

12-2020

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## “Balderdash! A Dozen Critically Flawed Biblical Scholarship Views Destined Deservedly for the Dust Bin—Part I”

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*At a book review in the national SBL meetings over a decade ago, a senior scholar commented: “I’m not sure if I understand the argument fully, but I’d say, put it in the dust bin and start over.” What I would say, even to a student, is: “Be sure you understand an argument before you accept or reject it.” And, further, “If an argument is finally insufficient, propose an improvement.” That is what the following overview of three decades of research seeks to establish.*

**By Paul N. Anderson**

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December 2020

It goes without sayings that biblical studies, and especially New Testament studies, comprise a field that is an inch wide and a mile deep. This is no accident. Indeed, the Bible is the most significant and widely read book in human history, and it has served historically as the primary basis for much of western politics, philosophy, literature, art, and ideology over the last two millennia, let alone Christian theology and religion. This does not mean, though, that all readings of Scripture pass muster in terms of sound exegetical analysis. While an ancient text may indeed “speak” to a later reader or community in ways that confirm or challenge readers’ proclivities, this does not mean that all subsequent interpretations or inferences are of equal value when subjected to scrutiny. This is why critical scholarship is needed. Conventional interpretations in every generation and situation of biblical scholarship deserve to be challenged and/or confirmed with the best tools of critical analysis available, yet a view being considered “traditional” does not necessarily obviate its lack of validity or veracity.

That being the case, to question a view is not to overturn it. Or, to single out one of the most ubiquitous fallacies of biblical scholars, “not necessarily” does not imply “necessarily not.” Nor does the denial of one view establish an alternative one. Each hypothesis must be confirmed, denied, or modified by critical analysis, whether it supports a traditional view or counters it. Therefore, Ricoeur’s view of second naïveté is not the end of critical reflection. While recovering the essence of an earlier view challenged by modern, critical judgments can indeed be liberating, modern critics often disagree with each other. Thus, one must

ask which critical views are held to be compelling—among the best of critics—and why? Thus, second naïveté is not enough; it must be accompanied by *second criticality*, whereby critical views are challenged critically, as well as traditional ones.[1] However, if critical scholars are adverse to having their views challenged analytically, they de facto forfeit the mantle of critical authority, itself. They have simply supplanted one form of dogmatism with another—defending “critical dogmatism”—a contradiction of terms; or at least, it should be.

These issues are no more prevalent in the entirety of biblical studies than within Johannine scholarship, and yet, this is understandable. Nowhere in the study of ancient texts are the stakes so high and the issues so multifarious as those pertaining to the Johannine riddles (theological, historical, theological). Further, scholars have employed differing critical methodologies in addressing some of John’s riddles, and few scholars have addressed even a majority selection of the three-dozen most perplexing ones. Therefore, impasses among even the best of Johannine scholars are totally understandable, as very few have engaged even a plurality of John’s perplexing issues in interdisciplinary ways. That is why attempts at an overall Johannine theory are needed, employing the best of critical methodologies, following the best of scientific evidence—wherever it might lead—in addressing the Johannine riddles.[2]

In service to that end, following are twelve flawed scholarly judgments that deserve to be abandoned by critical and traditional scholars alike, given the fact of their critical insufficiency. In each case, more extensive analyses have been published elsewhere, so any desiring more detailed evidence for each judgment are encouraged to read further, aided by the references.[3] At a book review in the national SBL meetings over a decade ago, a senior scholar commented: “I’m not sure if I understand the argument fully, but I’d say, put it in the dust bin and start over.” What I would say, even to a student, is: “Be sure you understand an argument before you accept or reject it.” And, further, “If an argument is finally insufficient, propose an improvement.” That is what the following overview of three decades of research seeks to establish.

### **Critical Fallacy #1: Theology Versus History and History Versus Theology**

A prevailing dichotomy in New Testament studies and Jesus research over the last century and a half has been the disjunction of history from theology. The point is well taken, that subjective investments may cloud one’s objectivity, but every inference of what is “historic” hinges upon a subjective judgment regarding its significance. Thus, insignificant events rarely merit historical documentation, although it is always helpful for any reporting of past events to be substantiated by objective and correlative evidence.[4]

