer, is witness to the heavenly realm. This transcendent dimension now becomes available to his disciples through their faith in him. The frequent usage of verbs of sight such as

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<sup>624</sup> Meeks, *Prophet-King*, 298.

ὁράω, θεωρέω, θεάομαι, βλέπω, ἐμβλέπω indicate the importance of ‘seeing’ in the Fourth Gospel.<sup>625</sup> While these verbs may refer to the ordinary faculty of sight that is mere physical perception, often the Johannine usage implies a spiritual apprehension that is not automatically available to everyone.<sup>626</sup> Borgen contends that the word ‘to see’ (6.36, ἑώρακατε) alludes to ‘theophanic visions in the history of Israel’. Thus Abraham saw (εἶδεν) the day of Jesus (8.56); Nathanael sees (ὥψεσθε) what Jacob/Israel saw in the vision at Bethel (1.49-51); the phrase ‘we have beheld (ἐθεασάμεθα) his glory’ (1.14) alludes to the theophany at Sinai (cf. 1.18; 5.37; 6.46); Isaiah saw (εἶδεν) the glory of the Son (12.41).<sup>627</sup> However, John focuses these allusions into one person, so for him θεωρέω denotes ‘a vision of God in the life and work of Jesus’.<sup>628</sup>

The motif of an ‘open heaven’, prominent in the apocalyptic literature (Ap Zeph 10.2; Ap Ab 19.4; T Lev 2.6), finds its ultimate realization in the Johannine Christ. Barrett rightly asserts: ‘John...begins from the historical scene of the ministry of Jesus, and means to assert that this is the place where heaven is open and access to God becomes possible.’<sup>629</sup> Thus the Johannine Jesus can say to Philip: ὁ ἑώρακὼς ἐμὲ ἑώρακεν τὸν πατέρα (14.9). In this connection it is interesting to note Bühner’s comment: ‘Es besteht die Möglichkeit, hinter Joh.

<sup>625</sup> Cf. Michaelis, ὁράω’, 340, 345.

<sup>626</sup> Cullmann, *Early Christian Worship*, 45, finds these two meanings intertwined throughout the Fourth Gospel.

<sup>627</sup> Borgen, *Bread from Heaven*, 175.

<sup>628</sup> Kanagaraj, *Mysticism*, 217.

<sup>629</sup> ‘Paradox and Dualism’, 110. Cf. Kanagaraj, *Mysticism*, 192.



12.45; 14.9 eine ältere, apokalyptische Schicht aufzuweisen: die himmlische Herrlichkeit wird dem in der Vision hinaufsteigenden Anabatiker zugänglich, so daß sie an ihm selbst schaubar wird'.<sup>630</sup>

As the exclusive witness to heavenly reality, Jesus promises his followers that which the apocalypticists sought after, namely an open heaven. Thus at the close of the initial encounter with his disciples Jesus says: καὶ λέγει αὐτῷ, 'Ἀμὴν ἂμην λέγω ὑμῖν, ὅψεσθε<sup>631</sup> τὸν οὐρανὸν ἀνεωγότα καὶ τοὺς ἀγγέλους τοῦ Θεοῦ ἀναβαίνοντας καὶ καταβαίνοντας ἐπὶ τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου (1.51).<sup>632</sup> This verse forms the climax of a literary crescendo in which a series of titles have been accorded to Jesus, culminating in the promise of a 'greater' revelation. This pattern is quite common in the apocalyptic literature where we find that the disclosure spirals to higher levels and the seer is instructed to prepare himself for 'greater things'. So, for example, at the conclusion of his second vision Ezra is told: 'If therefore you will pray again and fast again for seven days, I will again declare to you *greater things* than these' (4 Ez 6.31). In 3 Baruch the angel Phanael leads the seer through the heavenly series with the invitation: 'Come and I will show you *greater* mysteries' (3 Bar 2.6).

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<sup>630</sup> Bühner, *Der Gesandte*, 218.

<sup>631</sup> Bernard, *St John*, 67, states that ὅπτομαι is used by the evangelist to refer to the vision of heavenly or spiritual realities rather than ordinary sight. This is not the case with ὁρᾶν, which may denote both heavenly and earthly sight. Cf. Bultmann, *John*, 69, n.2.

<sup>632</sup> This logion probably had an independent setting, but has been taken over by John as a metaphor for 'the closeness of the Son of Man on earth to heaven, his unceasing union with God' (Schnackenburg, *St John*, I, 320).

However, the primary inspiration for the verse is clearly Gen 28.12-13. The LXX reads: κλίμαξ ἐστηριγμένη ἐν τῇ γῇ, ἧς ἡ κεφαλὴ ἀφικνεῖτο εἰς τὸν οὐρανόν, καὶ οἱ ἄγγελοι τοῦ θεοῦ ἀνέβαινον καὶ κατέβαινον ἐπ’ αὐτῆς. Comparing this to the Johannine passage we can see that the evangelist has replaced ἐπ’ αὐτῆς with ἐπὶ τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου.<sup>633</sup> In the Genesis narrative the stairway (Hebrew: מַלְאָךְ), which links heaven and earth, facilitates the self-revelation of God to Jacob.<sup>634</sup> But in the Fourth Gospel this function is achieved by the Son of Man; he is the way to the Father (14.6), the conduit between heaven and earth that makes the presence of God manifest in his person (12.45; 14.9-10).<sup>635</sup> Quispel contends that the vision of the Son of Man relates to the *Offenbarungsgestalt* (i.e. כְּבוֹד) of the divine referred to in Ez 1.26 and Isa

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<sup>633</sup> It may be that in substituting the Son of man for the stairway, John is making use of a grammatical ambiguity in the Hebrew text where כֹּן may be taken to mean ‘upon him’ as well as ‘upon it’. Unlike the Greek (κλίμαξ), the Hebrew for ladder (מַלְאָךְ) is masculine, causing the grammatical ambiguity. The rabbis disagreed over the application of כֹּן, whether it referred to the ladder or Jacob; cf. *Gen. R.* 68.18. Cf. Burney, *Aramaic Origin*, 116; Ashton, *Understanding*, 342, n. 18.

<sup>634</sup> Kanagaraj, *Mysticism*, 191, n. 30, observes that עֲלֵיךְ in Gen 28.13 refers to the Lord standing ‘before him (Jacob)’; cf. Westermann, *Genesis 12-36: A Commentary*, 454; von Rad, *Genesis*, 279.

<sup>635</sup> Barrett, ‘Paradox and Dualism’, 110, comments: ‘It is characteristic of ladders that they have two ends; they connect two points. This is what John has to say of the Son of man; he connects heaven and earth. Because he belongs to both heaven and earth he makes possible communication between the two.’ Similarly, Smalley, *Thunder and Love*, 27, remarks that John ‘sees in the enfleshment of the Word a conjoining of heaven and earth. Cf. idem, ‘Johannes 1,51 und die Einleitung zum vierten Evangelium’, 300-13; Tuckett, *Christology*, 164.



6.1.<sup>636</sup> The angels express this glory, while their movement represents the *Verkehr* between heaven and earth.<sup>637</sup>

When we turn to the Synoptic tradition we find that the promise of the eschatological coming of the Son of Man is formulated as follows: ‘Henceforth you will see (ἀπ’ ὅρτι ὄψεσθε) the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven’ (Mt 26.64 = Mk 14.62).<sup>638</sup> However, from the Johannine perspective the advent of the Son of Man has already occurred. This brings with it, as Kanagaraj observes, the ‘possibility now of seeing the heavenly glory and of having communion with God on the basis of (ἐπί + acc.) what Jesus will accomplish by his death and exaltation. This...is for John μείζω τούτων’.<sup>639</sup> He is therefore the ‘gate of heaven’ (Gen 28.17), ‘the place of the presence of God’s grace on earth, the tent of God among men (cf. 1.14)’.<sup>640</sup>

The disciples, in contrast to the outside world, are bequeathed the privilege of an ongoing spiritual apprehension of the risen Christ. Thus although the world sees him no more, his followers continue to see him (14.19: ὁ κόσμος με οὐκέτι θεωρεῖ, ὑμεῖς δὲ θεωρεῖτε με). Hence, the community of believers is able to ‘bear witness’ to what they have seen (3.11: καὶ ὃ ἑώρακαμεν μαρτυροῦμεν), which in essence is the glory of God manifest in the person of Jesus (1.14: καὶ

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<sup>636</sup> Quispel, ‘Nathanael’, 282.

<sup>637</sup> Bühner, *Der Gesandte*, 391-92.

<sup>638</sup> This tradition seems to have influenced the Antiochene and Alexandrian textual transmission of Jn 1.51.

<sup>639</sup> Kanagaraj, *Mysticism*, 193. Once again the verse may constitute a polemic against those who have claimed any heavenly vision apart from through Jesus.

<sup>640</sup> Schnackenburg, *St John*, I, 321.



ἐθεασάμεθα τὴν δόξαν αὐτοῦ, δόξαν ὡς μονογενοῦς παρὰ πατρός; cf. 2.11). Just as Jesus witnessed to what he had heard and seen (8.26, 38), so his disciples are commanded to testify (15.27: καὶ ὑμεῖς δὲ μαρτυρεῖτε) to what they have seen (3.11). However, for them the subject of the heavenly vision is Jesus himself (1.14).<sup>641</sup>

Further to witnessing heavenly reality in Jesus, the disciples also participate in the Son's eschatological role. On the one hand the life and work of Jesus was unique and complete, so that at the end of his earthly sojourn he could truly say that he had glorified the Father by accomplishing the work the Father had given him (17.4: ἐγὼ σε ἐδόξασα ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, τὸ ἔργον τελειώσας ὃ δέδωκάς μοι ἵνα ποιήσω; cf. 19.30). On the other hand, the Father, who performed his works through Jesus (14.10), continues to work through the disciples of Jesus (9.4; cf. 5.17). These works, done in the name of Jesus (14.12), are similar in character to those performed by the earthly Christ. Indeed, the fulfilment of Jesus' prediction to Nathanael that he would see 'greater things' (1.51: μείζω τούτων) is realized throughout the eschatological period, introduced by Jesus, but continued on earth in the lives of the community of his followers. Those who believe in Jesus will not only do his works, they will accomplish 'greater ones' (14.12: μείζονα τούτων).

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<sup>641</sup> Ricca, *Die Eschatologie*, 114, observes that 'Diese Vision war nach jüdischer Ansicht eine Segnung der zukünftigen Zeit (vgl. 6, 46). In Jesus ist sie gegenwärtige Wirklichkeit'.

The defeat of the prince of this world, achieved as Jesus is 'lifted up' on the cross, entails the introduction of eschatological judgment (12.31-32). However, in contrast to most apocalyptic imagery, this act is not punctiliar (a single event occurring at the close of this present age) but rather linear, that is, an ongoing activity continuously enacted by the spoken word of God. It is therefore a continuing reality in the life of the community of believers. As well as the miraculous 'signs' which demonstrated Jesus' divine glory (2.11; 11.4), and of course the lifting up of the Son of Man (12.32), the Father's work was accomplished in the spoken words of Jesus. Thus Jesus equates the words that he speaks with the work that the Father does through him (14.10). This activity is of paramount importance in the ongoing life of the community of disciples, for via the agency of the Holy Spirit, Jesus continues to speak his words (16.13) through the members of the Johannine community. However, the words of the risen Christ are not only 'spirit and life' (6.63), they perform a significant role in the eschatological judgment: 'the word that I have spoken will be his judge on the last day' (12.48: ὁ λόγος ὃν ἐλάλησα, ἐκεῖνος κρινεῖ αὐτὸν ἐν τῇ ἐσχάτῃ ἡμέρᾳ). Hence, we may infer that the disciples, as agents of Jesus' word (8.31), participate in the activity of the Son in the eschatological age.<sup>642</sup> We shall now develop this idea.

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<sup>642</sup> Bultmann, *Theology*, II, 38, remarks that 'the judgment, then, is no dramatic cosmic event, but takes place in the response of men to the word of Jesus'.

Allusion has already been made (cf. ch. 2) to the fact that Jesus is given the authority to judge ‘because he is the Son of Man’ (5.27: καὶ ἐξουσίαν ἔδωκεν αὐτῷ κρίσιν ποιεῖν, ὅτι υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου ἐστίν). This title, the subject of much controversy, may reflect the close association between Jesus and his followers. In the apocalyptic literature, although this figure is a real heavenly being, he may also be viewed as the heavenly counterpart of the community of disciples who espouse allegiance to him.<sup>643</sup> In Dan 7.13 it is recorded that ‘dominion and glory and kingship’ have been given to the one ‘like a son of man’ (w(\$ ui(o\ \$ a)nqrw/pou). However, in 7.18 the interpreting angel reveals to Daniel that ‘the holy ones of the Most High shall receive the kingdom and possess the kingdom for ever, for ever and ever.’ This implies that the Son of Man and the holy ones are integrally related. If the term ‘holy ones’ carries its usual connotation of angels or supernatural beings, the following reference to ‘the people of the holy ones of the Most High’ (7.27) may then refer to the Jewish nation who are the earthly counterparts of these angelic protectors, themselves under the leadership of the one like a son of man. Thus the three references in Dan 7.14, 18 and 27, in which the one like a son of man, the holy ones of the Most High, and the people of the holy ones are all spoken of as receiving the kingdom, represent

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<sup>643</sup> Martyn, *History and Theology*, 141, contends: ‘It is centrally as the Son of Man that Jesus appears on the contemporary level of the drama and thus makes known his presence.’



three levels of a 'multidimensional reality'.<sup>644</sup> Nickelsburg observes that 'the son of man stands parallel to the (people of) saints (of the most High). His exaltation (v. 14) means their exaltation (vv. 18, 22, 27).'<sup>645</sup> Thus the Son of Man represents the community and draws it into his own destiny.<sup>646</sup>

In the Similitudes of Enoch the Son of Man is presented as a heavenly personage who represents the righteous community on the supernatural level.<sup>647</sup> Here also there is a parallelism, or 'structural homologue',<sup>648</sup> between the Son of Man and the righteous community, not in the sense that he is simply its celestial personification, but rather along the lines of a heavenly *Doppelgänger* which is actually more real than, and prior to, the earthly counterpart.<sup>649</sup> So, for example, the fact that the Son of Man is represented as concealed (1 En 39.7; cf. 4 Ez 13.52) until the judgment may correspond to the humiliation of the persecuted righteous, whose destiny is hidden from public recognition.<sup>650</sup> After their vindication 'the Lord of the Spirits will abide over them; they shall eat and rest and rise with that Son of Man forever and ever' (1 En 62.14). The destiny of the community is thereby tied into that of their heavenly counterpart.

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<sup>644</sup> Collins, *Apocalyptic Imagination*, 106.

