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*An Exegetical Analysis of the Johannine Jesus's Son-Father Relationship in the
Fourth Gospel with The Theological Significance and Implications in
Contemporary Context*

Jing Yih Hsieh
Master of Philosophy

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Philosophy



School of Philosophy and Theology
Fremantle Campus
May 2022

DECLARATION OF AUTHORSHIP

To the best of the candidate's knowledge, this thesis contains no material previously published by another person, except where due acknowledgement has been made. This thesis is the candidate's own work and contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree and diploma in any institution.

Signature:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Jing Yih Hsieh', written in a cursive style.

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ABSTRACT

This exegetical study focuses on the distinctive characteristics of the Johannine Jesus's unique cognitive perception, his claims of equality with God in the language of oneness in the Son-Father relationship in the Fourth Gospel, and with theological significance and implications in contemporary context.

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This thesis would not have been possible without the guidance and patient support of my supervisors, Dr Peter Christofides and Dr Lawrence Pang. I would also like to thank the School Research Committee, the School of Philosophy and Theology and the Australian Government Research Training Program for making this thesis possible.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to the loving memory of my late father, Kwang Hwa Hsieh (Columbo Plan Scholar (Australia), 1961) who passed away on 12 May 2016. The memory of his fatherhood and indomitable spirit in his faithful commitment to his family fills my heart with immense gratitude and sorrow.

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CHAPTER 1: THE JOHANNINE JESUS'S SON-FATHER RELATIONSHIP

1.1 Introduction

To encounter the Johannine Jesus in the lengthy discourse in the Greek text of the Fourth Gospel is to be drawn by the intricate dynamic of his distinct perception of God, and his ubiquitous claims of equality with the Father in the language of oneness.¹ For example, the Johannine Jesus's perception of God is explicitly depicted as connected to his origin and commission from the Father (John 7:29). In another example, the author explicitly depicts that to complete the work of the Father for the Johannine Jesus, is as necessary as food is to physical body (John 4:34).² Moreover, the Johannine Jesus claims that he is equal to the Father, and yet at the same time, he does not do anything out of his own initiative, but to purposefully carry out whatever the Father does (John 5:19).³ These outrageous claims made by the Johannine Jesus seems unparalleled and distinct from the Synoptics.⁴

So, is the Johannine Jesus depicted as equal with God (John 10:38), or subordinate to God (John 14:10)?⁵ Is Johannine Christology based on the Johannine articulation of the unity of the Johannine Jesus and the Father, or a theological

1. C.H. Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1965), 143, 253; Rudolf Bultmann, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1971), 5, 83, 145; William R. G. Loader, *Jesus in The Fourth Gospel : Structure and Issues in Johannine Christology* (MI: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2017), 62.

2. Loader, *Jesus in The Fourth Gospel*, 58; John 7:29 "I know him, because I am from him, and he sent me."; John 4:34 Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to complete his work." (New Standard Revised Version); Bultmann, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary*, 145; Johannine Jesus often refers to God as "τοῦ πέμψαντός με/του pempantos me", i.e. "the one who sends me", see also John 7: 29, 8: 29.

3. John 10:30 "The Father and I are one." ; John 5:19 "Jesus said to them, "Very truly, I tell you, the Son can do nothing on his own, but only what he sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, the Son does likewise."

4. Bultmann, *The Gospel of John*, 5.

5. The principle of the Jewish law of agency may harmonise this contradiction according to Ashton, see John Ashton, *Understanding the Fourth Gospel*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 316, 324.

tension to be resolved by demythologising (e.g. Bultmann), or moralizing (e.g. Lindars), or hypothesising on the development of the epistemological reflection of the author of the Fourth Gospel (e.g. Anderson), or all of the above?⁶ Does the Johannine Jesus's perception of God display this theological tension (e.g. in the explicit use of Greek verbs "to know" in two distinct forms, γινώσκω/*ginōskō* and οἶδα/*oida*, in John 8:55) ?⁷ These are preliminary questions regarding the Johannine Jesus's Sonship in his unique perception of God and his claims of equality with God in the language of oneness.