In particular, David F. Strauss leveraged this dichotomy in his second book on Jesus, *The Christ of Faith and the Jesus of History*,[5] privileging the Synoptics’ historicity over and against John’s. This book was of course necessary for his first book to stand: *The Life of Jesus Critically Examined*, wherein he argued that John’s story of Jesus was rooted in mythical folklore, borrowing from contemporary religions rather than rooted in historical memory. The disjunction, however, commits three fallacies. First, it fails to note that the Synoptics are also theological in their orientation and interest, not just John. Second, Strauss fails to consider critically the fact that the Christ-hymn underlying the Johannine Prologue is clearly an addition by the redactor—likely the author of the Johannine Epistles. Its poetic form, distinctive vocabulary, and similarity to 1 John

1:1-3 suggests that it was added to an earlier, more mundane narrative, opening in ways similar to Mark 1. Thus, John's pre-existent motif was not a part of the original narrative and likely reflects the work of the compiler rather than the evangelist. It introduces the narrative well, but like the opening of the first Johannine Epistle, it likely originated first as a confessional response to the evangelist's narration rather than representing the first stroke of the Johannine quill.[6] Third, as Strauss declares in his foreword his intention to overturn the work of Schleiermacher—what he has dedicated all of his life's work to doing—his intention is clearly theological in its motive. Thus, if Strauss is right, that theological investment displaces historical veracity, his entire book is untrue, based on its stated interest. The problem, though, is that his basic premise is wrong; history and theology are inextricably entwined. So, Strauss's forced dichotomy fails in both validity and veracity; a more nuanced approach is critically required.[7]

Apply this move to any other discipline, and the implications are ludicrous. No political interests of lives of Caesars or ancient kings can be considered historical; no literary interests in lives of ancient poets can be considered historical; no philosophical interests in lives of Greek philosophers can be considered historical; only non-historically significant accounts can be considered of value by historians. Balderdash! While theological interests can indeed corrupt or distort the accurate reporting of historical memory or attestations, theological reflections can also be the fruit of historical understandings rather than its root. More nuanced critical analyses of gospel traditions are required than simply discounting as ahistorical any report with theological overtones. That is a fact.

## **Critical Fallacy #2: The Synoptics Versus John and John Versus the Synoptics**

The second dichotomy leveraged by Strauss, in preferring the Synoptics historically over John, is also critically flawed both in terms of validity and veracity. First, in terms of validity, contests between the Synoptics and John are not necessarily three against one, as Matthew and Luke clearly used Mark as a common source. Thus, the larger contest is between John and Mark, as two individuated perspectives, although the non-Markan material in Matthew and Luke also corroborates general impressions of Jesus and his ministry found in the Synoptics overall. Second, while multiple attestation will affirm similarities between the Gospels, especially where triple or double attestation is present, it cannot be said that individuated reports are necessarily ahistorical. Distinctive Matthean, Lukan, and Johannine accounts may indeed have their own claims to historical memory, which includes the bulk (at least 85%) of the Johannine witness. Third, if John may have been familiar with at least Mark, the omission of Markan reports may reflect interests in non-duplication (clearly stated in John 21:25) rather than ahistoricity.[8] Thus, rejecting Johannine historicity on the basis of its distinctive material falls short in terms of logical validity.

In terms of veracity, the disparagement of Johannine historicity also falls short critically. While much of the Synoptic witness is historically more plausible than the Johannine (Jesus speaking in parables about the Kingdom, dining with sinners and Pharisees, performing exorcizing ministries and healing lepers, getting at the heart of the Mosaic Law, etc.), much of the Johannine witness is more historically plausible to that of the Synoptics. This includes multiple trips to Jerusalem, engaging Judean leaders during festivals, ministering over two or three years, the last supper taking place the day before the Passover, etc. Second, some of John's differences with Mark, given at least general familiarity, appear to be augmenting Mark

chronologically (with early material) and geographically (with Judean material), as well as setting the record straight, here and there. Thus, it is *Jesus* who embodies the typologies of the prophet Moses and Elijah, not John the Baptist (John 1:19-36); not everyone in Galilee rejected Jesus, despite what he'd said in Nazareth about a prophet's reception in his hometown (Mark 6:4; John 4:44); the timing of the temple incident, the last supper, and the crucifixion are contested (John 2:13-25; 13:1; 19:14); and Jesus never promised to return before the last of the eyewitnesses had passed, Peter got it wrong from day one (Mark 9:1; John 21:22-23). Third, while the Johannine Jesus speaks in the language of the evangelist, none of the images and themes in the Johannine narrative are missing from the Synoptics. They reflect paraphrastic adaptation rather than theological invention.[9]