<sup>645</sup> *Resurrection, Immortality, Eternal Life*, 77. Mowinckel, *He that Cometh*, 385, asserts that 'he is the ideal man, the pre-existent, heavenly ideal and pattern; and one day the pious will be exalted to be with him' Cf. Cullmann, *Christology*, 150-1: 'He is the ideal Heavenly Man who is identified with the first man *at the beginning of time*.'

<sup>646</sup> Mowinckel, *He that Cometh*, 381.

<sup>647</sup> Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism*, 231, refers to an analogous belief held by the Qumran community for whom 'the host of 'good angels'...was the heavenly counterpart of the eschatological community of salvation, which was very closely connected with it.'

<sup>648</sup> Cf. Theissen, *Sociology of Early Palestinian Christianity*, 26.

<sup>649</sup> Cf. Eliade, *Myth of the Eternal Return*, 3-6.

<sup>650</sup> Collins, *Apocalyptic Imagination*, 187.

The judgment of 'Azazel and all his company, and his army' by the Elect One as he 'sits on the throne of glory' (55.4) implies the corresponding positions of the respective communities represented by the heavenly forces. In particular the righteous elect are shown to be not only vindicated in the eschatological judgment but promoted to the role of judging those who oppressed them in the earthly life. Their ultimate destiny is to be united with the elevated Son of Man who is himself given the final promise that 'together with you shall be their dwelling places; and together with you shall be their portion. They shall not be separated from you forever and ever and ever' (71.16) [cf. Jn 17]. It seems that those disciples of Enoch who revered him as the Son of Man who had been elevated to this heavenly office believed that they would be united with him in the eschatological glory.<sup>651</sup> Hurtado suggests that 'the exalted patriarchs served for some Jews as assurance of the eschatological reward for which they themselves hoped'.<sup>652</sup> The heavenly community comprises not only the angelic host, but also the transformed human righteous ones after their death (1 En 47.2; 51.4; 53.6, 61.12). Hence, Collins observes that 'the human community of the elect and the righteous stands in very close association with the angelic world and will ultimately be merged with it'.<sup>653</sup>

Gerd Theissen has undertaken an interesting study, based on the synoptic references to the Son of Man, in which he observes a correlation between the

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<sup>651</sup> Cf. Schnackenburg, *St John*, III, 60; Colpe, *TDNT*, 427.

<sup>652</sup> Hurtado, *One God*, 66.

<sup>653</sup> Collins, *Apocalyptic Imagination*, 184.



sayings about the Son of Man and the experience of the community who follow him: 'the role of the Son of Man as an outsider corresponds both positively and negatively to the role of Christians'.<sup>654</sup> Thus heavenly authority is not only bestowed upon the Son of Man; it is bequeathed to the community. Persecution is the lot of both, but so is the coming glory. By identifying with the Son of Man, the Christian community were able 'to interpret and come to terms with their own social situation...They believed that the Son of Man himself underwent the same fate as they did...His situation corresponded to their situation'.<sup>655</sup>

*Mutatis mutandis* this analysis may be applied to the Fourth Gospel.<sup>656</sup> Certainly the notion of solidarity between Jesus and his disciples is reflected throughout the Fourth Gospel. Dodd has argued that the Johannine Son of Man embodies collectively the people of God.<sup>657</sup> Ricca has also suggested that the Son of Man in the Fourth Gospel represents 'die neue Menschheit'.<sup>658</sup> Thus he

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<sup>654</sup> Theissen, *Early Palestinian Christianity*, 26.

<sup>655</sup> Ibid, 27, 30.

<sup>656</sup> Many scholars posit John's awareness of the synoptic tradition of the Son of Man, while interpreting it in his own distinctive way. Cf. Schnackenburg, *St John*, I, 529-42; Higgins, 'Son of Man', 153-84; Moule, *The Phenomenon of the New Testament*, 35. Meeks, 'Man from Heaven', 163, highlights the connection between the career of the Son of Man and the experiences encountered by the Johannine community. He states that 'in telling the story of the Son of Man who came down from heaven and then re-ascended after choosing a few of his own out of the world, the book defines and vindicates the existence of the community that evidently sees itself as unique, alien from its world, under attack, misunderstood, but living in unity with Christ and through him with God.'

<sup>657</sup> Dodd, *Interpretation*, 243-4, states that 'as Son of Man he is in some sort the inclusive representative of ideal or redeemed humanity.' Barrett, *St John*, 302-3, supports this position.

<sup>658</sup> Ricca, *Die Eschatologie des vierten Evangeliums*, 92. Cf. Pamment, 'The Son of Man in the Fourth Gospel', 58, who observes that the title given Jesus 'draws particular attention to his representative humanity'.



accomplishes redemption by being lifted up that he may draw all men to himself (12.32). He goes ahead to prepare a place so that his disciples may be with him (14.3). Most clearly of all in 13.20, Jesus asserts that ‘whoever receives one whom I send receives me’. Dodd concludes that ‘such solidarity is a part of what the Fourth Evangelist means by describing Christ as Son of Man.’<sup>659</sup>

Now since it is clear that believers possess eternal life by virtue of their union with Jesus (14.19), it is surely admissible to posit that they are able to exercise judgment in the name of Jesus. In 20.23, having received the Spirit, the disciples are given specific authority to retain sin. This may be understood as administering judgment upon those who reject the message of the followers of Jesus. Martyn argues that it is through the agency of the Paraclete that the judgment of the Son of Man is continuously effected in the present. Thus ‘by continuing Jesus’ “suit with the world” the Paraclete makes effective Jesus’ presence as the awesome Son of Man’.<sup>660</sup> Now, as agents of the Paraclete, the disciples are authorized to carry out the role attributed to him (16.8).<sup>661</sup>

In the Fourth Gospel the motif of present judgment acts as a device that both denigrates unbelieving accusers and honours the followers of Jesus. The bitter controversy between Jesus and his opponents reflects the later conditions of the Johannine community in which there was a struggle for religious legitimation

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<sup>659</sup> Ibid. Cf. Odeberg, *The Fourth Gospel*, 40; Hammerton-Kelly, *Pre-Existence*, 225-30; Strachan, *Fourth Gospel*, 10-11; Bultmann, *John*, 105.

<sup>660</sup> *History and Theology*, 145.

<sup>661</sup> Cf. Aune, *Cultic Setting*, 83.

to counter the stigmatising from the Jewish synagogue. Neyrey has drawn attention to a pattern in which the ‘judged one becomes the Judge and those judging are judged’.<sup>662</sup> Those born ἄνωθεν are being subjected to critical scrutiny on earth by unbelievers, yet the evangelist shows that it is these judges who are really on trial since they have failed to believe in the name of the Son. This is the case in ch. 5 when the Jews condemn Jesus for working on the Sabbath (5.16-17) only to be informed that it is the Son who is the true judge. In 5.22 we read that ‘the Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son’ (οὐδὲ γὰρ ὁ πατήρ κρίνει οὐδένα, ἀλλὰ τὴν κρίσιν πᾶσαν δέδωκεν τῷ υἱῷ). It is important to observe the reason given for why God has handed over the office of judgment to the Son, namely, ‘all may honour the Son, even as they honour the Father’ (ἵνα πάντες τιμῶσι τὸν υἱὸν καθὼς τιμῶσι τὸν πατέρα). It is not possible to honour God while denigrating Jesus, and the same holds true for the community of his followers who ‘abide’ in him and in whom he ‘abides’ (cf. 15.4). The final judgment of the Son of Man will ratify the decisions made in response to him on earth. The negative judgment passed on Jesus will recoil back on unbelievers who will experience a ‘resurrection of judgment’ (5.29: εἰς ἀνάστασιν κρίσεως).

We have argued that the disciples, by virtue of their union with Jesus, experience a vision of transcendent reality and also participate in the ongoing process of eschatological judgment. However, just as the true identity of Jesus as

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<sup>662</sup> Neyrey, ‘John III - A Debate over Johannine Epistemology and Christology’, 117.

God's only Son was unrecognised, indeed positively rejected, by the world, so the disciples encounter opposition and rejection. The motif of rejection of Jesus by his compatriots, 'the Jews', runs like a thread throughout the Gospel. Although Jesus comes from above, sent by the Father to bear witness to what he has seen and heard, his testimony is rejected (3.32b: καὶ τὴν μαρτυρίαν αὐτοῦ οὐδεὶς λαμβάνει). Rather than accept the revelation from heaven, 'the Jews' persist in their search of the scriptures seeking eternal life, blind to the fact that these very writings point to Jesus. So still they refuse to accommodate Jesus (5.40: καὶ οὐ θέλετε ἐλθεῖν πρὸς με). The rejection of the Son soon takes on a more sinister aspect as the determination grows to destroy him. Throughout the Gospel, in addition to references where the authorities attempt to arrest Jesus (7.30; 7.32; 7.44; 8.20; 10.39; 11.57), there are numerous allusions to attempts made by 'the Jews' to kill him (5.18; 7.19; 8.37; 8.44; 8.59; 10.31; 11.8).

In the Farewell Discourse Jesus warns his disciples that they too will encounter hostility: 'If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you' (15.18). In Johannine thought 'the world' is depicted as the realm of darkness. Thus the light which enters the world (1.10) is described as τὸ φῶς ἐν τῇ σκοτίᾳ φαίνει (cf. 3.19). Although the object of the saving love of God (3.16), ὁ κόσμος οὗτος is characterized as being in radical opposition to God (8.23; 9.39; 11.9; 12.25, 31; 13.1; 16.11; 18.36).<sup>663</sup> Ultimately 'the world' is

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<sup>663</sup> Cf. 1 Jn 5.19: 'καὶ ὁ κόσμος ὅλος ἐν τῷ πονηρῷ κείται.'



portrayed as enemy terrain under the dominion of the devil who is in fact designated as ὁ ἄρχων τοῦ κόσμου (12.31; 14.30; 16.11).

Although the source of the opposition is denominated as ‘the world’, since ‘the Jews’ can be seen as representative of this larger category there is a clear parallel between the treatment meted out to Jesus and that given to his followers. Thus Jesus reminds them that ‘a servant is not greater than his master’. Therefore, ‘if they persecuted me, they will persecute you’ (15.20). Here we are informed that the conflict, rejection and persecution faced by the community find a precedent in the life of Jesus. The shock engendered by the hostile attitude of former associates is mitigated by the knowledge that this is what Jesus encountered and predicted for the disciples. Accordingly the solidarity between the two life situations instils a sense of security for the community of disciples concerning what is happening.

So far in this chapter we have argued that apocalyptic thought provides a precedent for the author of the Fourth Gospel to identify similarities between the experience of Jesus and those encountered by a community of his followers. The apocalyptic technique is an interpretative device that correlates two different situations on the basis of a common pattern. This is employed by John in his Gospel to justify weaving together events occurring in the life of a later generation of disciples with those that faced the historic Jesus. Far from falsifying his account, the author applies an apocalyptic method which traces coherence in otherwise perplexing events. However, not only does the Fourth Gospel assume a

parallelism between the histories of the earthly Jesus and the later community of believers, it also interprets the opposition from a cosmic perspective.

In the pervasive dualistic view of reality present within the Fourth Gospel 'the Jews' belong to the lower sphere (8.23), representing 'the world' in their hatred for Jesus (cf. 8.21-47 with 15.18-25).<sup>664</sup> We shall now enquire as to why this is the case, tracing possible connections with a line of thought inherent in apocalypticism. It will be argued that the dualistic perspective common to both apocalyptic and Johannine thinking is engendered from a belief that reality is characterized by a conflict between supernatural cosmic forces.

## 2. *Cosmic Warfare*

In the history of philosophy the term monism has been used to denote 'any system of thought which sees in the universe the manifestation or working of a single principle'.<sup>665</sup> By contrast dualism posits two antithetical principles or forces that account for the phenomena of the universe and its history. The historian of religion Ugo Bianchi has defined dualism as 'the doctrine of the two principles...dualistic are all those religions, systems, conceptions of life which admit dichotomy of the principles which, coeternal or not, cause the existence of that which does or seems to exist in the world.'<sup>666</sup> On this basis both Judaism and

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<sup>664</sup> Cf. Grässer, 'Die antijüdische Polemik im Johannesevangelium', 74-90.

<sup>665</sup> *Dictionary of philosophy and psychology*, Vol 2, 100.

<sup>666</sup> Bianchi, 'The Category of Dualism', 15. Gammie, 'Spatial and Ethical Dualism in Jewish Wisdom and Apocalyptic Literature', *JBL* 93 (1974), 356-85, identifies as many



Christianity are clearly monistic since Yahweh is held to be the ultimate origin and cause of all that is.

Nevertheless, biblical scholars have traced a development in the belief structure of post-exilic Israel engendered by the need to give a satisfactory answer to the problem of suffering. In response to the deteriorating historical situation facing the post-exilic community it is permissible to speak of a 'modified dualism'<sup>667</sup> borne out of an attempt to rationalize the reversals that had beset the Jewish people. The Deuteronomic theory of suffering as the just desert of disobedience could not account for the calamities that had befallen the Jewish remnant after their renewed determination to remain loyal to the Torah. It was in this climate of bewilderment that, perhaps under the influence of Persian thought,<sup>668</sup> the idea evolved that the angels who possessed a delegated authority

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as ten types of dualism: *cosmic* - the division of the world (cosmos) into two opposite powers of good and evil, darkness and light; *temporal* - the radical distinction between this age and the age to come; *ethical* - the polarisation of two groups; *psychological* - an inner conflict between two impulses operating in the individual; *spatial* - the contrast between heaven and earth; *theological* - the complete category difference between the Creator and his creation; *physical* - the division between matter and spirit; *metaphysical* - the opposition between God and Satan; *soteriological* - the divide determined by the response of acceptance or rejection to God's salvation; *cosmological* - the bifurcation of the world into two co-existent principles. Cf. Otzen, 'Dualistic Thinking', 147.

<sup>667</sup> The term was coined by Albright, *From the Stone Age to Christianity*, 362. Cf. Frost, *OT Apocalyptic*, 242. Bianchi, 'The Category of Dualism', 15, speaks of a 'softened' dualism.

<sup>668</sup> Following in the footsteps of his teacher Hermann Gunkel, Sigmund Mowinckel, *He that Cometh*, 276, traced the roots of apocalyptic dualism in the post-exilic period to Persian or Zoroastrian influence. This view was accommodated by scholars such as Rowley, *Relevance*, 40, 54, 66; Frost, *Old Testament Apocalyptic*, 19; Russell, *Method and Message*, 266, 270-1; Lohse, *The New Testament Environment*, 63. However, it was later challenged by Frank M. Cross, *New Directions*, 165, n. 23; idem, *The Divine Warrior*, 28-30; idem, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic*, 343-46, and Hanson, 'Jewish



over the nations had exceeded their mandate. Rather than acting as God's envoys in administering punishment to those who had opposed God's will, they had usurped the Most High's authority by exercising their own domination and oppression.<sup>669</sup> The problem of human suffering was thereby placed within the context of cosmic evil.<sup>670</sup>

For example, in the Apocalypse of Abraham the origin of humanity's problems is seen to reside in the sin of Adam and Eve under the influence of Azazel (23.10-14). The rule of Azazel accounts for the evils that befall Abraham's descendants (24.1), the false Temple worship with its eventual destruction (25-27) and consequent loss of privileges (31.6-8).<sup>671</sup> Thus behind the actions and decisions of human agents lie cosmic powers operating through those agents.

