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CONTRIBUTIONS OF THIS VOLUME AND THE DE-JOHANNIFICATION OF JESUS

Paul N. Anderson

As the essays in this volume demonstrate, the evidentiary basis for excluding the Gospel of John from the historical quest for Jesus is extensively flawed, critically. Many dozens, perhaps hundreds, of instances in which the Fourth Gospel arguably contributes to a fuller understanding of the life and ministry of the prophetic figure from Nazareth require renewed consideration if the fuller database of historical information about Jesus is to be consulted. The question, of course, is how to do so. While it might be safer and less likely to err to exclude John from the quest, such a conservatively reductionistic approach runs the risk of garnering only a partial sampling of the first-century historical record of Jesus and his ministry, thus producing a distorted portraiture of Jesus. Therefore, while the de-Johannification of Jesus might make a Synoptic quest easier and more straightforward, historians committed to consulting the full range of historical resources in the venture can no longer exclude the one canonical account claiming first-hand contact with the ministry of Jesus. Such a claim may be scandalous, or even wrong, but it is the character of the material itself that requires a new quest, given the critical contributions of the essays in the present volume and other recent work.

Glimpses of Jesus through the Lens of the Fourth Gospel

While it would be an error to see the Gospel of John as being solely historical in its interest or value, a more nuanced reading of the text liberates it from a theology-only straightjacket, just as it has needed to be liberated from a history-only straightjacket in the modern era. After all, the Synoptics are also theological as well as historical in their interest and character,

so each feature and section of John's text must be evaluated on its own in terms of its historical contribution or lack thereof. Therefore, while full portraiture of Jesus may be elusive, however the quest for Jesus is conducted, at least some glimpses of Jesus may come through when using the Johannine lens. This is especially true as the dialectical character of historiography itself is acknowledged, which challenges equally claims of ahistoricity as well as claims of historicity. Thus, the essays in the three sections of this book make considerable contributions along those lines.

Glimpses of the Passion of Jesus through the Johannine Lens

From the essays in the present volume, John's rendering of the last days of Jesus offers several contributions in the historical quest for Jesus. First, the political realism of John's presentation of the arrest, trials, and crucifixion of Jesus, given the backdrop of the Roman presence in Judea, offers distinctive insights that are missing from the other Gospels. Donald Senior shows how John's narrative exposes the political tensions felt by Jewish leaders in Jerusalem regarding the threat of messianic figures, including Rome's willingness to crack down on insurrections. This is confirmed by historical events before and after the ministry of Jesus, according to Josephus and other historians. Of special interest is the relation between Annas and Caiaphas, including the role of the high priest in representing the Jewish nation to Rome. While theological expansion upon the Synoptic narratives cannot be ruled out, the political realism of John renders plausible inferences regarding Jesus's death at the hand of the Romans. Warren Carter then identifies seven common features when the accounts of Jesus before Pilate are viewed in bioptic perspective. While distinctive material in John cannot be confirmed by multiple attestation—by definition, of course—the presentation of Jesus and Pilate together in John offers several plausible inferences as to what pre-Gospel memory preserves regarding the Roman trial and crucifixion of Jesus in John.

Craig Keener's essay further explores the likelihood that Pilate's perception of Jesus as a harmless sage—engaging issues of truth in nonviolent ways—may account for his reluctance to put Jesus to death. In that sense, the somewhat sympathetic treatment of Jesus by Pilate in John coheres with the violence-challenging Jesus portrayed in the Synoptics as well as the Fourth Gospel. In both cases, Jesus is not only nonviolent. He is counter-violent. John thus provides a historically plausible link between the presentation of Jesus in Synoptic and Johannine accounts, opening new

possibilities for glimpsing historical events during the last days of Jesus's life in terms of corroborative impression. Like contemporary biographers of the day, John's rendering of Jesus's engagement with Pilate seems rooted in knowledgeable information and plausible inference.

A second contribution of John's Passion narrative is that it offers alternative chronological information that is arguably preferable over the timing of events in the Synoptics. Along these lines, Stephan Witetschek shows that the Markan timeframe of the crucifixion (at nine o'clock, the third hour) is historically less plausible than the sentencing of Jesus in John (at noon, the sixth hour). Therefore, it is a mistake to regard John's time reference as a feature of Passover symbolism. A large number of events took place that morning, as reported by Mark, on the way to the cross. Therefore, the later timing of the sentencing of Jesus alleviates a historical problem in Mark (how did so many things get done so early in the morning?), and John's alternative timing thus offers a more likely ordering of events over and against Mark's rendering. In his essay in part 2 within the present collection, Colin Humphreys infers specificity within John's timetable, based on calendrical and astronomical calculations: Jesus was crucified on Friday April at 3:00 on 14 Nissan in 33 CE. Likewise, the dating of the Last Supper as being on the Thursday evening is historically correct in John, even if Mark's tradition made use of different calendar measures. Some scholars will disagree with the year of Humphrey's calculation, with the majority view favoring 30 CE, but his work otherwise confirms also the dating of the Last Supper in John, and Jesus is not crucified on the Passover in any of the Synoptics, even though the Last Supper is presented as a Passover meal therein. In that sense, Mark also corrects Mark's own timing of the Last Supper, as does John.

A third set of contributions among the present essays puts forth alternative perspectives on John's historicity. Wendy North demonstrates clearly the Johannine evangelist's theologically influenced recasting of Nicodemus and Caiaphas within the text. Likewise, information that was likely known to John's audiences is recast in ways that fit the theological interests of the evangelist. Based on these observations, North then infers that where John coincides with the Synoptics, the Evangelist has recast existing material, arguing such a view on the basis of the race to the tomb and the anointing at Bethany. While the historicity of John's individuated material cannot be judged on this basis, North concludes that where the Fourth Evangelist overlaps with the Synoptic, he offers no new material of historical character or value. Therefore, North extends the implications of

that judgment to question the likelihood that John offers anything of value in the historical quest for Jesus, although that may overstate the case.

Jean Zumstein accounts for John's differences with the Synoptics as a function of the Evangelist's plotting the narrative so as to further his theological interests. Seeing that relecture within John's farewell discourses expands meanings in post-Easter perspective, the temple incident and eucharistic theme have been moved earlier, with the latter replaced by a foot-washing scenario, and discourses of Jesus have replaced the dramatic scene of Gethsemane. This alternative way of remembering Jesus's last days orders events in ways that further the presentation of Jesus's path to the cross as a function of literary design rather than historical interest. These two essays therefore, account for John's similar and distinctive material as factors of the evangelist's theological and literary interests, rather than of historical character or design.

A fourth contribution of the essays on the last days of Jesus argues an overall set of ways that John's Passion narrative contributes an independent historical record that is possible, plausible, and even likely in its historical value. Robert Fortna, the leading Johannine member of the Jesus Seminar, argues here the Jesus Seminar has been too minimal in its estimation of John's historicity. While John's ordering of the temple incident, the entry to Jerusalem, and the entrusting of Jesus's mother to the Beloved Disciple are unlikely or questionable, John's presentation of the Bethany incident as a foot anointing, the Last Supper as a noneucharistic meal on a Thursday evening, Jesus's washing his disciples' feet, his more detailed arrest, his Jewish and Roman trials, his death and the multilingual titulus placed upon the cross, and his distinctively Jewish burial are either possible, plausible, or likely. Fortna sees John's presentation as reflecting the use of a hypothetical Signs Gospel, which served as an apologetic narrative designed to convince audiences that Jesus was the Jewish Messiah. In that sense, Fortna sees John's narrative as an alternative historical account to be considered, and in many ways preferred, over its bioptic counterpart, Mark.