Scholarship tends to describe the Johannine Jesus's Sonship in the motif of an envoy Revealer predicated primarily on the Jewish laws of human and angelic agencies by divine creation (e.g. Adam and Gabriel the arch angel), by divine election (e.g. Abraham, Jacob, nation of Israel) and by divine commission (e.g. Moses, the prophet deliverer of Jewish people from Egypt) in the Old Testament to mediate God's divine purpose on earth.⁸ To some extent, the Johannine Jesus seems to conform with this understanding in his deeds and words in the gospel narrative and discourses in the model of a prophetic revealer envoy.⁹ However, there are notable elements of non-conformity in the Johannine Jesus's perception of God and his claims of equality with God in the language of oneness, e.g. pre-existing relationship

6. Ernst Kasemann, *The Testament of Jesus* (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1968), 25; Paul N. Anderson, *The Riddles of the Fourth Gospel* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2011), 158; Bultmann demythologises Johannine Jesus to Revealer who mediates the knowledge of God by attributing mythical metaphysical element, e.g. pre-existent, to the influence of Gnosticism, see Bultmann, *The Gospel of John*, 9, 28, cf. Ashton, *Understanding the Fourth Gospel*, 307; moral excellence of Johannine Jesus, see Barnabas Lindars, *The Gospel of John* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1982), 65, 370; Anderson proposes a reflexive cognitive dialogue between the past perceptions of the author of The Fourth Gospel and the post-Easter faith experiences of subsequent Johannine community, see Anderson, Paul N. *The Christology of the Fourth Gospel: Its Unity and Disunity*, 11, xxxiii.

7. John 8:55 "though you do not know him. But I know him; if I would say that I do not know him, I would be a liar like you. But I do know him, and I keep his word." (New Revised Standard Version)

8. Ashton, *Understanding the Fourth Gospel*, 56, 316, 324; Bultmann, *The Gospel of John*, 83; Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, 254; Loader, *Jesus in The Fourth Gospel*, 212; Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, 255.

9. Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, 257; Loader, *Jesus in The Fourth Gospel*, 126, 422.

with the Father who sends him, and his authority to exercise judgement and to give life, which is exclusive to the divine prerogative of the Father.¹⁰

Another understanding of the Johannine Jesus's divine Sonship is connected with the reference to the heavenly Son of Man who "has descended" (John 3:13).¹¹ This seems to cohere with Bultmann's perspective that the Johannine Jesus is the heavenly Revealer who comes to reveal the message of God and return to God.¹² So, how does this account for the Johannine Jesus's unique perception of the Father? Does this understanding affirm Dodd's view that the Johannine Jesus's divine Sonship is the archetypal relationship of human in relation to God?¹³ Is there a connection between Jesus-the-Revealer and Jesus-the-Son in the Fourth Gospel?

This study thus seeks to investigate the distinctiveness of the Johannine Jesus's unique perception, and his claims of equality in the language of oneness in his Son-Father relationship from a textual critical perspective of the Greek text.¹⁴ The Johannine Jesus is characteristically depicted to speak in lengthy discourses which seems to make textual criticism a useful tool for the purpose of this study — to investigate the Johannine Jesus's unique perception of the Father, and his claims of equality with the Father in the language of oneness.¹⁵

10. Ashton, *Understanding the Fourth Gospel*, 325; Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, 257; Loader, *Jesus in The Fourth Gospel*, 313, 363.

11. Ashton seems to establish and identify the connection of Johannine Jesus to the heavenly Son of Man predicated on the eschatological victor of Daniel 7, see Ashton, *Understanding the Fourth Gospel*, 372.

12. Bultmann, *The Gospel of John*, 150.

13. Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, 244.

14. Eldon Jay Epp, and Gordon D. Fee, *Studies in the theory and method of New Testament textual criticism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Co.,) 14.

15. C.K Barrett, *The Gospel according to St John: An Introduction with Commentary and Notes on the Greek Text*, Second Edition (London: SPCK, 1955), 19.