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Apocalyptic against its Near Eastern Environment', 50, who argued that a recrudescence of Canaanite mythic material, which throughout the monarchy were fostered by the Jerusalem court and subsequently drawn into prophecy by Second Isaiah, provided an adequate explanation of the dualistic motifs. Nevertheless, recent studies suggest the likelihood of some Persian influence on Second Temple religion, particularly noting the effect of Iranian ethical dualism on the Qumran literature thought.' For a thorough review and bibliography, cf. G. Widengren, 'Leitende Ideen und Quellen der iranischen Apokalyptik', 77-162.

<sup>669</sup> Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism*, 229, writes: 'In principle, the Old Testament pattern of God's sovereign, unlimited omnipotence in nature and history was maintained. However, because evil had been experienced in personal life and in the most recent history of the Jewish people as a concentrated power with apparently a deliberate plan, and there was at the same time a concern to liberate God from the chain of direct causality in the interest of a theodicy, the dualistic doctrine of the two spirits was adopted as a fundamental part of 'angelology'.

<sup>670</sup> Russell, *Method and Message*, 238: 'The same force of evil could be seen in microcosm in human history and in macrocosm in cosmic history.'

<sup>671</sup> Cf. Rubinkiewicz, 'La vision de l'histoire dans l'Apocalypse d'Abraham', 143-44; Stone, 'Apocalyptic Literature', 415.

The Book of Jubilees records how when Moses is chosen to write down all that will be revealed to him concerning Israel's history he prays that God should not abandon his people but rather 'create for them an upright spirit. And *do not let the spirit of Beliar rule over them* to accuse them before you and ensnare them from every path of righteousness' (Jub 1.20). The antithesis of the 'spirit of Beliar' is a 'holy spirit' (manfasa qēddus), which Moses asks should inhabit the chosen people (1.21). In the account of the post-diluvian period the author records how in 'the third week of that jubilee the polluted demons began to lead astray the children of Noah's sons and to lead them to folly and to destroy them' (Jub 10.1). When Noah is informed of what is happening he intercedes for his descendants, requesting that the malevolent spirits be imprisoned and taken to the place of judgment. This is vital if his children are to flourish in the earth, and so Noah prays: 'Let your grace be lifted up upon my sons, and *do not let the evil spirits rule over them...*and let them not rule over the spirits of the living because you alone know their judgment, and *do not let them have power over the children of the righteous* henceforth and forever' (italics mine).

The request is granted, but only partially. Mastema, 'the chief of the spirits', opposes the request of Noah complaining to the Lord that unless some are left free he 'will not be able to exercise the authority of [his] will among the children of men' (10.8).<sup>672</sup> Accordingly the angels of the Lord are bidden to let a

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<sup>672</sup> In the Book of Jubilees the leader of the supernatural evil forces is usually referred to as mak<sup>w</sup>annēn mastēma = שר המשטמה (11.5,11; 17.16; 18.9, 12; 48.2,9,12,15).



tenth remain 'so that they might be subject to Satan upon the earth' (10. 11). The subsequent afflictions that befall humanity, and in particular the chosen nation, can be traced to supernatural malign powers. For example, the heinous activity carried out by Ur and his comrades in the city that he named after himself was done with the assistance of 'cruel spirits [who] led them astray so that they might commit sin and pollution. And the prince, Mastema, acted forcefully to do all this. And he sent other spirits to those who were set under his hand to practise all error and sin and all transgression' (11.4-5).

While the majority of Noah's descendants are influenced by the evil spirits and fall prey to idol worship and other evil practices, Abraham forms a conspicuous exception. While still in Ur he separates himself from Terah his father in order to avoid worshipping the idols and prays that he might be kept from the 'straying of the sons of men' (11.17). It is this same prayer that he offers in Haran on the eve of his journey to a new land: 'My God, the Most High God...save me from the hands of *the evil spirits which rule over the thought of the heart of man*, and do not let them lead me astray from following you' (12.20). The following account of Abraham's test over offering up his son Isaac on mount Moriah is given with its heavenly backdrop. As happened in the case of Job, a supernatural figure, here Mastema, is presented as inciting the Lord to permit his servant to be tested. Although God seems to accede to the request of Prince Mastema, once Abraham's determination to be faithful even in this extreme test is proved, the Angel of the Presence interposes standing before Abraham and



Mastema and bids Abraham to refrain from sacrificing his son. At this outcome 'Prince Mastema was shamed' (17.9).

Qumran theology is also quite explicit in its belief that behind human activity lie spiritual forces of both good and evil. Thus in the Community Rule we read: 'Those born of truth spring from a fountain of light, but those born of falsehood spring from a source of darkness' (1QS 3.19). The writer amplifies this perspective by stating that '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' (1QS 3.20-21). The War Scroll exhibits a similar perspective in its contrast between the Prince of Light and 'all the spirits of truth under his dominion' and those under the control of Satan, the Angel of Malevolence, who 'walk according to the precepts of Darkness' (1QM 13.11-12). In the Hymns Scroll the writer lambastes those who, while bearing the yoke of testimony, have been 'led astray' and have rebelled 'against the service of righteousness'. Of these renegades it is stated that 'a counsel of Satan is in their heart' (1QH 6.19-22); they form 'an assembly of deceit and a horde of Satan' (1QH 2.22). The Damascus Document also makes reference to those 'under the dominion of the spirits of Satan' (CD 12.2).

It is clear, therefore, that apocalyptic thought tended to trace human conflicts to supernatural causes. Enmity between different groups could be interpreted as reflecting the activity of warring celestial powers. In other words ethical dualism on the human plane corresponded to cosmic dualism in the

heavenly realm.<sup>673</sup> It is accordingly possible to relate specific expressions of a dualistic perspective to one another.<sup>674</sup> Thus, Nickelsburg has observed the effect of the complementary kinds of dualism in 1 Enoch combining to form a ‘mutually dualistic construction of reality’, which he surmises may have originated from experiences where ‘people felt alienated and victimized.’<sup>675</sup> For example, Enoch’s tour of the respective post-mortem abodes prepared for the souls of the departed shows that the co-mingling of the wicked and righteous on earth will be replaced by a strict separation of souls as they are allocated different regions and conditions in the after-life (1 En 22.9). At the last judgment ‘the wicked ones will be driven from the presence of the righteous and the elect’ (1 En 38.3; cf. 41.8). Here ethical dualism is reinforced by a cosmic differentiation reflecting the different destinies awaiting the ‘wicked’ and the ‘righteous’.

It is significant that the period in which Jewish apocalyptic literature thrived has been noted for its factionalism reflected in the plethora of sectarian communities.<sup>676</sup> The conflict between these groups is often painted in stark, black and white terms,<sup>677</sup> with the implication that a dualistic *Weltanschauung* may be

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<sup>673</sup> Vielhauer, ‘Apocalypses’, 588, states that ‘the essential feature of Apocalyptic is its dualism which, in various expressions, dominates its thought-world.’

<sup>674</sup> This type of dualism is probably rooted in the ethical division of mankind found in wisdom literature in which the wicked (רשעים) are opposed to the righteous (צדיקים). Cf. Prov 10-15. See also the wisdom Psalms, especially Ps 1. Gammie, ‘Spatial and Ethical Dualism’, 378, believes that ‘the conception as well as the language of ethical dualism has been inherited from wisdom circles’.

<sup>675</sup> Nickelsburg, ‘The Apocalyptic Construction of Reality in 1 Enoch’, 64.

<sup>676</sup> Cf. Blenkinsopp, ‘Interpretation and the Tendency to Sectarianism: An Aspect of Second Temple History’, 1-27.

<sup>677</sup> Overman, *Matthew’s Gospel and Formative Judaism*, 19.



an interpretative device for imposing meaning on to a series of adverse circumstances that has beset a community. This perspective lies behind the study of Otto Plöger who theorises that the apocalyptic dualistic outlook was particularly welcomed by circles which felt alienated from the dominant Jewish authorities in the centuries after the Babylonian exile. He posits the emergence of conventicles who attempted to 'translate the dualistic world-view into the terms of their own situation, which was marked by opposition to the official community, and thus to convert cosmic dualism into an ecclesiastical and confessional dualism.'<sup>678</sup> This has also been described as a sort of 'social dualism', in which the recipients of the apocalyptic teaching are separated from the community at large and established as a sectarian, esoteric, eschatological group of the elect.<sup>679</sup>

There may also be a comparable social function attached to the cosmic and ethical dualism running through the Fourth Gospel which also characterises parts of the apocalyptic literature.<sup>680</sup> The theme of cosmic division is introduced right

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<sup>678</sup> Plöger, *Theocracy and Eschatology*, 48.

<sup>679</sup> Bilde, 'Gnosticism, Jewish Apocalypticism, and Early Christianity', 16, observes that apocalyptic revelation is 'intimately connected to the specific social and cognitive situation of a small community of pious individuals suffering from distress of both material and spiritual character.' Cf. W. Schmithals, *Die Apokalyptik*, 79: 'Dem kosmischen Dualismus bzw. dem Äonendualismus entspricht auf der anthropologischen Ebene ein Klassendualismus.'

<sup>680</sup> Kuhn, 'Die in Palästina gefundenen hebräischen Texte', 209, argues that 'the cosmic dualism of John's Gospel leads neither to asceticism nor to licence, but is indissolubly bound up with an ethic that is obviously rooted in the Jewish tradition.' Cf. Ashton, *Understanding*, 210-12, who observes 'how easy it is to pass from an apparently cosmic dualism to a moral dualism'. He refers to an isolated Qumran passage (1Q 27. 1:5-7), which 'exhibits very clearly the rich blend of eschatological and moral dualism that makes it so difficult to insist upon the kind of distinction that was later to become so important in Western philosophy' (quote p. 212).



at the beginning of the Fourth Gospel, setting the stage for the drama that will follow. Thus in the Prologue we read: ‘The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome (οὐ κατέλαβεν) it’ (1.5).<sup>681</sup> This ontological conflict finds expression in the human arena as we are informed that Jesus, the true light, came to his own people but they did not receive him (1.11: εἰς τὰ ἴδια ἦλθεν, καὶ οἱ ἴδιοι αὐτὸν οὐ παρέλαβον). For those outside the circle of disciples we find that men loved darkness rather than light (3.19b: καὶ ἠγάπησαν οἱ ἄνθρωποι μᾶλλον τὸ σκότος ἢ τὸ φῶς).

It is quite likely that a dualistic orientation developed in the Johannine community as a way of dealing with the psychological trauma consequent on expulsion from the synagogue.<sup>682</sup> In the words of Alan Segal: ‘It is a dualism of a specific type, a dualism which has helped the Johannine Christians understand how they can continue to consider themselves heirs to the prophecies of the Jewish Bible when the synagogue has rejected both them and their understanding of how

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<sup>681</sup> There are two possible meanings for the word καταλαμβάνειν here, namely ‘to overcome’ or ‘to grasp with the mind; to understand’. Schnackenburg favours the latter meaning (*St John*, I, 246-47) although Barrett, *St John*, 158, is probably right in arguing that John plays on both meanings, as he does with other words (cf. 3.3; 3.14). Certainly the motif of conflict with hostile forces that permeates the Gospel argues in favour of embracing the notion of overcoming as part of John’s meaning. Lindars, *Gospel*, 87, suggests that the aorist points to the climactic event of the cross whereby Jesus achieves a decisive victory over the powers of evil.

<sup>682</sup> Painter, *The Quest for the Messiah*, 6, notes how the dualistic worldview ‘gives expression to a social reality’. He argues that as with the Qumran community, dualistic language in John ‘gives expression to the sectarian consciousness of those who have rejected the dominant forms of Judaism of the day (in terms of Temple and political and social life) or who have been rejected by synagogue Judaism’ (ibid, 32). Cf. Segal, ‘Ruler of This World’, 254; Lieu, ‘Anti-Judaism in the Fourth Gospel’, 115.

biblical prophecy has been fulfilled.’<sup>683</sup> It is significant that the distinctive Johannine usage of the term οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι embodies a pejorative, polemical tone. ‘The Jews’ are portrayed as an unreceptive, hostile body, consistently failing to understand Jesus (3.1-15; 6.52; 7.35; 8.57) and often taking the role of overt opponents (5.16-18; 6.41; 8.34-59; 10.31). What was valued in Judaism is only allowed legitimacy as it is embodied and fulfilled in Jesus.<sup>684</sup>

Why is this the case when, from the point of view of historical fact, Jesus and his disciples are themselves of Jewish extraction? Furthermore, to the woman at the well Jesus states that salvation is from the Jews (4.22). Simply distinguishing hostile from neutral instances and limiting the term to Judeans<sup>685</sup> or authorities<sup>686</sup> does not address the issue of John’s characterization of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι or their function within the Gospel. Whatever referent οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι may identify in the Johannine narrative, that referent is meant to carry the sense of all those who do not believe and oppose Jesus.<sup>687</sup> The role or function of the term has received classic expression in the words of Bultmann:

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<sup>683</sup> Segal, ‘Ruler of This World’, 254. Later he states that ‘The dualist theology is partly a symbolic portrayal of the sociological position of the church’ (p. 259).

<sup>684</sup> Rensberger, *Overcoming the World*, 28, comments that for the Johannine group ‘Jesus became the center of their new cosmos, the locus of all sacred things.’

<sup>685</sup> Lowe, ‘Who were the IOYΔΑΙΟΙ?’, 116.

<sup>686</sup> von Wahlde, ‘The Johannine “Jews”: A Critical Survey’, 33-60; cf. Dunn, *The Partings of the Ways*, 158.

<sup>687</sup> Ashton, ‘Identity and Function’, 57; Smiga, *Pain and Polemic*, 169, contends that ‘the sense of “the Jews” overwhelms the reference of “the Jews” within the narrative, even leading to a disregard for referential precision’.



