

2019

**Why the Gospel of John is Fundamental to Jesus Research
(Chapter One of Jesus Research: The Gospel of John in Historical
Inquiry)**

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The constellation of the Johannine riddles—theological, historical, literary—and their implications for understanding the Jesus of history as well as the Christ of faith, and thus the historical and religious basis of western civilization, comprises arguably the most difficult set of biblical critical issues and discussions in the modern era: full stop. Just as John's theological tensions precipitated and contributed to the most intensive and extensive of theological discussions in the patristic era,¹ so John's literary and historical tensions have contributed to most intensive and extensive literary and historical biblical discussions in the modern era. Understandably, the issues are complex. The discussions are multidisciplinary; the implications are momentous. That is why this study is needed and why it is needed now.²

I. Brief Overviews of Scholarship

Over the last century and a half, two critical platforms have ruled the day among critical scholars engaged in Gospel studies and Jesus Research: the *dehistoricization of John* and the *de-Johannification of Jesus*. These terms might overstate the issues a bit, in that many first-rate scholars have taken exception to particular issues along the way, and even those holding such views might acknowledge any number of exceptions. Overall though, as the work of the Jesus Seminar asserted, these two platforms are touted as foundational for modern critical scholarship in researching the Jesus of history rather than the Christ of faith. The problem, however, is that each of the planks upon which such platforms are constructed is terribly flawed, critically. Good points abound in critiquing a traditional view here and there, but simply to question a thesis is not to have proven its antithesis; that takes more work. A brief overview of scholarship within Jesus studies and Johannine studies is thus in order as an introduction to the subject at hand.³

The First Three Quests for Jesus⁴

Formative within the emergence of these critical platforms is the historic debate between Friedrich Schleiermacher and David F. Strauss in *the 19th-century quest for Jesus*. In general terms, Schleiermacher, in his Halle lectures on Jesus and his later book on the subject,⁵ argued that between John and the Synoptics, John's presentation of Jesus is the most reliable because it shows a deeply penetrating understanding of Jesus and his mission—the sort of knowledge that represents first-hand acquaintance with the subject of the Gospels: Jesus of Nazareth. Conversely, the Synoptic Gospels (he takes Matthew to be the first—the standing view at the time) present a fragmentary picture of Jesus, reflecting the gathering of bits of traditional material in second-hand, editorial ways. Challenging this approach, Strauss⁶ argued in his first book that while there appears to be historical material in the Gospels, much of it betrays the influence of contemporary religions. Therefore, miraculous and wondrous elements in the Gospels root not in the facts of history but in the incorporation of wondrous elements characteristic of mythic contemporary religions and folkloric embellishments. In his second book, Strauss drove two wedges in his focused attack against Schleiermacher. First, he forced a divide between theology and history; if a narrative shows theological interest and character, it

¹ This essay was presented at the Princeton-Prague Symposium on Jesus Research and the Gospel of John (March 2016). It will be published in *The Gospel of John in Historical Inquiry: The Third Princeton-Prague Symposium on Jesus Research, Princeton 2016*, edited by James H. Charlesworth with Jolyon and G. R. Pruszinski, in consultation with Petr Pokorný and Jan Roskovec (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2017, anticipated).

cannot be regarded as historical. Second, because John is different from the Synoptics and theological in its thrust, the quest for Jesus must side with the Synoptics to the exclusion of John. Thus, the Jesus of history must be divorced from the Christ of faith if one is to rescue Biblical Studies from their traditional encumbrances, liberating their reasoned use in the modern era. While 19th century critical scholarship did not share this view entirely, traditional confidence in John's historical contribution to the quest for Jesus overall lost out to its distinctive presentation of Jesus over and against the Synoptics.

Along these lines, Strauss' paradigms largely became the foundational bases for the first three quests for Jesus over the next century and a half. The 19th-century quest came to settle on Mark as the basis for Matthew and Luke, although with Wrede's⁷ questioning of Mark's historicity, the quest was somewhat abandoned rather than looking to John as an informative alternative. This phase has been overstatedly called *the "No Quest" for Jesus*. While Bultmann and some others sidestepped the historical quest of Jesus as a factor of diminished confidence in Mark's historicity as the first gospel and subjective results of so-called objective quests, the next phase of gospel-critical scholarship nonetheless focused on the history of gospel traditions as a means of informing the history of Jesus and his ministry.⁸ This led to source-critical investigations of gospel traditions, aided by form- and redaction-critical analyses and history-of-religions comparisons. Assuming (correctly, most scholars believe) that Matthew and Luke made use of Mark, the inference of an unknown Q source was advanced as an attempt to explain their similarities beyond their Markan connections. Some Q theorists also sought to identify such a source as the early form of Matthew in Hebraic language, as referenced by Papias in Eusebius (*Hist. eccl.* 3.39), although that view has not carried the day critically. With these advances in Synoptic studies, the quest for sources underlying the Johannine narrative got well underway within the 20th century and beyond, bolstered by these other critical methodological advances.

Launching a new stage in Jesus Research, *the "New Quest" for Jesus*, so named by James Robinson,⁹ began in 1951 following Käsemann's calling for a sustained study of Jesus as a first-century Jew.¹⁰ Despite the Gospels' presentations of Jesus of Nazareth in religious terms, attempts were made to distinguish the historical figure of Jesus from emerging religious trappings, both Jewish and Christian. As a minimalist approach, seeking to make use of only that which is fairly certain, scholars of the second half of the 20th century sought to exclude anything that seems overtly Christian or characteristically Jewish from presentations of Jesus in the Gospels, privileging also material that is multiply attested and cohering with majority-view impressions of his ministry. Of course, these four criteria (dissimilarity, embarrassment, multiple attestation, coherence) function to exclude anything distinctive in Matthew or Luke, and especially in John, bolstered by the fact of John's highly interpretive presentation of Jesus. Thus, siding with Reimarus two and a half centuries earlier, since John's narrative begins with a christological hymn and includes distinctive I-am sayings of Jesus, these features justify the exclusion of John from Jesus studies. Käsemann's own approach to the Gospel of John was to virtually ignore all of its mundane and incarnational features, arguing that its presentation of Jesus was that of God striding over the earth,¹¹ whose feet rarely touched the ground. Thus, John's dehistoricization made it easier to focus on the Synoptics primarily, simplifying the task in albeit distortive ways.

With the advent of social-scientific, anthropological, politico-religious, and cognitive-critical analyses of Judaism in its first-century Mediterranean contexts, what Tom Wright¹² described as *"a Third Quest" for Jesus* emerged in the 1970s. In looking at the Jewishness of Jesus and seeing him as a transformer of Judaism into its best self, viewing Jesus as challenging

purity laws and religious codes in the name of an authentic Jewish vision of faith and practice produced new insights into the Jewishness of Jesus and the rest of the New Testament writers, including Paul. As a more generous approach to ascertaining historical knowledge of Jesus and his ministry, this new set of investigations into the life of Jesus took seriously his work alongside other first-century messianic prophets and Jewish leaders, seeking to understand psychological and sociological aspects of Jesus ministry more fully. Lest their work be considered less than critically compelling, however, Third Questers have, overall, been content to leave John out of their studies so as to not jeopardize the reception of their portraits of Jesus of Nazareth. This is understandable, but it also bespeaks the timidity and inadequacy of modern Jesus scholarship overall.

As a means of pushing back against these more exploratory approaches to Jesus Research, though, a reassertion of New-Quest skepticism took form in what was called “*the Renewed Quest*” for Jesus by Robert Funk and John Dominic Crossan, reasserting its parsimonious approach. From the mid-1980s on, Robert Funk and the Jesus Seminar worked to consolidate the findings of the New Quest for future generations, lest the previous generation’s skeptical stances on a variety of issues be lost.¹³ Presenting to the general public what critical scholars believed about the Jesus of history—over and against traditional, churchly views—the Seminar played to the media, claiming the mantle of New Testament scholarly opinion for itself. Over its first decade of operation, papers were presented on each of the sayings and deeds of Jesus in the New Testament, which were then voted on by the membership. Marbles denoting black (no way, no how), grey (possibly, but probably not), pink (could have said or done that), and red (probably said or did that) were cast after each element, and the votes were tabulated mathematically. The results were published in the volumes of the Jesus Seminar, affirming only 18% of the material in the Gospels goes back to the Jesus of history (red or pink). Marcus Borg¹⁴ put it more positively: “at least this much” goes back to Jesus, by means of these evaluative criteria.

Within that venue, the primitivity of the Q tradition was linked to the *Gospel of Thomas*, leading scholars to judge that the sayings of Jesus in the second-century Gnostic gospel were far superior in terms of historicity over and against the presentation of Jesus in Mark or any of the other canonical Gospels. Simultaneously within that project, the Gospel of John suffered the most programmatic exclusion from historicity and Jesus studies for over a century. As a result, even the semblance of a Johannine feature within one of the Synoptic Gospels was deemed to make it unreliable historically; thus, Johannine verisimilitude came to be seen as a basis for rejection in terms of Jesus-research historicity. However, if all worthy sources for Jesus Research are being utilized, why has the one gospel tradition claiming first-hand contact with Jesus been programmatically excluded from the venue?

This anti-Johannine thrust of modern Jesus scholarship exposes several fallacies, calling for incisive skepticism and critical correction. First, because the Synoptics are theological as well as John, and because John shows evidence of historical memory as well as theological development, a more nuanced approach deserves consideration. Second, given that Matthew and Luke used Mark, the difference is not necessarily three against one; rather, differences often reflect distinctive presentations of Jesus and his ministry between Mark and John—two highly individuated perspectives. Third, if every source is open for historical-Jesus consideration, however, including the Gospels of Thomas, Philip, and Truth, what is to be made of the one canonical Gospel claiming first-hand knowledge of Jesus and his ministry—what are the critical bases for rejecting that claim altogether? Fourth, as criteria for determining gospel historicity—

by function and design—served to exclude Johannine contents and perspectives from the historical quest for Jesus, do the results point to John’s ahistoricity, or do they simply reflect the results of applying biased, anti-Johannine criteria? A fifth fallacy applies positivism to verification but not to falsification; “not necessarily” can never imply “necessarily not.” To simply question a traditional view is not to demonstrate its opposite; that requires evidence, which on nearly all default proposals regarding the origin and character of the Johannine tradition, remains lacking. By means of these and other operations, John’s historicity has been challenged programmatically, and yet, they are individually and collectively fallacious in either their design or their operation. This also explains why overly skeptical approaches to Jesus Research have failed to convince some audiences; after all, to simply challenge a view is not to disconfirm it compellingly.¹⁵

Since the turn of the new millennium, however, the unsustainability of excluding the Gospel of John from Jesus Research, while including everything else, evoked a backlash. Given that most historical Jesus scholars in the 20th century could not also claim to be Johannine scholars, leading Johannine scholars began to weigh in on the discussions, calling for a new quest for Jesus—one that included the Gospel of John rather than ignoring it. In 2001 the John, Jesus, and History Project got underway at the national SBL meetings, looking at these three seemingly incompatible subjects in conjunction with each other and testing the durability of modern platforms and their constitutive planks. I might call this the beginnings of a *Fourth Quest for Jesus*,¹⁶ in that new criteria for determining historicity are required if the Johannine tradition is to be included in the mix. Then again, while this cursory overview of historical Jesus Research accounts for some of the reasons the Gospel of John has been sidestepped in the historical quest of Jesus, John’s theological, historical, and literary riddles create their own multitudinous perplexities for Johannine scholars, as well. Therefore, a brief overview of Johannine critical scholarship is also in order, as Johannine scholars themselves are not in one accord as to John’s composition, authorship, development, or historical character.

Issues and Developments in Johannine Scholarship

Overlapping historical-Jesus studies, but somewhat independent of them, Johannine studies have forged their own trajectories over the last century or more. Privileging the view, that John’s Gospel represents an independent eyewitness account of Jesus’s ministry and thus having its own historical account to share, a “new look” at the traditional view of John’s origin and character has developed in a variety of ways. Building on Lightfoot’s earlier defense of the traditional view, B. F. Westcott¹⁷ argued a *concentric set of inferences*, beginning with an independent memory of Jesus, written by a Jew, of Palestine, one of the twelve—and even one of the three closest to Jesus, and finally John the son of Zebedee. More conservative approaches have tended to build in this direction, as shown in the critical-yet-traditional commentaries of Morris, Carson, Michaels, Köstenberger and others. However, such riddles as the supposed early death of John the son of Zebedee, the apparent finalizing of the Gospel by an editor who added material, John’s highly theological and distinctively Johannine material, John’s omission of important Synoptic content, and John’s differences with the Synoptics called for critical alternatives to the traditional view. Interestingly, one of the main reasons for doubting the traditional view is the purported early death of John the son of Zebedee. This concern, which emerged in the late 19th century, is based on the claim that Philip Sidetes (5th century) and George Hamartolos (9th century) cited an unknown testimony of Papias, that John had died early and thus could not have written any of the works bearing his name. Upon this view, alternative

theories of John's composition were launched, but a closer look debunks that claim. What Philip and George say is that James and John suffered martyrdom, building on Mark 10:38-39, where Jesus asserts that they will drink his cup and be baptized with his baptism. Upon reading the fuller writings of Philip and George, however, neither claims that James and John died at the same time or that John died early. James did, martyred in 44 CE, but both of these authors locate John's witness in Ephesus, coinciding with the reign of Domitian (81-96 CE). Put pointedly, no one believed that John died early until the modern era; such is a modern myth, and a false one, at that.¹⁸

A momentous set of critical approaches to the Johannine riddles was forged by Rudolf Bultmann in his 1941 commentary on John, whose influence continues to be of considerable significance, even decades later. While Bultmann believed very little could be known with certainty regarding the Jesus of history, his analysis of the history of the Synoptic traditions and his magisterial commentary on John stand out as *the zenith of modern diachronic literary-critical and historical-critical paradigms*. By combining form-critical analysis, history-of-religions awareness, stylistic-contextual analysis, and theological *Tendenz*-criticism, Bultmann claims to have reconstructed hypothetical sources underlying the canonical Gospels in ways that identify literary strands and layers within each tradition. Especially his *The Gospel of John: A Commentary*¹⁹ is unsurpassed in any field of biblical studies for its critical acumen, theological sensitivity, and existential reach. Thus, John's historicity is present but fragmentary, calling for analyses of particular details rather than an overall historical perspective on the ministry of Jesus. While most scholars have been finally unconvinced about his identifying of three major sources underlying John, followed by the Evangelist's organizing into a narrative whole, which was later disordered and augmented (and wrongly reordered) by an ecclesiastical redactor, Bultmann's theological and exegetical insights along the way continue to instruct interpreters along theological, historical, and literary lines. In his, albeit, traditional approach to the Gospel of John, Ramsey Michaels declared²⁰ that the most helpful resource in writing the successor to Leon Morris' commentary was Bultmann's commentary. Again, in addressing the Johannine riddles thoroughly, though often ineffectively, Bultmann's work is unsurpassed.

A third 20th-century approach to John's historicity envisions John as *dependent on the Synoptics*. For those less enthralled with imagining hypothetical sources underlying John, one fact is clear. The Fourth Evangelist expands theologically upon material in his own narrative. Signs grow into (or are anticipated by) discourses; mundane details are accompanied by spiritual associations; the narrator comments upon theological implications of what is done or said—even if uttered unwittingly; biblical allusions abound. Given the Evangelist's theologically expansive work, and if it can be assumed that he knew at least Mark and perhaps the other gospel traditions, might a good deal of John's material simply reflect theological expansions upon Mark and the Synoptics? This is an understandable inference, and B. H. Streeter, in constructing an overall Synoptic Hypothesis, inferred that such an operation accounts for at least some of John's similar-yet-distinctive presentation of Jesus. This trajectory was followed by C. K. Barrett,²¹ the Leuven School, and several others—seeing John as expanding upon Synoptic traditions theologically—and thus of little or no independent historical value. It is largely a theological expansion upon historically prevailing Synoptic traditions.