1.2 Research Methodology and Design

This study is thus based on historical-grammatical analysis of the Greek text of the selected verses to investigate the textual meaning contained in Nestle-Aland version 28 (i.e. NA 28).¹⁶ For the purpose of this study, this historical-grammatical approach is selected for the sufficiency of its overall objectivity to ascertain the textual meaning in the Greek text of the Fourth Gospel.¹⁷

The Greek verbs “to know” are used in the Fourth Gospel in two distinct forms in the text: γινώσκω (ginosko) and οἶδα (oida). The meanings of these two forms are investigated to gain an understanding of the Johannine Jesus’s unique perception of God in selected text passages to detect nuanced meaning, if any, for the purpose of exegeting the selected text passages. Further investigation into the Johannine Jesus’s claims of equality in the language of oneness is investigated in the selected passages to elucidate the meaning in the Fourth Gospel.

The selection of these passages indicates a limited focus of scope to investigate distinctive characteristics of the Johannine Jesus’s Son-Father relationship.¹⁸ Hence, this study is informed by notable commentaries and relevant scholarly articles to discern the traditions that shapes the author’s understanding, and the underlying theological significance in the Johannine Jesus’s unique perception of God, and his claims of equality with God in the language of oneness.

The research design further divides this study into five chapters as follows:

16. Stanley E. Porter, and Andrew W. Pitts, *Fundamentals of New Testament Textual Criticism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2015), 85, accessed November 17, 2021, ProQuest Ebook Central; Wendy E.S. North, “Why Should Historical Criticism continue to have a place in Johannine Studies,” in *What We Have Heard from the Beginning : The Past, Present, and Future of Johannine Studies*, ed., Tom Thatcher (Baylor University Press, 2007), 21.

17. Porter and Pitts, *Fundamentals of New Testament Textual Criticism*, 86.

18. The Johannine thought is so intricately integrated that it is an “organic living whole” and it is a distortion to isolate any part of the “whole”, see Barrett, *The Gospel according to St John*, 67.

1. Introduction and purpose of research methodology. In this chapter, the research purpose and design methodology for this study is introduced with a view to explore the significance of the Johannine Jesus's Son-Father relationship in the Greek text, focusing on the Johannine Jesus's unique perception, and his claims of equality with God in the language of oneness in the proposed framework of hermeneutical considerations.

2. An overview of the concept of divine sonship, pertaining to the Johannine Jesus's Son-Father relationship in the Fourth Gospel is outlined.

3. The study of the meaning of Greek verbs "to know", i.e. γινώσκω and οἶδα in John 7:29; 8:55; and 17:8, to elucidate the Johannine Jesus's unique perception of God.

4. The claims of equality in the language of oneness in John 1:14 (Oneness in the Word); 4:34 (Oneness in the purpose of God); and 5:19 (Oneness in divine authority to judge and give life) is examined to elucidate the author's unique depiction in the language of oneness.

5. The theological significance of the Johannine Jesus's Son-Father relationship is discussed in view of the findings in chapters 3 and 4 in relation to its implications to a believer of faith in contemporary context.

1.3 Terminology Used in This Study

1. God is used interchangeably with YHWH Elohim/Elohim in this study.¹⁹ The Father is used as a relational terminology in relation to the Johannine Jesus.

19. YHWH Elohim are references of God in the Old Testament, Judaism and extrabiblical Jewish literature such as *Book of Jubilee*, *Wisdom of Solomon* and *Sirah*. Due to limitation of scope, the trajectory of YHWH Elohim in the Old Testament to these extrabiblical literature is not investigated.

2. The Johannine Jesus is used with reference to Jesus in the Fourth Gospel. Jesus-the-Son is a sonship terminology, while Son of God, Son of Man, Messiah are titular references of the Johannine Jesus in this study.

3. The language of oneness in the Fourth Gospel is a terminology to denote “in one accord” in the words and deeds of the Johannine Jesus with the Father. The meaning of the language of oneness is to be elucidated further in the course of this study.