The term οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι, characteristic of the Evangelist, gives an overall portrayal of the Jews, viewed from the standpoint of Christian faith, as the representatives of unbelief (and thereby, as will appear, of the unbelieving ‘world’ in general)....οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι does not relate to the empirical state of the Jewish people, but to its very nature.’<sup>688</sup>

The expulsion from the synagogue (by whatever means) would be a traumatising event for those nurtured within the womb of Judaism. As part of the therapy John endeavoured to provide a rationale for what had happened by representing the life of the historic Jesus as a conflict between cosmic forces. Jesus, the heavenly agent sent from the realm above, is consistently rejected and opposed by the representatives of darkness (1.11; 8.44). The conflict between Jesus and ‘the Jews’ is interpreted as a cosmic battle between the heavenly powers of good and evil, God and Satan.<sup>689</sup> Behind the human opponents of the Johannine Christians lies a supernatural power who is described as their ‘father the devil’ (8.44: ὁ πατὴρ τοῦ διαβόλου).<sup>690</sup>

The alternative term used to designate the malign being opposed to Jesus is ὁ ἄρχων τοῦ κόσμου τούτου (12.31; 14.30; 16.11). Clearly the Johannine concept of the ‘prince of this world’ is related to the term ‘king of this world’ (Asc

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<sup>688</sup> Bultmann, *The Gospel of John*, 86-7.

<sup>689</sup> Douglas, *Natural Symbols*, 31, has found that ‘small competitive communities tend to believe themselves in a dangerous universe, threatened by sinister powers operated by fellow human beings.’ The negative attitude to the world outside is projected as hostility on the part of cosmic powers.

<sup>690</sup> Hickling, ‘Attitudes to Judaism in the Fourth Gospel’, 353.



Isa 4.2) and ‘god of this world’ (Asc Isa 9.14; cf. 2 Cor 4.4) and is based on the notion of an archangel who had been appointed over the world but had fallen.<sup>691</sup> A seminal study by Alan Segal argues that John’s negative presentation of this figure is a reflection of the social reality underlying the Gospel, functioning to account for the hostility experienced from former compatriots.

Given the evidence for Jewish speculation about a principal angelic mediator, be it Michael, Gabriel, Enoch, Iaoel, or Melchizedek, Segal suggests that the title ‘prince of this world’ (ὁ ἄρχων τοῦ κόσμου τούτου) may have evolved into a divine hypostasis, as had already occurred in other Near Eastern cults. Now because Johannine Christianity espoused Jesus as the supreme divine mediator, all other pretenders to the role were deemed to signify supernatural opposition to him. Hence ‘the negative reaction of the Jews towards Johannine Christianity...could then be projected into the heavenly realm by the Fourth Gospel as a reflection of the negative reaction of the Lord of the World’.<sup>692</sup> Thus for the Johannine Christians ὁ ἄρχων τοῦ κόσμου τούτου is evil because the Jews, who symbolize the world, oppose their message. The heavenly reality is invoked to explain the social reality of conflict and polemic between Christians and Jews.<sup>693</sup>

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<sup>691</sup> Daniélou, *Theology of Jewish Christianity*, 188.

<sup>692</sup> Segal, ‘Ruler of This World’, 259. It is significant that the references to ὁ ἄρχων τοῦ κόσμου τούτου (12.31; 14.30; 16.11) are to be found in passages in which antagonism to the Jews is evident.

<sup>693</sup> Ibid, 267: ‘The negative portrayal of the theology of the oppressor parallels opposition on the social level and enforces the pariah mentality of the sectarian group. It projects that opposition into the heavenly realm’.

Crucially, it is the heavenly opposition, i.e. Jesus' supernatural opponent lying behind the Jews' antagonism, which is judged and defeated by Jesus (12.31).<sup>694</sup> Moreover, as we saw in the last chapter, the Johannine believers are promised the aid of the Paraclete, originally an angelic protector, in their dispute with their opponents.<sup>695</sup> The contest is therefore acted out on two levels, in both the heavenly and earthly realms. The cosmic opposition that Jesus encountered in the eschatological hour of battle (12.31) is repeated in the lives of his followers. For them the 'hour that is coming' (ἔρχεται ὥρα) not only involves the experience of true worship in Jesus (4.23) and the triumph of spiritual resurrection (5.25), but also persecution by the world (16.32).<sup>696</sup>

Jesus specifically warns the disciples that in the world they will have tribulation (16.33: ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ θλίψιν ἔχετε). The use of the word θλίψις in the NT refers to both the coming eschatological woes (cf. Mk 13.19, 24; Rm 2.9) and also the persecutions experienced by the Christian community (cf. Mk 4.17; Acts 11.19; Eph 3.13). However, these two senses may coalesce since believers regarded their sufferings as possessing eschatological significance. Thus in Rev

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<sup>694</sup> Twelftree, 'Exorcisms in the Fourth Gospel and the Synoptics', 141, gives as the reason why John omits specific accounts of exorcisms the fact that 'Jesus' *entire ministry* is to be understood as, or at least is pervaded by, a battle with Satan...reaching its climax and realization in the cross event ~ the grand cosmic exorcism'.

<sup>695</sup> Johnston, *Spirit-Paraclete*, 57, observes that 'what was true of the Master had to become true also for his servants: that is why the Spirit is promised...they too were to be at war with evil powers'. It is interesting to note the similarity with the theology of Qumran at this point, where the angelic leader of the righteous is also designated the Spirit of Truth (1QS 3.24).

<sup>696</sup> Bultmann, *John*, says: 'The eschatological hour is first of all an hour of dismay; before [man] can appreciate its χαρά he has to experience its λύπη'.



7.14 the worshipping multitude, clothed in white robes with palms in hand, are said to be those ‘who have come out of the great tribulation (οἱ ἐρχόμενοι ἐκ τῆς θλίψεως τῆς μεγάλης)’.

If it is true that οἱ ᾿Ιουδαῖοι are agents of their father the devil (8.44), this is especially true of the presentation of ᾿Ιούδας, a figure of obvious importance in the Fourth Gospel since he appears at regular intervals throughout the narrative. A significant aspect of the Johannine presentation of Judas arises in the initial reference to him found at the end of the bread of life discourse (6.70-71). Here Jesus alludes to his choice of the Twelve while knowing that one of them is a devil (6.70, εἷς διάβολός ἐστιν). The use of this term implies that behind the humanity of Judas stands a supernatural entity of malign character. The deeds of the human agent actualize the intentions of the spiritual power of which he is the earthly counterpart. Accordingly, the narrator applies the term διάβολός to Judas in connection with his forthcoming betrayal of Jesus (6.71). Thus betrayal is not viewed merely as a human act of disloyalty, but as the work of an evil spiritual power.<sup>697</sup>

As we have already argued, an integral element of apocalyptic thought is the notion that what transpires on earth is influenced by supernatural agents. Thus, in various documents reference is made to supernatural counterparts who stand behind the human actors. For example, in the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs we find classic expression of the idea that superhuman powers have the

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<sup>697</sup> Barrett, *St John*, 307, comments: ‘Satan has made Judas his ally, a subordinate devil’.



potential of taking control of human action: ‘Two spirits await an opportunity with humanity: the spirit of truth and the spirit of error’ (T Jud 20.1-5). Thus, ‘when the soul is continually perturbed, the Lord withdraws from it and Beliar rules it’ (T Dan 4.7). Only the pure in heart will have the power to ‘hold fast God’s will and to shunt aside the will of Beliar’ (T Naph 3.1). However, the patriarch warns that ‘for the one who does not do the good...*the devil will inhabit him as his own instrument*’ (8.6).

This apocalyptic notion is employed by the Fourth evangelist to explain the actions of Judas in the events leading up to Jesus’ crucifixion. Crucially, in John 13.2 the cause of Jesus’ betrayal is attributed to the work of the devil operating through him: καὶ δείπνου γινομένου, τοῦ διαβόλου ἤδη βεβληκότος εἰς τὴν καρδίαν ἵνα παραδοῖ αὐτὸν Ἰούδας. However, Satan not only has access to the heart of this unclean emissary (13.2,10), but is actually able to inhabit him (13.27, τότε εἰσῆλθεν εἰς ἐκεῖνον ὁ σατανᾶς) in order to accomplish his purpose. It may be significant for the history of the Johannine community that the invasive force of evil occupies Judas in the context of a fellowship meal. The turncoat comes from the inner circle of disciples making his act of betrayal all the more traumatic. Judas goes out (ἐξῆλθεν) from the community of light into the darkness of night (13.30). As a former member of the inner circle of Jesus’ followers, the figure of Judas may represent a type of those who have drawn back from their earlier allegiance and informed against leading community personnel (cf. 18.5).

In the prayer of ch.17 Jesus alludes to Judas as ‘the son of perdition’ (ὁ υἱὸς τῆς ἀπωλείας). Elsewhere in the New Testament ἀπώλεια usually refers to eschatological perdition or damnation (Mt 7.13; Acts 8.20; Heb 10.39; 2 Pet 2.1; 3.7; Rev 17. 8, 11). However, in 2 Thess 2.3 this actual expression is used in the context of the forthcoming *parousia* of Christ. In this passage the writer warns his readers that Jesus will not appear until ‘the rebellion comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of perdition (ὁ υἱὸς τῆς ἀπωλείας)’. Barrett suggests that ‘John saw in Judas this eschatological character who must appear before the manifestation of the glory of Christ (just as in 1Jn 2.18, 22; 4.3 heretical teachers are represented as Antichrist)’.<sup>698</sup>

At the close of the first section of the farewell discourse Jesus concludes his conversation with the disciples by saying: ‘I will no longer talk much with you, for *the ruler of this world is coming*. He has no power over me; but I do as the Father has commanded me, so that the world may know that I love the Father. Rise let us go hence’ (14.30-31). At this juncture we encounter one of John’s most flagrant *aporiae*, which has long vexed commentators and given rise to various hypotheses. Among these are the displacement theory; the ascription of a different meaning from the obvious one to the words ‘arise let us go hence’; and the unlikely suggestion that the material in chs. 15-17 was spoken as Jesus and the disciples walked to the garden referred to in 18.1.<sup>699</sup> However, the most tenable

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<sup>698</sup> *St John*, 508.

<sup>699</sup> Cf. Bernard, *John*, I, 53-54; Bultmann, *John*, 349-51.

explanation is that 13.31-14.31 and chs. 15-17 present alternative versions of the farewell discourse.<sup>700</sup> This would account for the notable similarities between the two blocks of material, particularly if they first circulated orally.<sup>701</sup>

Now if chs. 15-17 form a second version of the last discourse, then it is reasonable to propose that the obvious sequel to the conversation in ch.14 is the narrative recorded in ch.18. In this case we find that Jesus' prediction that 'the ruler of this world is coming' (ἔρχεται) is answered in the approach of Judas with the band of soldiers. Thus three verses after this prediction (excluding the second version of the farewell discourse found in chs.15-17), we read that Judas, together with his entourage, 'comes' (18.3, ἔρχεται) to where Jesus and the disciples were after they have arisen and gone to the garden (14.31 and 18.1). Given that Satan has 'entered' into his emissary Judas (13.27), we would suggest that the fulfilment of Jesus' word that the ruler of this world is coming is found in the arrival of Judas who 'comes' to the group and sets in motion the events leading up to the crucifixion. This provides clear evidence for the thesis that the cosmic powers are operating through human agents.

A further interesting insight into this episode is given by Harvey. He observes that at the moment of Jesus' arrest by the officers of the chief priests, the evangelist records that 'Judas, who betrayed him, was standing with them' (18.5). Now the reference to the betrayer 'standing' may well allude to the stance taken

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<sup>700</sup> Schnackenburg, *St John*, III, 89-91.

<sup>701</sup> Cf. Barrett, *St John*, 454-55.



by an adversary in a court trial. For example in Ps 108.6 (LXX), we read: 'Let his adversary stand on his right hand'; more clearly still in Zech 3.1 it is recorded: 'His adversary stood on his right hand to oppose him'. Now we have already seen that in Jn 6.71 Judas is referred to by Jesus as δῖάβoλoς. While this word is another term for the supernatural being opposed to God, also known as Satan, the literal meaning of δῖάβoλoς is 'accuser; slanderer'. Since the adversary would 'stand' in court, the evangelist's reference to Judas 'standing' implies his role as an agent of the prince of darkness. Harvey concludes: 'Judas, by "standing" with Jesus' enemies, identifies himself again as *diabolos*'.<sup>702</sup>

In the light of this analysis we may see that the dualistic perspective espoused in the Fourth Gospel results in a presentation of a drama in which characters and events are assigned to one of two opposing categories: falsehood or truth, darkness or light, below or above, slavery or freedom, flesh or spirit, death or life, the devil or God. The former category is characteristic of the world in the grip of its evil ruler, while the second is an integral part of the heavenly sphere embodied in Jesus. The presence of Jesus acts as a catalyst by which people must decide either to align themselves with the light or choose darkness.<sup>703</sup> Hence at various points within the narrative we are alerted to the divisions that arise in

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<sup>702</sup> *Jesus on Trial*, 38.

<sup>703</sup> Bultmann, *Theology of the NT*, 21, argues that 'the cosmological dualism of Gnosticism has become in John a *dualism of decision*.' Although recent scholarship denies the Gnostic provenance of the Fourth Gospel, the basic recognition that John employs various dualistic concepts to promote the idea that Jesus' presence constitutes a *krisis* is valid.

response to the divine revelation through Jesus. For example, at the feast of Tabernacles it is recorded that there was much muttering about Jesus with some coming down in favour of him while others view him with suspicion (7.12). His subsequent declaration on the last day of the feast in which he offers himself as the source of spiritual refreshment only compounds the *division* among the crowd (7.43, σχίσμα οὖν ἐγένετο ἐν τῷ ὄχλῳ δι' αὐτόν).

The same theme reappears when the Pharisees are depicted as searching for an explanation that will account for the healing of the blind man. Once again the action of Jesus confronts people with the need to make a choice concerning him, leading to a division of opinion (9.16, καὶ σχίσμα ἦν ἐν αὐτοῖς). The third occasion when specific reference is made to the divisive effect of Jesus is at the end of the discourse on the good shepherd (10.19, Σχίσμα πάλιν ἐγένετο ἐν τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις). It is clear, then, that the effect of the ministry of Jesus is to divide the audience into two camps.

More specifically, his presence highlights the constituency of two predetermined groups. The Jews do not believe because they do not belong to his sheep (10.26); they are unable to respond positively to Jesus unless the Father draws them (6.44, 65). Conversely, the disciples chosen by Jesus (15.16) have already been given to him by the Father (6.37; 17.6). Hence Jesus epitomises the effect of his mission as judgment (κρίμα), a sunderance, in which 'those who do not see may see, and that those who see may become blind' (9.39). In the light of this Carter observes that 'response to Jesus creates a cosmic and social division

(7.43; 9.16, 22; 16.2; 10.19-22) constituting the community's identity...only those who believe in the only one who has seen the Father (1.18; 6.46) can themselves see God (12.45; 14.9)'.<sup>704</sup>

It is of importance for the symbolic universe of the Johannine community to emphasize that the status of the two respective groups constitutes a reversal of previously held notions of which of them commands the divine sanction. Thus, the Jews who boast of their religious pedigree are informed that they are mistaken in assuming that by being a child of Abraham one is *ipso facto* a child of God (cf. Jn 8.31-58).<sup>705</sup> In fact 'the Jews' are not born of God (8.47: ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ οὐκ ἐστέ), but are of their father the devil (8.44: ὑμεῖς ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς τοῦ διαβόλου). Indeed the claim by the Jews to know God is repeatedly challenged and rejected (7.28-29; 8.19, 54-55; 15.21; 16.3; 17.25).<sup>706</sup>

On the other hand, those dismissed as a rabble ignorant of the law (7.49) are dignified with status as children of God. Belief in the name of Jesus confers upon a person the right (ἐξουσίαν) to become a child of God, that is, to be born of God (ἐκ θεοῦ ἐγεννήθησαν) (1.12-13; 3.3-7). This privilege becomes all the more significant in that it elevates believers to a spiritual plane of communion with the divine which is denied to 'the Jews'. Carter points out that 'in its absolute conviction of the correctness of its claims about Jesus *the* revealer, the Prologue's symbolic world attests the specialness of the community...only this community

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<sup>704</sup> Carter, 'Prologue and John's Gospel', 43.