A fourth critical approach argues for *an independent Johannine tradition*, whether or not its author was the son of Zebedee or a member of the Twelve. Whoever the author might have been, John's independence from the Synoptics was argued by P. Gardner-Smith,²² and its account of Jesus's ministry as a historical tradition parallel to the Synoptics was established by

C. H. Dodd.²³ Raymond Brown²⁴ and Rudolf Schnackenburg²⁵ began with inferring the Evangelist to be the apostolic son of Zebedee, although their theories of composition later evolved into accepting the possibility of John's author being an eyewitness source who was not one of the twelve. The view that the Evangelist was John the Elder was argued by Martin Hengel²⁶ and Richard Bauckham,²⁷ and other inferences of alternative eyewitness origins of John's material were argued by Ben Witherington (Lazarus),²⁸ James Charlesworth (Thomas),²⁹ Esther De Boer (Mary Magdalene),³⁰ Urban C. von Wahlde (an unknown eyewitness and other Johannine leaders),³¹ and others. Therefore, John's presentation of Jesus represents an individuated-but-developed memory of Jesus's ministry, to be considered historically alongside Synoptic accounts as a distinctive memory of Jesus, whoever the author might have been. In 1968 A. M. Hunter described this development as "the new look at the Fourth Gospel," in which the historical character of John's autonomous memory of Jesus is once more receiving critical consideration among leading New Testament scholars, albeit reflecting the Evangelist's paraphrastic reworking of his historical tradition.³²

A fifth approach has been to sidestep controversial issues of John's originative history and to focus on its developing history and evolving situation as a *two-level, history-and-theology approach* to John's origin and character.³³ If the Johannine narrative was delivered in a situation where tensions with local synagogue leadership developed somewhere in the later mission to the Gentiles, might that explain John's distinctive presentations of Jesus as the Messiah/Christ? Argued by Raymond Brown,³⁴ J. Louis Martyn,³⁵ and others, John's presentation of Jesus at least bespeaks the history of the tradition's contextual development, so that is the place to begin when seeking to account for its distinctive presentation of Jesus. Thus, theological and contextual concerns go some distance toward accounting for expansions on Jesus as fulfilling the typologies of Moses and Elijah, as well as embodying aspects of the true Israel.³⁶ Ernst Käsemann³⁷ argued that the main target was institutional Christianity; Peder Borgen³⁸ argued that the target was the Docetists; Richard Cassidy³⁹ saw the Roman presence under Domitian as formative. Then again, the presence of one contextual crisis does not eliminate the likelihood of others; thus, Wayne Meeks, Moody Smith, and Raymond Brown argued for a larger dialectical situation within Johannine Christianity, and the Johannine Epistles, and to a lesser degree the Apocalypse, facilitate reconstructions of the Johannine dialectical situation.⁴⁰ Within this approach, though, originative history is all too easily eclipsed by inferences of later history, which seems to go against the thrust of the Evangelist's work. As such, the interest in the history of the Johannine situation somewhat eclipsed the New Look at John, forged by C. H. Dodd and others a generation earlier.

A sixth approach to John's riddles involves a *new-literary approach*, simply focusing on the text we have—as it is—however it was written and by whom. On this score, the 1983 analysis of Alan Culpepper⁴¹ on the literary anatomy of the Fourth Gospel has been the most significant single Johannine monograph over the last three decades or more, and the plurality of Johannine critical studies since then have been new-literary analyses, ranging from plot, rhetoric, characterization, reader-response, dialogical, irony, typology, and symbolism analyses. Some studies have applied new literary critical theory to the Johannine text; others have sought to appreciate John's literary design and artistry in the context of contemporary literature—Jewish, Greco-Roman, and Synoptic. Similarities and differences with comparative analysis are equally instructive along these lines. While new-literary studies are conducted well, independent of historical interests, comparisons and contrasts with Synoptic traditions inevitably call for inferences regarding tradition development and implications for historical analyses of the

Gospels' subject: Jesus of Nazareth. Thus, while these studies might not be motivated by historical interests, they often have implications for understanding originative and developing histories of the narrative. After all, historical narrative is crafted rhetorically, as is fictive narrative, so a literary-critical analysis in itself cannot escape historical implications along the way.

Jesus in Johannine Perspective: A Fourth Quest for Jesus

From these brief overviews of Jesus and Johannine scholarship, it is clear that these two venues of research have continued within their own trajectories, but often doing so as silos without engaging each other's research or findings. The value of noting key developments within these two fields of research, however, is to account for the lack of engagement between them, setting the stage also for a sense of the work to be done if any headway is to be made along these lines. If the recent interest in the Fourth Gospel as a resource for Jesus Research might be called a Fourth Quest within Jesus studies, perhaps a return to John's originative history and character might be called "the Renewed Quest" in Johannine studies. And, the nexus of these two fields can be seen in the integration of Johannine and Jesus scholarship emerging since the beginning of the third millennium.

II. Johannine and Jesus Scholarship Today: A Paradigm Shift in the Works

The critical question is whether these moves are critically robust, given the complexity of the data being analyzed. If every resource is to be used in conducting Jesus Research, how can the Fourth Gospel be excluded from the venture? In 2010 James H. Charlesworth published an important essay, calling for and noting already a paradigm shift within Jesus Research—moving from ignoring John to including John in the historical quest of Jesus.⁴² In this programmatic essay, Charlesworth notes five scholars who declare that John is off-limits for Jesus studies, demonstrating the fixity of the older paradigm. He then poses ten points of critique, followed by featuring five scholars, whose works demonstrate the measured use of John within Jesus studies, showing that a paradigm shift is already underway. In the final pages of his essay, he notes the contributions of the John, Jesus, and History Project as seminal within that transition, and this is a worthy judgment indeed.

Begun in 2001, this collaborative venture held at the national SBL meetings from 2002-2016 has garnered an e-list of over 500 scholars from around the world, addressing systematically the constellation of issues related to the dehistoricization of John and the de-Johannification of Jesus. Assuming these two platforms as givens within critical biblical scholarship, questions follow as to how robust they are and what the evidentiary bases might be for whatever views are held. As a result, its five triennia have addressed a steady progression of issues, inviting presentations from a wide variety of perspective, seeking to include top scholars in the world, who are welcome to argue any case they wish, providing they substantiate claims they make with evidence. Responses to essays are also drawn in as seems fitting to the issues being engaged. Attendance at the meetings has been strong, and over 180 scholars will have presented in these sessions by the project's culmination.

While the inquiry has only just begun, the Project's various approaches to central issues have developed as follows. (1) Critical assessments of critical views were gathered, including five substantial literature reviews, a variety of diverse methodological approaches to the issues, and a case study showing the historical plausibility of the itinerary of Jesus in John over and against the Synoptics (2002-2004). (2) Aspects of historicity were explored in the three main

sections of John: chapters 1-4, 5-12, and 13-21 (2005-2007). (3) Glimpses of Jesus Through the Johannine Lens were gathered regarding the Passion narrative, Jesus's works, and Jesus's teachings in John (2008-2010). (4) Papers on archaeology and the Fourth gospel were gathered from leading archaeologists around the world (2009-2011). (5) Explorations of methodologies for conducting Johannine historiography were gathered over several sessions. (6) Portraits of Jesus within the Johannine narrative were gathered over several sessions. (7) Various reviews of important books and commentaries were gathered over several sessions. (8) Special sessions were organized addressing such relevant issues as historicity, Qumran, and the Dead Sea Scrolls (2007), the historical situation of the Johannine Epistles (2011), celebrating the contributions of C. H. Dodd and Raymond Brown (2013), and investigating John and Judaism (2015). (9) A host of papers were gathered on Jesus remembered in the Johannine tradition, both intra-traditionally and inter-traditionally (2011-2016). (10) Papers were gathered on Jesus Remembered in the Johannine situation (2014-2016). Most of the findings of these presentations have or will find their way into published form as follows.

In print or in press:

- *John, Jesus, and History, Vol. 1: Critical Appraisals of Critical Views*, SBL Symposium Series 44. Paul N. Anderson, Felix Just SJ, Tom Thatcher, eds. Atlanta: SBL Press, 2007.
- *John, Jesus, and History, Vol. 2: Aspects of History in the Fourth Gospel*, Early Christianity and its Literature 2. Paul N. Anderson, Felix Just SJ, Tom Thatcher, eds. Atlanta: SBL Press, 2009.
- *Qumran and the Dead Sea Scrolls: Sixty Years of Discovery and Debate*, Early Judaism and its Literature 32. Mary Coloe PBVM and Tom Thatcher, eds. Atlanta: SBL Press 2011.
- *Engaging with C. H. Dodd on the Gospel of John: Sixty Years of Tradition and Interpretation*. Tom Thatcher and Catrin H. Williams, eds. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013.
- *Communities in Dispute: Current Scholarship on the Johannine Epistles*, Early Christianity and Its Literature 13. Paul N. Anderson and R. Alan Culpepper, eds. Atlanta: SBL Press, 2014.
- *John, Jesus, and History, Vol. 3: Glimpses of Jesus Through the Johannine Lens*, Early Christianity and its Literature 19. Paul N. Anderson, Felix Just SJ, Tom Thatcher, eds. Atlanta: SBL Press, 2016.
- *John and Judaism*, Resources for Biblical Studies 87. R. Alan Culpepper and Paul N. Anderson, eds. Atlanta: SBL Press, 2017.
- *Portraits of Jesus in the Gospel of John*, Library of New Testament Studies. Craig Koester, ed. London: Bloomsbury T. & T. Clark, 2018.

In process (some details subject to change):

- *Archaeology and the Fourth Gospel* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, ed. Paul N. Anderson, est. 2019).
- *John, Jesus, and History, Vol. 4: Jesus Remembered in the Johannine Tradition* (ed. Paul N. Anderson et al, est. 2019).
- *John, Jesus, and History, Vol. 5: Jesus Remembered in the Johannine Situation* (ed. Paul N. Anderson et al, est. 2020).

- *John, Jesus, and History, Vol. 6: Methodologies for Determining Johannine Historicity* (ed. Paul N. Anderson, est. 2021).

Additional book-length collections organized by the John, Jesus, and History Steering Committee and its members over its fifteen-year history include: (1) edited volumes by Tom Thatcher and sometimes others on Jesus in Johannine Tradition, thirty-six essays by senior and emerging Johannine scholars worldwide on their most important convictions regarding Johannine issues, treatments of orality and media-culture studies in relation to the emergence of gospel traditions, and a celebration of John's literary anatomy and diverse approaches to its character and function;⁴³ and (2) the Johannine Monograph Series, edited by Paul Anderson and Alan Culpepper, getting back into print some of the most important of Johannine monographs over the years—with new critical forewords describing the flow of Johannine scholarship in relation to that volume.⁴⁴ (3) In addition to these contributions, members of the Steering Committee have their own important contributions to make, from a variety of angles and perspectives, and the quest for Jesus in bi-optic perspective cannot be monological in its exercise.*

Other scholars also have their own approaches to the issues, and as Mark Allan Powell⁴⁵ has noted, this significant ground-shift has made it evident that the Gospel of John can no longer be ignored within the historical quest for Jesus. The question, of course, is how to approach the issues involved. Any way forward will need to consider the perils of using and not using John in the historical quest for Jesus, a strategy for analyzing John alongside the Synoptics, criteria for determining Johannine and Synoptic historicity, and a means of thinking about gospel historicity in ways that include gradations of plausibility in constructing a critical understanding of the subject: Jesus. Mindful of the foibles involved, the perils of using and not using John in historical-Jesus Research are worth considering.

III. Perils of Using John in Jesus Research: Daunted by the Johannine Riddles

The distancing of the Gospel of John from historicity interests, especially involving the quest for the Jesus of history over and against the Christ of faith, is understandable. After all, when engaging the multiplicity of Johannine riddles, numerous perils abound! These historical riddles largely have to do with John's similarities and differences with the Synoptics as well as John's highly theological thrust. On Synoptic-Johannine differences, some of these issues can be harmonized, but others cannot. The scholar must choose between the two traditions, and John most often loses out to the other three. On aspects of theology, John's *Logos*-hymn to the pre-existent Christ, wondrous signs, and high-christological material function to eclipse aspects of John's mundane representations Jesus and his ministry. After all, the rhetorical emphasis on Jesus's being the Messiah/Christ—the Son of God calls into question the disinterested objectivity of the narrator, raising doubts about the overall enterprise as well as particular details. Therefore, the following perils cannot be ignored if one attempts to use John in historical-Jesus Research.

Differences of Inclusion

Differences in inclusion between John and the Synoptics are problematic in both directions. If John really does represent first-hand memory of Jesus and his ministry, how could it possibly have omitted some of the most notable features of Jesus's ministry? While these riddles are more fully spelled out elsewhere,⁴⁶ a suggestive overview illustrates the challenge.

Synoptic presentations missing from John include:

- Birth narratives, followed by genealogies of Jesus's heritage
- The baptism of Jesus by John, followed by John's arrest and death
- The temptation of Jesus in the wilderness
- The calling of the twelve
- Jesus's extensive preaching on the Kingdom of God and its character
- Jesus's teaching his followers by means of parables
- Jesus's healing of lepers and women
- Jesus's casting out of demons
- Jesus's dining with sinners, tax collectors, and Pharisees
- Jesus's sending out his disciples by twos in ministry
- The transfiguration of Jesus and the appearances of Moses and Elijah
- An extended journey to Jerusalem through Jericho
- Beatitudes and fulfillments of the Law
- Woes to Scribes and Pharisees
- The institution of a remembrance meal at the last supper
- The cursing of a fig tree
- An apocalyptic discourse

Here the critical question cannot but follow: if John represents a historical memory of Jesus and his ministry, how could it *not* include so many of the basics featured in Mark and its Synoptic counterparts? Of course, there are many other scenarios and reports in the Synoptics that have gone missing in John, but these are some more notable omissions in John. Likewise, a good number of features in John are not found in the Synoptics, and here the question cuts in the opposite direction. If indeed John's presentation of Jesus's ministry is rooted in historical memory, how could these features have *not* been known and included by the other gospel writers? After all, if they had been known, surely they would most likely not have been omitted.

Johannine elements of Jesus's ministry missing from the Synoptics include:

- The early ministry of John the Baptist before being imprisoned
- Disciples of John leaving him and following Jesus
- The wedding miracle at Cana
- Multiple trips to Jerusalem before the final one
- Extended dialogues with the likes of Nicodemus, the Samaritan Woman, religious leaders in Jerusalem, Peter, the sisters of Lazarus, Pilate, Mary Magdalene, Thomas, and others
- Traveling through and staying in Samaria, garnering a Samaritan following
- Healings in Jerusalem: the lame man and the blind man
- Confrontations by leaders in Jerusalem, leading to extended engagements
- I-am sayings connecting a predicate nominative with the identify Jesus
- Long discourses about Jesus's being sent from the Father
- The raising of Lazarus from the dead
- Consternation by Caiaphas over a Roman backlash and the sacrificing of Jesus
- Jesus's washing his disciples' feet
- Peter's role at various points in the narrative

- The presentation of the Beloved Disciple as being in close relationship with Jesus
- Topographical and sensory details: details about the temple, Jacob's well, the Samaritan's worship site, five porticoes, *Gabbatha*, the stone pavement, spices used for the burial, distances, elevations, temperatures, smells
- Political dynamics in relation to the Roman presence
- Jewish customs and terms explained to Hellenistic audiences

Of course, multiple similarities also abound between John and the Synoptics. The beginning of Jesus's ministry is likened to that of John the Baptist, Jesus calls a cadre of disciples to be involved with him in his ministry, he performs healings on the Sabbath, he embraces the disenfranchised while challenging religious authorities, he is engaged combatively by religious authorities, a feeding/sea-crossing set of events is remembered, Peter makes a pivotal confession, a momentous visit to Jerusalem involves an ironic triumphal entry; Jesus clears the temple, teaches in Jerusalem, is anointed by a woman, holds a last supper with his disciples, departs to a garden, is betrayed by Judas and arrested, is beaten and maltreated, is denied by Peter, a disciple severs the ear of another at which Jesus commands the putting away of the sword, Jesus is tried in Jewish and Roman settings, is sentenced to death, is crucified, and is reported to have been encountered in the post-resurrection experiences of his followers. Therefore, between John and the Synoptics, multiple similarities and differences abound, and these must be evaluated critically in terms of their plausible historicity.

Differences of Presentation

A second problem with seeing John as a historically-rooted tradition is that it differs with the Synoptics in significant ways that cannot simply be harmonized. In these and other instances, the tendency of historical scholars is to go with the Synoptic majority over and against John, and while the criterion of multiple attestation can indeed affirm the likelihood of a detail or theme being more historical likely, it cannot serve effectively as a means of rejecting the lone account or presentation in Matthew, Luke, or John. Further, if Matthew and Luke are making use of Mark, even similar-but-different renderings of Mark may merely imply their modifications of Mark rather than independent corroborations of historical memory. Along these lines, because John is so pervasively independent of the Synoptics, perhaps presenting alternative views with intentionality, multiple attestation as a basis for determining John's ahistoricity is deeply flawed. The contest, most foundationally, is between John and Mark, and if Mark represents an amalgam of material ordered for narratological reasons, Mark's sequence of events itself might be more conjectural than chronological.