Fifth, in going far beyond a mere response to the essays in part 1 of this collection, Tom Thatcher's analysis contributes to the inquiry by assessing why there is agreement and disagreement between some of the scholars' treatments of historicity in John. In his analysis of the essays in this section, Thatcher affirms the many ways that John's historicity is established by these scholars, even seeing the narrative-constructive approach by Zumstein as not necessarily discounting its historical basis, despite its literary and theological interest. Conversely, he appreciates North's literary analysis

but judges her viewing of John's dependence on Mark as assumed rather than demonstrated. Therefore, given the vast number of John's distinctive features, these particulars are left unaccounted for in seeing John as derivative upon Mark, so that weakens the case of John's ahistoricity. Thatcher affirms Fortna's approach to John as reflecting an independent historical tradition and values the nuance with which Fortna makes his judgments. In addition to engaging and evaluating the essays in this section, Thatcher then proceeds to making his own contribution on the subject.

He thus notes over two dozen ways that John's Passion narrative contributes historically to understanding the last days of Jesus, with a third of these in the shadow of the Synoptics. This analysis thus raises several questions. First, a reasonable goal of studying John's historicity is less focused on identifying "absolute historical truth" and more concerned with possible, plausible, and likely measures of John's narrative realism as a more measured approach to the venture. Second, considering John's sources, Thatcher expands upon the fact that inferences as to the origin and development of John's tradition, whether it be independent or dependent on Synoptic material, clearly plays a role in the judgments scholars make regarding John's historicity. A fair amount of interplay continues between inferences of Johannine historicity and the character of John's tradition and vice versa. Third, Thatcher notes the relation between inferences of theological features of the Johannine narrative and resultant disparagements of their historicity, critiquing the move as understandable but not compellingly warranted. Here the assumption that theology produces history fails to acknowledge the likelihood that history also produces theology. After all, the very determination of the historic over the incidental is the inference of significance, which, especially in the Johannine memory of Jesus, is tied to fact as well as fiction. Therefore, in the fullness of Thatcher's analysis, he not only engages the essays in part 1 effectively, but he points the way forward in naming some of the further questions to be addressed within the larger venture.

As a result of these analyses, it seems clear that unless John's story of the last days of Jesus is solely dependent upon Mark or the other Synoptics (North's view) that John's Passion narrative represents an independent tradition to be viewed alongside the Synoptics in seeking to understand the Jesus of history, not merely the Christ of faith.

Glimpses of the Works and Ministry of Jesus through the Johannine Lens

Likewise, when the works and ministry of Jesus are viewed through the perspective of the Johannine lens, the results are not insignificant. John's story of Jesus thus makes a number of contributions in the judgments of scholars contributing to this volume. First, with reference to the relation between Jesus and John the Baptist, John's narrative contributes several historical reports that illumine that relationship and enhance a fuller understanding of the ministry of Jesus. Robert Webb notes correctly that here John is presented as the "testifier" rather than the "baptizer," a feature that fits the prophetic character of John's ministry, while also being historically problematic, as it furthers the theological interest of the Evangelist. Nonetheless, the Johannine presentation of John's ministry contributes to a fuller understanding of Jesus's ministry, making it likely that Jesus was baptized by John, that Jesus and John ministered alongside each other for some time, with Jesus and his disciples also doing some baptizing work (though probably not in the manner of later Christian developments), that Jesus's ministry bore an association with John's eschatological framework (including the sense of time-fulfillment in Jesus's understanding of his ministry), and that the ministry of Jesus moved geographically back and forth between the Transjordan ministry of John and his Galilean ministry.

Andreas Köstenberger expands upon the John-Jesus relationship, showing good reason to accept the presentation of the calling of Jesus's first disciples in the Fourth Gospel as more plausibly historical. Employing new criteria for determining Gospel historicity, Köstenberger notes that the *criterion of primitivity* produces positive results in that the more informal presentation of John's disciples leaving him and following Jesus is less programmatic than the Synoptic renderings of Jesus's calling the Twelve. John's presentation also fills in some of the gaps in the Synoptic calling narratives, which otherwise seem abrupt and contrived. The *criterion of corroborative impression* sees the Johannine presentation of the calling of the disciples as providing a more textured basis for a fuller understanding of the calling narratives in the Synoptics. The distinctiveness of John's calling narrative might even suggest John's familiarity with one or more of the Synoptics, reflecting an interest in augmenting their accounts. The *criterion of critical realism* favors the Johannine rendering, in that it provides a contextual basis for John's disciples departing from his mentorship and following Jesus. They stayed with him for a night and came to know

him, leading to their conviction regarding his mission. The *criterion of open coherence* minimizes the false dichotomies resultant from pitting the Synoptics against John, showing perhaps a three-step process at work when considering John alongside the Synoptics: personal acquaintance led to the calling of individual disciples, culminating with the calling of the Twelve. As two eyes offer a fuller perspective than looking through one eye alone, the Fourth Gospel shows that Jesus's first followers were not simply selected out of the blue. Rather, some of them were first followers of John the Baptist, who upon meeting Jesus joined his ministry, providing a fuller historical understanding of the beginnings of Jesus's ministry in John and resultant developments as presented in the Synoptics.

A second contribution of the essays in part 2 of this collection both affirms and disconfirms the chronology of John's presentation of the temple incident. Humphreys argues that Jesus's clearing the temple at the beginning of his ministry sets the stage well for his prophetic ministry, which challenged religious leaders, leading up to his rejection and death. Humphreys holds open the possibility of a second temple incident at the end of his ministry rather than forcing a choice between John and the Synoptics, although he also sides with John against the Synoptics in noting three Passovers and thus a three-year ministry of Jesus. Most New Testament scholars, however, see the temple incident as the same event, and arguably so. James McLaren, interestingly, believes that both presentations of timing in the Synoptics and John are problematic and untenable. In the writings of Josephus, temple incidents in Jerusalem are characteristically presented as leading to immediate imprisonment and/or punishment by death, but in neither the Synoptics nor John does such a sequence of events directly follow. Therefore, while John's account is not affirmed by this measure, neither is the account of the Synoptics—the leading reason for questioning John's presentation. Annette Merz questions elements of both of these essays, so the timing and frequency of Jesus's acting up in the temple calls for further analysis before simply assuming John alone got it right or wrong.

A third contribution of these essays draws parallels between the Johannine presentation of Jesus's ministry and the virtuoso-religion practices of the Essenes among the Judean poor. Tim Ling thus builds on the work of Brian Capper (2003, 2006, 2011), showing plausible and likely connections between Jesus's Synoptic teachings to care for the needs of the poor and aspects of community as rendered in the Johannine narrative. This is especially clear in Jesus's engagements with the Bethany family, as he cares

for the condition of Lazarus and as his feet are anointed by Mary. This seems more likely than the more royal-associative head anointing in Matthew and Mark, attested by Luke's departure from Mark, coinciding with John's more mundane foot anointing. Further, John's adding the detail of Judas's holding the money bag as a means of addressing the needs of the poor bolsters the virtuoso thrust of John's narrative. John's positive presentation of women also demonstrates genuine humanitarian concern, and addressing of the mother of Jesus as "woman" and entrusting her to the care of the Beloved Disciple furthers the thrust of virtuoso religion in kinship ways. In these ways, the presentation of Jesus as cultivating a caring, familial community among his followers and associates seems historically likely, and presentations of Jesus's concerns for the poor in the Synoptics are supported in John by these and other corroborative impressions.

A fourth contribution within part 2 involves the distinctive signs of Jesus in John 2–11. Udo Schnelle analysis of the seven signs of Jesus in John 2–11 suggests that the Evangelist draws two of them from the Synoptics and the others from independent traditions reflecting the influence of contemporary religious parallels. Thus, John's miracles represent the historically correct ministry of Jesus as a healer and a worker of wonders, although the external particulars of these five miracles cannot be confirmed. Important, though, is their theological function within the narrative. They demonstrate the Son's relation to the Father, point to the Passion of Jesus, and reveal the glory of Christ in the physicality of their expression. In that sense, they are physical demonstrations of divine grace, connecting literary, theological, and historical interests within the Johannine narrative. Gary Burge highlights the grounded character of the two healings by the pools in Jerusalem as presented in John 5 and 9. Given that the twin pools of Bethsaida and the second Pool of Siloam are confirmed by archaeological finds within recent years, their descriptions in John are not features of theology but historical memory. The wedding miracle, dialogues with Nicodemus and the Samaritan woman, and the Festival of Tabernacles all confirm regional concerns for ritual purity, confirming their contextual basis in historical Palestine and the sociological realities of the day. Therefore, while some of the packaging of Jesus's signs in John bears markers of contemporary religions, other features cohere with religious practices of the day in terms of critical realism.