Along these lines, the phenomenology of a comparison-contrast fits entirely with the critique of Mark by the Johannine Elder, as cited by Papias in Eusebius (*Hist. Eccles.* 3.39). First, while Mark preserved some of the preaching of Peter, he presented it *in the wrong order*. Thus, John's locating of the temple incident, multiple trips to Jerusalem, and some other chronological presentations may reflect Johannine chronological opinion (rightly or wrongly), rather than theological interests. Second, Peter's preaching did not really reflect a historical presentation of Jesus and his ministry; rather, it was crafted to suit the needs of the audience. Thus, criticism serves as license. If Peter (and Mark) paraphrased the message of Jesus, so can we. Third, Mark's duplicate stories are not a huge problem; he was just being conservative, seeking to leave nothing out (two feedings, two sea crossings, etc.). Thus, we don't want to duplicate Mark; that material is already available. Rather, here is new content (in the first Johannine edition) not in Mark. Non-duplication of the Markan narrative, while augmenting it with new material, was a stated Johannine interest.[10]

### **Critical Fallacy #3: The Beloved Disciple as Final Author of the Johannine Narrative**

A fallacy often perpetuated by traditional scholars is to assume that the Beloved Disciple was the final author of the Gospel of John. All references to the disciple Jesus loved are third-person (13:23; 19:26; 20:2; 21:7, 20; sometimes associated with "the other disciple," 18:16; 20:2, 3, 4, 8), and likewise "the eyewitness" (19:35) whose "testimony is true" (19:35; 21:24). Assuming that this person was the author of the Johannine gospel narrative, some have argued that he was speaking about himself in third-person references because he had been totally transformed in his personality by his relationship with Christ. If this person were John the son of Zebedee, who with his brother were labeled "sons of thunder" (in Aramaic, described in Greek as Βοανηργές, Mark 3:17) wanting to call down fire from heaven upon the Samaritans (Luke 9:54), he must have undergone a remarkable personal transformation process, so the thinking has gone. Likewise, Peter is labeled a "rock" in John 1:42 (Κηφᾶς ὃ ἐρμηνεύεται Πέτρος, the Aramaic term translated into Greek). More likely is that the Johannine evangelist, whoever he may have been, had died by the time that the narrative was being finalized, as his death is referenced in John 21:23. Jesus never said he would not die; he only said to Peter, "If it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you?" This clearly sets the record straight regarding Mark 9:1, claiming that Peter's memory underlying Mark's narrative was wrong from day one.[11]

Likewise flawed is the traditional view that John the Apostle was the author of all five of the Johannine writings, including the Johannine Epistles and Apocalypse. Rather, a number of second-century traditions cite two leaders named “John” buried in Ephesus: John the Apostle and John the Presbyter (the Elder). Most certain is the likelihood that John the Elder authored the Epistles, as the author of 2 John and 3 John names himself as such. The second most likely inference is that John the Elder was the final compiler of the Johannine Gospel (around 100 CE), following the death of the Beloved Disciple, whoever he may have been. The Elder *may* have been the original evangelist, but he also claims that the disciple Jesus loved wrote the earlier narrative (21:24, ὁ γράψας ταῦτα), not himself. The third most likely inference is thus that the evangelist was indeed John the Apostle, as no other figure has anywhere near the constellation of internal and external evidences, despite also having the greatest number of problems.[12] The authorship of Revelation is the most uncertain, given its apocalyptic form and rough diction; yet, it is the only one of the Johannine writings claiming directly the name “John” as author (Rev 1:1, 4, 9; 22:8). This could be pseudepigraphal, but differences in style between the Apocalypse and the other Johannine writings could also be a factor of difference in genre and thrust.

Therefore, rather than trying to fit one author into the authorship of all five Johannine writings, a modified traditional view is the most critically plausible way forward. Whoever the particular figures might have been, the Beloved Disciple is clearly a third-person appellation, accorded the Johannine tradent after his death by his followers and fellow leaders. If the early church memory is somewhat sound, that John the Elder was mentored by the Apostle, it would stand to reason that he finalized the evangelist’s work after his passing, circulating it among the churches as a first-hand witness, whose testimony is true (John 19:34-35; 1 John 5:7-8; 3 John 12). His anonymity, however, is not a marker of nonidentity. Like the unnamed mother of Jesus in John, this does not disqualify her identity as Mary. Rather, she is left unnamed for three plausible reasons. First, she was known by all; second, she was highly respected and referenced by her relation to Jesus; third, there were other “Marys” in the narrative (wife of Cleopas, sister of Martha, Magdalene), so using her proper name would have necessitated a clarification from the start. Likewise the Beloved Disciple, especially if his name were John. He was known by all, he was highly respected and referenced by his relation to the Lord, and he required distinguishing from other “Johns” in the narrative (father of Simon, the Baptist, the Elder). Thus, his non-named title may actually suggest his name was “John” rather than discounting the possibility. He did not, however, reference himself as “the disciple Jesus loved.” That was most likely his reverential appellation awarded by the final compiler and the larger community after his death.[13]