Problematic Differences in Chronology and Itinerary:

- Aspects of Chronology
 - The ministries of Jesus and the Baptizer (Jesus begins ministering before John was thrown into prison in John; after John was thrown into prison in the Synoptics)
 - The timing of the temple incident (early in John; later in the Synoptics)
 - The number of Passovers during Jesus's ministry (three in John; one in the Synoptics)
 - The timing of the last supper (Passover eve in John; a Passover meal in the Synoptics)

- The timing of the crucifixion (noon in John; 9:00 am in Mark)
- Aspects of Jesus's Travels
 - Visits to Jerusalem (at least four times in John; once in the Synoptics)
 - Largely ministering in the north: Galilee (Synoptics); largely ministering in the south: Judea (John)
 - Samaria: to be avoided (Matthew), to be travelled through and engaged (John and Luke)
 - Traveling with his disciples (largely Synoptics) and sometimes alone (largely John)

Of course, Jesus could have cleansed the temple twice, but did he, really? The events seem very similar in their presentation. Along these and other lines, one cannot have it both ways. One must go with either the Synoptics or John. Then again, just because Jesus made a final trip to Jerusalem, this does not mean it was his first visit. The fact that he was not arrested immediately upon his celebrated entry—in John or the Synoptics—suggests (with John) that he was a known entity among the Roman guards.⁴⁷

Then again, other differences in presentation are also worthy of consideration, especially when two or more of the Synoptics corroborate each other in distinctive ways. For instance, not only does Mark present Jesus as teaching in parables about the Kingdom of God, but Matthew and Luke do as well. The Johannine Jesus does not, however, and his words are often difficult to distinguish between those of the narrator or John the Baptist. This seems a legitimate case wherein the form and content of Jesus's teaching the Synoptics are closer to the Jesus of history, and John's presentation of Jesus's teachings coheres with the thought and language forms of the Evangelist. Additionally, several other aspects of Jesus's ministry in terms of style and emphasis are also worthy of consideration. Therefore, the following distinctive presentations of Jesus's ministry require critical analysis when comparing and contrasting John and the Synoptics.

Problematic Differences in Jesus's Teachings and Ministry:

- Aspects of Jesus's Teachings
 - Featuring parables (Synoptics); featuring I-Am sayings (John)
 - Jesus speaks in short, pithy sayings (especially in Mark); Jesus expands into long, drawn-out discourses (John)
 - Jesus teaches largely about the Kingdom (Synoptics); Jesus teaches about the King and his life-giving work (John)
 - Messianic secrecy is asserted by Jesus (especially in Mark); messianic openness is displayed (extensively in John)
 - Jesus claims to fulfill the Law of Moses by pointing to its radical center (Synoptics); Jesus claims that Moses writes of him (John)
 - Jesus reduces the Ten Commandments to two: loving God and loving neighbor, calling also for the love of enemies (Synoptics); Jesus issues a new commandment: love one another (John)
 - Jesus teaches that the Son of Man will return before the apostles have died (Synoptics); Jesus never said that the Beloved Disciple would not die before he returned (John)
- Aspects of Jesus's Ministry: Operations and Concerns

- Jesus is baptized by John (Synoptics); Jesus's baptism is not narrated, and he himself did not baptize, although his disciples did (John)
- Jesus dines with sinners, tax collectors, and Pharisees (Synoptics); Jesus engages a Samaritan woman and is offered hospitality in Samaria (John)
- Jesus performs healings of lepers and exorcisms of demoniacs (Synoptics); he does neither of these in John but is accused of having a demon by Jerusalem leaders
- Jesus sends his disciples out in twos to perform ministry (Synoptics); Jesus travels mostly with his disciples (John)
- Jesus performs miracles primarily in the north (Galilee, Synoptics); Jesus performs miracles signs in the south (Judea, John)
- Jesus institutes a meal of remembrance (Synoptics); Jesus ordains serving one another at the last supper (John)
- The pivotal confession is made by Peter (Synoptics); momentous confessions are made by Nathanael and Martha
- Jesus ministers and travels with male disciples (Mark); Jesus engages women meaningfully in his ministry (John)

Some of these differences, of course, can be harmonized. Just because Jesus preached in parables about the Kingdom of God, this does not mean that he said nothing of himself. Then again, the Jesus of the Synoptics seems self-effacing—very much unlike the self-presenting Jesus we have in John. The Synoptic Jesus dines with sinners and tax collectors, but this commensality with the marginalized is missing from John. The Matthean Jesus forbids travel to Samaria, but John's Jesus not only ventures through Samaria, however, the woman at the well becomes the apostle to the Samaritans, and that mission is successful. In both John and the Synoptics Jesus performs healings on the Sabbath, but John does not present Jesus as an exorcist or a healer of lepers. Are these simply omissions by John, or do we have a different and less historically connected understanding of Jesus here displayed? Of course, the theological slants and rhetorical interests of the gospel narrators are also factors in the differences in presentation between John and the Synoptics, so these must be considered as well.

Differences in Theological Slant and Narration

Foundational differences are also clear when one considers the sort of Jesus that is presented in Mark and the Synoptics when held in sharp relief against the sort of Jesus presented in John. Some of these differences are factors of arrangements of material and emphases made; others are factors of narrative designs and stated purposes.

Theological and Narrative Differences:

- Theological Designs and Emphases:
 - Jesus comes preaching the Kingdom and repentance (Mark and the Synoptics); Jesus teaches the essentiality of being born from above and led by the Spirit (John)
 - The urgency of Jesus's ministry is highlighted (Mark); more extended engagements with his followers are narrated (John)
 - Moses and Elijah forecast Jesus's Messiahship in the work of John the Baptist and on the Mount of Transfiguration (Mark and the Synoptics); John denies being

- Elijah and the Prophet (Moses) and has no Transfiguration scenario, as Jesus fulfills both the typologies of Moses and Elijah (John)
- Faith is required for miracles to happen (the Synoptics); the signs of Jesus lead people to faith (John)
 - The value of the feeding is that people ate and were satisfied (Mark and the Synoptics); the value of the feeding is not that people ate and were satisfied—they failed to see the feeding as a revelatory sign
 - The martyrdom of the sons of Zebedee is foretold by Jesus (Mark); the martyrdom of Peter is foretold (John)
 - Jesus affirms Peter’s authority and institutes structural leadership (Matthew); Peter affirms Jesus’s authority, and Jesus emphasizes the availability of the Holy Spirit to all (John)
 - Jesus teaches his disciples to pray (Matthew and Luke); Jesus prays to the Father on behalf of his disciples (John)
 - Implicit and Stated Purposes of Authors:
 - The virgin birth of Jesus shows his divinity (Matthew and Luke); the *Logos* hymn shows the Son’s agency from the Father as the incarnate Word (John)
 - An orderly account is produced for Theophilus (Luke); the signs of Jesus are presented in order that people might believe (John)
 - Blessed are those who embrace the paradoxical way of the Kingdom (Matthew and Luke); blessed are those who obey Jesus and who believe without having seen (John)

While not all of these parallels between John and the Synoptics are entirely close, they do display remarkable contrasts in their presentations of Jesus of Nazareth. Indeed, they could reflect different perspectives on the historical figure of Jesus—likely factors of different emphases in the preaching of the apostles and subsequent ministries. On the other hand, the questions raised by these differences raise precisely that question: how far have the departures in the preaching, teaching, writing, gathering, and editing of accounts of Jesus and his ministry strayed from a close and fitting representation of who he was and what he came to do, rather than reflecting the developing understandings of Jesus in the second or third generations of the Jesus movement?

Impossibilities of Harmonization

For these and other reasons, it is understandable why the perils of including John in the historical quest of Jesus are fraught with problems and headaches. Indeed, the three-dozen Johannine riddles outlined in fuller detail elsewhere show why the best scholars in the world still find themselves in contention over how to approach John’s composition, development and purpose(s), let alone how to integrate one’s understanding of the Johannine Jesus with his presentations in the Synoptics. While some differences can be harmonized, and need to be, others defy harmonization. Therefore, one must at times choose between John and the Synoptics, and critical scholars have largely sided with the Synoptics over and against John.

Among these dichotomies, did Jesus speak in parables about the Kingdom, sending his disciples out in twos, healing lepers and delivering the afflicted from demons, and calling twelve disciples to be his followers? If one says, “yes” to these issues, one has sided with the Synoptics against John—worthy judgments, in my view. However, if one infers Jesus ministered for more

than one year (perhaps two or three), performed signs in Jerusalem as well as Galilee, traveled to Jerusalem several times during his ministry, ministered alongside John the Baptist for a time, and angered the Jerusalem authorities before his final visit, one has just sided with John's historicity over and against that of Mark and the Synoptics—also worthy judgments in my view.⁴⁸ On a variety of issues, presentations of Jesus in John and the Synoptics corroborate each other in independent ways. On a good number of other issues, however, the critical scholar cannot have it both ways; one must side with John or the Synoptics, not both.

Lest it be inferred, however, that including John in the quest for Jesus is motivated by traditional or conservative interests, the following facts invite pause. First, just as traditional views have numerable problems to them, critically, the standard answers posed by critical scholars have new sets of problems that make the dehistoricization of John and the de-Johannification of Jesus untenable critically. Some good points are made, but more nuanced views are needed. Second, what *if* John is found to be historically preferable on a number of matters over and against the Synoptics? How would traditional or conservative scholars deal with John being right and the three Synoptic Gospels being wrong—one against three? Such a venture is not motivated by conservative interests; it is required by critical inquiry. Further, one can appreciate why some conservative scholars have caved in and embraced the expulsion of John from canons of historicity, locating it within repositories of theology. They can still hold to their theological uses of John—embracing the Johannine Christ of faith, without challenging an more facile synthesis of Synoptic-based Jesus Research—befriending the Synoptic Jesus of history. However, such an approach sidesteps the critical facts that John's tradition includes a plethora of mundane and historically grounded content, and that some of John's presentation of Jesus bears greater plausibility than Synoptic corollaries. Therefore, despite the perils of using John in the quest for Jesus, the perils of not using John are far greater—critically—calling for a new quest for Jesus, if all legitimate sources are to be utilized.

IV. Perils of Not Using John in Jesus Research: Engaging the Johannine Riddles

One of the considerable advances made by the Jesus Seminar since the mid 1980s is their endeavor to make use of all ancient resources available in the historical quest of Jesus. In particular, the special focus on the *Gospel of Thomas*, cohering with corroborating themes in the canonical Gospels, extended the potential database of materials to be accessed in garnering an inclusive approach to the venture. However, the greatest weakness of the Jesus Seminar had to do with its methodological approach—excluding John from the canons of historicity, and even seeking to rid the Jesus-Research database of all Johannine semblances simply because of an anti-Johannine bias on account of John's assumed ahistoricity. But what if John's tradition does contain some or a good deal of historical memory? If so, the dehistoricization of John and the de-Johannification of Jesus are fraught with new sets of critical problems, from beginning to end, and these must be corrected if there is any critical sobriety in the historical quest of Jesus. This is especially the case given the limitations of Markan historicity.⁴⁹

(1) The first problem with these moves is the hyperextended juxtaposition of history and theology, as though one cannot include the other; even Strauss' leveraging of that dichotomy was confessedly motivated by theological interest.⁵⁰ (2) A second problem is the fact that Mark and the other Synoptics too are steeped in theological interests, so their approaches cannot be taken at face-value as objectively historical any more than John's can. (3) John contains a good deal of mundane material that appears to reflect historical memory and content, despite its theological thrust; and, some of John's high-christological material is added later, not a part of the original

narrative. (4) At least some of John’s material either corroborates or corrects Synoptic presentations of Jesus—arguably for historical reasons, not theological ones. (5) At least some Synoptic presentations of Jesus either corroborate or modify our understandings of John’s presentation of Jesus, even though John was probably finalized last. (6) As a result, new criteria for determining historicity must be developed for critical use, finding ways of including John’s witness alongside the Synoptics if the critical quest for Jesus is to proceed as a historically adequate critical venture. If all sources are going to be used in the historical quest of Jesus, a way must be found to make use of the Gospel of John.

John, the Most Mundane of the Gospels

While John is in some ways the most theological of the four canonical Gospels, it is also the most mundane among their number.⁵¹ Like Mark, John provides a bridge between Jewish language and customs reflecting primitive memories of Jesus and his ministry, and their later deliveries in Hellenistic settings. Further, John includes more topographical and archaeologically corroborated references than all the other Gospels combined—canonical or otherwise. John’s spatial and temporal references also cohere with grounded understandings of Palestine, unlikely to have been fabricated a thousand miles away in an Asia Minor setting, and it is an empirical fact that John references a good deal of detail that shows signs of sensorily-derived information. So, the empirical fact of John’s empirical details defies claims to its narrative’s eclipse by theological perspectives and interests. Therefore, if John’s story is rooted in theological investments alone, rather than first-hand memory of Jesus and his memory, how does one account for John’s grounded features as the most mundane of the Gospel narratives about Jesus?

First, note the *grounded phenomenology* of John’s rendering of Galilean, Samaritan, and Judean knowledge for audiences of a diaspora and Hellenistic setting. Aramaic and Hebraic names are both preserved and translated for non-Jewish audiences: Peter’s Aramaic nickname is given, *Kēphas* (1:42), the Hebraic *Golgotha* is translated (as it is in Mark 15:22) as the “Place of the Skull” (John 19:17); *Rabbi* means “teacher” (1:38); *Messias* is translated “Christ” (the word for “anointed one” 1:41; 4:25); the nickname for Thomas, is given as *Didymus* (the word for “twin,” 11:16; 20:24; 21:2); Mary Magdalene references Jesus in Aramaic, *Rabbouni* (translated as “teacher” 20:16); and the Sea of Galilee is identified by its Greco-Roman name, “Tiberias” (6:1; 21:1). These Aramaic and Hebraic terms would not have been transposed within a Hellenistic setting if they had not been a part of the earlier Johannine tradition (contrastive to Luke, which is mostly dependent upon Mark), and they would not have needed translation if they had not been rendered in a Greek-culture setting (contrastive to Matthew, which was delivered in a highly Jewish setting). In that sense, John and Mark are similar in that they display Palestine-rooted memories of Jesus’s words and works delivered later in cross-cultural settings. If these grounded features were concocted or invented in a Greco-Roman setting such as Ephesus, the narrator would first have had to travel to Palestine to get a feel for the ethos of the scenes and scenarios reported; they are clearly cross-cultural in their origin and delivery.

Second, John’s narrator *explains Jewish customs and measurement features to distant audiences*, seeking to account for developments and turns within the narrative. The capacity of the stone jars used for Jewish purification practices is described (holding about two or three *metrētēa*—twenty or thirty gallons, 2:6); Jews do not share drinking vessels with Samaritans (4:9); the day being the Sabbath meant no doing of work (5:9; 9:14); the Jewish leaders could not enter the Roman palace if they wished to eat the Passover, thereby avoiding Gentile-contact impurity (18:28); the Jewish leaders did not want dead bodies left on the crosses during the

Sabbath, as this would be defiling (19:31); Jesus's followers prepared his body according to Jewish burial customs (19:40). And, values and weights are noted: the feeding and the perfume were valued at 200 and 300 denarii (6:7; 12:5), and the weight of the embalming spices was a hundred pounds (19:39). Likewise, several distance measurements are referenced, corresponding with known realities: the middle of the lake is described as 25 or 30 *stadia* (three or four miles, 6:19), Bethany is just under two miles from Jerusalem (15 *stadia*, 11:18), and the boat to which Jesus presented himself after the resurrection was 200 *pēchōn* from shore (a hundred yards, 21:8). These sorts of details display first-hand familiarity with Jewish customs, measurements, distances, and other features rendered for distanced audiences somewhat removed from Palestine itself.

Third, *topographical and geographical knowledge* is supported by the facts on the ground as well as archaeological research. John's baptizing work is described as "across the Jordan" (in Bethabara, not Bethany, in some ancient manuscripts; 1:28; 3:26; 10:40) and in Aenon near Salim, as there is much water there (3:23); Sychar (the site of Jacob's well) and Mount Gerizim (a Samaritan site of worship, 4:4-6, 20) are known to the narrator; Jesus and others travel "up to" Jerusalem (2:13; 5:1; 11:55; 12:20) and "down to" Capernaum (2:12); the Sheep Gate in Jerusalem is mentioned as a known location reference (5:2); in Jerusalem Jesus teaches in the temple near its treasury (7:14, 28; 8:20; 18:20) and near Solomon's portico (8:20; 10:23); the Pool of Bethzatha is described as having five porticoes (suggesting two pools with a column down the middle, 5:2); the Pool of Siloam is a purification pool (confirmed by archaeologists just over a decade ago 9:1-9); the Kidron is known to be a winter-flowing stream (18:1); the house and courtyard of the High Priest are described with familiarity (18:13-15); the Praetorium of Pilate is mentioned (18:28, 33; 19:9) as well as the stone pavement (*lithostrōtos* in Greek), though a different name is given in Hebrew (*Gabbatha*, meaning "ridge of the house," 19:13); Jesus was crucified outside the city (19:20, corroborated by Heb 13:12); and Jesus is buried in an unused garden tomb (19:41-42, corroborated by Luke 23:53).