4. Author refers to the author of the Fourth Gospel, and not the writer of this thesis.

1.4 Scope of Study and Limitations

1. This study focuses on the Johannine characteristics of the unique perception of the Johannine Jesus in relation to the Father, and his claims of equality with the Father in the language of oneness. The relationship and role of the Spirit of the Johannine Jesus in his Sonship is not examined in this study, although this is an indispensable area of interest for further research. The Son-Father relationship in the Synoptics and other New Testament writings, e.g. Johannine epistles, and Pauline epistles, are not investigated but may be cited, where relevant, in the discussion in this study. The development of Jesus’s Son-Father relationship in the New Testament is not investigated in this study. Similarly, the development of the concept of divine Sonship in the Old Testament and Judaism in extrabiblical writings is not investigated. The Jewish and Greek extrabiblical literature are cited from secondary sources without further investigation.²⁰

20. Methods of inter-textual hermeneutics and meaning of words to present-day readers are not applied in this study. Examples of further investigations may include dating of literature in antiquity, the extent

2. Selected text passages in chapter 3 and 4 of this study is exegetically analysed in their immediate context, except when wider context is relevant to the focus of this study. The choice of text passages pertains to the focus of this study, namely, the cognition of the Johannine Jesus, and his claims of equality in the language of oneness in his Son-Father relationship in the Fourth Gospel. The research is thus limited by the scope of this study as outlined in this Chapter.

3. Scholarly stance concerning Johannine authorship, background, date, and place of writing etc., is still open, and it is inevitable that this study must opt for a stance on these issues to frame its exegetical analysis. So, a preliminary perspective this study opts to adopt from scholarly input is as follows:

- a) the written form of the Fourth Gospel is dated around 90-100 CE, with a predominantly syncretic cultural milieu of Hellenistic Judaism located in the socio-historical context of the Imperial Roman Empire.²¹
- b) the Fourth Gospel is likely independent of, but complementary to the Synoptics.²² There seems to be a recent resurgence in scholarship to renew the suggestion of a greater reliance of the Fourth Gospel on the Synoptics, e.g. in the use of common oral tradition in the passion and resurrection narratives.²³ Scholarly opinions such as Moody Smith and Keener, maintain that there is

of conflation with other cultural milieu in Ancient Near East literature, see Barrett, *The Gospel of John and Judaism*, 61.

21. A suggested first readers of The Fourth Gospel are the Hellenistic Jews who seem to represent a syncretic religious outlook and Jewish religious experience as represented by Philo's writings, see D.A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John* (MI: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1991), 92.

22. Barrett, *The Gospel according to St John*, 16, 27; Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 51-52.

23. Andrew Lincoln, *The Gospel According to St John: Black's New Testament Commentaries* (Bloomsbury Publishing Plc., 2005, 30-31; Craig S. Keener, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary* (Peabody Mass.: Hendrickson, 2003), 40; David F. Ford, *The Gospel of John: A Theological Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2021), 2.

no direct evidence that the Fourth Gospel is directly dependent on the Synoptics, and the details of the narrative of the arrest and trial of Jesus between the Fourth Gospel and the Synoptics vary.²⁴ Although the debate is still open, it may seem the general consensus at present is that the author of the Fourth Gospel may have some knowledge of the Synoptics, but the author arranges the material in the Fourth Gospel according to his own creative intent.²⁵ For the purpose of this paper, and in consideration of the limitation in scope, the writer of this thesis opts for the scholarly opinion that the author of the Fourth Gospel may seem to have some knowledge of the Synoptics, but material in the Fourth Gospel is written without direct reliance on the Synoptics.

- c) The first author of the Fourth Gospel is a Jew who knows the Johannine Jesus intimately but not necessary one of the original twelve apostles, and the Fourth Gospel is subsequently edited by a redactor or subsequent editors of the Johannine community based on the memory of the first author.²⁶
- d) A recent study seems to demonstrate the extent and nature of textual variation among the earliest witnesses to the Fourth Gospel seems to exhibit stability in the transmission of the text.²⁷

24. Keener suggests that no direct reliance on the Synoptics does not mean that the author of the Fourth Gospel had no knowledge of the Synoptics, see Keener, *The Gospel of John*, 41-42.

25. Ford suggests that the author of the Fourth Gospel either has direct relationship with the Synoptics or the sources that the Synoptics relate to, see Ford, *The Gospel of John*, 2.

26. Regardless of the number of stages of composition, it seems likely that The Fourth Gospel is the product of one mind, see Stephen Smalley, *John: Evangelist & Interpreter* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1998), 117-118; further investigation to verify these stages of composition is out of the scope of this study.

27. Jeff Cate, "The Early Textual Transmission of John: Stability and Fluidity in Its Second and Third Century Greek Manuscripts," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 62, no. 3 (September 2019): 648–50,

However, this is not within the scope of this study to verify, or to evaluate its findings.