<sup>705</sup> Cf. Strachan, *The Fourth Gospel*, 93-95.

<sup>706</sup> Culpepper, 'Anti-Judaism as a Theological Problem', 75.



has become ‘children of God’ (1.12, τέκνα θεοῦ)...only in this community is God’s revelation, presence and wisdom to be discovered’.<sup>707</sup>

In Johannine thought nature is determined by origin, hence the regular use of εἶναι ἐκ to express both origin and type of being. Both believers and unbelievers are characterised by their origin (εἶναι ἐκ).<sup>708</sup> Thus ‘the Jews’ are characterized as those who are ‘from below’ (8.23: ὑμεῖς ἐκ τῶν κάτω ἐστέ), that is of the devil (8.44: ὑμεῖς ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς τοῦ διαβόλου ἐστέ). In contrast the followers of Jesus are εἶναι ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ (8.47) which is equivalent to εἶναι ἐκ τῶν ἄνω (8.23). Therefore, like their Master, they are not ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου (8.23; 15.19; 17.14), but ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς (8.42; cf. 1 Jn 2.16) and therefore ἐκ τῆς ἀληθείας (18.37).

Having been divinely authorized to become children of God, believers are born into a new, higher realm by becoming integrated into the person of Jesus (6.54; 15.4). Allegiance to Jesus qualifies the disciple to participate in the eternal realm from the moment of believing. ‘Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life’ (3.36; cf. 6.47), right now, from this moment on; the eschatological age has begun.<sup>709</sup> Although only Jesus has beheld the Father (1.18; 3.13; 5.37; 6.46), he

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<sup>707</sup> Carter, ‘Prologue and John’s Gospel’, 50.

<sup>708</sup> Bultmann, *John*, 136, argues that εἶναι ἐκ is a way of referring to someone’s origin and is therefore analogous to γεννηθῆναι ἐκ.

<sup>709</sup> Ricca, *Die Eschatologie*, 116, states: ‘Dieses ewige Leben beginnt nach der Meinung des Johannes nicht nach dem physischen Tod (s.nur 11.26), der physische Tod wird vielmehr irrelevant angesichts des Heiles, des ewigen Lebens. Das ewige Leben beginnt mit dem Hören auf die Offenbarung, die Jesus spricht, mit dem Glauben, daß Jesus der himmlische Offenbarer ist’.

has opened up the way for those who believe in him to enter into the divine presence. The parameters of earthly existence are transcended for the believer in that he or she is translated into the realm above, thereby passing from death to life (5.24: μεταβέβηκεν ἐκ τοῦ θανάτου εἰς τὴν ζωὴν). The access to the deity previously reserved for angelic beings and the privileged seer is now extended to all those who will believe in the Son.

Like the Qumran community, which had also been separated from the Jerusalem Temple, it is not surprising to detect the conviction that their own communal gathering formed the ‘place where the heavenly realm came into closest contact with the world of men.’<sup>710</sup> Indeed the corporate life of the community is characterized by the same unity that subsists between the Father and the Son (17.21). Having been separated from ‘the world’, which for them was represented by the Judaism of which they were part, they are now given a ‘new’ commandment to love one another as Jesus has loved them (13.34). The unity born of self-sacrificing love would be evidence of their union with divinity and demonstrate that they are already participating in the blessings of the eschatological age. Käsemann rightly affirms of the disciples: ‘They belong to the realm of truth, of light and life, in short, *they belong to heaven*’ (italics mine).<sup>711</sup>

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<sup>710</sup> Rowland, *Open Heaven*, 118.

<sup>711</sup> *Testament*, 28.

### 3. *Eschatological Vindication*

Clearly an important objective of apocalyptic literature was the need to address the difficulties arising out of the apparent contradiction between the belief in a righteous God, who had promised well-being to those who obeyed the laws of the Covenant, and the actual state of suffering and oppression endured by the Jewish people.<sup>712</sup> The hostility meted out to the chosen nation appeared to be a direct contradiction of the Deuteronomic theory of history, which posited a nexus between obedience to the Torah and material prosperity. In the dark times of the Second Temple period piety brought suffering, while apostasy was rewarded with life.

Apart from the obvious physical discomfiture experienced in times of turmoil, there would be deleterious psychological effects attendant upon a reversal of fortunes. In such circumstances an authoritative, heavenly disclosure of impending retribution upon the agents of oppression, coupled with final vindication of the righteous, would impart psychological comfort and reduce the cognitive dissonance of the victims. Knowing that there is a glorious future helps support those suffering from the evils of persecution, injustice and deprivation in the present. The reassuring apocalyptic message proclaimed that there is another world, a transcendent dimension, which will resolve present oppression, alienation

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<sup>712</sup> Charles, 'Apocalyptic Literature', *Encyclopaedia Biblica* i, col 213; idem, *HDB*, 110; idem, *Future Life*, 208; Davies, 'Apocalyptic and Historiography', 21.



and injustice. Although from a temporal perspective the revelation pertains to the future, the spatial dimension of the otherworldly reality gives grounds for its certainty.<sup>713</sup>

It is important to recognise that access to the heavenly realm provides proof of the future predicted because it is perceived as stored up in this realm and therefore already a present reality. Heaven is viewed as ‘a kind of repository of the whole spectrum of human history which can be glimpsed by the elect’.<sup>714</sup> Readers of an apocalypse are therefore able to enjoy a proleptic participation in the coming reality. By means of the divine revelation, the future is actualized in the present; heaven comes to earth. Thus, for example, Enoch’s heavenly journey provides assurance for those suffering from the evil, disorder and injustice of this life that in the end equity and righteousness will prevail.<sup>715</sup> The seer is shown a rocky mountain containing the places where ‘the spirits of the souls of the dead should assemble into them...until the day of their judgment and the appointed time of the great judgment upon them’ (22.3-4; cf 39.4). A place of light with a spring is reserved for the souls of the righteous (22.9), while two other dark realms are

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<sup>713</sup> Nickelsburg, ‘Apocalyptic Construction’, 56, remarks that ‘the temporal dimension (judgment will take place) is reinforced by reference to the spatial dimension...There are places structured into the cosmos that guarantee the coming reality of judgment and the consequent rewards and punishments.’

<sup>714</sup> Rowland, *Open Heaven*, 56. Von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, II, 288, observes in his discussion of the visions in Zechariah, which many scholars believe to be apocalyptic in form, that future events on earth are viewed as already present in heaven. Cf. Gese, ‘Anfang und Ende der Apokalyptik’, 20-49; Amsler, ‘Zacharie et l’origine de l’apocalyptique’, 227-31; North, ‘Prophecy to Apocalyptic via Zechariah’, 47-71.

<sup>715</sup> The disclosure that divine judgment is reserved for both angelic rebellion and human sin reflects unsettled conditions in which confusion and conflict face the elect. Cf. Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature*, 54; Suter, ‘Fallen Angel, Fallen Priest’, 115-35.

for the sinners. In the first compartment those who did not receive the penalty for their evildoing on earth are tormented (22.11: ‘plague and pain’ τῶν μαστίγων καὶ τῶν βασάνων) and in the second those who were punished on earth are kept but not raised up (22.13: οὐ τιμωρηθήσονται ἐν ἡμέρᾳ τῆς κρίσεως, οὐδὲ μὴ μετεγερθῶσιν ἐν τεύχεσιν).

During his second journey with the angels Enoch is permitted to see the mountain of God’s throne of judgment, next to which is a ‘fragrant tree’, which at that time is out of bounds to all human beings. It is reserved for the elect who, after the ‘great judgment’, will be ‘presented with its fruit for life’ (1 En 25.5). The view of the throne of God on the summit of seven mountains of precious stone and surrounded by fragrant trees, which will bring joy and life to the righteous, evokes praise from the seer ‘at that moment’. He is able to rejoice in the present because he witnesses evidence of the goodness stored up for the future.

The purpose of these cosmological details is to ‘show that the afterlife is provided for in the structure of the universe’.<sup>716</sup> The description of the places of punishment awaiting the transgressors (1 En 21; 27) and the paradise prepared for the righteous (1 En 32) corroborate the belief in a kind of ‘eschatological verification’.<sup>717</sup> Hence the guided tour of heaven establishes the moral as well as

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<sup>716</sup> Collins, ‘Cosmos and Salvation’, 136.

<sup>717</sup> On the notion of ‘eschatological verification’, see John Hick, *The Centre of Christianity*, 99-103.



geographical order of the world.<sup>718</sup> This is achieved by the disclosure of remote places in the cosmos where the future condemnation of the wicked and salvation of the righteous is already a present reality. Thus the problems of the present are placed in a larger perspective, thereby providing a basis for consolation and reassurance.<sup>719</sup>

In the Book of Similitudes, the seer is given supernatural insight into the future blessings stored up for the righteous: 'Until now such wisdom, which I have received as I recited (it) in accordance with the will of the Lord of the Spirits had not been bestowed upon me before the face of the Lord of the Spirits. From him the lot of *eternal life* has been given to me' (1 En 37.4). He views the present dwelling places of the holy ones (39.4), in particular that which is 'underneath the wings of the Lord of the Spirits' (39.7), which his soul desired, and is confidently able to state that '*already my portion is there*; for thus has it been reserved for me before the Lord of the Spirits' (39.8; cf. Ap Ab 13.7). Because the righteous ones 'have hated and despised this world of oppression', they may rest in the knowledge that their 'portion' is preserved by the Son of Man (1 En 48.7).

2 Enoch develops the same idea of an eternal state that is already prepared for the righteous and which is revealed to the seer (9.1; cf. 49.3). The culmination

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<sup>718</sup> Segal, 'Heavenly Ascent', 1360: 'Though the workings of the physical universe are described, the most important message of Enoch is that the unrighteous will be punished and that the suffering of the righteous has a meaning.'

<sup>719</sup> Cf. Collins, *Daniel with an Introduction*, 22; Davies, 'Social World', 254, proposes that the purpose of certain apocalyptic texts (e.g. Daniel, 4 Ezra) 'is to give assurance in the face of the desolation which man's own observation and experience invoke'.



of the seer's tour through the various heavens is seeing the face of the Lord himself (22.1) and being privileged with a personal audience with the deity. Moreover, the Lord commands that the seer should be admitted into his presence on a permanent basis, so that he might 'join in and stand in front of my face forever' (22.6). Thus, not only does he see the place prepared for the righteous, but he is also assured of a prepared place, eternally situated before the face of the Lord (36.3). The revelation imparted to the seer assures him that no matter what inequality or disparity of treatment is experienced in this transient age, he who fears God 'will be most glorious *in that age*' (43.3), which is an eternal one and will 'come about for the righteous' (65.8). Thus Enoch exhorts his children to maintain hope and faithfulness, although faced with distress, assaults, derision and temptation, 'so that you may become inheritors of the *never-ending age*' (2 En 66.6).

Baruch too is assured that even now the New Jerusalem is 'preserved' with God (2 Bar 4.6). As the seer views the earthly city of Jerusalem on the verge of being destroyed by the heathen oppressor, the Lord informs him that the present city is not the one which is engraved on the palm of God's hands. The building of which this was spoken has been prepared from the creation of Paradise, revealed to Adam, Abraham and Moses, and is still, as yet, preserved with God (4.1-7). The seer is given the privilege of beholding the glory that is kept for the righteous, who, while enduring much labour in this passing world, 'will receive great light in that world which has no end' (48.50). Thus, although the present age is 'a

struggle and an effort with much trouble', the future age will be 'a crown with great glory' (15.8).

The promise of a future age of bliss is intended to sustain the righteous while undergoing the trials of faith to which they are subjected. The seer is able to assure them of a time when 'health will descend like dew, and illness will vanish, and fear and tribulation and lamentation will pass away from among men, and joy will encompass the earth' (2 Bar 73.2). Present tribulations should not be concentrated upon since they are part and parcel of this fleeting existence. Rather he admonishes his listeners to 'think about that which has been promised...regarding the end' (83.6), for they shall receive from the Mighty One 'everything which has been prepared and has been preserved' for them (84.6).

Like Baruch, Ezra is rebuked for concentrating too much on the problems of the present, earthly existence. Thus the angel Uriel asks 'why have you not considered in your mind what is to come, rather than what is now present?' (4 Ez 7.16). The solution to Ezra's perplexities over the apparent injustices and anomalies of earthly life is found in the disclosure that 'this present world is not the end; the full glory does not abide in it' (7.112). God has made a 'world to come' (8.1) for the sake of the righteous minority who in this age are subject to 'sadness and infirmities' (4.28). The present subjugation under heathen powers (6.57) will be replaced by a glory already awaiting them. The 'habitations' and 'chambers' of the righteous are 'guarded by angels in profound quiet' (7.85,95). Therefore, the world to come is already *in situ*, waiting to be revealed but at the

present time 'is not yet awake' and must therefore be 'roused' (7.31). Accordingly, Ezra is promised that for him and the righteous like him, 'Paradise is opened, the tree of life is planted, the age to come is prepared, plenty is provided, a city is built, rest is appointed, goodness is established and wisdom perfected beforehand' (8.52). Here we see that, once again, the apocalyptic revelation serves to establish the future as a present reality in the minds of the hearers. On the testimony of the seer who has been 'shown...the reward laid up with the Most High' (13.56), they can be confident now of the certain resolution to all injustice and suffering.

In the case of the Qumran community there appears to be evidence of a belief that, by means of apocalyptic revelation, it was actually able to participate in the glory of the heavenly realm.<sup>720</sup> Thus in 1QM 10.10-11, the 'people of the saints of the Covenant' are described as privileged to have 'heard the voice of Majesty and *have seen the Angels of Holiness*, whose ear has been unstopped, and who have heard profound things.' Similarly in 1QH 3.21, the hymnist expresses his experience of life in the community as follows: 'Thou hast cleansed a perverse spirit of great sin that it may *stand with the host of the Holy Ones*, and that it may enter into community with the congregation of the Sons of Heaven.'