Fourth, the Evangelist is familiar with places from which people hail, reflecting personal knowledge and connectedness with individuals seemingly known during the ministry of Jesus. Philip, Andrew, and Peter were from Bethsaida—a royal Greek city (1:44; note that Greeks are introduced to Jesus by Philip, 12:21); Nathanael is purported to have hailed from Cana of Galilee (2:1, 6; 21:2); some of Jesus's teaching took place in the Capernaum Synagogue (2:12; 4:46; 6:17, 24, 59); Judas is described as being from *Kerioth* in Judea (6:71; 12:4; 13:2); Bethany is the home of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus (11:1, 18; 12:1); Mary of Magdala features prominently (19:25-26; 20:1; 18); Joseph of Arimathea provides a burial place (19:38). Thus, many people are identified by their geographic place of origin in John. Additionally, special knowledge of relations between persons is referenced generously. Andrew and Peter are described as brothers (1:40, 44; 6:8; 12:22); "those of Zebedee" are mentioned in the last scene (21:2); Peter is identified as the son of Jonas (1:42; 21:15, 16, 17); the anonymous disciple loved by Jesus is a key figure in John's narrative (13:23; 19:26, 27; 20:2; 21:24); Annas is the father-in-law of Caiaphas (18:13, 24), the High Priest that year (11:49; 18:13, 14, 24, 28); the servant of the high priest is Malchus (18:10); Jesus's brothers (7:3, 5, 10), father (1:45; 6:42), and mother (2:3; 6:42; 19:25) are mentioned; the family of Lazarus is described extensively in John 11; and John the Baptist and his followers witness to Jesus as the Messiah/Christ extensively (1:6-8, 15, 19-35; 3:22-30).

Fifth, given John's claims to first-hand historical knowledge of Jesus and his ministry, the fact that knowledge related to all five senses is attested to in its narrative requires critical

consideration instead of being dismissed perfunctorily on account of John's high-christological material. John's distinctive material could indeed be concocted and made to seem realistic as a function of verisimilitude, but the demonstration of such is different from simply asserting it as a conjecture. Given that the Beloved Disciple is remembered as being close to Jesus (13:23-25), is present at the cross and entrusted the care of Jesus's mother (19:16-42), accompanies Peter to the tomb of Jesus (20:1-10), points out the Lord to Peter on the lake (21:1-7), and is presented as someone of whom Peter is jealous, though apparently deceased at the time the Johannine narrative is finalized (21:18-24), the witness of that unnamed figure deserves critical consideration in seeking to discern the character and origin of the Johannine witness. Or, to put it in the words of James Charlesworth, "Whose witness stands behind the Fourth Gospel?"⁵² Regardless of who the eyewitness or the unnamed leading disciple might have been, John's editor and community attest to their conviction that his testimony is true (19:34-35; 21:24), thus implying a known-but-departed leader's memory and rendering of the ministry of Jesus.⁵³

Therefore, just as John's material includes the most elevated and theological presentations of Jesus among the four canonical Gospels, John also is the most mundane and grounded among them. John's empiricism is thus an empirical fact. So, until an alternative view is established, the Johannine editor's claims that the Johannine narrative reflects an individuated memory of Jesus's ministry must be taken seriously as a narrational attestation with implications for understanding more about its subject, Jesus of Nazareth. While John's Prologue affirms a preexistent view of the Father's Son as the divine *Logos*, the bulk of the Johannine narrative conveys political, religious, sociological, and experiential concerns—the perspectives rooted in points, not stars.⁵⁴ John's reflections are existential every bit as much as they are transcendent, neither of which controverts the originative claims and epistemic character of its individuated memory of Jesus.

The Johannine Prologue: A Communal Affirmation of the Narrative

While nearly all critical scholars agree that the Johannine Prologue reflects a worship community's affirmation of belief in the central elements of John's story of Jesus, fewer have considered the implications of its later development in relation to the more mundane narrative.⁵⁵ John 1:1-18 is more similar in its form and its content to 1 John 1:1-4 than it is to the rest of the Gospel's narrative, and just as the prologue to the first Johannine Epistle reflects a community's affirming response to the Johannine story of Jesus, so does the Gospel's Prologue. Given that John 21 is clearly added to the first ending of the Gospel by an editor, who also explains that he is not the author of the narrative, attributing that contribution to the deceased, dearly-beloved disciple (21:23-24), a likely inference is that the author of the Epistles served as the final editor of the Gospel (with Bultmann, here). As a result, a robust theory of Johannine composition must accompany critical judgments as to what features of John's narrative are rooted in historical memory and claim and which are rooted in theological development and attestation. Neither critical Jesus Research nor critical Johannine scholarship has effectively addressed John's composition factors as a basis for making distinctions between John's historical claims and theological interests.

Here some of the issues presented in the Johannine Epistles provide clues to the Gospel's interests and operations. More specifically, if the Johannine situation is dealing with aspects of church unity, engaging the world, denials of Jesus as the Christ, and denials of Jesus's having come in the flesh, these features account for at least some of John's distinctive portrayal of Jesus in the narrative.⁵⁶ Therefore, if the later Johannine material (siding here with Lindars,⁵⁷

Ashton,⁵⁸ Brown,⁵⁹ Smith,⁶⁰ and others) included John 1:1-18, 19:34-35, chapters 6, 15-17, and 21, and a few other asides, the following issues are clarified.

First, John's Prologue is not the first stroke of the quill, signaling a divine-*Logos* presentation of Jesus in the narrative. That was added later, whereas the original beginning of John is more like Mark—beginning with the ministry of John the Baptist about Jesus's being the Jewish Messiah. Therefore, some of the primary reasons for excluding all of John's narrative from historicity-consideration are based upon the flawed inference that the Prologue sets the stage for the Gospel's narration, when it was clearly added to enhance the reception of the narrative, reflecting a later and more developed theological set of understandings, representing Johannine Christianity's faith commitments. So, John's Prologue says more about the history of the Johannine situation than it does the Jesus of history, and it should not be used for or against historical-Jesus studies in relation to John's story of Jesus; pre-existent divinity claims are not a part of John's original narrative. Rather, the original beginning of John's narrative is more mundane, focusing on John the baptizer—more similar to Mark 1:1-15 than to Hebrews 1:1-4.

Second, what is apparent in the first edition of John's narrative is that its material does indeed seek to prove that Jesus is the Messiah-Christ, fulfilling the prophecies and typologies of Moses and Elijah. Here we see some pushback against Synoptic views: John is neither Elijah nor Moses; *Jesus* is. And, Jesus's challenges to Sabbath regulations and religious opposition in the name of Moses and the Law are substantiated by the claims that Moses wrote of Jesus (Deut 18:15-22). When both the narrator and Jesus declare that his prophetic word has come true, this shows that he indeed fulfills the Prophet-like-Moses typology and that Jesus is the Mosaic Messiah/Christ (John 2:22; 13:19; 18:9). Virtually all of the Son-Father relationship references are made with reference to Jesus's prophetic agency, rooted in this Mosaic typology, not a Gnostic Redeemer-Myth or even metaphysical claims about the divinity of the Son.⁶¹ Those discussions developed later, but John's foundational presentation of the Son's representation of the Father coheres closely with the parable of the vineyard owner's rejected son in Mark 12, and to see it as originating in high christological perspective is anachronistic and wrong. Therefore, John's original five signs of Jesus (assuming John 6 and 21 were added later), complementing the five books of Moses, are designed to invite belief in Jesus as the Messiah-Christ, availing the gift of life in his name (20:31).

Third, John's later material shows evidence of several issues in the Johannine situation that are being addressed in the meantime. While the earlier Gospel narrative is designed to convince audiences that Jesus is the Jewish Messiah, not all believe, and some depart from the community, plausibly returning to the Synagogue. Their interest may have been preserving Mosaic monotheism, and hence the claim that if they deny the Son, they will lose the Father (1 John 2:18-25). Apparently, this uneven reception among "his own" is attested in the later reflection of the Gospel's Prologue (John 1:10-13). Therefore, John's high christological material serves this apologetic interest, and should be understood in that way. In John's later material, though, we also find the most incarnational and anti-docetic thrust of John's narrative. Apparently addressing those who refuse to believe Jesus came in the flesh (1 John 4:1-3; 2 John 7), the Gospel's Prologue asserts "We beheld his flesh" (John 1:14), wherein the glory of God is paradoxically revealed. Likewise, Jesus's disciples must ingest his flesh and blood if they expect to retain the gift of eternal life, although swallowing that message is a hard thing to do (6:51-67). In the world, Jesus's followers will suffer tribulation (15:26-27; 16:33), and an eyewitness attests to having seen water and blood pouring from the side of the crucified Lord (19:34-35). The

martyrological death of Peter is foretold, and Jesus's followers are called to be faithful, no matter what the cost (21:15-24).

Aside from high and low aspects of John's Christology presented in the Prologue, the ambivalent presentation of Jesus's signs is also worth considering. On one hand, John's signs are embellished; on the other hand, they are also existentialized. While some of them defy naturalistic explanations and are therefore problematic for cause-and-effect approaches to historiography, it is also interesting that the narrator presents Jesus as rebuking the seeking of signs (4:48; 6:26), and those who have not believed are especially blessed (20:29). The point here is that John's high and low christological elements reflect early and late understandings of Jesus within the Johannine tradition, reflecting also developments within the Johannine situation. Therefore, while the Gospel's Prologue does indeed contain theological affirmations of Jesus's divinity, it does not eclipse the more mundane, historical content within the narrative, which may be serviceable in the historical quest of Jesus. Likewise, just because the *Gospel of Thomas* asserts that one must become a male to enter the Kingdom (GosThom 114), this does not mean the entire collection is a factor of Gnostic speculation alone. What is true about the Johannine tradition is that both early and late material appears to contain high and low presentations of Jesus, so the critical scholar must seek to make sense of the narrative's particular material on its own terms before judging John's story of Jesus to be historical or ahistorical, overall.

Mimesis or Memory?

Given that John possesses more non-symbolic illustrative details than any of the other Gospels, one inference among those swayed by John's theological thrust is to infer that these details have been added, not as indications of first-hand contact with terrain and historical events, but as mimetic imitations of reality. While John's verisimilitude certainly could have been added to make the story more graphic for later audiences, the fact is that Mark also possesses a good deal of this type of detail alongside John.⁶² If the inference is that this was a convention employed by contemporary authors, the case could be a worthy one. After all, Philostratus, in his *Life of Apollonius of Tyana*, renders a graphic narrative, so it is sometimes assumed that John's narrative is simply fictive and not rooted in historical memory based upon a contemporary convention.⁶³

When analyses of the four canonical Gospels are performed on this very issue, however, the likelihood of such a convention being applied to John's narrative falls apart, and it does so for three reasons. First, the canonical Gospels are closer to John than narratives about Apollonius two centuries later, so that is the closer genre comparison. Second, when analyses of Mark and the Gospel traditions making use of Mark (Matthew and Luke) are compared, they tend to omit details included in Mark, generalizing the detail instead of adding detail. Matthew and Luke will add units of narrative, but they overall omit names, places, and graphic details, sometimes adding generalizing statements about Jesus's fulfilling all righteousness (Matt) or teaching his followers and others about the Kingdom (Luke). Therefore, if it is argued that the character of John's prolific inclusion of detail is to be informed by contemporary parallels, the results point more directly in the direction of first-hand memory as opposed to fictive mimesis. Third, some of these details featured by John and Mark (200 and 300 denarii, green grass / much grass), which are not repeated by Matthew and Luke, so if some sort of contact is to be inferred between the Markan and Johannine traditions, this points to oral-tradition contact rather than written-tradition influence.

A thorough set of analyses between Synoptic parallels with John 6 and 18-19 shows that while John and Mark appear to possess independent memories of Jesus's ministry, despite impressive contacts. This likelihood is suggested by the fact that there is a good deal of non-symbolic, illustrative detail in John's rendering of these events in Jesus's ministry, and by the fact that neither Matthew nor Luke tends to add details to their treatments of Mark.⁶⁴ As a result, the strongest critical inference is that despite John's theological thrust, John's narrative is a dramatized history rather than a historicized drama. The latter is disconfirmed based upon the closest parallels: Matthew's and Luke's uses of Mark.

John in Relation to Mark: An Alternative History?

Johannine scholarship has debated the relation of John to Mark in a number of ways, but several aspects of that relationship are important to establish.⁶⁵ First, it is wrong to compare the developing Johannine tradition as knowingly alongside all three finalized Synoptic traditions; they probably were not gathered until a half-century or so after John's narrative was finalized. Therefore, John's tradition must be compared and contrasted with each of the Synoptic traditions, allowing inferences to emerge from the particulars of that analysis, beginning with Mark. Second, the contacts between John's and Mark's traditions cannot be simplistically assessed as factors of the completed documents; a longer dialectical history of intertraditional contact is more likely. That being the case, various forms of contact between oral and written traditions deserve critical consideration in developing an adequate approach. Third, because John shows no identical similarities with Mark, it cannot be said to be dependent upon Mark; nor can it be claimed that John is totally unaware of and independent of Mark. Most likely is the view that John's narrator was familiar with Mark, perhaps heard as a narration in one or more meetings for worship (with Mackay).⁶⁶ If such were the case, John's earlier developments show signs of being written for hearers of Mark, explaining John's departures from Mark as well as muted echoes.⁶⁷ Therefore, John follows Mark's pattern but produces an alternative history as an augmentation of Mark, and to some degree as a corrective to Mark. John's first edition is likely the second Gospel narrative, drawn together around 80-85 CE. Fourth, John's later material seems to harmonize John's narrative with Mark and the other Gospels, after the death of the Beloved Disciple, likely drawn together around 100 CE.

Assuming that John's narrative developed independently of Mark, but with at least a general awareness of its influence, John's presentation of Jesus and his ministry likely provides an alternative history, to be considered alongside Mark as the second Gospel, though its initial influence seems to have remained local. In addition to the discernible "interfluence" between the oral stages of the pre-Markan and early Johannine traditions,⁶⁸ John's presentation of Jesus should be seen as differing from Mark because of its historical interest rather than a factor of ignorance or theologized embellishment.

First, John's story of Jesus plausibly *augments Mark's narrative chronologically and geographically*. With apparent awareness of Mark 1:14, which asserts that Jesus's ministry begins *after* John was thrown into prison, John 3:24 clarifies that the beginning of Jesus's ministry in the Johannine narrative includes events that transpired *before* John was thrown into prison. Hence, the Johannine presentation of a less programmatic calling narrative and engagements with the Baptist and his followers explicitly augments Mark's abrupt beginning. In addition, the reference to the first and second signs of Jesus in John 2:11 and 4:54 reflects John's chronological augmentation of Mark in presenting two miracles performed before the healings and exorcisms of Mark 1. This action is corroborated by Matthew in its ordering the Capernaum

healing from afar before the healing of Simon Peter's mother-in-law in Matthew 8. The other three signs in John's earlier material augment Mark geographically. In addition to miracles done in Galilee and on the way to Jerusalem, Jesus also performed signs in Jerusalem and Bethany, which also explains the opposition of Judean leaders, which is nonetheless palpable in Mark's narrative despite his not being reported as having visited until his visit at the culmination of his ministry. Matthew again corroborates John's accounts, knowingly or otherwise, in reporting that Jesus performed healings in Jerusalem's temple precinct upon the blind and the lame (Matt 21:14). Jerusalem miracles of Jesus are only found in John 5 and 9. Luke also includes a second account of Jesus's raising a young man from the dead, a lesson about two sisters—Mary and Martha, and a parable about a poor dead man named Lazarus (Luke 7:11-17; 10:38-42; 16:19-31), suggesting at least some contact or familiarity with the Johannine tradition. If John's first edition were performed alongside Mark's rendering of Jesus's ministry, it would clearly have been understood as presenting an alternative account, filling in some of Mark's chronological and geographical lacunas.