In one of the most fascinating interdisciplinary essays in the collection, Jo-Ann Brant makes a fifth contribution to understanding the ministry of Jesus through the Johannine lens. Linking analyses of John the

Baptist's ministry extending into Samaria (Aenon near Salim), issues of ritual purity, and Jesus's engagement with the woman at the well, Brant heightens our sensitivities to some of the socioeconomic and geopolitical issues behind religious concerns, facilitating a fuller understanding of Jesus's words and works in all the Gospels. John the Baptist's water ministry in the wilderness thus challenged centralized and official venues of purification, emphasizing accessibility and moral rectitude as a protest. Given that Rome exercised control over running water within its imperial regions, Jesus's promise in both Jerusalem and Samaria to provide "living" water—pointing to God as the sole source of refreshment and purification—must have challenged Roman promises of provision and the instrumentality of empire. In these ways, the geopolitical implications of John's presentations of water issues not only facilitate a fuller understanding of Jesus ministry as presented in the Fourth Gospel, but they also illumine the works and ministry of Jesus in the Synoptic Gospels as well.

In responding to these essays, Merz engages them critically and analytically. On John the Baptist, Merz sides with Webb over Köstenberger on the witness motif, which serves a highly theological function, although she affirms both scholars' points on followers of the Baptist likely or certainly being among the first followers of Jesus. Overall, she appreciates the use of new criteria for determining historicity, although she is less willing to harmonize John and the Synopsics than is Kösternberger, inferring some contradiction rather than corroboration. Merz challenges the certainty of Humphreys's dating of the crucifixion in John and sees two temple incidents as highly unlikely. She also challenges McLaren's basis for assuming that all temple challenges would have been dealt with swiftly and directly, in capital ways. After all, it is Josephus Flavius whose voice we have, here, and given his pro-Roman interest in writing the histories of the Jews and their costly wars, his invested bias cannot be overlooked. On community, miracles, and water, Merz cautions our authors to be mindful also of the *Sitz im Leben* of the Johannine tradition. Therefore, virtuoso-communal features of John's narrative must be viewed within contextual settings of the Johannine situation, possibly reflecting earlier traditional memory, but not necessarily so. On the other hand, Merz considers the contributions of Schnelle and Burge as historical treatments of the works of Jesus *par excellence*. Among other things, Jesus's having performed healings and delivered teachings in Jerusalem near the pools of Bethsaida and Siloam can be taken as likely, although Brant's connect-

ing the geopolitics of water in the region with Jesus's claiming to provide "living water" seems to Merz more tenuous.

In sum, a fair amount of the Johannine account informs a fuller understanding of the works and ministry of Jesus considerably, including apparent corroborations and disjunctions.

Glimpses of the Words of Jesus through the Johannine Lens

Interestingly, the most difficult of subjects, the words and message of Jesus as glimpsed through the Johannine lens, still yields a variety of results contributed by the essays in the present volume. First, Steve Graham points to the number of Aramaisms and Hebraisms evident within the Johannine narrative, at times within the speech of Jesus. Rather than seeing these data as indicators of an Aramaic source, contra earlier interpreters, Graham sees them as features connecting the speech of Jesus (*Kēphas* and *Siloam*) or earlier Jesus traditions (*Rabbi*, *Rabbouni*, *Messias*, *Bethzatha*, *Gabbatha*, *Golgotha*) with their later developments within the Johannine narrative. Sometimes the earlier Jewish diction is translated, and Jewish customs are likewise explained, for later Hellenistic audiences. This shows the cross-cultural reach of the Johannine narrative. The feature of Semitic terms translated into Greek is also common to Mark, although Matthew and Luke generally omit such details. This Johannine-Markan commonality may suggest contact with primitive oral traditions underlying these narratives, though independently so.

A second contribution in the present volume shows a similarity of form between the sayings of Jesus in the Synoptics and John, in that in addition to long, drawn-out discourses, the speech of John's Jesus also includes short, pithy, agrarian aphorisms. Interestingly, while such features were markers of Jesus-sayings used by the Jesus Seminar and New Quest scholars, these types of sayings in John continue to be omitted from databases of plausible or likely Jesus sayings by such scholars. Noting at least twenty-six aphorisms in John that fit the characteristic form of Jesus sayings, Linda McKinnish Bridges performs a close analysis of John 4:35, where Jesus calls people to lift their eyes to the harvest, seeing that the fields are ripe, an invitation to the Samaritan mission. Given parallels in Matthew and Luke, this saying meets several established criteria for determining historicity: multiple sources, developing tradition, modification, coherence, plausible tradition history, and hermeneutical potential. It also comes close to meeting several other criteria, so even by standard crite-

ria for determining historicity, many of John's Jesus sayings should not be excluded from sayings attributed to Jesus as recent scholars have done. This exposes striking inconsistencies within historical-Jesus scholarship regarding factual approaches to evidence and standing criteria for determining historicity when applied to the Synoptics over and against John.

A third contribution by essays in this section evaluates similarities of theme between the Synoptics and John, performing comparisons and contrasts in ways analytical. Jörg Frey notes that, despite the strong likelihood that the language of Jesus was closer to the speech of the Synoptic Jesus than the Johannine Jesus, some parallels are still worth noting. While the Jesus portrayed in the Synoptics speaks extensively about the kingdom of God, this theme is only mentioned in one section in John: the dialogue between Jesus and Nicodemus in John 3. Such a dearth of kingdom sayings in John makes it hard to imagine that the words of Jesus are represented reliably in John. Rather, teachings attributed to Jesus by the Johannine Evangelist reflect his adapted representations of Jesus within the Johannine situation. Nonetheless, an interesting parallel between requirements for entering the kingdom of God appears in John and the Synoptics. In Matt 18, one can only enter the kingdom if one comes as a child. In John 3, one can only enter the kingdom if born anew from above. Two christological features are also evident in John's developments of this theme: the kingdom of God is supplanted by the kingdom of Jesus as the Christ (John 18), and John's Jesus expands extensively on the result of entering the kingdom: believers receive eternal life. The Evangelist's transformation of Jesus-language as represented in the Synoptics, though, is not accidental or unexplained. It is reflected in the final discourses of Jesus in John 14–16, who reminds his followers that the Holy Spirit will bring to mind Jesus's teachings in ways that allow them to retell the story in ways more befitting their historical situation than historical accuracy with reference to the language of Jesus.

Similarities of theme, albeit accompanied by distinctive Johannine presentations of Jesus's teachings, are contributed by Jan van der Watt's analysis of Jesus's teachings. Themes of sacrificial commitment to Jesus and his community are shared between John and the Synoptics, although the particular diction of laying down one's life for one's friends is more Hellenistic than Jewish. Therefore, the thrust of Jesus's teachings in John on this theme fits well with the sort of thing Jesus would have said, especially on the love motif, although the Johannine rendering likely reflects a contextual adaptation by the evangelist. William Loader's treatment of Jesus's teachings on good news for the poor performs a similar analysis, as

this theme seems entirely missing from the Gospel of John. However, just because John's rendering is largely silent on caring for the poor explicitly, if social marginalization had economic consequences, the healings of Jesus in John must be seen as addressing also their economic condition meaningfully. Further, loving one's own in community, as admonished in 1 John, involved caring materially for the needy within one's community. And, Judas's custody of a common purse in John's narrative—used for supporting the needy materially—contributes a fuller picture of Jesus and the poor historically, over and against the Synoptics. Especially if welcoming the poor into community, accompanied by remembering the Lord's commandments to love one another, Jesus's bringing good news to the poor is not as absent from John's narrative as literalistic scholars might have inferred. Therefore, caution must be exercised before claiming John's silence on a particular theme or subject.