4. Gender-neutral nouns and pronouns are applied except when they refer to God, the Father, the Johannine Jesus, and the Greek text under study where gender differentiation is an important grammatical tool to understand the meaning of the Greek text of the Fourth Gospel.²⁸

1.5 A Framework of Hermeneutical Considerations

At this juncture, a framework of hermeneutical considerations for this study is discussed. The depiction of the Johannine Jesus's full understanding of the Father, and his claims of equality in the language of oneness is prevalent in lengthy dialogues, or monologues in the Fourth Gospel. Such a depiction may be viewed as a pedagogical tool to shape the Johannine Jesus's divine Sonship according to authorial intent (e.g. Philip is told that if he sees the Johannine Jesus he sees the Father in John 14:9), and to distinctly portray the contour, character and content of the Johannine Jesus's divine Sonship for the readers, which are seen by Schnackenburg as closely related to the Johannine Jesus's revelatory work of the Father.²⁹

<https://search-ebshost-com.ipacez.nd.edu.au/login.aspx?direct=true&db=lsdar&AN=ATLAI0V191014003284&site=ehost-live&scope=site>; for further reading on Greek Manuscripts of The Fourth Gospel, see Hugh A. G. Houghton, "The Text of The Gospel and Letters of John," in *The Oxford Handbook of Johannine Studies*, 1st edition (Oxford University Press, 2018), 2, <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780198739982.013.1>.

28. For example, the Greek noun for son in The Fourth Gospel is υἱός, which is masculine in gender indicated by its ός endings. So, if this noun is expressed in neuter in English, it would misrepresent the Greek noun.

29. Brown, *An Introduction to the Gospel of John*, 198; Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St John*, vol. 1, 24-25, 517.

It seems the literal depiction of historical chronology is not a concern for the author.³⁰ This may then account for some literary aporias in the Fourth Gospel, which seems subsequently resolved by theories of displacement (e.g. Bultmann), or multisource composition (e.g. Bultmann), or multistage composition (e.g. Fortna) or a variation (e.g. theory of multiple edition by Boismard, and Martyn's theory of reconstruction of the history of Johannine community).³¹ For the purpose of this study, the redaction activity of a multistage composition together with the reconstruction of subsequent Johannine community is consistent with a view of a latter dating of the Fourth Gospel around 85-110 C.E..³² The absence of reference to the destruction of Jerusalem Temple in the narrative may place the lower limit closer to pre-70 C.E., but the evidence is not conclusive.³³ Most scholars seem to agree on Ephesus as the place of writing and according to Brown, there seems to be some support in Acts 19:1-7, but the place of writing is not significant for the purpose of this study.³⁴

The genre of the Fourth Gospel is expressed by the Greek word *euangélion*, which is more in line with primitive evangelistic homilies than a Roman biography.³⁵ The primitive homilies are subsequently written by the first author with a specific epistemological focus to proclaim the identity of the Johannine Jesus (John 20:30) in early Christianity.³⁶

30. Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St John*, vol. 1, 20-21.

31. Brown, *An Introduction to the Gospel of John*, 41, 43, 46, 53, 58, 69.

32. Brown, *An Introduction to the Gospel of John*, 210.

33. Brown, *An Introduction to the Gospel of John*, 212.

34. Brown, *An Introduction to the Gospel of John*, 204-205.

35. Lindars, *The Gospel of John*, 25; Brown, *An Introduction to the Gospel of John*, 79, 141, 180; Walton Steve, "What Are the Gospels? Richard Burridge's Impact on Scholarly Understanding of the Genre of the Gospels," *Currents in Biblical Research* 14, no. 1 (October 2015): 85, 89, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1476993X14549718>.

36. Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St John*, vol. 1, 24; Brown, *An Introduction to the Gospel of John*, 283; "a unique form of early Christian thought," see Robert Kysar, *John, the Maverick Gospel* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2007), 2.