Second, John seems to *correct several additional features of Mark's chronology and itinerary*, including presentations of Jesus's reception in the north. Explicitly, as Jesus himself had said (in Mark 6:4), that a prophet is not without honor except in his hometown, look how the Samaritans and Galileans received him (John 4:41-45)! Further, the Galileans had seen Jesus's earlier sign performed in Jerusalem at the beginning of his ministry—not the end—at the cleansing of the temple. This accounts for why Jerusalem leaders were scheming to put Jesus to death already upon his second visit, not simply a culminative response at the end of his ministry (John 5:18 versus Mark 14:55). Given that Papias cites the opinion of the Johannine Elder that Mark's rendering of Peter's preaching is adequate but *in the wrong order*, it may be assumed that John's presentation of an early temple cleansing and multiple trips to Jerusalem reflects an alternative chronological history of Jesus's ministry as a knowing corrective to Mark, not a theological fabrication. Further, the nearness of the Passover in John 2:13; 6:4; 11:55 palpably reflects political concerns rather than theological exposition, and John's two- or three-year ministry of Jesus is more historically plausible than Mark's single-Passover itinerary. John's presenting the last supper as happening the day before the Passover is also more likely than Mark's presenting the event as a cultic Passover meal (John 13:1; 19:14; Mark 14:12-14). And, John's referencing the sixth hour as the time of the crucifixion might be a correction to Mark's less realistic reference to the third hour, given Mark's reporting a rather extensive number of things that transpired beforehand (John 19:14; Mark 15:25). In that sense, John's rendering of the last days of Jesus is more realistic than that of Mark.

If the Johannine narrator were familiar with Mark's ordering and timing of events, these features of the Johannine rendering of Jesus's ministry should be seen as attempts to set the record straight chronologically and realistically, not theologically. Interestingly, along these lines, Mark actually corroborates some of John's alternative chronology. For one thing, while Mark references only one Passover, Jesus's ministry in Mark extends over at least two spring seasons. In addition to the final events in Jesus's ministry, the green grass of Mark's feeding narrative (Mark 6:39) reflects the event's association with an earlier springtime. For another, despite the last supper being presented as a Passover meal in Mark, Jesus is not crucified on the Passover but on the day before the Sabbath (assuming the Passover was on the Sabbath that year, Mark 15:42; John 19:31), thus bolstering confidence in John's alternative dating. Further, the temple incident in John, where Jesus is reported to have said something about the destruction of the temple—causing consternation among the Jerusalem populace—is referenced twice in Mark,

despite not having been narrated in Mark. In Mark 14:57-59 false witness at Jesus's trial claim Jesus had spoken about destroying the temple (apparently referencing the event described in John 2:19), and on the cross, passers by in Mark 15:29 not only repeat Jesus's reference to the temple's destruction, but they also reference his claim to rebuilding it in three days as mentioned only in John 2:19. Mark's story of Jesus thus appears to convey familiarity with events narrated only in John, so some cross-influence (to use Raymond Brown's term) appears likely between these two traditions. Therefore, not only do John's chronological differences from Mark imply a corrective interest, but some of Mark's material also appears to support John's rendering independently.

Third, if John's early narrative can be seen as developing alongside Mark's presentation of Jesus and his ministry, it should be seen as reflecting a *dialectical engagement* of Mark. Affirming the larger elements of Jesus's ministry, involving collaboration with that of John the Baptist, the gathering of followers, teachings about the spiritual character of God's workings in the world, healing on the Sabbath, popular reception, resistance from religious leaders, traveling to Jerusalem, culminating in the last days in Jerusalem, John's rendering of Jesus's ministry also displays several contradistinctive elements. Whereas the Synoptic rendering emphasizes the Kingdom, messianic secrecy, Jesus's commands over forces of nature, programmatic elements of disciples' ministries, formalized sacramentology, the leadership of twelve male disciples, the martyrdom of James and John, and the imminence of the *parousia* before apostles' deaths, the Johannine rendering emphasizes the leadership of the King, messianic disclosure, the existential character of Jesus's signs, familial and Spirit-based aspects of disciples' ministries, informal ecclesial presentations, the leadership of women and non-members of the twelve, the martyrdom of Peter, and the wrongful representation of Jesus's words about the *parousia* despite the apostles' deaths. Even pointedly, John the Baptist is presented in Mark as fulfilling the typologies of Elijah and the Prophet Moses, whereas in John he denies being such. These typologies are fulfilled by Jesus the Fourth Gospel, and thus in these cases John's theological understanding of Jesus and his ministry accounts for at least some of its dialectical engagements of Mark.

John's presenting a theologically interested set of dialectical alternatives to Mark, however, need not imply ahistoricity. Rather, John's less formal ecclesiology, positive presentation of women in leadership, existentialized view of miracles, and a present eschatological interest may indeed be closer to the ministry of Jesus of Nazareth than their Synoptic counterparts.⁶⁹ Whatever the case, John's presentation of Jesus and his ministry appears to have developed alongside Mark in a non-duplicative way, and this can be seen in the selection of materials as well as in the narrator's first closing statement in John 20:30-31. The reference to Jesus's having performed many signs in the presence of his disciples should be understood as "I know Mark's out there; stop bugging me for leaving things out; but *these things* are written so that you might believe." By the time the rest of John's narrative is finalized, the later rendering not includes the feeding, sea-crossing, discussion, and Peter's confession in John 6, thus harmonizing John's story of Jesus with the Synoptics. It also provides centripetal appeals for unity, counteracting centrifugal tensions within the Johannine situation (John 15-17), and Peter is rehabilitated in John 21, also around a charcoal fire, despite having denied Jesus around the same in John 18. Nonetheless, aware of criticisms for not including other familiar stories of Jesus and his ministry, a defense of John's alternative presentation is made by the final editor in John 21:25: "Look, if we would have included *everything* Jesus said and did in the Synoptics and elsewhere, there'd not be enough libraries, let alone enough books to describe these reports—

we're being selective, here, on purpose." Thus, John's earlier and later endings defend its augmentation of Mark and the Synoptics against questions raised as to its distinctive character.

Interestingly, these facts of John's similarities to and differences from Mark cohere entirely with John the Elder's opinion of Mark's narrative, as represented by Papias around 130 CE (Eusebius, *Hist eccl.* 3.39):⁷⁰

Mark, having become the interpreter of Peter, wrote down accurately, though not indeed in order, whatsoever he remembered of the things done or said by Christ. For he neither heard the Lord nor followed him, but afterward, as I said, he followed Peter, who adapted his teaching to the needs of his hearers, but with no intention of giving a connected account of the Lord's discourses, so that Mark committed no error while he thus wrote some things as he remembered them. For he was careful of one thing, not to omit any of the things which he had heard, and not to state any of them falsely.⁷¹

While many a commentary has been offered on this famous paragraph by scholars, the connection between its content and the opinion of the Johannine Elder has gone largely unnoticed critically. Further, they cohere with the phenomenology of the Johannine-Markan analysis above in three significant ways. (1) First, Mark's narrative is said to be fairly acceptable, but its order is flawed; thus, the Johannine narrative sets the record straight in ways that are largely plausible and are even confirmed by other material in Mark. Further, if Mark was gathering his material in pericopes and snippets, the single visit to Jerusalem may simply reflect Mark's culminative ordering of events—placing all engagements with religious authorities, the temple incident, and the last days of Jesus at the very end—for conjectural reasons rather than chronologically informed ones. It takes no historical knowledge to simply assume that the temple incident led to Jesus's arrest, trial, and death, but even in Mark Jesus is not arrested immediately after his triumphal entry to Jerusalem. This seems unlikely, and Mark's chronology is every bit as problematic as John's is on that score.⁷² (2) Second, Mark represents Peter's preaching pretty well, but it was crafted to meet the needs of Peter's audiences rather than a fair representation of Jesus's true intentions. This might be a reference to emerging church structures, male leadership, and an imminent *parousia* before the death of the apostles; whatever the case, it also appears to reflect a Johannine critique of Petrine renderings of Jesus's teachings as license to do the same. Therefore, the Johannine Evangelist and redactor may also have paraphrased Jesus's teachings in their own words, following other precedents—even among the Twelve—providing rather intentional connectives between paraphrastic Jesus's sayings and related actions. (3) Third, The Johannine Elder clarifies that Mark's problematic duplicative accounts are forgivable because he was simply trying to be conservative—seeking to leave nothing out. Therefore, two feedings instead of one, multiple healings of the blind and the lame, the casting out of demons and the healing of lepers, even Jesus's teachings in parables about the Kingdom—these need not be repeated in an independent narrative in the Johannine opinion as cited by Papias. Thus, John's critique of Mark's duplicative presentation is reflected in the first edition's non-duplicative presentation of Jesus and his ministry, as all five of those miracles are not found in Mark. Rather, John's presentation of Jesus and his ministry offers an augmentation, corrective, and complement to Mark as an alternative history rooted in an individuated gospel tradition rather than speculative theology or fictive narration.

John's Influence Upon Luke (and perhaps Q)

When assessing the character and origin of distinctive similarities between Luke and John, and also between Q and John, the issues are a bit different.⁷³ While John appears to have been finalized last among the canonical Gospels, a common inference among scholars is that John depended on other traditions that had been finalized previously. That approach, however, faces several problems. (1) First, just because John is finalized late, this does not imply that its material originated late and only late. Some of it was likely delivered earlier—in written or oral form, or both—and various traditions likely had different histories of contact and engagement with other traditions, including the Johannine. (2) Second, there are no identical similarities between John and the Synoptics; thus, even Barrett is forced to admit that if John made use of Synoptic traditions, it was not in the literary-dependency way that Matthew and Luke made use of Mark. Therefore, not only is it highly unlikely that John is dependent upon Mark, it is even less likely that John depended on Luke; few if any of Luke’s primary features are found in John (birth narratives, temptation scene, Nazareth sermon, parables of the Good Samaritan or the Prodigal Son, etc.). (3) Third, given that Luke depends on Mark, the places where Luke and John do agree suggest that Luke departs from Mark in Johannine directions as the most plausible inference. Bailey argued that Luke and John may have shared a common source, but that source is imaginary, and there is no evidence or hint of its existence. Thus, the strongest critical inference (with Lamar Cribbs)⁷⁴ is that because Luke departs from Mark at least six dozen times in ways that coincide with John, the Johannine formative tradition appears to have been familiar to Luke, at least partially, perhaps in oral stages of formation. This may even be suggested directly in Luke 1:2, where Luke expresses gratitude for what he has received from eyewitnesses and servants of the *Logos*.

Therefore, because several sorts of Johannine content are discernible in Luke, over and against what Luke has garnered from Mark, the strongest critical inference is that *the Johannine tradition influenced Luke* in several ways. It could be that these contacts came from a source other than the Johannine tradition, but they certainly cohere with what we find in John, and the most plausible critical inference is that some form of the Johannine tradition played a role in Luke’s additions to and departures from Mark. (1) First, note the Johannine additions of material and detail: the “right” ear of the servant was severed (John 18:10; Luke 22:50); Satan enters Judas (John 13:27; Luke 22:3); the tomb is one in which no one had ever been laid (John 19:41; Luke 23:53); Peter arrives at the tomb and sees the linen cloths lying there (John 20:5; Luke 24:12). (2) Second, note the addition of Johannine events and persons by Luke: Jesus travels through Samaria in ministry as well as Galilee (John 4:4-42; Luke 17:11); sisters Mary and Martha are introduced, having similar roles (John 11:1-45; 12:1-11; Luke 10:38-42); a living dead man named Lazarus is added to Luke’s narrative in parabolic form (John 11:1-12:17; Luke 16:19-31); a great catch of fish is introduced within a calling narrative (John 21:1-14; Luke 5:1-11). (3) Third, Luke departs from Mark’s presentations in ways cohering with John’s: Luke omits Mark’s second feeding and relocates the confession of Peter after the feeding of the 5,000, not the 4,000 (John 6:68-69; Luke 9:20); Peter’s confession in Luke, “the Christ of God,” conflates “the Christ” in Mark with “the Holy One of God” in John (Mark 8:29 & John 6:69; Luke 9:20); Luke changes the head anointing to a foot anointing, coinciding with John against Mark (Mark 14:1-11 & John 12:1-8; Luke 7:36-50); Luke moves the servanthood motif to the last supper, where it is in John (John 13:1-17; Luke 22:24-30). (4) Fourth, Luke adds Johannine themes to Jesus’s teaching—themes not found in Mark: the Holy Spirit will teach believers what they need to know and say (John 14:26 Luke 12:12); women make confessions in John and Luke (John 11: 27; Luke 11:27); Samaritans are reported as receiving Jesus’s ministry with gratitude

(John 4:39-42; Luke 17:16; Acts 8:7-8, 13-17); Jesus refers to “my Kingdom” only in John and Luke (John 18:36; Luke 22:30). These and over fifty other instances where Luke departs from Mark and coincides with John could simply be coincidences. If, however, they reflect intertraditional contact, the strongest inference is that Luke demonstrates a good deal of familiarity with the Johannine story of Jesus in his incorporation of Mark, incomplete though that knowledge appears to have been.⁷⁵

The Q tradition is more problematic, though, for several reasons. As the Q document or tradition itself is a hypothetical reality, so its character and existence are themselves in question. It could be, for instance, that the non-Markan double tradition reflects Luke’s use of Matthew as well as Mark, suggesting Luke’s later finalization. That, of course would also augur for Luke’s familiarity with the Johannine tradition, rather than John’s familiarity with Luke. Further, it is nearly impossible to know which direction influence may have traveled, and if contact happened during the oral stages of these traditions, it could be that cross-influence, or “interfluence,” may characterize the reality more effectively than a simplistic source-critical view. Whatever the case, several interesting features cohere between the triple tradition without Mark. (1) First, similar narrative elements include: the one coming after John will baptize with the Holy Spirit (Matt 3:11; Luke 3:16; John 1:26); John’s baptisms are across the Jordan (Matt 3:13; Luke 3:3; John 1:28; 10:40); the healing in Capernaum is from afar (Matt 5:5-13; Luke 7:1-10; John 4:46-54); the Jerusalem leaders seek to destroy Jesus (Matt 11:18-19; Luke 19:47; 5:18; John 7:25, 30; 8:59; 10:31; 11:53). (2) Second, Jesus teaches about discipleship: the harvest is plentiful, and the laborers are few (Matt 9:37-38; Luke 10:2; John 4:35); to those who ask and it shall be given (Matt 7:7-11; Luke 11:9-13; John 14:13-14; 15:7; 16:24); a servant/disciple is not above one’s master (Matt 10:24-25; Luke 6:40; John 13:16; 15:20). (3) Third, echoes of themes abound: Abraham is referenced as father (Matt 3:9; Luke 3:8; John 8:39); entering through the narrow gate is key (Matt 7:13-14; Luke 13:23-24; John 10:7); the shepherd cares for the sheep (Matt 18:10-14; Luke 15:3-7; John 10:1-18); the prayer of Jesus is momentous (Matt 6:9-13; Luke 11:1-4; John 17:1-17). (4) Fourth, the Father-Son Relationship is key: the Father and the Son’s mutuality of knowing is pivotal (Matt 11:27; Luke 10:22; John 3:35; 7:28-29; 10:14-15; 13:3-4; 17:1-3, 22-25); the one receiving/hearing Jesus receives/hears the one who sent him (Matt 10:40; Luke 10:16; John 13:20; 12:44-45; 5:23). Most telling here is that the Johannine Father-Son relationship apparently has been embraced by Q, raising the question as to whether either John’s tradition or a parallel memory of Jesus underlay the double tradition referred to as Q. Or, it could have gone back to Jesus, who legitimated his words and works on the basis of a divine commission—described in a variety of ways among the gospel traditions.

John’s Dialectical Engagement of Matthean Influence

While the first edition of John appears to have built around Mark, earlier stages of engagement—perhaps during the oral stages of the pre-Markan and early Johannine traditions—appear also to have had some contact. Raymond Brown referred to the engagement of preachers traveling in ministry appearing to underlie some of these contacts as cross-influence (cf. Peter and John traveling together in ministry through Samaria in Acts 8, for instance); I call it “interfluence.” It also appears that some “interfluentiality” might also have been the case during later phases of the Johannine tradition’s development in relation to the Matthean tradition. Again, the lack of explicit textual contacts makes it unlikely that John is depending on Matthew or that Matthew is depending on John in a textual-literary way, but there does appear to be some engagement between these two traditions, plausibly in the later stages of their development.

In terms of Matthean engagement of the Johannine narrative or themes, Matthew shows knowledge of the healings of the blind and the lame in Jerusalem's temple district, reported only in John 5 and 9 (Matt 21:14). Matthew also locates the healing from afar in Capernaum before the healing of Simon Peter's mother-in-law, perhaps reflecting familiarity with the Johannine claims regarding the first and second signs of Jesus, as though they preceded the healing of Peter's mother-in-law as reported in Mark 1. Matthew's presentation of Christ being present in the midst of those who gather in his name (Matt 18:18-20) echoes the fuller Johannine presentation of Christ's ongoing presence at work through the Holy Spirit in the gathered community of his friends (John 14-16). Matthew also reinforces the theme of Jesus's fulfilling the Prophet predicted by Moses in Deuteronomy (Matt 21:11), as John's Jesus declares that Moses wrote of him (John 4:46), and there are twenty-four parallels between Deuteronomy 18:15-22 and the Father-Son relationship in John. Matthew's and John's presentations of Jesus as the Jewish Messiah also reinforce each other in the mission to Jewish and Gentile audiences, so some of these similarities could reflect indirect contacts from a shared ethos of Christian identity and outreach rather than direct intertraditional engagement.