#### **Critical Fallacy #4: Underlying Alien Sources**

The apostolic authorship of the Fourth Gospel, however, has been intensely contested for the last two centuries, and for understandable reasons. First, much of the most compelling historical material in the Synoptics is missing from John (listed above), while much of John’s most memorable material is missing from the Synoptics (also listed above). Second, the Johannine Jesus (and even John the Baptist) speaks in the evangelist’s language (note the similarities between John 3:31-36 and 12:44-50), so at best we have a highly interpretive rendering of Jesus and his ministry in John. Third, every scenario in which either or both of the Zebedee sons is present in the Synoptics is missing from the Fourth Gospel, including the calling of

the Twelve, the Transfiguration, and the sending of disciples out in ministry teams. Fourth, Peter and the Beloved Disciple are juxtaposed in the Johannine narrative, so that might argue for a source outside of the apostolic band. Fifth, even beyond the pre-existent thrust of the Prologue, the Johannine Jesus has full command over his destiny, knows what is in the hearts and minds of his subjects, and performs wondrous signs.[14] Such presentations are hard to square with cause-and-effect historiography. These and other issues have led critical scholars to disparage the possibility of the Fourth Gospel's representing an apostolic witness to Jesus and his ministry.

On the other hand, John's narrative possesses a great deal of historically attested material. More specifically, the Fourth Gospel possesses more archaeologically corroborated detail and topographical verisimilitude than all the other gospels put together—canonical and otherwise.[15] Thus, even though the wondrous in John's narrative poses a scandal to naturalistic modernism, its historical features demand a plausible account. Along these lines, Rudolf Bultmann sought to account for John's historical material by proposing three major sources underlying John's story of Jesus, as well as several minor ones. These included a *Sēmeia* Source (accounting for John's distinctive signs), a Revelation-Sayings Source (accounting for John's sayings material and the Prologue), and a Passion Source (accounting for John's distinctive Passion narrative). While Bultmann mounted evidence for these hypothetical sources on the bases of stylistic, contextual, and theological evidence, however, when that evidence is applied to John 6—where two of these sources, the evangelist's work, and additions by the Redactor should be displayed as a showcase of diachronicity—the evidence is totally lacking.[16]

A theory receiving wider acceptance is the more modest theory of Robert Fortna, combining the Johannine signs and Passion narrative into a hypothetical Signs Gospel. In addition to a number of stylistic features, Fortna argues that the theological tension between an elevated view of signs and their existentialization by the evangelist points to the evangelist's making use of an alien source with which he theologically disagrees. However, when Fortna's evidence is subjected to critical scrutiny, a number of new problems arise. First, there is no textual or literary evidence of such a source's existence; it is an imagined reality. Second, the minimal use of connectives is simply a feature of the narrator's work; it does not signal an alien source. Third, Fortna's inference that theological tensions could not have existed within the thinking of a dialectical thinker is totally flawed. If he disagreed with a source theologically, why did he employ it? More likely, the evangelist was a dialectical thinker, reflecting in both-and ways on the ministry of Jesus, rather than employing only either-or dichotomies. Thus, there is absolutely no compelling evidence for inferring non-Johannine sources underlying the Johannine witness. This also means that the disjunction between "history and theology" in the Fourth Gospel, as put forward by J. Louis Martyn is critically flawed. What we have is an overall Johannine tradition, developed over several decades within several evolving situations. Thus, intratraditional dialectic is observable, between earlier and later understandings, but none of these perspectives is plausibly non-Johannine.[17]