The unity of the Johannine style, e.g. the emphasising of a positive proposition before a corresponding counter statement, and the movement of thought in concentric circles, is noted by scholars such as Schnackenburg, Carson and Lindars.³⁷ There seems to be some Jewish elements in the Greek text, e.g. the presence of some Aramaic idiom, and parataxis (words and phrases connected by Greek conjunction “and”), “quasi-poetic” Old Testament parallelism with repetition of simple words framed in literary techniques, such as inclusion, chiasm, misunderstanding, irony, and relecture.³⁸ The Jewish element in Johannine style seems to support Barret’s suggestion of a Jewish audience/readers.³⁹ If this is the case, then it is likely that the first author is a Jew who knows the Johannine Jesus, but not necessarily one of the twelve, nor conclusively the Beloved Disciple.⁴⁰

If so, what kind of Jewish audience/readers? Scholars have long identified possible formative thought streaming from Greek philosophy, Hellenistic/Rabbinic Judaism, and alternative non-Christian sources e.g. Gnosticism, so, it may seem the intended audience/readers are part of the Jewish Diaspora living in a Hellenistic environment, which in turn may infer a conflation of different elements of Hellenism (e.g. Logos in Stoicism) and Judaism (e.g. syncretic concept of Logos in Philo’s writings).⁴¹

37. Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St John*, vol. 1, 112, 117; Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, 48; Lindars, *The Gospel of John*, 46.

38. For example, the Semantic vocabulary Rabbi is retained in John 1:38, see Brown, *An Introduction to the Gospel of John*, 278-279; Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St John*, vol. 1, 107, 111; cf Lindars, *The Gospel of John*, 45.

39. Barrett identifies topographical connections with Old Testament, see Barrett, *The Gospel of John and Judaism*, 39, 41.

40. Brown, *An Introduction to the Gospel of John*, 195-196

41. The Western Jewish Hellenistic diaspora speaks Greek as their common language while the Eastern Jewish diaspora speaks Hebrew, see Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, 10, 12, 23, 37; Brown, *Introduction to The Fourth Gospel*, 129; Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St John*, vol. 1, 119, 486.

However, none of these understanding seems to relate Logos as the Word of God to the Johannine Jesus as the author does in John 1:14.⁴² Bultmann seems convinced of a primary influence of a form of pre-Christian Gnosticism, primarily predicated on the affinity with the concept of dualism, and the notion of a Mandaean revealer.⁴³ Nevertheless, some dualistic concept, e.g. light and darkness, can also be found in Qumran literature while others, e.g. death and life, seem to be absent in Qumran literature.⁴⁴ This may seem to lend some support for Johannine traditions to be more consistent with the Jewish world of Palestine instead of pre-Christian Gnosticism, especially when scholars increasingly recognise that Gnosticism is essentially metaphysical, and impersonal in character.⁴⁵ According to Brown, evidence linking the Fourth Gospel to pre-Christian Gnosticism seems absent.⁴⁶ This view is consistent with Dodd and Schnackenburg.⁴⁷

Thus, it may seem that various non-Christian sources which the Fourth Gospel may be identified with cannot be proven conclusively.⁴⁸ As for Christian sources, Barret argues for a dependence on the Synoptics but many scholars, e.g. Dodd, Brown, Schnackenburg and Lindars, increasingly support an independent Johannine tradition, which involves a multi-stage development from the original evangelistic homilies into a kerygmatic character in the reconstruction of the gospel's

42. Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St John*, vol. 1, 482-483.

43. Bultmann, *The Gospel of John*, 8-9.

44. Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St John*, vol. 1, 130, 131.

45. Brown, *An Introduction to the Gospel of John*, 28, 118; see also Beasley-Murray, *John*, lv; Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, 103; Lindars, *The Gospel of John*, 42; Johannes Beutler, "In Search for A New Synthesis," in *What We Have Heard from the Beginning : The Past, Present, and Future of Johannine Studies*, ed. Tom Thatcher (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2007), 29.

46. Brown, *An Introduction to the Gospel of John*, 119.

47. Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, 114; Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St John*, vol. 1, 149.