John's engagement with the Matthean tradition reflects also a bit of familiarity with the Matthean text or awareness of how some of its teachings on ecclesiology were being used by contemporaries in the late first-century situation. In particular, it seems likely that the primacy-loving Diotrephes of 3 John was applying the structure-imbuing thrust of Matthew 16:17-19 and the accountability-managing themes of Matthew 18:15-17 in ways strident. This is not a matter of dependence, though; it more closely resembles a dialectical and corrective engagement by the Johannine leadership. On several fronts, the Johannine presentation of Jesus offers an alternative to the presentation of Jesus's will for the church in Matthew 16:17-19. Confessions in John are made by women, not by members of the twelve (Nathanael and Martha); blessedness follows from obeying Jesus and believing without having seen, not from making the correct confession; flesh and blood must be ingested by Jesus's followers: an invitation to martyr-faithfulness; images for the church are more fluid and dynamic: sheep and shepherd, vine and branches; the apostolic commission extends to a multiplicity of followers, not a Petrine constriction; and, Peter affirms Jesus's authority rather than having his authority (and that of those who follow in his wake) affirmed by Jesus. Put sharply, Peter returns the keys of the Kingdom to Jesus, according to John 6:68-69, where they belonged all along. In these ways, John's presentation of Jesus and his will for the church puts forward a more primitive ecclesial vision of leadership and organization, despite being finalized last among the Gospels.⁷⁶

An Inclusive Quest for Jesus Requires the Use of John

In the light of these features, and if all worthy sources are to be included in the historical quest of Jesus, it is critically irresponsible that the one Gospel claiming first-hand memory of Jesus should be programmatically omitted from the enterprise. After all, if Luke made use of John in his understanding Jesus, why shouldn't modern scholars? John indeed has highly theological material in it, but it also has more mundane and grounded material than all the other Gospels put together. The Johannine Prologue and some of its high-christological rhetorical features must be distinguished from more historically grounded material within the narrative, but even the Prologue asserts the flesh-becoming itinerary of Christ, the Word (with Bultmann, John 1:14). And, it must be remembered that John's story of Jesus is rendered through the paraphrased and personally adapted teaching of the Beloved Disciple, as all remembered narrations do, so some of that material must be assessed in cognitive-critical and contextual perspective. Thus, in

comparing John's story of Jesus with the Synoptic traditions, individually and collectively, particular judgments of historicity are facilitated. Agreeing that John should be used within Jesus Research, however, is only part of the battle; the real test follows with seeking to discern how to make use of John within the historical quest of Jesus, alongside the other gospel traditions and available resources.

V. Making Use of John in the Critical Quest for Jesus: A Call for Second Criticality

If John is to be used within the historical quest of Jesus of Nazareth, how ought scholars proceed within that quest? John ought to be seen as an independent Jesus tradition, which, though theologically developed, nonetheless has its own story to tell in terms of historical memory and witness. That tradition, however, developed within particular contexts, and the Evangelist's way of telling the story of Jesus within that setting played a formative role in that process. In making use of John within a new quest for Jesus, however, new criteria for determining historicity must be established, allowing more textured perspectives on Jesus in bi-optic perspective. If all sources are to be used, John must be included; but if John is to be included, finding ways to do so effectively is required. In negotiating tradition and criticism, it is not only second naïveté that is welcomed, but second criticality is required. After all, there is considerable disagreement among critical analyses, and simply to raise a question about a view (traditional or otherwise) is not to overturn it. Thus, criticism must be challenged critically as well as tradition.⁷⁷

John as an Alternative Memory of Jesus and his Mission Among the Gospels

While the Gospel of John is different from the other canonical Gospels, it deserves to be considered alongside them. Mistaken, however, is the view that John was initially developed with all three Synoptics in view, when knowledge along those lines did not become available for several decades—perhaps even a decade or more after the completion of John's narrative. Most likely, though, is that John's narrator had the Gospel of Mark in view, although probably not in written form. That being the case, John's early stages as a written tradition appears to have had Mark in mind, written as an alternative rendering of Jesus's ministry, thus augmenting, complementing, and correcting Mark in modest ways. John's first edition thus includes five signs of Jesus—showing him to be the Jewish Messiah, cohering with five books of Moses—a Jewish-rhetorical design replicated also in Matthew's five discourses of Jesus. The first two signs in John augment Mark's rendering of Jesus's ministry chronologically; the three Judean signs of Jesus in John augment Mark geographically. Put otherwise, Matthew and Luke built *upon* Mark; John built *around* Mark. John's later material, including the signs in John 6 and other content, harmonizes John with the other Gospels. Therefore, John is different from and similar to the Synoptics on purpose, arguably with some degree of knowing intentionality.

John's Presentation of Jesus in Cognitive-Critical Perspective

If John and Mark are considered foundational for the two primary trajectories remembering Jesus and his ministry, a key factor in their similarities and differences is the likelihood that at least two followers of Jesus had distinctive ways of telling stories of Jesus and his ministry.⁷⁸ While it cannot be known who these particular followers of Jesus were, and several tradents may have been involved in the developing and furthering of these traditions, an underdeveloped feature of gospel traditions is the link between the ministries of the preachers and teachers and ways they presented the ministry of Jesus. From a cognitive-critical

perspective, distinctive presentations of Jesus's teachings and works likely cohered with the interests and capacities of those who furthered them, and this will have affected their distinctive renderings of Jesus's words and works. For instance, while all nine of the Johannine themes and images represented in John's distinctive I-am sayings are also found in the Synoptics, the Fourth Evangelist likely adapted them in Christocentric ways.⁷⁹ It could also be that differing first impressions of Jesus and his ministry facilitated these associative links. While the Markan Jesus refers to the burning bush (Mark 12:26), and Jesus makes absolute I-am sayings in Mark as well as John (Mark 6:50; John 6:20), at least one of the disciples might have associated an identification saying (*egō eimi* = It is I) with a theophanic text (*egō eimi* = I am). If the latter association, typified in the Johannine sea-crossing scenario, reflects the experience and perspective of the Johannine trident, it is easy to understand how Ricoeur's surplus of meaning might have led to the Johannine rendering of Jesus and his ministry in exalted christological ways.

Likewise, while Jesus may indeed have linked faith to the seeing of miracles, the Synoptic preachers likely furthered the implication to explain the relative dearth of miracles in later experience: if miracles do not happen it is not God's fault; it is the fault of humans and their lack of faith. And, if the role of Peter in the Acts of the Apostles is any indicator of the sorts of power-ministries some apostles are remembered as having exercised, one can imagine such a legacy continuing in the presentation of Jesus and his ministry by them and their followers. Conversely, the relative dearth of miracles in early Christian experience is alleviated by the Johannine Evangelist's pointing to the existential meaning of Jesus's signs, over and against their wondrous value. Therefore, blessed are those who have not seen, and yet believe (John 20:29). When comparing Petrine (pre-Markan) and Johannine traditions, individuated impressions of Jesus's ministry likely extended from the days of the apostles to the eras following their departures and deaths. And, a good deal of these individuated perspectives can be seen in the similarities and differences between John and Mark in particular—likely resulting from a set of cognitive-critical factors, a subject requiring further critical inquiry.

The Developing Memory of Jesus and his Mission Within the Johannine Situation

The Johannine memory of Jesus developed in its own individuated ways quite independent of the Synoptic traditions, although there may have been several forms and levels of intertraditional dialogue along the way. In the first phase of the Johannine situation, in Palestine before the Evangelist moved to a diaspora setting around 70 CE, two sets of socio-religious dialogues are apparent. The first involved *tensions between Jewish leaders in Jerusalem and Judea and followers of the Galilean prophet, Jesus*. These north-south tensions are reflected in the presentation of the *Ioudaioi* as loving the praise of humans rather than the glory of God, challenging Jesus's authority, and holding to temple and synagogue codes of religious operation (Sabbath laws, religious festivals, etc.). These tensions reflect memory of Jesus's ambivalent reception in Jerusalem as well as the same among his followers. The second set of dialogues during this phase (30-70 CE) reflects *tensions between followers of Jesus and followers of John the Baptist*. Here John plays the role of the key witness to Jesus's being the Messiah, not he. Therefore, John's presentation of the Jerusalem-based leaders' opposing Jesus and the Baptist's affirming Jesus connects Jesus and his ministry with the needs of the emerging Johannine situation. In that sense, one level of history speaks to another in meaningful, supportive ways.

The second phase of the Johannine situation (70-85 CE) follows a transition to a setting within the Gentile mission, and there is no better site to infer than the traditional setting of

Ephesus and Asia Minor, for which there is ample second-century attestation. In early Christian memory, Ephesus has no competitors as the developing setting of Johannine Christianity. Here again two dialectical engagements present themselves within the Johannine writings and related literature. First, *ambivalent engagements with leaders of the local Jewish population* are apparent. Here the authority of Moses and scripture is debated—perhaps even deuteronomic texts, in particular. Whereas the Son’s relation to the Father is challenged on the basis of the oneness of God in Deut 6, the authenticity of Jesus is defended by the Johannine leadership as fulfilling Deut 18: Moses wrote of Jesus; he is the prophet Moses predicted, confirmed by his word coming true. A second crisis during this period *emerges with the ascendancy of Domitian as emperor* (81-96 CE), in that he required public respect for the empire in the form of emperor laud. Throughout the Roman Empire, but especially in Ephesus, in its competition with Pergamum for *neokoros* status, non-Jewish subjects were required to show their respect for the imperial presence by either confessing Caesar as lord, or offering incense to his image, or both. Hence, the confession of Thomas, “My Lord and my God!” in John 20:28 would have been a pointed challenge to the Roman presence in the second and third phases of the Johannine situation. It was during this phase that the Johannine narrative was drawn together—both as an apologetic to show that Jesus was indeed the Jewish Messiah (the five signs of Jesus cohere with the five books of Moses), who also was to be followed and served as Lord, even against hostilities in the world.

The third phase of the Johannine situation (85-100 CE) shows evidence of two further crises, although previous dialectical tensions continued. The first involved *the docetizing response of Gentile believers in Jesus to growing pressures to stay engaged with culture and society in support of local customs and festivals accentuated by the imperial presence*. As a means of legitimating assimilation with culture, non-Jewish believers in Jesus might have argued that because he was divine he did not suffer; therefore, his followers need not be expected to do the same. In corrective response to creeping Docetism, the Johannine Evangelist reminds later audiences of Jesus’s earlier teachings on the way of the cross. Put in different ways, but still cohering with the thrust of this theme in Mark 10:38-39 and elsewhere, Jesus’s followers are called upon to be willing to ingest the flesh and blood of Jesus; the bread he offers is his flesh, given for the life of the world. That nourishment emboldens followers in later generations to count the cost and to commit themselves to martyr-willingness in the face of emerging challenges and hostilities. Therefore, later additions to the narrative remind audiences that physical water and blood came forth from the side of Jesus, and that the Word became flesh, in whose presence the glory of God is paradoxically revealed. The second crisis during this phase reflects *dialectical engagements with Christian church leaders in the area*. If the likes of Diotrephes, “who loves primacy” in 3 John 9-10, have been excluding Johannine ministers from their churches in the interest of asserting a hierarchical (and Petrine) approach to order and governance, this accounts for the later emphasis in the Johannine narrative (especially in chs. 6, 15-17, and 21) upon a Spirit-based approach to Christ’s leadership within the gathered community of believers. Therefore, while John is likely the last of the four canonical Gospels to have been finalized, its egalitarian and familial ecclesiology reflects a more primitive understanding of church governance—argued in the name of a historical memory of the charismatic Prophet from Galilee within a later, cosmopolitan setting.

The importance of considering the history of the Johannine situation in longitudinal perspective is that it helps one appreciate the historical contexts within which John’s historical memory of Jesus was developing and delivered. Within such a setting, exorcisms and leper-

healings might not have been as helpful in telling the story of Jesus and his ministry. Likewise, Kingdom sayings emerging within Synoptic memories of Jesus’s teachings might not have been as potent in their reach as connecting later audiences existentially with ways that Jesus fulfills the essence of life-producing bread and water, darkness-dispelling light, death-defying life, and the living shepherd and vine as the way forward for all seekers of truth in a Hellenistic setting. One can even discern two distinctive purposes between the first edition of John’s narrative and its final compilation following the death of the Beloved Disciple. The first edition leads people to believe that Jesus is the Jewish Messiah—an apologetic thrust; the later material calls for followers of Jesus to abide and remain in him and his community—a pastoral thrust. Thus, even what it means to “believe” in Jesus shows some development between the earlier and later stages of John’s story of Jesus. In both of these concerns, the Johannine memory of Jesus of Nazareth is crafted in such ways as to address the needs of emerging situations as understood by the Johannine narrator and editor—over and against other Gospel narratives—as an alternative (and needed) history of Jesus. And, that’s what all historiography does. It connects memories of the past with the needs of the present; there is no such thing as non-rhetorical historiography.

Revised Criteria for Determining Gospel Historicity

In the task of including John’s story of Jesus in the historical quest for Jesus, new criteria for determining historicity must be introduced. Multiple attestation, dissimilarity, rationalistic naturalism, and circular coherence have functioned to marginalize the Johannine witness as having any historical value at all, but if all worthy sources are to be included, new criteria must be devised. These criteria should allow for including worthy Johannine and Synoptic material, while also helping the historian distinguish between earlier and later understandings of the past. It also is important to make judgments in terms of gradations of certainty, not simply to force an either/or judgment, when a more nuanced perspective is required. Therefore, in contrast to the either-or approach of the Jesus Seminar, designed to throw judgments into sharp relief at times for effect, a more measured approach would allow a middle ground (sometimes issues are simply “possible”—not entirely problematic or plausible), still averting claims to certainty on either end of the spectrum. Therefore, gradations of certainty, and a new set of criteria for determining gospel historicity include the following:⁸⁰

<i>Gradations of Certainty:</i>	
Certainly not	1-14%
Unlikely	15-29%
Questionable	30-44%
Possible	45-54%
Plausible	55-69%
Likely	70-84%
Certain	85-99%

The importance of using a more nuanced approach to measuring gradations of certainty in assessing the likelihood of particular features is that it opens up the middle in terms of what might be “possible” and “plausible,” as well as what might be “possible” though “questionable.” It also distinguishes “certainly not” from “unlikely” and “likely” from “certainly.” Most errors among analysts tend to be factors of moving to the extremes as a result of not affirming something closer to the middle: “plausible” is wrongly taken to imply “certain,” and

“questionable” is wrongly taken to imply “certainly not.” And, explaining *why* a judgment fits within any of the gradations along the continuum reduces equivocation and clarifies the basis upon which one’s judgments can be evaluated critically by others. Bases for those judgments, however, must be adequate for the task, and following are a more fitting set of criteria for determining gospel historicity—if all worthy sources are to be consulted—including the Gospel of John.

New Criteria for Determining Historicity:

- *Corroborative Impression Versus Multiple Attestation.* A huge problem with the criterion of multiple attestation is that by definition it excludes everything that might be added to Mark’s account of Jesus’s ministry by other gospel traditions and writers. Further, if Mark was used by Matthew and Luke, then triple-tradition material may simply denote their uses of Mark rather than reflecting independent attestations of a historical memory or event. And, if anything within John—or for that matter, in Matthew or Luke—is intended to augment or correct Mark, it is automatically excluded from consideration, even if the basis for such a judgment is flawed. A more adequate approach looks for corroborative sets of impressions, wherein paraphrases, alternative ways of putting something, or distinctive renderings of a similar feature inform a fuller understanding of the ministry of Jesus. Such an approach would thus include the Johannine witness rather than excluding it programmatically.
- *Primitivity Versus Dissimilarity or Embarrassment.* While the criteria of dissimilarity and embarrassment might keep one from mistaking later Christian views for earlier ones going back to Jesus, they also tend to distort the historiographic process, itself. What if apostolic Christians and their successors actually did get something right in their memories of Jesus? Or, what if Jesus of Nazareth actually did teach conventional Jewish views during his ministry? The criterion of dissimilarity would thereby exclude such features from historical consideration, allowing only the odd or embarrassing features to be built upon. Even if such data is unlikely to be concocted, to exclude other material from the database of material creates an odd assortment of portraiture material, which if used, is likely to create a distortive image of Jesus. And, while embarrassing features might be less likely to have been concocted, does a collage of unseemliness really represent a subject better than an assortment of honorable and less honorable features? A more adequate way forward is to identify primitive material, seeking to distinguish it from its more developed counterparts. This may include Palestine-familiarity features, Aramaic and Hebraic terms, primitive institutional developments, and other undeveloped material less influenced by the later mission to the Gentiles.
- *Critical Realism Versus Dogmatic Naturalism or Supranaturalism.* Just as dogmatic supranaturalism is an affront to historical inquiry, so is dogmatic naturalism—especially when it functions to exclude anything that might approximate the wondrous in gospel narratives. John’s Prologue was probably added to a later or final edition of the Gospel, so its cosmic perspective should not eclipse or distort the more conventional features of John’s narrative, just as the birth narratives of Matthew and Luke should not eclipse their more mundane features. Rather, political realism, religious anthropology, and social-sciences analyses should provide helpful lenses for understanding the perception of Jesus as a Galilean prophetic figure in all four Gospel traditions. After all, John’s narrative begins in ways similar to Mark’s, launched by the association of Jesus with John the

Baptist, and it concludes with his arrest, trials, and death in Jerusalem at the hand of the Romans. Therefore, historical and critical realism acknowledges the historical problem of wondrous claims, but it also considers cognitive, religious, political, and societal aspects of realism that might account for such impressions.