A fourth contribution of the present study toward understanding the message of Jesus involves several studies that offer new means of analysis introducing text-development approaches to John in the light of interdisciplinary memory theory. Building on his massive study on the Lord's sayings in John, Michael Theobald applies memory theory to John's updating, or reconfiguring, Synoptic-background Jesus sayings in similar-yet-distinctive ways as *metatexts*. Like Luke's and Matthew's adaptations of Mark, or the Gospel of Thomas's updating of Synoptic sayings of Jesus, we also see evidence of John's transformation of earlier Johannine themes intratraditionally, which implies also the transformation of Synoptic-tradition sayings intertraditionally. Theobald gives several examples of this feature in John, including entering the kingdom, the prophet without honor, keeping and losing one's life, the messengers/servants and their reception, answered prayers "in the name of" Jesus, and the forgiveness of sins. Likewise, such dominical sayings as the gathering of Israel, casting-out themes, and wisdom motifs show continuity and discontinuity between Jesus sayings in the Synoptics and in John. Such themes as the Son of Man, the door/gate, and Jesus's addressing God as "Father" also carry over between the Synoptics and John. Here the prayer of Jesus in John 17 expresses in fuller detail major elements of the prayer Jesus taught his disciples as presented in Matthew and Luke. Yet, as with the other parallel themes, the newly rendered Johannine presentation of Jesus's words speaks to the later Johannine situation—especially addressing Jewish-Johannine tensions—in relevant, updated ways. This is the sort of renovated history John's words of Jesus represent.

A similar approach to Theobald's is that of R. Alan Culpepper, who identifies kernel sayings, or maxims, remembered by Jesus's followers in the Johannine tradition, leading to restatement, interpretation, and application within the emerging Johannine situation. Moving from the known to the more speculative, Culpepper notes John's modifications of Old Testament texts and themes also found in the Synoptics. He then applies these observations to the identification of core sayings within the Johannine narrative, which appear to be interpreted and expanded upon by the evangelist. Fourteen of these maxims are identifiable as core sayings within the Johannine tradition (though may go back to Synoptic-like Jesus tradition; see John 5:19; 10:1-5; 12:24), and they are here introduced and developed as a means of addressing concerns within the Johannine situation. Significant within this analysis is that it shows a critical methodology whereby earlier traditional material not found in the Synoptics might be identified as being developed and reworked in the Johannine situation, while still casting light upon the historic message of Jesus, refracted though it be.

A fifth contribution of the present volume is that it contributes valuable insights as to the sense of prophetic agency Jesus may have embraced, couched in primitive Jewish terminology. While the Johannine Prologue clearly reflects the worship material of early Christianity, "Son of Man" as a christological title never occurs in New Testament worship material. Other than the witness of Stephen in Acts 7, the term only appears in the language of Jesus about himself, so it deserves attention in the quest for Jesus's words and message, as Benjamin Reynolds argues. On this score, John's presentation corroborates distinctively Synoptic renderings of Jesus as the Son of Man who predicts his death, who will be thereby glorified on the cross, and who brings salvation to the world. Particular in John's presentation is Jesus's question to the formerly blind man as to whether he believes in the Son of Man (John 9:35). This may indicate an understanding of the agency of the Son of Man within contemporary Judaism, bearing implications for understanding the mission of Jesus as presented in Johannine and Synoptic traditions as an apocalyptic figure under the sway of a divine commission.

Another agency motif in the Gospel of John is the prophet-like-Moses schema rooted in Deut 18:15-22. Peder Borgen here contributes an analysis of this motif in John 5-9, providing the key to understanding the Father-Son relationship in the Fourth Gospel. Following the healing of people on the Sabbath in Jerusalem, Jesus legitimates his actions on the basis of having been commissioned by the Father. Whereas Jewish lead-

ers cite Moses as the basis for Sabbath observance, Jesus cites Moses as predicting a prophet who would act not on his own volition but only upon the basis of what God instructs. The fact that Jesus's words come true in John's narrative shows that he is indeed the authentic prophet predicted by Moses, and thus his teaching is to be equated with that of the Father. The Father-Son relationship in John's narrative is thus rooted in a Jewish agency schema rather than Platonic ontological assertions of being. The likelihood that the Mosaic agency typology bore messianic associations in Galilee is suggested by the crowd's wanting to rush Jesus off and make him a prophet-king like Moses in John 6:14–15. Thus, Jesus may have understood himself in these terms during his ministry, which also may have led to charges of blasphemy. Therefore, a more contextual perspective on the Father-Son relationship in John provides insights into Jesus's earth-bound ministry as well as appreciations for how christological appropriations of such subjects may have developed.

In his responses to these essays, James Dunn affirms the importance of challenging the nineteenth-century disparaging of John's historical value and place at the table in the quest for Jesus, although he maintains the Synoptic witness as the primary go-to resource. In his analysis, he affirms the likelihood that Bridges may have discovered in John 4:35 an actual saying going back to the teachings of Jesus, but he challenges the operations of the Jesus Seminar and others who limit the words of Jesus to "single anecdotes and one-liners." This reflects the musings of twentieth-century academicians rather than a "historically informed picture of the earliest Christian teaching and exhortation." Dunn sees Culpepper's identification as a valuable way forward in discerning primitive maxims, or core sayings of Jesus, developing within the Johannine tradition, even if not replicated in the Synoptics. Likewise, Theobald helps account for development within the living Johannine tradition, seeing paraphrases as metatexts, although certainty that a particular saying goes back to Jesus remains elusive. Graham's work indeed features some Aramaic elements that may go back to the speech of Jesus, or primitive memory about his ministry, but their historical significance is modest. While Dunn questions some of the specific language going back to Jesus, he affirms Borgen's central thesis that the Mosaic prophet motif in John supports the view that the divine agency schema in John is rooted in memories of the historical Jesus's characterization of his own mission.

Dunn concurs with Frey's skepticism about preferring John above the Synoptics, although he does not see that great a difference between

being spiritually born anew (John 3:3–6) and coming to Jesus as a child (Matt 18:3). Keeping in mind what John was doing, though, shows how the Johannine focus on eternal life may have developed as a transposition of futuristic views of the kingdom of God in emphasizing its present reality. Reynolds's treatment of the Son of Man in John has a lot going for it, according to Dunn. As a motif cohering with Jesus as the Messiah and Son of the Father, John 9:35 suggests that this was a primitive way of conceiving of Jesus's divinely authorized mission, although asserting more than that remains elusive. Regarding Loader's essay on the fact that Jesus's concern for the poor in the Synoptics seems to have gone missing in John, Dunn concurs that not much can ever be inferred from silence. On the other hand, given the explicit concern for the needs of the poor in 1 John 3:17 and the emphasis on caring for one another in community, Dunn affirms Loader's conclusion that John's narrative indeed calls for caring for the poor, but it does so in distinctive, Johannine terms. Likewise, Dunn concurs with van der Watt that the saying attributed to Jesus in John 15:13 that there is no greater love than to lay down one's life for one's friends represents a Hellenistic saying rather than a Jewish one and that it cannot thus be attributed to Jesus of Nazareth. On the other hand, the fact that it coheres with similar themes represented also in the Synoptics seems to reflect the gist of Jesus's teachings, even if rendered in a Hellenistic paraphrase. Dunn concludes his review by asserting again his judgment that while the Synoptics provide the primary basis for understanding the teachings and message of Jesus, the Gospel of John is still "of immense value to students inquiring about the historical Jesus and asking how Jesus was actually remembered in the earliest days of Christianity."

Thus, while rooted in historical memory, we also see within the Johannine tradition a great deal of creativity and adaptation of that memory in service to the needs of the early Christian movement.