### **Critical Fallacy #5: Disordering, Reordering, and Overlaying Redactions**

In order to reproduce or “create” the strophic character of the Johannine *Logos*-hymn in the Johannine discourse material, Bultmann inferred a disordering and reordering of the Johannine text. Within John 6 alone, for instance, no fewer than ten disorderings and reorderings were inferred, supposedly illuminating the hymnic character of the Johannine I-Am sayings, bolstering his inference that John’s distinctive sayings material originated from the cultic setting of an early Gnostic community of which John the Baptist was a leader. As his followers joined the Jesus movement, they superimposed Gnostic liturgy upon the teachings of Jesus, as reflected by Bultmann’s inference of a hypothetical Revelation-Sayings Source. Thus, the historical origin John’s discourse material need not be ascribed to Jesus of Nazareth; its history-of-religions origin lay in the Gnostic character of what was later echoed in the Odes of Solomon, two centuries later. Bultmann also infers that the Redactor has added theologically disparate material as a means of countering and amending the evangelist’s content. Thus, futuristic eschatology counterbalances the evangelist’s present eschatology, and the injunction to ingest the flesh and blood of Jesus (6:51c-58) ameliorates the lack of a eucharist-institution in John 13.

Of course, Bultmann’s rearrangement theory addresses several aporias (perplexities) in the sequence of the narrative. The events in John 4 and 6 are in Samaria and Capernaum—expounding upon the water of life and the bread of life, and the events in John 5 and 7 are in Jerusalem—debating the Bethzatha healing of the lame man on the Sabbath. Thus, Bultmann proposed (followed by Schnackenburg, for instance) that the original order should have been chapters 4, 6, 5, 7. Another sequence problem occurs in John 11, where the identity of Mary is clarified (11:2) by the statement that this was the one anointing the feet of Jesus, which does not happen until the next chapter (12:1-8). Thus, one might question whether the order of these two sections may have been reversed, and even whether the Johannine temple incident might have been moved to the beginning of the narrative for theological or other reasons. John 14:31 also seems odd, as Jesus saying “let us depart” is followed by three more chapters, and they do not arrive at the Garden until 18:1. Further, it is indeed puzzling that the Johannine Jesus is neither baptized by John (explicitly) and that no symbolic meal of remembrance is instituted at the Johannine Last Supper. If the Redactor has added chapter 21 as a second ending, why not imagine his adding other material as an accounting for some of John’s other theological tensions.

While the Johannine narrative does indeed show evidence of being finalized by a second hand, however, his work appears to be more supportive of the evangelist’s work, rather than intrusive. He attests that the testimony of the eyewitness and the Beloved Disciple is true, and he also harmonizes John’s narrative with the Synoptics. Therefore, his work is better seen as compiling the evangelist’s witness rather than that of an intrusive redactor, or editor. That being the case, Bultmann’s disordering/reordering schema falls short critically for several reasons. First, the language and strophic character of the Johannine *Logos*-hymn differs from the discourse material in John; it is closer to 1 John 1:1-3 than the I-Am sayings of the Gospel. Thus, lumping these into a common alien source stretches the evidence beyond credulity. Second, the revelational claims of the Johannine Jesus are more squarely rooted in the Mosaic agency schema based on Deuteronomy 18:15-22, rather than later Gnostic writings.[18] Those later texts reflect expansions upon the Johannine witness rather than its origin. Third, to imagine extensive disorderings of texts, occurring between sentences and between sections of unequal length, is empirically impossible to imagine. More plausible is that the Compiler added larger sections (such as chs. 6, 15-17, and 21) in filling out the Johannine narrative, as well as crafting three verses of the Johannine *Logos*-hymn around the Baptist



references in John 1:6-8, 15, 19ff. and adding Beloved Disciple and eyewitness references.[19] Thus, with Brown over Bultmann, the Compiler seems to be preserving and furthering the evangelist's work by adding later material, although the hymnic material in the Prologue might reflect the Elder's composition originating first as a response to the narration, added later as an engaging introduction to the narrative.[20]

### **Critical Fallacy #6: Johannine Dependence Upon Mark**

If the Johannine witness did not originate in an independent tradition, nor was it based upon imagined alien sources, its historically grounded material must have come from some source, so the Leuven School and C. K. Barrett have argued. That being the case, Mark's Gospel and other Synoptic traditions have been argued as material upon which the Fourth Evangelist depended. This view was argued earlier by B. H. Streeter, who, in seeing the Johannine Gospel as the last among the four canonicals, imagined it to be a spiritualization of Mark and the Synoptics. Thus, the showcase for Johannine-Synoptic contacts would be parallels to John 6 and 18-19, where the similarities are closest.[21]