- *Open Coherence Versus Closed Portraiture.* Two central flaws in coherence-oriented criteria for determining historicity in the quest for Jesus include the circularity of the approach and the closed character of its portraiture. On one hand, the Gospels form the primary database for determining a coherent impression of Jesus of Nazareth; on the other, those same Gospels are evaluated on the basis of information contained within them. Further, scholars too easily build a view of what cannot represent a feature of Jesus's ministry based upon the narrowing down of what he must have done and said.

What results from a more nuanced approach to gospel historicity is that degrees of plausibility can be inferred and assessed with greater acuity and discernment. Most significant for historical Jesus studies is the impression that David Strauss faced when he wrote his third edition of the *Das Leben Jesu*. Here Strauss came to doubt his doubts as to John's ahistoricity, although he later changed his mind and reverted back to his absolutist skeptical stance in his subsequent editions—a factor of Baur's insistence on his larger revisionist program. However, if John is likewise seen today as an autonomous Jesus tradition developing alongside the other accounts but not dependent on them, it comes to serve as an independent attestation of Jesus and his ministry as well as something of a dialogical engagement of the Mark-based accounts. That being the case, some features of Jesus's ministry are most robustly represented in the Synoptics, while the Johannine presentation of Jesus and his work might be historically preferable in other ways. Further, in a number of cases John and the Synoptics cohere in distinctively attested ways, and these corroborative accounts serve as independent attestations of Jesus and his ministry, thus bolstering a more textured set of understandings than simply drawing upon the Synoptics alone. Put otherwise, the Synoptic witness to Jesus is corroborated independently by a contemporary source, not extra-canonically but intra-canonically: the Gospel of John. Given that the four canonical Gospels were not grouped together until the mid-to-late second century CE, an independent source of verification need not be extracanonical.

What is Meant by “History?” A Dialogical Approach

An interesting fact is that gospel historiography in the modern era has been subjected to standards of assessment that are by no means applied to any other subject in ancient history. This is understandable, as their subject, Jesus, is arguably the most important single figure in western history—perhaps in world history. The stakes indeed are high. On the other hand, because of the tendency for advocates and adversaries to claim too much and too little, both fideism and skepticism abound. A more realism-friendly approach to gospel historicity, however, deserves to make use of memory theory, perspective theory, social-sciences analysis, cognitive-critical studies, and rhetorical analysis as interdisciplinary means of appreciating the overall perspective of the gospels in the light of critical realism.

Given that several sorts of dialogues are at work in even the canonical Gospels' presentations of Jesus, these dialectical realities require consideration in determining the character of their historicity, or the lack thereof. First, multiple impressions of Jesus and his ministry surfaced among his followers and non-followers, evoking dialogues between earlier and later experiences and perspectives. Second, those impressions developed in the ministries of

Jesus's followers and their followers, addressing dialogically the needs of emerging audiences. How could it be otherwise? Third, as units of material became transmitted in written forms, or purveyed by others, stories of Jesus at times engaged and co-opted rhetorical tropes as a means of furthering the appeal of the Jesus narratives—including appeals to Jewish Scripture and employments of religious conventions within contemporary societies. Fourth, as units were gathered into overall gospel narratives, oral and written traditions were ordered and crafted into gospel forms, connecting earlier reports of Jesus and his ministry with the needs of later audiences. Fifth, as gospel traditions engaged each other, literary assimilation was made of earlier traditions (especially Mark for use by Matthew and Luke; there is no evidence of non-Johannine traditions underlying John) in the construction of later renderings of Jesus's ministry. Sixth, in addressing needs of later audiences, dialogues within traditions and between them, albeit in distinctive ways, led to the productions of the Gospels following Mark, but in different ways. Therefore, the Gospels and Jesus must be analyzed in bi-optic perspective, as such an approach takes into consideration the varying levels and forms of dialogue germane to the canonical renderings of their subject and his work. These features are elemental to the critical analysis of gospel traditions in assessing their origins, character, and developments.

By focusing on *corroborative impression*, perspectives emerging from similar presentations of Jesus, even if not identical or in multiple sources, can still provide plausible and likely understandings of what Jesus said and did. By focusing on *primitivity*, earlier impressions of Jesus can be established as plausible bases upon which to construct views that include later developments while also noting their departures from earlier memories. By focusing on *critical realism*, exaggerated claims of supernaturalism can be distanced from political, religious, sociological, economic, and psychological realities serving to contextualize reports and claims jarring against reasoned sensibilities. By focusing on *open coherence*, varying impressions of Jesus can be drawn together into a synthesized whole rather than creating distorted portraits of Jesus based on incorporating only parsimonious certainties at the expense of a wealth of impressions reflecting plausible information about Jesus of Nazareth. These more nuanced and measured approaches might run the risk of making some errors, far greater critical errors have accompanied the one-sided positivism of modernistic Jesus studies at the expense of more critically adequate quests for the Jesus of history.⁸¹ The robust promise of the critical enterprise is that it invites critical engagement and analysis in seeking to devise and employ the best tools possible in service to the scientific inquiry being conducted.

VI. Conclusion: The Gospels and Jesus in Bi-Optic Perspective

In establishing a genuinely adequate quest for Jesus, ways must be found to include the Johannine witness, alongside other traditions, although critically so. If second- and third-century resources are going to be used in the interest of an inclusive and comprehensive approach, and if the venture is to be critically respectable, ways of accessing Jesus-tradition material in the one Gospel claiming first-hand memory of Jesus and his ministry, albeit theologically developed, must be found. And yet, the way is fraught with landmines, detours, and potholes, requiring an overall theory addressing the multiplicity of the Johannine riddles.⁸² Given that Mark and John may be seen as the Bi-Optic Gospels, representing two individuated perspectives on Jesus from the earliest stages of their traditions through the latest stages, approaching Jesus in bi-optic perspective seems the best approach, critically.

As a set of ways forward, the following questions seem worthy of consideration, for making advances in terms of second criticality. (1) Beginning with Mark's narrative and the

plausibly inferred traditions underlying it, what can be known of Jesus from this first narrative rendering of Jesus and his mission, followed by the contributions of Matthew and Luke? (2) Assuming the author of John's initial narrative rendering of Jesus and his ministry has at least some familiarity with Mark, how might it represent John's following, augmenting, and perhaps correcting Mark? (3) Assuming some sort of dialectical engagement between the Johannine and Synoptic traditions, how might John have influenced or been engaged by other traditions, reflecting intertraditional dialogues regarding understandings and meanings of Jesus and his ministry? (4) How might John as an independent means of verification of and challenge to the Synoptics help critical scholars refine their understandings of Jesus and his ministry, providing a sense of corroborative impression in addition to John's dialectical engagement of other traditions? (5) How might similar-but-different presentations of Jesus among the gospel traditions provide a fuller and more textured sense of historical memory, availing a greater sense of critical realism regarding political, religious, economic, sociological, and psychological dynamics related to the historic ministry of Jesus? (6) Using John and other Jesus-tradition witnesses as resources, how might a fuller understanding of Jesus and his ministry be thus garnered by approaching Jesus and the Gospels in bi-optic perspective, based on a larger set of theories related to the dialogical autonomy of the Fourth Gospel? (7) In expanding the analysis of worthy Jesus-tradition material beyond the canonical Gospels, how does John's witness to Jesus also extend to contributions of the Pauline, Petrine, and general letters of the New Testament, as well as non-canonical sources, including the Gospels of Thomas, Philip, and Truth, and also the Muratorian Fragment, Tatian's Diatesseron, and the Shepherd of Hermas? (8) In making use of the Gospel of John in the quest for Jesus, how might the most important contributions of the 19th century quest for Jesus help us reengage the works of Schleiermacher, Neander, Baur, Strauss, and others—accounting for their insights in the light of more adequate views of historicity? (9) In finding a place for the Gospel of John within the New and Renewed Quests for Jesus and the Renewed Look at the Fourth Gospel, how might the Judaism of Jesus, and a focus on Johannine primitivity provide a source of independent verification and falsification in analyzing the Synoptic witness to Jesus and his ministry? (10) By including the Gospel of John within the social- and cognitive-scientific studies of the Third Quest for Jesus, how might John's contribution to socio-religious, political, economic, and psychological understandings of Jesus and his ministry facilitate discernment of originative and developing memories of Jesus among all gospel traditions—including John?

Given that lopsided positivism of verification has contributed to false negatives and distortive positives in the modern quests for the Jesus of history, the first three quests for Jesus have produced incomplete and inadequate understandings of Jesus. As a result of the fact that portrayals of Jesus have built upon partial representations of reconstructed information about Jesus, modern Jesus studies have produced skewed portraits of Jesus and his ministry. Given the critical inadequacies inherent to the dehistoricization of John and the de-Johannification of Jesus, the critical way forward is clear. Albeit fraught with new challenges and complexities, the Gospel of John can no longer be excluded from historical Jesus Research if all worthy sources are to be utilized. The question, of course, is how to do so, and that will require addressing the Johannine riddles, developing an understanding of John's character and origin, devising adequate criteria for determining Johannine and Synoptic historicity, coming to understand the Gospels and Jesus in bi-optic perspective, and also finding more adequate ways of envisioning historical memory itself as a correction to its modernistic distortions.

Within the new millennium this work is already begun, and thus there is no need to call for a Fourth Quest for Jesus. Given the advancements of the John, Jesus, and History Project, the Princeton-Prague Symposia, the Enoch Seminar,⁸³ and the new critical work of New Testament scholars internationally, such an enterprise is already well underway.

¹ On the history of John's contributions to christological and theological discussions in the patristic era, see T. E. Pollard, *Johannine Christology and the Early Church* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970); Maurice F. Wiles, *The Spiritual Gospel: The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel in the Early Church* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960); Anthony Casarella, *The Johannine Paraclete in the Early Church: A Study in the History of Exegesis* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1983); Paul N. Anderson, *The Christology of the Fourth Gospel: Its Unity and Disunity in the Light of John 6*, WUNT 2/78 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1996; repr. Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2010).

² For an analysis of the character and origin of 36 of the key Johannine riddles, see Paul N. Anderson, *The Riddles of the Fourth Gospel: An Introduction to John* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2011). My analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of twelve planks of the two established critical platforms regarding John, Jesus, and history, suggesting why this study is needed, and why it is needed now, was first published in Paul N. Anderson, *The Fourth Gospel and the Quest for Jesus: Modern Foundations Reconsidered*, LSNT 321 (London: T&T Clark, Bloomsbury, 2006), 25-41, and then in *John, Jesus, and History*, Vol. 1: *Critical Appraisals of Critical Views*, Paul N. Anderson, Felix Just, S.J., and Tom Thatcher, eds., SBL Symposium Series 44 (Atlanta: SBL, 2007), 13-70.

³ For additional reviews of the literature, see Paul N. Anderson, "On Jesus: Quests for Historicity, and the History of Recent Quests," *QRT* 94 (2000): 5-39, and the four literature reviews in Anderson et al., *John, Jesus, and History*, Vol. 1, 75-101, 109-20, 121-32, 133-59.

⁴ Of course, there are many ways of categorizing the epochs of Jesus Research, including dividing up the 19th century into two periods and seeing the early 20th century as a Jesus-traditions quest, but this is a workable way to consider some of the major movements in the field.

⁵ Friedrich Schleiermacher, *The Life of Jesus*, Jack Verheyden, ed., S. MacLean Gilmour, trans. (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975).

⁶ David F. Strauss, *The Christ of Faith and the Jesus of History: A Critique of Schleiermacher's The Life of Jesus*, Leander E. Keck, ed. and trans. (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977).

⁷ William Wrede, *The Messianic Secret*, J. C. G. Greig, trans. (Cambridge: Clarke, 1971).

⁸ Dale Allison, "The Secularizing of the Historical Jesus," *Perspectives on Religious Studies* 27.2 (2000): 135-51, notes, for instance, no fewer than 90 books on Jesus between 1907 and 1953, with only one year missing a significant book on Jesus that year. Bultmann's skepticism regarding history, however, came to prevail among many New Testament scholars overall, until it was challenged in the early 1950s by his student, Ernst Käsemann.

⁹ James M. Robinson, *The New Quest of the Historical Jesus* (London: SCM, 1959).

¹⁰ Ernst Käsemann, "The Problem of the Historical Jesus," in his *Essays on New Testament Themes*, SBT 41, translated by W. J. Mongtague (London: SCM, 1964), 15-47. His inaugural lecture at Göttingen in 1951 on this subject was delivered again at Marburg in 1953 for a reunion of alumni and published the following year in *ZTK* 15 (1954): 125-53.

¹¹ Disagreeing diametrically with Bultmann's incarnational view of the Johannine Evangelist's thrust, Ernst Käsemann, *The Testament of Jesus: A Study of the Gospel of John in the Light of Chapter 17*, translated by G. Krodel (Philadelphia: Augsburg Fortress, 1968; repr. The Johannine Monograph Series 6, Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2017), saw John's narrative as naïve Docetism.

¹² N. T. Wright, "Towards a Third Quest? Jesus Then and Now," *ARC: The Journal of the Faculty of Religious Studies, McGill University, Montreal, Canada* 10.1 (1982): 20-27.

¹³ Robert W. Funk, Roy W. Hoover, and the Jesus Seminar, *The Five Gospels: The Search for the Authentic Words of Jesus* (New York: Polebridge Press, 1993). See also Robert W. Funk and the Jesus Seminar, *The Acts of Jesus: The Search for the Authentic Deeds of Jesus* (San Francisco: Harper, 1998).

¹⁴ See my analysis: "On Jesus: Quests for Historicity, and the History of Recent Quests," *Quaker Religious Thought* 94 (2000): 5-39; see also the response by Marcus Borg, "The Jesus Seminar from the Inside," *Quaker Religious Thought* 98 (2002): 21-27.

¹⁵ Thus, second criticality is required in biblical scholarship, not simply second naïveté; cf. Paul N. Anderson, *From Crisis to Christ: A Contextual Introduction to the New Testament* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2014) x-xii.

¹⁶ Paul N. Anderson, "A Fourth Quest for Jesus... So What, and How So?" *The Bible and Interpretation* (July 2010): <http://www.bibleinterp.com/opeds/fourth357921.shtml>.