The writer of the Community Rule underlines in the clearest of terms his belief that the Qumran community was allied to the glory of the heavenly world: 'My eyes have gazed on that which is eternal, on wisdom concealed from men, on

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<sup>720</sup> Rowland, *Open Heaven*, 117.



knowledge and wise design (hidden) from the sons of men; on a fountain of righteousness and on a storehouse of power, on a spring of glory (hidden) from the assembly of flesh. God has given them to His chosen ones as an everlasting possession, and has caused them to inherit the lot of the Holy Ones. He has joined their assembly to the Sons of Heaven to be a Council of the Community, a foundation of the building of Holiness, an eternal Plantation throughout all ages to come' (1QH 6-8). Such passages appear to reflect both a present experience in the world above and a proleptic participation in the glory of the future.<sup>721</sup> Reflecting on this evidence, Rowland remarks that 'the life of the elect community was an extension of the heavenly world. God has, as it were, extended the boundaries of heaven to include this haven of holiness.'<sup>722</sup>

In the light of the preceding analysis we may see that a fundamental trait of apocalyptic thought is the notion that there is a heavenly, eternal dimension to existence, normally hidden from humanity, but supernaturally revealed to the apocalyptic visionary. By means of a dream-vision or celestial journey the heavenly world becomes a present experience in the life of the seer. Often this involves a preview of the future that is seen as already present in this transcendent sphere. The apocalyptic seer is assured that the temporal and spatial dimensions of this present life are to be transcended by a future, heavenly realm that is yet to

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<sup>721</sup> Kuhn, *Enderwartung und gegenwärtiges Heil*, 91-2.

<sup>722</sup> Rowland, *Open Heaven*, 118.

be unveiled. It should be noted that the ensuing literary account of the apocalyptic experience becomes itself a window into the higher world.<sup>723</sup>

However, for the recipients of the apocalypse, the problem remains as to how they will themselves permanently enter this transcendent reality. Unlike the seer, they may not have been transported to heaven or experienced a direct revelation through angelic mediation. The answer to this question is formulated in terms of the concept of a future ‘resurrection’ which will introduce the eschatological era. Collins considers one of the distinctive characteristics of the apocalyptic perspective to be the hope of transcendence of death. Those who have suffered for their loyalty to God’s truth are assured that ‘there is a higher, more real world to which humans ultimately have access, and that, therefore, the misfortunes of this life are not final’.<sup>724</sup>

The notion of a resurrection from the dead receives its main development within apocalyptic circles.<sup>725</sup> The first undisputed canonical reference to the idea is found in Dan 12.2: ‘Many of those who sleep<sup>726</sup> in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt’ (ἀναστήσονται, οἱ μὲν εἰς ζωὴν αἰώνιον, οἱ δὲ εἰς ὄνειδισμόν). The context

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<sup>723</sup> Wintermute, *OTP*, 505, views ‘the experiences of the seer as a prototype of the postmortem trials of a pious soul as it advances toward the throne of the Almighty’.

<sup>724</sup> Collins, ‘Symbolism of Transcendence’, 11.

<sup>725</sup> A few oblique references to the idea are found in the Psalms. Isa 26.19 and Ez 37 use the concept of resurrection as a metaphor for the renewed life predicted for the nation of Israel.

<sup>726</sup> The word שָׁן, ‘to sleep’, is often used in the Hebrew scriptures to refer to death (Jer 51.39, 57; Job 3.13; 14.12).



of this passage is found in the religious persecution of the Jews, ignited by the policy of Antiochus IV Epiphanes with the intention of unifying his realm by spreading a common culture of Hellenism. The promise of resurrection provided a solution to the puzzle of why loyal Jews were facing death on account of their obedience to the Torah.<sup>727</sup> The idea began to be seen as a means whereby both perpetrators of evil and the loyal adherents of the Torah would receive final justice.<sup>728</sup>

In particular, the **משפלים** would be vindicated;<sup>729</sup> they ‘will shine like the brightness of the sky, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever’ (12.3). Since the stars are taken to represent the heavenly host (8.10; cf. 1 En 104.2, 6), the implication is that the wise teachers will be rewarded in eternity with fellowship with the angels.<sup>730</sup> Although they were condemned in their lifetime, God will reverse this judgment by acquitting them in resurrection.<sup>731</sup> Daniel himself is assured at the close of his dialogue with the heavenly beings that

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<sup>727</sup> Cf. 1 Macc 1.50, 60-1; 2 Macc 6.7.

<sup>728</sup> Daniel does not have a general resurrection in view. Cf. Nickelsburg, *Resurrection, Immortality, and Eternal Life*, 23; Puech, *La Croyance des esséniens en la vie future*, 79-85; Collins, *Apocalyptic Imagination*, 113. Contra Sutcliffe, *The Old Testament and the Future Life*, 139, who argues for an explanatory use of **רַב**, i.e. ‘many, viz., those who are asleep’.

<sup>729</sup> Collins, *Apocalyptic Imagination*, 111; idem, *Apocalyptic Vision*, 207-9, argues that the author of Daniel sprang from this group.

<sup>730</sup> Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism*, 197, suggests that this theme may be an anticipation of the Essene belief that the ‘pious live in close communion with the angels in the time of salvation.’ Cf. Volz, *Die Eschatologie*, 400: ‘Engel und Sterne sind vielfach als ein Ding zu betrachten.’ Nb. 2 En 29.3; 1 En 43.1; 100.10. Astral immortality was a widespread belief in the Hellenistic period.

<sup>731</sup> Volz, *Die Eschatologie*, 231, observes ‘daß die eschatologische Auferstehungshoffnung zu voller Klarheit in den Stürmen der Religionsverfolgung durch Antiochus Epiphanes und in der Zeit der Makkabäer durchgebrochen ist.’



he can rest from his labours in the certainty that he will ‘rise for [his] reward at the end of days’ (12.13).<sup>732</sup>

In the Epistle of Enoch the notion of a resurrection of the righteous also provides reassurance that the evils of oppression and injustice suffered during this life will be redressed. The problem facing the pious observers of the Law was that they were suffering the very evils which, according to the Law (cf. Lev 26; Deut 28), should have been the lot of those who transgressed the covenant. Moreover, they faced the taunts of the wicked that the piety of the righteous brings no reward since they suffer privation in this world and the afterlife is an illusion (1 En 102.6-8).<sup>733</sup> In order to counteract this conclusion, the writer extends the time-scale of retribution to embrace the concept of an afterlife in which everyone will be recompensed according to the deeds done in this life. Thus he reveals the ‘mystery’ (103.2 μυστήριον) written on ‘the tablets of heaven’:

‘All good things (ἀγαθά), and joy (χαρά) and honour (τιμή) are prepared for and written down for the souls of those who died in righteousness. Many and good things shall be given to you - the offshoot of your labours. Your lot exceeds even that of the living ones. The spirits of those who died in righteousness *shall live and rejoice*; their spirits shall not perish, nor their memorial from before the face of the Great One unto all the

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<sup>732</sup> Nickelsburg, *Resurrection, Immortality, Eternal Life*, 19, suggests that the notion of a future resurrection answers a religious need in the community in which the book of Daniel arose.

<sup>733</sup> Cf. Hartman, *Asking for a Meaning*, 76.

generations of the world. Therefore, *do not worry about their humiliation*' (1 En 103.2-4).

The righteous may be comforted by the knowledge that 'in heaven the angels will remember you for good before the glory and the Great One; and your names shall be written before the glory of the Great One' (1 En 104.1). They are the recipients of salvation (98.14; 99.1; 103.10). The light of heaven will shine upon them (96.3), so that they will themselves radiate its light and 'shine like the lights of heaven' (ὥσεὶ φωστῆρες τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ἀναλάμψετε καὶ φανεῖτε) and the gates of heaven will be opened to them (104.2: αἱ θυρίδες τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ἀνοιχθήσονται ὑμῖν).

The nature of the resurrection is left somewhat vague in these chapters. No allusion is made to bodily restoration, rather it is the spirits of the righteous which will live and not perish, and for which good things are laid up. However, whatever the mode, the reality of the resurrection of the oppressed righteous is asserted and acts 'as a paradigm for the resurrection of other righteous who had suffered or been persecuted'.<sup>734</sup> In this way the author refutes the contention of the wicked that there is no advantage in being righteous. Rather there is a future realm in which one's experiences of well-being will be inversely correlated with

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<sup>734</sup> Nickelsburg, *Resurrection, Immortality, Eternal Life*, 124.

the deprivation endured in this life. Furthermore, the promised rewards act as a vindication of the conduct of the righteous.<sup>735</sup>

A similar function may be discerned in the Testament of Judah in which resurrection is promised to those whose loyalty to God occasioned their death: ‘And those *who died in sorrow* shall be *raised in joy*; and those who died in poverty for the Lord’s sake shall be made rich; those who died on account of the Lord shall be *wakened to life*’ (25.4). To ‘die in sorrow’ may refer to violent death, while ‘on account of the Lord’ would appear to imply religious persecution.<sup>736</sup> Thus resurrection acts as the divine vindication of the behaviour of the righteous that incurred their ill-deserved deaths. In being ‘wakened to life’ God restores that which was unlawfully taken away.

Another example from the same period of the way in which a document could function to bring comfort to a community under pressure is found in the Testament of Moses. The work depicts Moses as predicting to Joshua the course of Israel’s history culminating in the persecution under Antiochus IV Epiphanes. At this crucial point a Levite by the name of Taxo will lead his sons in the way of unflinching loyalty to the Law, even on pain of death, knowing that God will avenge their suffering. Death itself may therefore be endured with the assurance that they will be raised to the realm of the heavenly host (stars of heaven) and will

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<sup>735</sup> Cf. Nickelsburg, *Resurrection, Immortality, Eternal Life*, 126: ‘resurrection or its equivalent is one facet of the judgment, by which God will adjudicate a specific unjust situation’.

<sup>736</sup> Similar expressions used of the Antiochene persecution are found in 2 Macc 7.9, 11, 23, 37: ὑπὲρ νόμων; διὰ νόμους; περὶ νόμων.



thereby transcend death: ‘Then you will be happy, O Israel!...And *God will raise you* to the heights. Yea, he will fix you firmly in the heaven of the stars, in the place of their habitations’ (TMos 10.8-9).

It is clear from these examples that in the apocalyptic literature the idea of resurrection functions as divine vindication for the unjust treatment meted out on the righteous during their earthly life. Now in our reconstruction of events surrounding the composition of the Fourth Gospel it has been suggested that the hostility of the Jewish community towards those perceived as perverting the ancestral faith involved not only expulsion from the synagogue, but execution as well.<sup>737</sup> The prediction of Jesus, that some of his followers will be killed by those who think that in this way they are performing a laudable religious duty (16.2), can be taken as *ex post facto* confirmation that this actually happened. Moreover the reference to the thief who comes to steal and also kill the sheep (10.10) indicates that some Johannine believers were the victims of this final step in sectarian hostilities.

The Farewell Discourse provides evidence of the intensity of the hostility encountered by the disciples from the Jewish authorities who still have considerable punitive powers at their disposal (15.18-20; 16.1-2). The fact that Jesus exhorts his followers not to ‘fall away’ (μὴ σκανδαλισθῆτε) shows that this was a real threat to the community. The verb σκανδαλίζειν means ‘to cause to give up the Christian faith’ and is used in this sense in the only other place where

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<sup>737</sup> Cf. Martyn, *History and Theology*, 66.

it occurs in the Fourth Gospel (6.61). We have already seen in our introductory chapter that it is likely that the Johannine community comprises many who are ἀποσυνάγωγοι. But, further, this passage indicates the very real threat of death that was facing these Messianic followers. Rabbinic Judaism upheld the propriety of capital punishment in cases where the purity of the faith was endangered (cf. *Sanh.* 9.6; *Num. R.* 21.4). Indeed for zealous Jews, jealously guarding the ancestral faith, the death of apostates who had defected to the Christian faith is an act of service (λατρεία) to God.<sup>738</sup> The word λατρεία is used to refer to the worship of the Temple (Rm 9.4; Heb 9.1, 6), and parallels the Hebrew עבֹדָה.

There is evidence from the mid-second century C.E. of the extreme hostility that existed between the Jewish and Christian communities in the writing of Justin Martyr. In his dialogue with Trypho the Jew, Justin accuses him as follows: ‘Your hands are still raised to commit crime! Even after putting Christ to death, you are not converted. You even *hate and kill us*, who through him believe in God, the Father of the universe, as often as you have power to do so’ (*Dial* 133.6; cf. 95.4; italics mine). In the *Martyrdom of Polycarp* 13.1 we are told that the Jews were at the forefront in preparing for the death of the Christian bishop, ‘as is the custom with them’. While this patristic evidence is from a generation or so later than the events surrounding the composition of the Fourth Gospel, it provides

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<sup>738</sup> The intense persecuting zeal reflected in the behaviour of Saul of Tarsus toward the early church is one notable example of an attitude that permeated the Judaism of the period (Acts 8.3; 1 Cor 15.9; Gal 1.13, 23).

indirect corroborative testimony of the inveterate antipathy between Jews and Christians that stems back to the gospel period.

The promise of eternal life at the end of ch.10 is couched in the language that contrasts the temporal insecurity of the believers with the eternal safety that they will enjoy in the presence of God (10.28-29). In all likelihood the guarantee that the sheep of Jesus will ‘never perish’ (cf. 3.16) or be ‘snatched’ from the hand of the Son or the Father refers to their eternal security in the realm above in union with their shepherd. Following in their master’s footsteps the disciples may voluntarily lay down their lives, knowing that they have authority to take them up again (10.18). Accordingly physical death is termed ‘falling asleep’, while resurrection is likened to being ‘wakened’ (11.11; cf. T Reub 3.1: πνεῦμα τοῦ ὕπνου ... εἰκὼν τοῦ θανάτου). The promise reiterated several times by Jesus in the Bread of Life discourse is that, while the believer may participate in eternal life right now, Jesus also will raise him up on the last day (6.39: ἀναστήσω αὐτὸν ἐν τῇ ἐσχάτῃ ἡμέρᾳ; cf. 6.40, 44, 54).<sup>739</sup>

Since Jesus is himself ‘the resurrection and the life’ (11.25), those who are in union with him cannot belong to the realm of death; they have imbibed ‘the medicine of immortality’. In partaking of him who is the ‘bread of life,’ the true disciple is assured that he will not die (6.50; 8.51), but live forever (6.51, 58).

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<sup>739</sup> While the Johannine emphasis is on realized eschatology it is equally true that as Barrett, *St John*, 294 comments, ‘John balances exactly the two aspects of the Christian life, in present possession and future hope’. It is therefore unnecessary to attribute the passages that speak of a futurist eschatology to an ecclesiastical redactor.