However, critical problems with literary "dependence" inferences regarding intertraditional relations are many. First, intertraditional contact may have involved oral-tradition cross-influence, or interfluence, since it is impossible to know which direction the influence might have gone. Why not infer John's influencing Mark, for instance, if such gospel tradents as Peter, John, and perhaps Philip traveled in ministry together or in the same region, as reported in Acts 8?[22] Second, as Walter Ong argued, secondary orality involves hearing about what has been written or reported in other contexts, so a particular text might not have been directly involved in within processes of intertraditional dialectic. Third, even if some access to a written tradition may be inferred, there is no way of knowing what form, stage, or edition would have been available. It might not have been the eventually canonized form. Thus, arguments from silence are especially weak; one cannot assume an intentional omission, if the particular version or form of an inferred source is unavailable to the modern scholar. Fourth, some distinctive features of John are included in other Gospels, so while the Johannine evangelist is likely familiar with at least Mark, it is a fact that the temple-rebuilding words of Jesus narrated *only* in John 2:19 are cited directly in Mark 14:59 and 15:29; Matthew 21:14 references the Jerusalem miracles of Jesus on the blind and the lame in the temple area reported in *only* in John 5 and 9; the Q tradition cites the "bolt out of the Johannine blue" in Matthew 11:27 and Luke 10:22 (cf. John 1:18; 3:35; 5:20-26; 10:15; 12:49-50; 14:9-13; 17:25-26); and Luke departs from Mark *no fewer than six dozen times* in ways that coincide with John (the right ear was severed—John 18:10; Luke 22:50; Satan entered Judas—John 13:27; Luke 22:3; Mary and Martha played similar roles—John 12:1-8; Luke 10:38-42). Finally, the second ending of Mark (16:9-20) contains within it a number of distinctive Johannine details. Thus, interfluentiality abides, and Johannine-Synoptic engagements were *by no means a one-way Street(er)*!

As a result, John's similarities and differences between each of the other traditions, leading to particular inferences in each case. Given John's non-dependence on Mark, including the majority of its tradition reflecting an autonomous and self-standing tradition, Mark and John deserve to be considered *the Bi-Optic Gospels*, reflecting individuated perspectives of Jesus and his ministry from day one.[23] Some oral tradition contact is plausible, as non-symbolic details (much/green grass, 200 denarii, 300 denarii, etc.) are shared

only between these two traditions (Matthew and Luke more commonly omit Markan details than adding to them), and John's first edition appears to have followed Mark's lead with its own story of Jesus, augmenting Mark chronologically and geographically and setting the record straight, here and there.

Put simply: Matthew and Luke built upon Mark; John built around Mark. Luke includes Johannine details and units of tradition that are not found in Mark, and the most compelling explanation for this fact is that Luke has had access to at least some of John's content. Thus, Luke 1:2 expresses appreciation for material garnered from other traditions—perhaps even the Johannine.[24] The Q tradition also contains some Johannine content, so that could reflect intertraditional contact or independent contact with primitive Jesus traditions. Contacts between the Matthean and Johannine traditions reflect solidarity in affirming the Jewish agency of Jesus, while also engaging dialectically differing forms of ecclesiology in the late first-century situation.[25] Thus, an overall theory—a Bi-Optic Hypothesis—is required to make sense of John's distinctive relations with other traditions.[26]

In the light of the above overview of over 2,500 pages of published treatments on matters Johannine, when I hear a scholar say “if it's theological, it can't be historical;” or, “Historical Jesus studies can use the Synoptics and everything else *except* the Gospel of John;” or, “the Apostle John wrote about his own death and wrote everything in the Johannine corpus;” or, “I have no idea whether John used sources or whether his material was disordered, reordered, and countered by an ecclesial redactor;” or, “John depended on Mark;” I say, “Balderdash!” No way, no how. The Johannine tradition reflects a self-standing Jesus tradition, developed theologically within its own trajectory and settings, engaging other traditions dialectically, but not depending on any of them for its content. More scholarly fallacies will be engaged in Part II of this present contribution, but for now, here's setting the record straight in what I believe are several advances in the labyrinth of international Johannine critical studies. [27]

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[1] See my overview of second criticality as an interdisciplinary approach to biblical criticism in my contextual introduction to the New Testament, *From Crisis to Christ* (2014, x-xii).

[2] See my introduction to John: *The Riddles of the Fourth Gospel* (2011).