Reflections, Projections, and Grinding New Lenses

In reflecting upon the contributions made by the above essays, several observations follow, pointing to further work to be done if a fully inclusive quest for the Jesus of history is to be pursued. Again, such a venture will be more difficult if the Gospel of John is added to the mix of historical resources for understanding more fully the historical ministry of Jesus of Nazareth, but ease is not the goal of critical inquiry. Rather, the critical inadequacy of sidestepping the most distinctive of the canonical Gospels

requires a new set of approaches to the issues. The question is how to do so. Perhaps a few reflections on the above essays will provide a place to begin.

Reflections upon Recent Approaches to the Issues

As nearly all of the essays suggest, the Gospel of John, while different from the Synoptics and highly theological in places, still has a great deal to contribute to the historical quest for Jesus. Questions regarding John's historical value, however, revolve around the foundational question as to whether John's tradition represents a self-standing historical memory of Jesus and his ministry. If not, does John depend upon the Synoptics or a set of other sources, or does it reflect a theological historicization of deeply held beliefs? None of the above essays assumes the latter view, as the character of John's material makes such a stance critically untenable.

However, an interesting difference can be noted between scholars assuming John's overall dependence upon the Synoptics and those inferring an independent tradition or John's use of a Signs Gospel or another set of non-Synoptic sources. North, for instance, argues that because John is dependent upon the Synoptics, it offers no new historical content, though she fails to include the distinctive features of John—about 85 percent of its narrative—in her assessment. Fortna, on the other hand, believes that because the Fourth Evangelist has made use of an independent source, and this increases the likelihood that John's material—even when parallel to the Synoptics—is largely historical in its character and origin. Of course, both of these views hinge upon the belief that there was no autonomous Johannine tradition to begin with, but this view is not shared by most of the contributors to this volume.

A difficulty in confirming the historicity of any of John's distinctive material, though, is precisely that fact. Material found only in John has no external means of verification, so it cannot be confirmed independently. This fact, however, does not prove the material is not historical. It simply means that its historicity cannot be confirmed with certainty. Again, not confirmedly historical does not imply confirmedly not historical. It is this fallacy of logic and its overstated implications that have thwarted the tenability of John's place within the first three quests for Jesus more than anything else. Put otherwise, positivism of verification (only what is confirmedly historical is allowed on the table of historical reconstruction) is not matched by its corollary, positivism of falsification (unless something

is confirmedly nonhistorical it cannot be taken off the table of historical reconstruction). Of course, the problem here may be the resorting to positivism itself, to begin with, which in its reductionism ceases to be nuanced and inclusive in the venture of historical inquiry. If these same standards were applied to other fields of ancient historiography—say, even Roman histories—very little of Josephus's accounts or those of the emperors' lives would be regarded as historical.

Rather, a more nuanced and modest approach to seeking glimpses of Jesus, rather than making overly bold claims of historical certainty, may be the most fruitful way to proceed overall. This is true when considering canonical and noncanonical sources alike, and it is along these lines that the above essays make their most valuable contributions. If similar-yet-different parallels between two or more Gospel traditions are found, this may suggest a feature's historicity in ways plausible, at least. If observations regarding how John's narrator treats other known sources, such as Old Testament passages or Synoptic features, inferences can be made as to whether Johannine passage reflects a core memory or saying that has been built upon within John's later developing tradition or not. If an account in John is found to be totally distinctive, or in disjunctive tension with some aspect of Mark or the other Synoptics, it could be accidental, or it could reflect a dialectical engagement with one or more of the other gospel traditions.

Therefore, considering the varying types of similarities and differences between John and the Synoptics provides an important place to begin within the present venture, requiring at least a new set of inductive analyses.

Jesus in Johannine and Synoptic Perspective

When considering John alongside the Synoptics, several categories of information emerge. First, *material included in the Synoptics but not in John* raises major questions as to why the lack of overlap between parallel treatments of their same subject, Jesus. Of course, argument from silence is an especially weak basis for assuming anything, so not too much can be made of such facts. For instance, it cannot be assumed that the Gospel of John is not historical because it fails to include exorcisms of Jesus, healings of lepers and women, parabolic teachings on the kingdom, or the institution of the Eucharist at the Last Supper. After all, John's narrator may have sought to be nonduplicative (note the Elder's critique of Mark's duplications according to Papias, Anderson 2013b). Could it be that Matthew and

Luke built upon Mark, but John built around Mark? John 20:30–31 and 21:25 seem to suggest such an augmentive and nonduplicative interest; so, assuming Johannine ahistoricity is not the only way to interpret these facts.

Rather, several of the present essays actually make advances along these lines, showing how features in the Synoptics are presented in ways similar-yet-distinctive in John. Might such alternative presentations of similar features offer a corroborative perspective in ways that provide independent accounts of particular features of Jesus's ministry? For instance, John's fuller treatment of the relation between the Baptist and Jesus helps set the stage for the more terse presentations in the Synoptics. The sorts of signs performed by Jesus in John cohere with those performed by Jesus in the Synoptics. The sequence of events during the last days of Jesus in John coheres overall with the same in the Synoptics. Rather than focusing on the kingdom of God, Jesus's teachings in John focus on the king and the result of entry into the kingdom, that is, eternal life. Agrarian images and terms used by the Synoptic Jesus are also found in John, albeit in distinctively developed ways. Jesus's concern for the poor in the Synoptics can be discerned in John's emphasis on loving one another in community. The rejection of the son of the vineyard owner by the tenants in Mark 12 is developed distinctively in John's Mosaic-agency schema. Finally, Jesus's partnership with family and friends who understand and carry forth his mission is common to the Synoptics and John, despite the Hellenistic rendering of the theme in the Johannine Prologue.

If paraphrase—putting a learning into one's own words instead of quoting it verbatim—is a marker of authentic understanding, perhaps this is the sort of history—not just theology—we have in John. As in the Synoptics, John conveys interpretive presentations of Jesus's ministry rather than rote-memory representations. Therefore, in limiting historical memory to exact quotations only, rather than allowing it to include the adaptation of earlier understandings to emerging situations, perhaps John's historical contribution has been missed precisely because of misjudging the sort of history it claims to be. Letting John be John is imperative for understanding adequately its theological content as well as its literary and historical character.

A second feature of comparing John and the Synoptics, though, includes the many *parallels and similarities* between these traditions. Despite the many differences, Jesus's ministry begins in Galilee and with finality culminates in Jerusalem. Jesus performs healings on the Sabbath—perhaps even as an act of provocation, challenging Sabbath regulations in the name of God's larger intention, and he disrupts the temple—driving

out animals and money changers. In so doing, Jesus furthers the prophetic work of John the Baptist, as their ministries overlapped in several ways. In addition to healings and other signs, Jesus also feeds the multitude and calms the sea in John, showing parallels with the Synoptics. John and Luke both include a great catch of fish. In John, Matthew, and Luke, Jesus performs a healing from afar in Capernaum. In John and Mark, the anointing of Jesus is set in Bethany, although in Mark and Matthew it is a head anointing, while in John and Luke it is a foot anointing. Challenges by religious authorities, especially in Jerusalem, accompany the ministry of Jesus, and a final trip to Jerusalem is momentous in both sets of traditions. The final days of Jesus in Jerusalem show an even greater number of similarities between John and the Synoptics, from Jesus's entry to Jerusalem to his death and burial. In terms of general and particular items in the ministry of Jesus, John's story corroborates a good number of the sort of things Jesus did and what happened to him.

Fascinating within a comparison/contrast between the sayings of Jesus in John and the Synoptics is the additional fact that many similarities are apparent regarding general themes and emphases, while the language used differs. These macro-themes include the transcendent work of God over and above political and religious institutional venues; an emphasis on love, God's love for humanity and humans' love for God, neighbors, enemies, and one another; the guidance and transformative work of the Holy Spirit, especially available to those undergoing trial; the way of the cross advocated in all four Gospels, being willing to suffer for one's faith if required by the truth; and the call to faith and responsiveness, being willing to follow Jesus faithfully as partners in his ministry. While John's language is different from the Synoptics along these lines, many coherences of theme are nonetheless discernible.