- ¹⁷ Brooke Foss Westcott, *The Gospel according to St. John*, 2 Vols. (London: Murray, 1908; repr., Grand Rapids: Baker, 1980). Impressive also is the newly published commentary and essays on the Johannine Question by J. B. Lightfoot, *The Gospel of St. John: A Newly Discovered Commentary*, The Lightfoot Legacy Set, Vol. 4, Ben Witherington, III and Todd D. Still, eds. (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2015).
- ¹⁸ Cf. Philip Sidetes (*History*, codex Barocchianus 142) and George Hamartolos (*Chronicon*, codex Coislilianus 305); so argued in Paul N. Anderson, *Riddles of the Fourth Gospel*, 104-05.
- ¹⁹ Rudolf Bultmann, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary*, G. R. Beasley-Murray, R. N. W. Hoare, and J. K. Riches, trans. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1971; repr. The Johannine Monograph Series 1, Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2014). In my Foreword to the 2014 publication (i-xxviii), I consider Bultmann's commentary on John to be the most significant New Testament monograph in the 20th century, second only, perhaps, to Schweitzer's *Quest of the Historical Jesus*.
- ²⁰ J. Ramsey Michaels, *The Gospel of John*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010).
- ²¹ C. K. Barrett, *The Gospel according to St. John*, 2nd edn. (London: SPCK; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1978); see also Thomas L. Brodie, *The Quest for the Origin of John's Gospel: A Source-Oriented Approach* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993).
- ²² Percival Gardner-Smith, *Saint John and the Synoptic Gospels* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1938).
- ²³ C. H. Dodd, *Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963).
- ²⁴ Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, 2 Vols., AB 29-29A (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1966-70).
- ²⁵ Rudolf Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St. John*, 3 Vols., Kevin Smyth, trans. (London: Burns & Oates; New York: Seabury, 1968-82).
- ²⁶ Martin Hengel, *The Johannine Question*, John Bowden, trans. (Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1989).
- ²⁷ Richard Bauckham, *The Testimony of the Beloved Disciple: Narrative, History, and Theology in the Gospel of John* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007).
- ²⁸ Ben Witherington, III, "What's in a Name? Rethinking the Historical Figure of the Beloved Disciple in the Fourth Gospel," *John, Jesus, and History*, Vol. 2: *Aspects of Historicity in the Fourth Gospel*, Paul N. Anderson, Felix Just, SJ, and Tom Thatcher, eds., ECL 2 (Atlanta, GA: SBL Press, 2009), 203-12.
- ²⁹ James H. Charlesworth, *The Beloved Disciple: Whose Witness Validates the Gospel of John?* (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, 1995).
- ³⁰ Esther A. De Boer, *Mary Magdalene: Beyond the Myth* (London: Bloomsbury T & T Clark, 1997).
- ³¹ Urban C. von Wahlde, *The Gospel and Letters of John*, 3 Vols., ECC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010).
- ³² Archibald M. Hunter, *According to John: The New Look at the Fourth Gospel* (Louisville: Westminster, 1968).
- ³³ For several crises in the Johannine situation over several decades, see Paul N. Anderson, "Bakhtin's Dialogism and the Corrective Rhetoric of the Johannine Misunderstanding Dialogue: Exposing Seven Crises in the Johannine Situation," in *Bakhtin and Genre Theory in Biblical Studies*, Roland Boer, ed., Semeia Studies 63 (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2007), 133-59.
- ³⁴ Raymond E. Brown, *Community of the Beloved Disciple* (New York: Paulist, 1979).
- ³⁵ J. Louis Martyn, *History and Theology in the Fourth Gospel*, 3rded., NTL (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2003).
- ³⁶ Wayne A. Meeks, *The Prophet-King: Moses Traditions and the Johannine Christology*, SupNovT 14 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1967; repr. Johannine Monograph Series 5, Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2017).
- ³⁷ Ernst, Käsemann, *The Testament of Jesus*.
- ³⁸ Peder Borgen, *Bread from Heaven: An Exegetical Study of the Concept of Manna in the Gospel of John and the Writings of Philo*, SupNovT 10 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1965 and 1981; repr. Johannine Monograph Series 4, Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2017).
- ³⁹ Richard J. Cassidy, *John's Gospel in New Perspective: Christology and the Realities of Roman Power*, 3rd ed., Johannine Monograph Series 3 (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2015).
- ⁴⁰ Wayne A. Meeks, "Man from Heaven in Johannine Sectarianism," *JBL* 91 (1972): 44-72; D. Moody Smith, *Johannine Christianity: Essays on its Setting, Sources, and Theology* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1984); Raymond E. Brown, *The Community of the Beloved Disciple*.
- ⁴¹ R. Alan Culpepper, *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel: A Study in Literary Design: Foundations and Facets* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983).
- ⁴² James H. Charlesworth, "The Historical Jesus in the Fourth Gospel: A Paradigm Shift?" *JSHJ* 8 (2010): 3-46.
- ⁴³ Robert T. Fortna and Tom Thatcher, eds. *Jesus in Johannine Tradition* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001); Tom Thatcher, *Why John Wrote a Gospel: Jesus—Memory—History* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox,

2005); Tom Thatcher, ed., *What We Have Heard From the Beginning: The Past, Present, and Future of Johannine Studies* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2007); Tom Thatcher and Stephen D. Moore, eds., *Anatomies of Narrative Criticism: The Past, Present, and Future of the Fourth Gospel as Literature*, RBS 55 (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2008).

⁴⁴ Published in paperback with new substantive introductions, books either in print or in process within the Johannine Monograph Series (Eugene: Wipf & Stock) include: Rudolf Bultmann, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary* (Vol. 1, 2014); Richard Cassidy, *John's Gospel in New Perspective* (Vol. 2, 2015); D. Moody Smith, *Composition and Order of the Fourth Gospel* (Vol. 3, 2015); Peder Borgen, *Bread From Heaven* (Vol. 4, 2017); Wayne A. Meeks, *The Prophet-King* (Vol. 4, 2017); Ernst Käsemann, *A Testament of Jesus* (Vol. 6, 2017).

⁴⁵ Mark A. Powell, "'Things That Matter': Historical Jesus Studies in the New Millennium," *Word and World* 29.2 (2009): 121–28. See also Mark A. Powell, *Jesus as a Figure in History, Second Edition: How Modern Historians View the Man from Galilee* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2013).

⁴⁶ See a full outline of twelve historical riddles of John in Anderson, *The Riddles of the Fourth Gospel*, 45-65.

⁴⁷ This case was argued compellingly by Paula Fredriksen, "The Historical Jesus, the Scene in the Temple, and the Gospel of John," *John, Jesus, and History*, Vol. 1, Anderson et al, eds., 249-76.

⁴⁸ For outlines of features most likely to be historical in all four canonical Gospels, in the Synoptics, and in John, see Paul N. Anderson, *The Fourth Gospel and the Quest for Jesus*, 127-73.

⁴⁹ See especially James M. Robinson, *The Problem of History in Mark* (London: SCM, 1957).

⁵⁰ Argued in fuller detail in Paul N. Anderson, "The Jesus of History, the Christ of Faith, and the Gospel of John," in *The Gospels: History and Christology; the Search of Joseph Ratzinger—Benedict XVI*, Vol. 2, Bernardo Estrada, Ermenegildo Manicardi, Armand Puig I Tarrech, eds. (Rome: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2013), 63-81.

⁵¹ For a full outline of the mundane material in John, including archaeological and topographical detail, see Paul N. Anderson, "Aspects of Historicity in the Gospel of John: Implications for Investigations of Jesus and Archaeology," in *Jesus and Archaeology*, James H. Charlesworth, ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 587-613; see also Urban C. von Wahlde, "Archaeology and Topography in the Gospel of John," in *Jesus and Archaeology*, James H. Charlesworth, ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 523-86.

⁵² James H. Charlesworth, *The Beloved Disciple*.

⁵³ For a full theory of John's composition and authorship, see Paul N. Anderson, "On 'Seamless Robes' and 'Leftover Fragments'—A Theory of Johannine Composition," *Structure, Composition, and Authorship of John's Gospel*, Stanley E. Porter and Hughson Ong, eds., *The Origins of John's Gospel*, Vol. 2 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2015), 169-218.

⁵⁴ Paul N. Anderson, "On Guessing Points and Naming Stars—The Epistemological Origins of John's Christological Tensions," *The Gospel of St. John and Christian Theology*, Richard Bauckham and Carl Mosser, eds. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 311-45.

⁵⁵ Paul N. Anderson, "The Johannine Logos-Hymn: A Cross-Cultural Celebration of God's Creative-Redemptive Work," *Creation Stories in Dialogue: The Bible, Science, and Folk Traditions* (Radboud Prestige Lecture Series by Alan Culpepper), R. Alan Culpepper and Jan van der Watt, eds., BINS 139 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2016), 219-42.

⁵⁶ For fuller treatments of several crises in the Johannine situation, cf. Paul N. Anderson, "The *Sitz im Leben* of the Johannine Bread of Life Discourse and its Evolving Context," *Critical Readings of John 6*, Alan Culpepper, ed., BINS 22 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1997), 1-59; and "Bakhtin's Dialogism and the Corrective Rhetoric of the Johannine Misunderstanding Dialogue: Exposing Seven Crises in the Johannine Situation," *Bakhtin and Genre Theory in Biblical Studies*; *Semeia Studies* 63, Roland Boer, ed. (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2007), 133-59.

⁵⁷ Barnabas Lindars, *The Gospel of John*, NCB Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972).

⁵⁸ John Ashton, *Understanding the Fourth Gospel* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1991).

⁵⁹ Brown, *The Gospel According to John*.

⁶⁰ D. Moody Smith, *The Fourth Gospel in Four Dimensions: Judaism and Jesus, the Gospels and Scripture* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2008). Again, for a fuller analysis, cf. Paul N. Anderson, "On 'Seamless Robes' and 'Leftover Fragments.'"

⁶¹ Paul N. Anderson, "The Having-Sent-Me Father—Aspects of Agency, Encounter, and Irony in the Johannine Father-Son Relationship," *Semeia* 85, Adele Reinhartz, ed. (1999): 33-57.

⁶² Bultmann argued that John's detail reflected a historicized drama rather than a dramatized history, although Matthew and Luke tend to omit Markan details rather than adding details. Cf. Paul N. Anderson, *The Christology of the Fourth Gospel*, 187-91. Note, thus, that in Erich Auerbach's *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*, Willard R. Trask, trans. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1953), he does not think this feature applies to gospel traditions.

⁶³ So argued Robert Funk in his *Honest to Jesus: Jesus for a New Millennium* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1996).

⁶⁴ For analyses of John 6 and 18-19, see Paul N. Anderson, *The Christology of the Fourth Gospel*, 70-251; and Paul N. Anderson, "Gradations of Symbolization in the Johannine Passion Narrative: Control Measures for Theologizing Speculation Gone Awry," *Imagery in the Gospel of John*, Jörg Frey, Jan G. van der Watt, and Ruben Zimmermann, eds., WUNT 2/200 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 157-94.

⁶⁵ As none of the similarities between John 6 and Mark 6 and 8 are identical (0 out of 45, Anderson, *The Christology of the Fourth Gospel*, 98-104), theories of John's dependence on Mark are totally without evidentiary basis. Therefore (with Gardner-Smith, Bultmann, and Smith) John is not dependent literarily on the Synoptics. However, the work of Ian D. Mackay, *John's Relationship with Mark: An Analysis of John 6 in the Light of Mark 6-8*, WUNT 2/182 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004), shows general similarities between John and Mark, and thus it cannot be claimed that John is isolated from Mark. The most plausible view, suggested by Mackay, is that the Johannine Evangelist probably heard Mark performed in one or more meetings for worship, and therefore John's relation to Mark is autonomous-yet-familiar.

⁶⁶ Ian Mackay, *John's Relationship with Mark*.

⁶⁷ Interestingly, Richard Bauckham argues two points that may be both compelling and reinforcing. In arguing that John's story of Jesus was written for readers of Mark, Bauckham demonstrates John's familiarity with at least some of Mark's narrative: "John for Readers of Mark," *The Gospel for All Christians: Rethinking the Gospel Audiences*, Richard Bauckham, ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 147-71. And, in elucidating the historiographic features of John's narrative, Bauckham demonstrates that John's genre is that of a *bios*—a Hellenistic historical narrative: *The Testimony of the Beloved Disciple*, 93-112. From these two theses a third inference must be drawn. John's story of Jesus is intended as a historical companion-and-alternative to Mark. Thus, John follows Mark's pattern to some degree but sets the record straight here and there along the way. Cf. Paul N. Anderson, "Mark and John—The Bi-Optic Gospels," *Jesus in Johannine Tradition*, Fortna and Thatcher, eds., 175-88.

⁶⁸ Such details as 200 and 300 denarii (John 6:7; 12:5; Mark 6:37; 14:5), the much/green grass at the feeding (John 6:10; Mark 6:39), and some other features are common to Mark and John alone, suggesting some sort of early-tradition contact, though not the sort of text-derivative relationship that Matthew and Luke enjoyed with Mark. For further details, see Paul N. Anderson, *The Christology of the Fourth Gospel*, 187-92.

⁶⁹ In terms of answerability between the Markan and Johannine traditions, see six discernible levels of dialectical engagement between these two traditions over several decades, including contrastive parallels between John and Mark: Paul N. Anderson, "Mark, John, and Answerability: Interfluentiality and Dialectic between the Second and Fourth Gospels," *Liber Annuus* 63 (2013): 197-245.

⁷⁰ For a fuller analysis of these three points by the Johannine Elder in Papias' testimony, see Paul N. Anderson, "The Jesus of History, the Christ of Faith, and the Gospel of John."

⁷¹ NPNF¹.

⁷² See the analysis of the historical inadequacy of the Synoptic and Johannine renderings of the temple incident by James S McLaren, "The Perspective of a Jewish Priest of the Johannine Timing of the Action in the Temple," *John, Jesus, and History*, Vol. 3, Paul N. Anderson et al, eds., 201-214.

⁷³ For a larger analysis of John's relation to each of the Synoptic traditions, see Anderson, *The Fourth Gospel and the Quest for Jesus*, 101-26, and idem, "A Bi-Optic Hypothesis: A Theory of Gospel Relations," in Paul N. Anderson, *From Crisis to Christ*, 102-127.

⁷⁴ F. Lamar Cribbs, "A Study of the Contacts that Exist between St Luke and St John," SBLSP (Cambridge, MA: SBL, 1973), 1-93.

⁷⁵ Note also the overlooked first-century clue to John's apostolic authorship found in Acts 4:19-20 (Anderson, *The Christology of the Fourth Gospel*, 274-77). On this note and over six dozen ways that Luke departs from Mark in support of a Johannine direction or including a Johannine detail, see Paul N. Anderson, "Acts 4:19-20—An Overlooked First-Century Clue to Johannine Authorship and Luke's Dependence upon the Johannine Tradition." *The Bible and Interpretation* (Sept 2010): <http://www.bibleinterp.com/opeds/acts357920.shtml>.

⁷⁶ For John's dialectical engagements with uses of the Matthean tradition, see Chapter 10 of Anderson, *The Christology of the Fourth Gospel*, and Paul N. Anderson, "'You Have the Words of Eternal Life!' Is Peter Presented as Returning the Keys of the Kingdom to Jesus in John 6:68?" *Neotestamentica* 41.1 (2007): 6-41. Versus the view that John was written to supplant the other Gospels (Hans Windisch, *Johannes und die Synoptiker: Wollte der vierte Evangelist die älteren Evangelien ergänzen oder ersetzen?* UNT 12 [Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1926]), John's finalized form is designed to be considered among the Gospels, and Matthew in particular during its later stages, with Käsemann, *The Testament of Jesus*, and somewhat with James Barker, *John's Use of Matthew* (Minneapolis:

Fortress, 2015). Contra Barker, however, John is not dependent upon Matthew; John engages Matthean influence dialectically, as the above studies demonstrate, but the Johannine tradition possesses its own origin and voice.

⁷⁷ So argued in my introductions to John and to the New Testament: Paul N. Anderson, *The Riddles of the Fourth Gospel* and *From Crisis to Christ*.

⁷⁸ Paul N. Anderson, *The Christology of the Fourth Gospel*, 137-65, 274-77.

⁷⁹ Cf. cognitive-critical analyses of historical memory and its developments within the Johannine tradition: Franz Mussner, *The Historical Jesus in the Gospel of St John*, Quaestiones Disputatae 19 (Freiburg: Herder & Herder, 1967); Paul N. Anderson, "The Origin and Development of the Johannine *Egō Eimi* Sayings in Cognitive-Critical Perspective," *JSHJ* 9 (2011): 139-206; Paul N. Anderson, "The Cognitive Origins of John's Christological Unity and Disunity," *Horizons in Biblical Theology; An International Dialogue* 17 (1995): 1-24.

⁸⁰ These gradations of certainty and new criteria for determining historicity are laid out in several places, including Paul N. Anderson and Jaime Clark-Soles, "Introduction and Overview," *John, Jesus, and History*, Vol. 3, Anderson et al, eds., 1-25; cited here are pages 18-21.

⁸¹ Consider the more generous approaches to conducting gospel historiography in Paul N. Anderson, *The Fourth Gospel and the Quest for Jesus*, 175-90.

⁸² Within an overall theory of John's dialogical autonomy, consider the impact of discerning the epistemological origins of all 36 of John's theological, historical, and literary riddles within the present endeavor: Paul N. Anderson, *The Riddles of the Fourth Gospel*, 157-72.

⁸³ In process is the editing of the proceedings of the sixth Nangeroni Meeting held at Camaldoli, Italy in June 2016, organized by Gabriele Boccaccini and others as part of a larger set of Enoch Seminars, designed to view the writings of early Christianity in the light of Jewish Second-Temple, apocalyptic, and intertestamental writings. The working title of this collection, edited by Ben Reynolds, elucidating the Jewishness of John's presentation of Jesus, is *Reading the Gospel of John's Christology as Jewish Messianism: Royal, Prophetic, and Divine Messiahs* (anticipated in 2018).