[3] References to the works of other scholars are made in my publications; here is the link to fourteen Johannine books that I have edited or written and over one hundred published Johannine essays that I have written, bolstering an overall Johannine theory:

[https://www.academia.edu/28983118/Johannine\\_Bibliography\\_2020\\_docx](https://www.academia.edu/28983118/Johannine_Bibliography_2020_docx)  
([https://www.academia.edu/28983118/Johannine\\_Bibliography\\_2020\\_docx](https://www.academia.edu/28983118/Johannine_Bibliography_2020_docx)).

- [4] The final chapter in my book on *The Fourth Gospel and the Quest for Jesus* raises the question as to the character of historical memory. With Bultmann, although he did not apply this understanding to gospel traditions, the character of historiography, like the best of theology, is always dialectical (2006a, 175-90).
- [5] See my treatment of Strauss in my analysis presented at the 2013 Ratzinger Symposium on Christology and the Gospels (2013b).
- [6] See my treatments of John's composition and the addition of the *Logos*-hymn to the original beginning of the Gospel narrative, which like Mark, likely began with the witness of the Baptist (2007a; 2015; 2016).
- [7] Note, for instance, the empirical fact of John's empirically derived content (2006; 2020).
- [8] See my more detailed analyses of the Johannine-Markan relationship (2001; 2013).
- [9] For a cognitive-critical analysis of the origin and development of the Johannine *Egō eimi* discourses, see 2011a.
- [10] For a fuller analysis, see 2013b.
- [11] For four features of an identifiable Petrine tradition underlying the Markan narrative, see 2014, 331-34; for treatments of the dialectic between the human sources of the pre-Markan and Johannine traditions from a Cognitive-Critical perspective, see 1996/1997/2010, ad loc; 2004.
- [12] For an overview of the state of the Johannine Question, see 2018b.
- [13] Of course, analyses of the Johannine tradition must be conducted whoever the author might have been (with Culpepper and literary theorists, there), but given the discovery of an overlooked first-century clue to Johannine authorship in Acts 4:19-20 (cf. 1 John 1:3 and John 3:32), it cannot be said that John the Apostle was only connected with it late-and-only-late (1996/1997/2010, Appendix VIII, 274-77).
- [14] For a full presentation of John's theological tensions, historical problems, and literary riddles, see 2011, 25-90.
- [15] The Fourth Gospel contains more archaeologically attested and mundane details than all the other gospels combined, canonical and otherwise: 2006; 2020.
- [16] For an analysis of the evidence for and against alien sources underlying John, see 1996/1997/2010, ad loc. Following his review of *The Christology of the Fourth Gospel* at the Orlando 1998 AAR/SBL meetings, Robert Kysar also declared that he had given up belief in theories regarding alien sources underlying the Johannine narrative, 1999a.
- [17] For Analyses of John's intratraditional and intertraditional dialectic see 1996/1997/2010, ad loc. In my conversations with Raymond Brown, he was especially appreciative of those features within and between gospel traditions.
- [18] See the extensive evidence (twenty-four contacts) linking the Father-Son relationship in John with the Prophet-like-Moses agency schema of Deuteronomy 18:15-22, 1999.
- [19] For an overall composition theory similar to those of Lindars and Ashton, see 2015.
- [20] On the character and origin of the Johannine Prologue, see 2007a; 2016.
- [21] For analyses of the Synoptics and John 6, see 1996/1997/2010, ad loc; for analyses of the Synoptics and John 18-19, see 2006b; 2007b.
- [22] On the longitudinal dialectic between the Markan and the Johannine traditions, see 2001; 2013.
- [23] For particulars of the analysis, see especially 1996/1997/2010, ad loc.

[24] For 72 instances of Luke's incorporating Johannine features and details in his redaction of Mark, see 2010.

[25] For Matthean-Johannine engagements, see 1996/1997/2010, ad loc and 2007c.

[26] For an overall theory of a Bi-Optic Hypothesis, see 2006a, 101-26.

[27] These include such fallacies as "The Early Death of John and Johannine de-Apostolization;" "A Single Issue in the Johannine Dialectical Situation—Jewish-Johannine Tensions;" "A Single Community in Johannine Christianity;" "Anti-Judaism in the Gospel of John;" "Johannine Sectarianism Versus Johannine Cosmopolitanism;" and "John: the Spiritualized Gospel, Versus John: the Mundane Gospel."