Conversely, in over two-dozen instances, similar sayings between John and the Synoptics are notable, while their places and functions within the narratives are different. For instance, common between John and Mark and other traditions are references to Jesus's speaking of such phrases as destroying the temple, the prophet's being without honor in his hometown, picking up one's mat and walking, Jesus's saying "I am" at the sea-crossing and elsewhere, seeing and hearing but not understanding, the poor being always present, the paradoxical mission of the Son of Man, finding and losing one's life, the "hour" of Jesus, the importance of serving others, asking and receiving, Jesus's drinking the "cup" before him, and Jesus's having taught openly in the temple. Common to John, Matthew,

and Luke are Jesus's references to the Father's and Son's mutual knowledge, the relation between a disciple or servant and one's master, the idea that to receive the agent is to receive the sender, and the command to put away the sword. Common between Matthew and John is Jesus's reference to the light of the world, and common between Luke and John is Jesus's declaring peace to his followers—among other themes. Are these similar-yet-different themes accidental, or do they reflect intertraditional contact? Or, might they even indicate common historical rootedness in distinctive memories of the Gospels' common subject, Jesus? Their individuated character makes literary-dependence derivation less likely, critically.

Again, while similarities and parallels abound when John and the Synoptics are placed side-by-side, few if any overlap for more than a few words, and even similar phrases are presented differently within the narratives. What these phenomena may point to is the multiplicity of ways that perception, memory, and development functioned within and between Gospel traditions. It would be a mistake to assume that the totality, or even the majority, of traditional memories of Jesus and his ministry are fully represented in the four canonical Gospels. As Dunn argues, one of the greatest contributions of this sort of analysis is that it sheds light on the historical process of memory development within Gospel traditions. Thus, understanding their history may be every bit as important as achieving a fuller understanding of the Jesus of history within this field of inquiry.

A third result of comparing and contrasting John with the Synoptics is that some differences and disjunctions between these traditions force a choice between them. Did Jesus travel to Jerusalem only once during his ministry, or did he attend pilgrimage festivals several times a year, as observant Jewish leaders would have done? Did Jesus's ministry involve only one Passover, or did it span at least three paschal festivals? Was the Last Supper a Passover meal, implying the crucifixion took place on the Passover, or did the Last Supper and the crucifixion take place the day before the Passover? Was Jesus sentenced at nine o'clock in the morning, or did a number of other events take place before his sentencing, making noon a more plausible inference? Did Jesus's ministry start up after John had been imprisoned, or did he minister alongside the Baptist for some time? Did Jesus's followers primarily include men, or were women also numbered among his close associates? If one sides with the second of any of the above options, one affirms John's historicity over and against the Synoptics.

However, did Jesus speak primarily about himself with long, drawn-out “I am” sayings, or did he teach with terse, pithy parables about the kingdom of God? Did Jesus cast out demons, or did religious leaders simply question whether he was possessed? Did Jesus call twelve disciples, or did a few of them simply defect from John the Baptist to follow Jesus? Did Jesus get arrested a few days after the disturbance in the temple, or was it several years later? Did Jesus teach people to love their neighbors and enemies, or did he focus on loving one another? Did Jesus institute a meal of remembrance at the Last Supper, or did he wash his disciples feet and call them to serve one another? If one sides with any of the first of these options, one affirms the Synoptics’ historicity over and against John’s.

Of course, John’s differences with the Synoptics could be a factor of ignorance—two traditions developing in their own ways independently or only with partial knowledge of the other—or it could represent alternative renderings with intentionality—Mark or John may have engaged the other tradition dialectically, or even correctively. The point here is that John’s alternative rendering of Jesus’s ministry may be different for theological reasons, but not necessarily so. It could (or, some parts of it could) have developed in a distinctive trajectory without complete knowledge of other traditions as a factor of autonomy and intertraditional innocence, or it could have developed as an intentionally distinctive presentation of Jesus’s ministry for historical reasons. Once more, judgments regarding John’s historicity hinge upon one’s view of John’s composition and its relations to the Synoptics, especially Mark. So, if John was familiar with a narrated form of Mark, at least some of John’s departures may have been for historical reasons, not primarily theological ones. John’s relations to Matthew, Luke, and hypothetical Q, of course, must be judged on their own terms, as well. Further, influence may have moved in more than one direction.

A fourth feature of comparison and contrasts between John and the Synoptics actually involves the majority (about 85 percent) of John’s narrative: distinctive material within the Johannine narrative. It is on this issue that the criterion of multiple attestation is most egregiously prone to error. If John or Matthew or Luke includes *anything* distinctive, even because of historical knowledge or opinion, it is mechanically expunged from the database of historical information. That being the case, why not exclude all of Mark also, especially if Mark was the first Gospel to be gathered and written? Thus, none of its material would have stood the test of multiple attestation before the other Gospels were written. Further, if Matthew and Luke improved upon and expanded upon Mark, plausibly for historical

as well as theological reasons, multiple attestation excludes their distinctive contributions, even if they were based upon historical knowledge or opinion. Therefore, while John's distinctive material cannot be confirmed laterally—by definition—the character of its historicity must be judged on other bases.

In terms of phenomenology, five of John's signs are distinctive and not found in Mark or the other Synoptics. Jesus's first disciples leave John the Baptist and become followers of Jesus. Jesus visits Jerusalem and engages Nicodemus, a religious leader, who later stands up for Jesus amidst his detractors and finally assists with his burial. Jesus travels through Samaria, and in addition to ministering to the woman at the well, stays a few days, and Samaritans come to believe in Jesus. The offense of Jesus's healings on the Sabbath in Jerusalem causes a great deal of upheaval among the religious leaders, leading to their planning to put him to death. Following debates over the law of Moses, Jesus defends his actions and teachings by asserting divine authorization, thus claiming to fulfill the prophet-like-Moses typology. Jesus visits Jerusalem at least four times, especially during festivals. Jesus is known among the family of Lazarus, and the woman performing the anointing of Jesus is named: Mary of Bethany. Caiaphas and the chief priests worry that the Romans will exact a backlash against the populace as crowds begin following Jesus. Philip introduces Greeks to Jesus. Jesus washes his disciples' feet. The relation between Caiaphas and Annas is mentioned, accounting for private consultations. Extended engagements with Pilate show his consternation over the crowd's having turned against Jesus. Women are at the cross, and the Mother of Jesus is entrusted to the care of the Beloved Disciple. Jesus is crucified with nails, and his side is pierced. A large quantity of spices is used to prepare Jesus's body for burial. Three appearances are narrated. The death of Peter is predicted. Finally, the death of the Beloved Disciple is referenced indirectly.

Given that John seems to have been produced for readers and hearers of Mark (with Bauckham 1998) and the acknowledgement that other written reports of Jesus's ministry are about (John 20:30), it could be that John is different from Mark on purpose. If John 6 and 21 were added later (with Lindars), the five miracles in John's first edition, or stage of composition, are precisely the ones not included in Mark. Further (with Bultmann and Fortna), these signs functioned to show Jesus to be the Jewish Messiah, and the five signs of Jesus cohere with the five books of Moses, perhaps accounting for some of the rhetorical selectivity involved. The later material, then, standardizes John's narrative with the other Gospels, adding

the feeding and the sea crossing, and Peter's role among the disciples is featured both in John 6 and 21. The adding of the Prologue and supplementary final-discourse material likely functioned to address a later set of issues as represented in the Johannine Epistles within the later Johannine situation.