The vivid sacramental language used in the Fourth Gospel emphasizes the flow of heavenly life that is perpetually conveyed by Jesus to his disciples. The true bread of life comes down from heaven (6.32,33,38,50); it belongs to a different, higher order of existence. By receiving the bread of Jesus' body the believer participates in this heavenly life that is, of course, eternal in character. As the Father has granted the Son to have life in himself (5.26), so the Son communicates the right to the believer to receive spiritual life (6.57; 14.19). Thus the mutual inherence of the Father and Son is extended to include the believer (14.20; 17.21, 23); this is accomplished through the ministry of the Spirit (14.17; cf. 14.23).<sup>740</sup>

The prospect held before the apocalyptic seer that 'henceforth you shall live with my son and with those who are like you' (4 Ez 14.9) is actualized in the present for the true disciple of Jesus. In Johannine thought the blessing of the future aeon, characterized as 'eternal life' (ζωὴ αἰώνιος), is already a present reality in Jesus.<sup>741</sup> Eternal life consists in revelation knowledge of the Son and the Father (17.3) and is therefore comparable to the experience of the apocalyptic seer in being elevated to the divine throne in glory. However, whereas the apocalyptic revelation reveals 'things that are future...for those who will live hereafter' (4 Ez 8.46), this time has now arrived in the person of Jesus. The eschatological era that is revealed to the apocalyptic seer as a present reality, reserved in heaven until

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<sup>740</sup> Rensberger, *Overcoming the World*, 120, comments that 'the seemingly arrogant Johannine claim that Jesus came down from heaven (6.42) applies in effect to the Johannine Christians themselves'.

<sup>741</sup> Schnackenburg, *St John*, I, 339, observes that 'eschatological salvation is always present in Christ, whatever the form under which it is bestowed'.

the appointed time for public disclosure, is seen to have already become manifest in Jesus according to the perspective adopted in the Fourth Gospel. Those who hear the word of Jesus and believe in the one who sent him are given eternal life; therefore they ‘have passed from death to life’ (5.24). This decisive transition is equated with the resurrection of the dead. Hence Jesus affirms that his presence indicates that the ‘coming hour’ (ἔρχεται ὥρα) has now arrived (νῦν ἐστὶν) when the dead hear the voice of the Son and therewith come to life (οἱ ἀκούσαντες ζήσουσιν) (5.25).

In the descriptions of the eternal state found in the apocalypses mention is made of certain spiritual qualities that will be bestowed upon the righteous. Betz observes that ‘die in der Endzeit wiedergewonnene Ordnung wird zusammenfassend das ‘Heil’ genannt, das Friede, Freude, Licht, Reinheit und Fruchtbarkeit in sich schließt (1 En 5.7-9; 10.16-11.2)’.<sup>742</sup> So, for example, in contrast to a future of ‘eternal execration’ which awaits the sinners, Enoch predicts that ‘to the elect ones there shall be light, joy and peace’ (1 En 5.7).

The qualities of peace and joy may be seen as ‘eschatological blessings’ that characterize the age to come. It is interesting to observe that these attributes are precisely the ones bequeathed by Jesus to his disciples as a lasting legacy of his spiritual presence with them. Rensberger remarks that as ‘God’s eschatological redeemer...Jesus’ mission involves bringing about many of the

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<sup>742</sup> *Der Paraklet*, 50.

expected eschatological blessings'.<sup>743</sup> His mission is not only to bring the heavenly realm to earth in his descent, but to establish it permanently through the community of disciples which bears his name. The quality of life that inheres within this community possesses the same character as that which exists in the heavenly sphere between the Father and the Son.<sup>744</sup> Ricca writes: 'In Jesus ist die messianische Zeit gekommen, und alle messianischen Realitäten sind den Menschen angeboten in der Gemeinschaft mit ihm durch den Glauben. Die Aktualisierung des Eschaton in Jesus bringt die Aktualisierung des Gerichts, der Herrlichkeit, der Wahrheit, der Erkenntnis, der Liebe, des ewigen Lebens und vieler anderer eschatologischer Realitäten mit sich.'<sup>745</sup>

### 3.1 Peace

In the turbulent times which saw the birth of much of the apocalyptic literature it is unsurprising to find that the writers predicted an eschatological age which would usher in a period of peace and tranquillity for those buffeted by the winds of persecution. The misfortunes suffered by the elect would be reversed and, in place of their mistreatment, the promise held out for them would be that '*peace* shall increase their lives and the years of their happiness shall be multiplied forever in *gladness and peace* all the days of their life' (1 En 5.10). The pain and

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<sup>743</sup> 'The Messiah Who Has Come into the World', 19.

<sup>744</sup> Kanagaraj, *Mysticism*, 266, observes that 'the dwelling of the Father and the son with the one who loves Jesus can well imply a permanent sharing of their life with him.'

<sup>745</sup> Ricca, *Die Eschatologie*, 128.



turmoil caused by the disobedience of supernatural beings would be eradicated by the superior power of God's angelic emissaries. Thus the archangel Michael is commissioned to 'destroy injustice from the face of the earth', enabling the righteous ones to escape from the evil regime and 'complete [their days] in *peace*' (1 En 10.16-17). The earth will be cleansed from all injustice, defilement and oppression, allowing even the natural world to be released into abundant fertility. In sum, 'the storerooms of blessing which are in the heavens' will be opened up upon the earth thereby redrawing the parameters of human life. In particular, '*peace and truth* shall become partners together' in this transformed world (11.1-2).

It is significant that the removal of peace is a fundamental element in the judgment decreed upon the perpetrators of evil. Thus on the day of judgment the Lord will 'grant *peace*' to all the righteous (1 En 1.8) as an eschatological blessing reserved for them, but removed from all agents of wickedness. The disobedient Watchers are banished from the presence of God and condemned to imprisonment in which 'there shall not be peace unto them even forever' (12.6; cf. 13.1). Similarly the writer of the Epistle of Enoch lambastes those plutocrats engaged in the unscrupulous economic exploitation of the righteous. With ringing condemnation the message sounds forth to the 'sinners, you are accursed forever; there is no peace for you' (1 En 102.3).

The presence of *peáce* may therefore be seen to be a mark of divine approbation bestowed upon those in God's favour.<sup>746</sup> It is an essential component of the 'glorious portion' given to those whom the seer is authorized to bless with '*peace* to the righteous ones in the *peace* of the Eternal Lord' (1 En 58.4). At the close of the Similitudes, Enoch is welcomed, as a permanent inhabitant of the spiritual realm, with the angelic benediction, '*peace to you* in the name of the world that is to become'. Indeed it is this coming, heavenly world from which 'proceeds peace' (1 En 71.15-16). Hence there will be peace to all the righteous ones (71.17). This is the reward which awaits Abraham as angels escort his 'precious soul' into Paradise 'where there are the tents of my righteous ones and (where) the mansions'<sup>747</sup> of my holy ones, Isaac and Jacob, are in his bosom, where there is no toil, no grief, no moaning, but *peace and exultation and endless life*' (T Ab 10.14). Given the premise that peace is a trait of the age in which the rule of God will be universally established, it is logical that the writer of 2 Baruch ascribes it to that time after the Anointed One has subjugated the enemies of God when he will then sit down 'in eternal peace on the throne of the kingdom' (2 Bar 73.1).

In the Fourth Gospel Jesus is shown as conferring the eschatological blessing of peace upon his disciples. 'Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to

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<sup>746</sup> Hartman, *Asking for a Meaning*, 133, regards the peace motif 'as a concept which gathers into itself all the consequences of God's blessings according to His covenant promises'.

<sup>747</sup> The Greek is *μοναὶ*, as in Jn 14.2.

you' (14.27). This occurs after 'the judgment' when 'the ruler of this world' is 'driven out' (12.31) and is co-ordinated with the sending of the Holy Spirit. These events, having established the eschatological age inaugurated by the coming of Jesus, open the way for the bequest of the peace which characterises this age to be a lasting possession of the community of disciples. The nature of the peace is different from that which the kingdom of this world offers (14.27) and is able to keep the hearts of the disciples from being troubled, even amidst the tribulation that this present world affords. Jesus speaks to them 'so that in me you may have peace' (16.33).

The Johannine account of the resurrection appearances of Jesus may well reflect the conditions in which the Johannine community would meet together for worship. Notwithstanding the fact that the doors of the house in which the disciples met 'were locked for fear of the Jews' (20.19), the spiritual presence of Jesus becomes a palpable reality to the assembled believers. The climate of fear hanging over them is at once dissipated by the words 'peace be with you' (20.19, 26). The ensuing commission and impartation of the Holy Spirit to the disciples, as well as the benediction upon those who believe on Jesus without having physically seen him, may well incorporate those aspects which were perceived as essential in the ongoing corporate life of the Johannine community. It is certainly reasonable to conjecture that, in the environment of hostility and feuding between the community and the Jewish synagogue, the disciples would value the eschatological blessing of peace conferred by the risen Jesus.



### 3.2 Joy

Another feature of the coming eschatological age depicted in the apocalyptic literature is the presence of joy.<sup>748</sup> Thus, in 1 Enoch complementary to the destruction of injustice and oppression will be the planting of joy, which the archangel Michael will perform (1 En 10.16). Since the lives of the righteous on earth have been invariably blighted with pain and suffering, the prospect of vindication and recompense for all the atrocities committed against them means that ‘the hearts of the holy ones are filled with *joy*’ (47.4). Present conviction of future blessing means that the righteous may experience, in some measure, a proleptic realization of that blessing.

In his dialogue with the Lord, Baruch speaks of the ‘good hope’ that the righteous possess, since ‘they leave this world without fear and are confident of the world which you have promised to them with an *expectation full of joy*’ (2 Bar 14.13). However, the consummation of this hope will be at the establishment of the reign of the Anointed One when ‘*joy* will be revealed and rest will appear’ (73.1). Joy is therefore characteristic of the messianic kingdom and will be confirmed as an integral feature of the eternal age. At the resurrection the righteous ‘will enjoy themselves...and not be sad’ (30.2). This eschatological reversal in fortunes is also attested in the Testament of Judah in its affirmation that ‘those who died in sorrow shall be raised in *joy*’ (25.4). In a similar vein Ezra is

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<sup>748</sup> Hartman, *Asking for a Meaning*, 37, observes that ‘the motif of joy is relatively commonly used in Jewish intertestamental texts in combination with thoughts of the eschatological peace and blessing’.

assured by his angelic interlocutor that when those who have kept the ways of the Most High are ‘separated from their mortal body...they shall see with *great joy* the glory of him who receives them’ (4 Ez 7.91). They will be ‘glad without fear’ as they contemplate their eternal reward while beholding ‘the face of him whom they served’ in life (7.98). The author of Jubilees gives the reason why the righteous will ‘live in peace and rejoicing’, it is because ‘there will be no Satan and no evil (one) who will destroy’ (Jub 23.29). Since the apocalyptic seer, through being admitted into the heavenly world, is given a preview of the age to come, it is not surprising to find that he also is bidden to ‘be very joyful and rejoice’ (ApAb 10.15). Through the revelation he becomes a participant in the eschatological era.

As we have seen, in the Fourth Gospel Jesus is the divine agent who inaugurates the eschatological era. It is therefore appropriate that he should communicate not only his peace but also his joy: ‘I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete’ (15.11: ἵνα ἡ χαρὰ ἡ ἐμὴ ἐν ὑμῖν ᾗ καὶ ἡ χαρὰ ὑμῶν πληρωθῇ). The same promise is given in the high-priestly prayer in 17.13: ἵνα ἔχωσιν τὴν χαρὰν τὴν ἐμὴν πεπληρωμένην ἐν ἑαυτοῖς (17.13). Kanagaraj argues that this speaks of ‘the eschatological joy fulfilled in the life of the Church...therefore the joy of the disciples is the eschatological joy initiated by Jesus on earth’.<sup>749</sup>

Although still in the world and therefore liable to hatred and persecution, his disciples are invited to participate in the joy of their master as they keep his

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<sup>749</sup> Kanagaraj, *Mysticism*, 270.

commands and abide in him. The current pain of rejection, suffering and bereavement experienced in a world still in darkness is likened to the temporary anguish of child-bearing which is forgotten in the joy of celebrating a new life; the ‘pain will turn into joy’ (16.20-21). The context of this promise is one in which the disciples are puzzling over the course of events which are leading to apparent desolation and separation from the master. But Jesus assures them they will see him again and ‘your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you’ (16.22).

This promise envisages a translation of Jesus’ relationship with his disciples from an earthbound, material level to a transcendent, spiritual plane. They will see him visually in bodily form after the resurrection, but, more importantly, spiritually and permanently through the ministry of the Holy Spirit. In this last extended discourse of the earthly Jesus with his disciples he lays down the spiritual principles that will govern their relationship once he has returned to the Father. The pattern of joy through pain will be repeated in the subsequent history of the community of disciples as they continue the work of their Lord (cf. 9.4). In fulfilling their task Jesus’ followers operate in his name allowing them to ask for divine aid, thereby equipping them with continual replenishments of joy (16.24).

In this chapter we have argued that the Fourth Gospel conceives the life of Jesus as providing an apocalyptic paradigm by which the experiences of believers



may be interpreted. While in one sense unique, the earthly career of Jesus proves to be a pattern for later followers, thereby supplying the hermeneutical key that can explain and order the perplexing circumstances facing them. It is clear that, according to John, the divine commission of Jesus is transferred to the disciples (13.20; 17.18). This is achieved by the sending of the Paraclete in the name of the Son (14.26) who continues to make real the presence of Jesus in a spiritual way in the community of believers (14.20; 20.21-22).<sup>750</sup> By means of the Spirit Jesus is enabled to continue living on earth through the medium of his disciples (14.17).<sup>751</sup>

Belief in Jesus elevates the disciple into a new dimension of existence which enables him to see the Father, the goal of an apocalyptic ascent, and participate in the authority of the Son in his eschatological role of judgment. The rejection encountered from former allies is interpreted as a reflection of a cosmic conflict between supernatural beings. They are no longer ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου (15.19; 17.14), just as Jesus is not ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου (8.23; 17.14). They too will be hated (15.18; 17.14), persecuted (15.20; 16.1-2, 33) and even murdered (15.13; 16.2).<sup>752</sup> However, since the decisive battle in this conflict has already been won by Jesus

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<sup>750</sup> Cf. Martyn, *History and Theology*, 148.

<sup>751</sup> Cf. Aune, *Cultic Setting*, 80: 'The mission of the disciples, which in reality is a continuation of the mission of Jesus under different circumstances, stands over against the world of unbelief with the same significance as did the historic mission of Jesus.' Martyn, *History and Theology*, 148, affirms that 'of all the functions of the Paraclete, none is more central than his continuing the work of Jesus.' So too, Casey, *Is John's Gospel True*, 153, 'the Paraclete is effectively the presence of Jesus with the disciples after his departure from the earth.' Cf. Barrett, *St John*, 483.