In sum, material in John that coheres generally with Synoptic presentations of Jesus, especially when it does so in slightly different ways, offers a corroborative impression of Jesus's ministry. The material that offers a contrary presentation of Jesus and his ministry—in relation to Mark especially—forces a judgment in one direction or another. In some cases, the Markan rendering is historically preferable, but in other cases, the Johannine rendering is more plausible historically. The material that is distinctive to John appears to be augmenting Mark (at least), although its historicity cannot be confirmed externally. Nonetheless, working things out on the particulars poses the only way to proceed, and the essays in this volume have done exactly that.

On Grinding New Lenses and Revising our Methodological Criteria

In this new and inclusive quest for Jesus, new lenses must be ground for the attaining a more adequate set of glimpses of Jesus through the Johannine lens. Some of these have been described and recommended in the present volume, and some of our scholars have made use of them, though not all, as the choice is up to them. Also, other tools may need to be designed if John is to be included in the historical quest for Jesus in addition to noncanonical texts and references, as well as materials in the New Testament beyond the Gospels. Some of that work has already been furthered by members of the Jesus Seminar and others, but one of the most difficult questions is how to take John seriously within the venture. Therefore, grinding new lenses may pose a set of ways forward within the larger quest.

First, on *history and theology*, while the point is well taken that a theological investment may jeopardize historical objectivity, it is also a fact that subjective perceptions of significance and meaning are invariably central to what is deemed to be historic and thus remembered as history. It cannot be otherwise. Because the Synoptics are historical as well as John, finding ways of exploring both history and theology in the quest for Jesus is essential in analyzing all gospel traditions, canonical and otherwise. On this point, a feature might worthily be questioned in terms of historicity, but that is not the same as establishing ahistoricity,

proper. Therefore, appreciating the Johannine perspective on a detail or scenario, perhaps in the light of parallel features in the Synoptics and the Johannine Epistles, will be helpful in the venture, although it must be kept in mind that any number of Gospel-tradition theological convictions may be the result of historical memory rather than a supplanting of it.

It could also be that first impressions of Jesus's words and deeds may have differed from day one and that theological impressions were early as well as late. This is why the underlying Markan tradition and the early Johannine tradition deserve to be regarded as bioptic perspectives on the ministry of Jesus and its meaning. Therefore, a cognitive-critical approach to these issues is also worthy of consideration in seeking to account for their differences and similarities. As emphases on the human suffering of Jesus appear to have been added by the final editor of John, emphases upon the humanity of Jesus are late as well as early. Therefore, aspects of John's high and low presentations of Jesus as the Christ are both early and late within the tradition, and a more nuanced approach to the issues is required in critical analysis. Thus, if the Prologue reflects a later addition to the narrative, its high-christological thrust should not be superimposed over ambiguous features of the narrative, so as to discount their mundane and theologically innocent thrust.

A second consideration is *the history of the Johannine situation*, as John's story of Jesus must be considered within its delivered history as well as its originative memory, however these may have developed. Note here that in furthering a presentation of Jesus as the Jewish Messiah/Christ, emphases upon his wonders and relation to the Father will have formed the backbone of the narrative's apologetic thrust. Therefore, the packaging of Jesus as fulfilling the typologies of Moses, Elijah, and other Jewish authorities must be seen as highly interpretive features of John's developing story of Jesus. Likewise, in challenging docetizing tendencies in the later Johannine situation, emphases upon Jesus's humanity, suffering, and fleshly incarnation will have comprised an important rhetorical thrust of John's presentation of Jesus of Nazareth. Rhetorical features alone, however, do not entirely eclipse the originative thrust of historical memory, but they do qualify the certainty with which claims are made regarding John's historical reliability.

A third field of inquiry involves *John's relations to the Synoptics, especially Mark*. Again, a facile error in Johannine-Synoptic studies is to assume that "the Synoptics" were readily accessible to the Johannine Evan-

gelist or others in the late first-century situation as a three-volume collection, when Gospel traditions were not formally gathered together for another half century or so. Even if intertraditional familiarity were a given, one cannot be certain that the completed Gospels as we have them now would have been accessible to any author when John's tradition was being formed and finalized. Most plausible within Johannine-Synoptic analysis is that the Fourth Evangelist was at least aware of Mark—perhaps as performed orally among the churches—which may have inspired an alternative account from Johannine perspective (with Mackay 2004). Later on, more extensive familiarity with other Gospel traditions is plausible, and it could even be the case that the authors of Luke, and perhaps Matthew or even Q, may have had access to the Johannine tradition; so, intertraditional dialogue deserves consideration along the way. Scholars vary in their approaches to these issues, but if John knew of Mark, at least some of John's differences may be intentional rather than accidental, problematic though such a possibility may be for traditional and critical scholars alike.

A fourth question involves criteria for determining Gospel historicity with John in the mix. Several of those criteria have been introduced or explored within the present volume, but more needs to be done along these lines. In particular, multiple attestation programmatically excludes John's material from consideration, even if it has a historical basis for its inclusion. Corroborative impression is a more fitting way to proceed, especially if John's material represents an independent Jesus tradition. Embarrassment and dissimilarity may isolate material that is unlikely to be invented, but a good deal of other worthy information is problematically excised. More fruitful is a focus on primitivity versus more developed presentations. Dogmatic naturalism can be as distortive as dogmatic supranaturalism. More serviceable is an approach operating along the lines of critical realism, taking note of socioreligious and political realities presented in the text. Coherence works well if it is open rather than closed, as circularity is an obvious weakness of such an approach. It should include John's independent tradition instead of ruling John's material out, because it does not cohere with multiply attested material. As these and other less Johannine-exclusionary criteria are put into play, a new day in historical Jesus studies will have begun.

Finally, upon these bases better judgments can be made in terms of nuanced and measured gradations of certainty. Rather than forcing a judgment between likely and unlikely inferences, a good number of issues are impossible to decide either way. Therefore, a middle category of "possible"

allows a noncommittal judgment to be made, given that the evidence on so many issues is incomplete. And, while “certainly so” and “certainly not” are critically elusive, “plausible” and “likely,” as well as “questionable” and “not likely,” serve the inquiry more effectively. Important within these categories, however, is for particular judgments to be accompanied by statements on why they are made, both in terms of reasoning and evidence. If scholars will perform such analyses, stating clearly also their reasoned bases, our inquiry will stand a much better chance of achieving some level of agreement over and against dissension.

In grinding new lenses for attaining glimpses of Jesus through the Johannine lens, new ways forward are opened in a more inclusive quest for Jesus, and within the present volume, these advances are already begun.

Projected Ways Forward in Launching a New Quest for Jesus

During the first of three public engagements with Marcus Borg at Reedwood Friends Church in Portland, Oregon on “The Gospels and Jesus in Bi-Optic Perspective” in May 2010, Professor Borg surprised me at the beginning of our open discussion, saying something like this: “Okay, Paul,” said Borg, “*What if* John were the only Gospel written by an eyewitness? What difference would that make? Would it simply give us a view of several trips to and from Jerusalem, or would it contribute anything significant to what Jesus scholars have already been coming up with for some time now?”

The first part of his comment took me completely by surprise. It made me wonder if Marcus Borg had been thinking of John’s tradition as an independent Jesus tradition all along, perhaps even based upon eyewitness memory, or whether he was simply being gracious in allowing such a possibility. I responded with something like this: “Well, I don’t really care what the results of the inquiry might be. I just feel that if all worthy sources are going to be used, the Gospel of John ought to be drawn into the mix. Then again, a portrayal of Jesus emphasizing authentic spirituality, welcoming women among his closest followers, and being more informal than institutional in developing an early movement within Judaism seems significant. And, these sorts of themes could be highly significant in understanding more fully the Jesus of history and his mission, not simply the Christ of faith” (see Anderson 2010b).

Sadly, Professor Borg passed away two winters ago. His good work and fellowship will be deeply missed. While the Jesus Seminar worked rigor-

ously under a reductionist agenda, producing a bare minimum of data about the words and works of Jesus by means of using particular methodologies as explored by a particular group of seminar fellows and associates, the John, Jesus, and History Project operates more inclusively in its interests, seeking to identify what material in John might be worthy of historical consideration in the larger quest for Jesus. As Johannine studies over the last several decades have focused on a variety of theological and literary issues, interest in the second levels of history, or the historical Johannine situation, these worthy approaches to John's narrative have somewhat eclipsed inquiry into the first levels of history: John's impressions of Jesus, his ministry, and his message. Building upon the advances made in the first three triennia of our project, further work to be done includes addressing several of the issues raised in the present volume, and these have formed the backbone of our inquiry in the interim. Here the language used by Dunn, "Jesus remembered," serves well this inclusive approach to John, Jesus, and history.

First, analyses of *Jesus remembered within the Johannine tradition* are essential for exploring the origin, character, and development of the Johannine tradition. While the completed version of John as we have it is important to take seriously in its entirety, some development can be seen within the Johannine tradition. Earlier impressions are adjusted in the light of later consciousness. Editorial asides explain features for later audiences. The final editor references the apparent death of the Gospel's author. A worship hymn somewhat similar to the beginning of the first Johannine Epistle introduces the narrative before its finalized circulation. Repetitions and variations suggest some development between oral and written traditions. An apparent first ending in John 20:31 is followed by an apparent addition. And these are just a few of John's riddles and aporias. While later material need not imply less accurate impressions of Jesus historically, the noting of intratraditional dialogue within the Johannine tradition serves well the task of distinguishing more primitive memories of Jesus from later. Even if the message or ministry of Jesus is paraphrased in more distinctively Johannine language, its overall gist may nonetheless inform one's view of Jesus in Johannine perspective.

A second set of issues to be assessed critically involves *Jesus remembered intertraditionally*, between John and the other Gospel traditions. As the present collection shows, one of the most crucial questions in discerning whether or not John has anything historically worthy to contribute to Jesus research is the question of John's relation to Mark. Were the two

traditions independent? Did one build on or borrow from the other? Was there some cross-influence, or interfluence, between oral stages of these traditions? If the Johannine evangelist was familiar with Mark, either in written or oral form—perhaps hearing Mark, or some version of Mark, performed among the churches—might that explain why John is similar to and different from Mark? Of course, more than one type of intertraditional relationship might have characterized the Johannine-Markan relationship, so some combination of contacts and relationships may also have been the case. Regarding Matthew and Luke, different sets of evidence emerge. Here questions revolve around the issues of whether material in these traditions and John reflects John's familiarity with them or their familiarity with John. Also, hypothetical Q as a resource also bears some similarities with John that require consideration.

A third set of issues involves *Jesus remembered within the Johannine situation*. Given at least one change of setting, moving from Palestine to a diaspora setting somewhere within the Gentile mission, how does an evolving historical situation affect the ways Jesus was remembered and represented in the Johannine narrative? Given that the language and concerns of the Johannine Gospel bear a strong resemblance to those represented in the Johannine Epistles, this surely must have influenced John's presentation of Jesus. Earlier situation-dialogues likely included engagements with followers of John the Baptist and Jewish leaders in Judea and Jerusalem. Following the Roman invasion of the region between 66 and 73 CE and the likely translocation of the Johannine leadership, other situational dialogues likely included engagements with local Jewish leaders in a diaspora setting, local representatives of the Roman imperial presence, docetizing Christian ministers who traveled among the churches, and institution-constructing leaders within the larger Christian movement. Some of these sociological tensions were internal to the Johannine community, while others impacted the Johannine situation from without. Either way, John's story of Jesus involved a steady stream of dialogues between Jesus's being remembered and the constructing of that memory in the service of addressing evolving crises and challenges within and around the historical Johannine situation (Anderson 1997, 2007c).

A fourth set of inquiries in exploring Jesus in Johannine perspective involves *establishing worthy criteria for determining historicity* in the quest for Jesus with the Fourth Gospel in the mix instead of being programmatically sidelined. Put otherwise, positivistic approaches to Jesus studies have emphasized only one side of the coin, not the other: verification

rather than falsification. In particular, movements within the field of historiography itself deserve to be employed within biblical studies in general, as nineteenth-century objectivism and infatuation with empiricism has dominated many historical-Jesus discussions, assuming what they claimed to prove: John's ahistoricity and irrelevance in the field of Jesus research. The point is that to question a claim, or to find it problematic, is not the same as establishing its falsity. It could be false, but unless such has been established, it ought not to be asserted. Particularly helpful would be an inventory of ancient Jewish and Greco-Roman approaches to historiography, seeking to identify the historical character of the Johannine witness within the conventional genres of historiography in its contemporary environment (Attridge 1976, 1984). Therefore, while distinctive elements of John's account of Jesus and his ministry might be impossible to establish with certainty, or even with robust likelihood, some of them still might be considered plausible, or possible. Even somewhat questionable features might inform the venture somewhat if they corroborate an impression of Jesus's ministry as recorded in the Synoptics.

A fifth set of inquiries in this new phase of the historical quest of Jesus in the modern era must involve a *generous and inclusive portraiture*, rather than a reductionist imaging of Jesus. Even if "at least" 18 percent of the material in the Gospels represents worthy information about Jesus,¹ the problem with constructing a portrait of Jesus from that material only is that it will invariably render a distorted portraiture. If the nose and left ear of a subject is well represented by an artist to the exclusion of less certain features, the representation would be more surreal than real. It would be a distorted portraiture rather than an adequate one. Therefore, a better approach for historically reconstructed portraiture is more of an impressionistic approach, including features that might not be exact in their replication but more suggestive in their function. On this score, the Gospel of John may yet provide invaluable texturing when compared with the Synoptics, increasing the dimensionality of portraits of Jesus even if Jesus remembered in the Johannine tradition carries with it interpretive aspects of its development.²

1. This is the language used by Borg in his response to my *Quaker Religious Thought* analysis of the quest for the Jesus of history and the history of recent quests (Borg 2002; Anderson 2000, 2002).

2. An interesting fact, of course, is that all five of the leading portraits of Jesus (adding apocalyptic to Borg's [1994] four other images of Jesus resulting from the

A fascinating way forward along these lines might be to compare and contrast emerging portraits of Jesus based on other traditions and materials and the Johannine witness. Jesus in John is certainly presented as a prophet-like-Moses figure, speaking God's truth in socially conscious ways. He certainly challenges religious institutions and political authorities in keeping with the Cynics of the day but in largely Jewish terms. He speaks wisdom and teaches direct access to divine instruction and even embodies wisdom from above. He comes across as a holy person associated with epiphanic encounters. He speaks of himself as an apocalyptic emissary, the Son of Man with a mission from on high. The mistake, though, would be to view any of these portraits of Jesus in first-century traditions as a totality of impression, to the exclusion of other features. Therefore, an open and inclusive approach to Jesus-portraiture will be less prone to error than disjunctive, narrow sketches.

The last six years within the John, Jesus, and History Project have explored programmatically all of these advances in the quest for Jesus in Johannine perspective, and we appreciate greatly the ways that leading scholars internationally have contributed to the inquiry. As Jesus research continues to find ways of exploring all worthy resources meaningfully, a new phase in the historical quest for Jesus is already begun. We see, however, through a glass darkly, as Paul puts in 1 Cor 13, and this is true of any critical venture of historical inquiry. So, while our vision is always limited in its capacity, perhaps grinding new lenses, and viewing our subject in new perspective pose an assist in the venture. For indeed, while fullness of sight eludes us, at least the present volume grants us a good number of glimpses of Jesus through the Johannine lens. In that sense, just as the second volume in the John, Jesus, and History series challenged critically the dehistoricization of John, elucidating multiple aspects of historicity within the Johannine narrative, so this third volume challenges the de-Johannification of Jesus in robust and critical ways. While one could call for a fourth quest for Jesus as a result, such is not needed, for such a quest is already well underway!

work of the Jesus Seminar: sage, cynic, prophet, holy man) are attested independently in John—sometimes with greater clarity than rendered in any one of the Synoptic Gospels (Anderson 2006b, 92–97).