<sup>752</sup> Rensberger, *Overcoming the World*, 69, notes that 'to be "born from above" is to undergo a change of communal affiliation and is therefore a social as well as a spiritual event.'

on the cross (12.31), believers can be assured that their own future destiny is secured. Indeed the coming eschatological age has been inaugurated as a present reality in Jesus. Eternal life, characterized by peace and joy, is now a current reality in the experience of the true disciple.

The community of believers thereby becomes the locus of the heavenly realm upon earth.<sup>753</sup> The earthly career of Jesus is continuously re-enacted in the lives of his adherents, acting as the filter through which experiences of rejection and alienation can be interpreted. His life on earth becomes the heavenly paradigm for believers.

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<sup>753</sup> Käsemann, *Testament*, 6, observes that the community of disciples addressed in John ch. 17, 'is actually joined more closely to heaven than to earth. Even though it still exists in earthly form, it belongs in its very essence to the realm of the Father and the Son'.

## CONCLUSION

In a religious society a power struggle may not occur necessarily in political or economic terms, but between two alternative belief systems. This is evident in the sectarian communities that existed in the Judaism of late antiquity where there was a tendency for each one to claim that it was the sole repository of God's highest revelation. Each group was concerned to present itself as divinely approved, sanctioned from above. Now the threat to a group's *Weltanschauung* is potentially more disturbing than more tangible physical threats. Therefore it must develop a symbolic universe that carries the divine warrant, thereby implying that alternative or antagonistic perspectives are in error. Furthermore, in order to guard this symbolic world the group must establish plausibility structures that will serve as intellectual bulwarks against an alternative worldview. The contention of the present study is that the author of the Fourth Gospel draws upon an apocalyptic perspective in order to justify the superiority of the divine revelation disclosed in the Johannine Jesus. In so doing he helps to shape the believing community's symbolic universe in such a way that will strengthen it against the subversive attacks of religious opponents.

It is clear that much of the material in the Fourth Gospel was forged in the heat of a controversy between the Johannine community and the Jewish synagogue. The focal point of this bitter religious duel was the question of



legitimate authority. The Mosaic Law provided the ultimate standard of religious authority for the Judaism of the post 70 C.E. period. However, the apocalyptic literature espoused a higher level of authority in its claim to be based on direct communication with the heavenly realm through vision or celestial journey (cf. 4 Ez 14.46).

In the light of rejection from former co-worshippers, it is imperative for the Johannine community to develop a symbolic universe which will legitimate its new position. In order to achieve this, the Johannine evangelist employs apocalyptic conceptual categories. Jesus is shown to be the witness *par excellence* of the heavenly realm and the source of ultimate truth. The teaching of the one who has directly witnessed heaven's secrets inevitably carries the divine imprimatur. Its heavenly provenance carries with it ultimate authority enabling it to supplant alternative viewpoints in the minds of the recipients. The 'Jews' looked to the law, given through Moses, as the bulwark of their religious authority, but for the Johannine believers ultimate truth has come through Jesus Christ (1.17) and the words by which this truth is conveyed are spirit and life (6.63). The new symbolic universe thereby created supersedes the outmoded, earthbound perceptions that may still try to retain a hold on the psyche of the hearers.

Although the Johannine Jesus resembles an apocalyptic seer, in that both testify to a heavenly dimension that they have experienced first hand, this is not the whole story. First, although John may employ an apocalyptic framework in his presentation of Jesus, he rules out the possibility that there may have been any

genuine rivals to Jesus' experience of heavenly reality. The privilege belongs exclusively to Jesus. He alone has seen God (1.18: Θεὸν οὐδεὶς ἑώρακεν πώποτε; cf. 5.37; 6.46). If any Jewish figure did have a genuine apocalyptic experience, this is interpreted christologically; Jesus himself was the focus of the revelation. Secondly, Jesus, unlike the human seer, is 'from above', 'from heaven' and thus 'from God'. It is therefore more appropriate to trace the apocalyptic model for the Johannine presentation of Jesus to the principal angel traditions which are themselves rooted in the figure of the מלאך יהוה. We have seen that, like this transcendent figure, Jesus is both sent by God (John, *passim*) and also presented as God in action (14.10). Indeed he bears the 'name' of God and is the supreme manifestation of his 'glory'.

Moreover, the Johannine Jesus is the disclosure of a 'transcendent reality' embracing both spatial and temporal dimensions. If, spatially, Jesus belongs to another, higher, heavenly sphere from which he is sent as a divine agent and to which he will return, from a temporal perspective he is presented as an eternal being, the 'I am' (cf. 1.1-3; 8.58; 17.5). His presence becomes the defining eschatological moment in the lives of all who meet him, determining both present and future destiny. Indeed Jesus is the eschatological reality which causes the

future to become realized in the present.<sup>754</sup> In him ‘the hour that is coming now is’ (ἔρχεται ὥρα καὶ νῦν ἐστὶν, 4.23; 5.25).<sup>755</sup>

The decisive transition to the eschatological age occurs in a ‘judgment’ which involves the defeat and expulsion of ‘the ruler of this world’, achieved by the ‘enthronement’ of the Son of Man on a cross (12.32). Therefore the verdict upon an individual’s destiny does not await a distant judgment day; it is pronounced now on the basis of their response to Jesus. Those who do not believe in him are condemned already (3.18, ἤδη κέκριται), while whoever does believe has eternal life *now*; he has already passed from death to life (5.24).

Jesus thus becomes the embodiment of a new sacred world for believers which supplants the old social world of Judaism which had formerly provided their life context. The fact that he is unrecognised and rejected by ‘the Jews’ shows that they are devoid of spiritual insight, blind to the truth. We have seen that an important feature of apocalyptic thought is that the revelation is veiled to outsiders. This provides a crucial rationalization for the misunderstanding and rejection of Jesus by former Jewish friends. It therefore forms a vital element in the overarching symbolic universe of the Johannine community. In a situation where a previously respected religious authority such as the Jewish synagogue is

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<sup>754</sup> Rensberger, *Overcoming the World*, 120, states that ‘Jewish eschatological hopes are entirely “localized” in Jesus’.

<sup>755</sup> Barrett, *St John*, 237, observes that the use of the simple continuous present ἔρχεται ὥρα alongside νῦν ἐστὶν shows that events (spiritual worship and resurrection) that seem to belong to the future are realized in the presence of Jesus *now*. The evangelist ‘emphasizes by means of his oxymoron that in the ministry, and above all in the person, of Jesus they were proleptically present’.



impugning the developing faith of Messianic believers, it would reassure wavering adherents to know that their new faith is underwritten by heavenly authority. Accordingly the community's social identity is securely anchored at the highest level, thereby compensating for the repudiation received at the hands of the synagogue.<sup>756</sup>

Because an apocalyptic disclosure is hidden from ordinary human understanding it is necessary for divine help to be given, usually via the agency of an *angelus interpres*. As well as granting insight into the meaning of the revelation, the angelic interpretation serves to provide the seer's message with further verification. Not only can he vouch for the heavenly mysteries he has witnessed firsthand, his understanding is underwritten by the word of heavenly messengers. Now in the Fourth Gospel, as argued in this thesis, the role of the Spirit-Paraclete is modelled on the *angelus interpres* of apocalypticism. He progressively interprets the full meaning of the Jesus-revelation to successive generations of believers. However, this interpretation is restricted to 'the initiated' who embrace the Johannine faith; those on the outside, represented by 'the Jews', refuse to believe and therefore remain in the darkness (9.41).

In addition to the interpretative ministry of the Spirit-Paraclete, we have shown that he may act in a legal capacity in representing the interests of believers who are facing the accusations and persecutions of former allies. As a heavenly

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<sup>756</sup> Rensberger, *Overcoming the World*, 119, observes that 'John's high Christology thus reinforces the community's social identity'. Cf. Käsemann, *Testament of Jesus*, 59-60.

attorney, the Spirit-Paraclete conducts a lawsuit against 'the world', on the one hand proving its guilt, and, on the other hand, vindicating Jesus and his followers from all malicious charges. Finally, like the angelic guide of the apocalypses, the Spirit-Paraclete lifts the believer into the transcendent realm which, through the act of worship 'in spirit and truth' makes heaven a present reality on earth.

Because the Spirit-Paraclete makes the presence of Jesus a spiritual reality in the life of believers (14.20; 20.21-22), the worshipping community becomes the house of God upon earth and thereby the gate of heaven (cf. 1.51; 14.2). Within its fellowship the revelation of Jesus continues to be a spiritual reality, with his earthly life acting as an apocalyptic paradigm for later followers. It is clear that, according to John, the divine commission of Jesus is transferred to the disciples (13.20; 17.18). Hostility from their opponents reflects the cosmic conflict in the heavenly realm. Thus the encounter between these two contrasting orders of reality is portrayed as an ongoing state of affairs since Jesus is ever present in the community which bears his name; it continues to shine in the darkness of a hostile world.<sup>757</sup> A colony of heaven is established on earth, qualitatively different from, but in dialogue with, 'the world'.

The present experiences of the Johannine community are interpreted in the light of the transcendent context; for these disciples the earthly life of Jesus

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<sup>757</sup> Cf. Aune, *Cultic Setting*, 45, 77. Cf. Schnackenburg, *The Church in the New Testament*, 104, refers to John's intention to present 'a picture of Christ corresponding to the Church's spiritual condition.'

becomes the apocalyptic vision<sup>758</sup> which is 'intended to interpret present, earthly circumstances in light of the supernatural world and of the future, and to influence both the understanding and the behaviour of the audience by means of divine authority'.<sup>759</sup> Order and coherence are thereby conferred upon the experiences of rejection and persecution, because they conform to the pattern displayed in Jesus.

John is eager to reassure the community that its own identity and security is indissolubly bound to that of the master. Jesus comes to earth conscious of his heavenly origin and destiny, assured that he has been sent from above to do the Father's will (4.34; 6.38). Thus whether facing the hostility of the Jews (8.14) or serving his disciples (13.3), Jesus is secure in the knowledge that he has come from God. This same knowledge is appropriated by his followers, on the basis of their union with him, proving to be of great comfort and support in circumstances of alienation and persecution. Although suffering tribulation in the world, they may be of good cheer since Jesus has overcome the world (16.33). The promise of eternal life, characterized by peace and joy, is now a current reality in the experience of the worshipping community.

The unveiling of another dimension of existence served to strengthen the Johannine fellowship of believers in a similar way to those communities who cherished apocalyptic writings. The adversity encountered by these believing communities is transcended by a disclosure of the divine plan and perspective

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<sup>758</sup> Barrett, *St John*, 212: 'The total historical phenomenon of Jesus of Nazareth is the place where God is known.'

<sup>759</sup> Yarbrow Collins, 'Introduction: Early Christian Apocalypticism', 7.



which resolves the cognitive dissonance that has arisen from a restricted, earthbound perception of matters. However, the hidden truth of heavenly reality communicated by seers in their apocalypses is focussed, for the author of the Fourth Gospel, entirely in the revelation of God through Jesus. Employing the model of the principal angel traditions found in apocalyptic literature, John presents Jesus as the *bona fide* witness of divine truth because he stands in the closest relation to God. Accordingly, his works and words possess ultimate legitimacy reflected in his authority to pronounce judgment and confer life (5.21-22). The fact that the revelation is rejected by 'the Jews' actually provides inverse corroboration of its validity, proving that opponents are devoid of the insight granted to believers. The latter are assured of the continual support of the Spirit-Paraclete who not only grants higher spiritual wisdom, but also provides effective vindication in the face of hostile charges and exclusive access into the divine presence. Indeed, via the agency of the Spirit-Paraclete the abiding presence of Jesus is an ongoing reality in the lives of believers.

Further comfort is given to the Johannine community by the recognition that the experience of rejection and hostility from former associates mirror those accorded to Jesus during his earthly life. In addition, the underlying reason for this hatred is exposed; it reflects a cosmic battle between light and darkness taking place in the unseen, spiritual world. Nevertheless, the final outcome of this battle is not in doubt since the decisive victory has already been achieved by Jesus over the prince of this world, accomplished, remarkably, by his death. While the

fulfilment of this triumph is yet to be completed, believers have already crossed over from the realm of death into the new dimension of eternal life.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### Abbreviations

|               |   |
|---------------|---|
| <i>ABD</i>    | <i>Anchor Bible Dictionary</i> (ed. D.N. Freedman; New York: Doubleday, 1994)   |
| <i>ANRW</i>   | <i>Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt</i>   |
| <i>APOT</i>   | <i>The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament</i> , edited by R.H. Charles, 2 vols. Oxford: Clarendon, 1913. |
| <i>BASOR</i>  | <i>Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research</i>  |
| <i>Bib</i>    | <i>Biblica</i>  |
| <i>BJRL</i>   | <i>Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester</i>  |
| <i>BR</i>     | <i>Biblical Research</i>  |
| <i>BT</i>     | <i>The Bible Translator</i>   |
| <i>CBQ</i>    | <i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>  |
| <i>ExpTim</i> | <i>Expository Times</i>   |
| <i>HR</i>     | <i>History of Religions</i>   |
| <i>HUCA</i>   | <i>Hebrew Union College Annual</i>  |
| <i>IDB</i>    | <i>The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible</i>  |
| <i>Int</i>    | <i>Interpretation</i>   |



|                |  |
|----------------|--|
| <i>JSOT</i>    | <i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>  |
| <i>JBL</i>     | <i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>  |
| <i>JNES</i>    | <i>Journal of Near Eastern Studies</i>   |
| <i>JSJ</i>     | <i>Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic and Roman Period</i>                                       |
| <i>JSNTSup</i> | <i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament - Supplement Series</i>  |
| <i>JTC</i>     | <i>Journal for Theology and the Church</i>   |
| <i>JSP</i>     | <i>Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha</i>   |
| <i>JTS</i>     | <i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>  |
| <i>Novt</i>    | <i>Novum Testamentum</i>   |
| <i>NTS</i>     | <i>New Testament Studies</i>   |
| <i>OTP</i>     | <i>The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha</i> , 2 Vols., (Charlesworth, J.H., [ed.]; London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1983, 1985) |
| <i>OTS</i>     | <i>Oudtestamentische Studien</i>   |
| <i>RB</i>      | <i>Revue biblique</i>  |
| <i>SJT</i>     | <i>Scottish Journal of Theology</i>  |
| <i>SVTP</i>    | <i>Studia in Veteris Testamenti pseudepigrapha</i>   |
| <i>TDNT</i>    | G.Kittel and G.Friedrich (eds.), <i>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</i>  |
| <i>TLZ</i>     | <i>Theologische Literaturzeitung</i>   |
| <i>TynBul</i>  | <i>Tyndale Bulletin</i>  |
| <i>TZ</i>      | <i>Theologische Zeitschrift</i>  |

*VT*                *Vetus Testamentum*

WMANT        Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament

*ZNW*                *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft*

*ZTK*                *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche*

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