48. Brown, *An Introduction to the Gospel of John*, 139.

history.⁴⁹ Regardless of the number of stages in the gospel's history of development, a new synthesis resulting in the postulation of Johannine community post-Easter is attributable to subsequent editors for redacting the first written copy of the Fourth Gospel, from a pre-Easter perspective to include post-Easter perspective, and without making fundamental changes to the first written copy of the Fourth Gospel.⁵⁰

1.6 A Suggested Conclusion

Hence, it may seem the scholarly view that the Fourth Gospel as predominantly Christian, which is rooted in Old Testament with an outer cloak of Hellenistic Judaism, provides a more robust understanding from the “perspective of the reception of the Gospel” in its final written form, and for the purpose of the post-Easter continuity of faith for the Jewish Diaspora in early Christianity.⁵¹ With this in mind, this study now turns to make inquiry into the concept of divine sonship in Chapter 2.

49. Beutler, “In Search for a New Synthesis,” 31; Barrett, *The Gospel according to St John*, 18-20; Brown, *Introduction to the Gospel of John*, 104; George Beasley-Murray, *John*, Revised Edition (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1999), xxxvi.

50. Smalley, *John: Evangelist & Interpreter*, 199; Brown, *An Introduction to the Gospel of John*, 82-85.

51. Barrett, *The Gospel according to St John*, 39; Brown, *Introduction to the Gospel of John*, 124, 180; Smalley, *John: Evangelist & Interpreter*, 32, 59.

CHAPTER 2: THE CONCEPT OF DIVINE SONSHIP

2.1 Introduction

In antiquity, the concept of divine sonship often refers to a divine association between a god and a human as a son of god by adopting the god of choice, e.g. in Greco-Roman period, Augustus was a son of god with the title of “son of Apollo”, indicating that Apollo is his preferred god.¹ In the Old Testament, angels (Genesis 6:2), individual humans, e.g. descendants of King David (2 Samuel 7:14), and the nation of Israel (Exodus 4:22-23) are all called sons of God by divine election or creation. What is unique in the Fourth Gospel is the author’s depiction of the divine sonship of the Johannine Jesus in terms of his unique perception, and his claims of equality with the Father in the language of oneness.²

2.2 Claims of the Johannine Jesus’s divine Sonship

These claims of the Johannine Jesus’s divine Sonship are not only outrageous, but also unprecedented in terms of the author’s anthropomorphic depiction in the likes of natural affection between a human father, and a naturally born son in a Jewish context.³

1. Michael Peppard, “The Eagle and the Dove: Roman Imperial Sonship and the Baptism of Jesus (Mark 1.9-11),” *New Testament Studies* 56, no. 4 (October 2010): 437, doi:10.1017/S0028688510000159; S.R.F Price, “Gods and Emperors: The Greek Language of the Roman Imperial Cult,” *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 104 (1984), 86, doi:10.2307/630281, <https://www.bibleinterp.com/articles/pep368014.shtml>.

2. For example: Johannine Jesus’s full comprehension of God (John 1:18, 7:29, 8:55, 10:15, 14:7 and 17:25), and Johannine Jesus’s claims of equality in the language of oneness (John 5:18, 10:30, 14:11, and 17:11).

3. Unlike practices in the Greco-Roman society, in the traditional Jewish thoughts and practices adoption seems rare, if not absent, see Ophir Yarden, “Adoption in Judaism,” *Dialog* 51, no. 4 (Wint 2012): 276, doi:10.1111/j.1540-6385.2012.00701.x; Deuteronomy 6:4-9.

D' Angelo's survey of Qumran's text and prayer literature in ancient Judaism, including literature from Philo and Josephus, suggests that God in the Jewish tradition is often addressed as "Father" to indicate a more intimate relationship.⁴

Concept of divine sonship of the Johannine Jesus also finds point of identification in Jewish apocalyptic literature with an anointed Jewish deliverer (2 Esdras 12:32), "my son the Messiah" (2 Esdras 7:28) and "my Messiah" (2 Baruch 40:1).⁵ A fragment from Dead Sea Scroll known as the "son of God" text (4Q246) also seems to explicitly relate the terminology "son of God" with the Jewish monotheistic understanding of the divine reality.⁶ These points of identification seem to include an understanding of God's sons as messianic agents to deliver God's people from political oppression.⁷

In early Christianity, the understanding of the concept of divine sonship is prominent in Pauline writings, which view Jesus as the first born "among brothers" in Romans 8:29. In Romans 1:3-5, Paul explicitly connects Jesus's divine Sonship to Jesus's resurrection from the dead, i.e. from a post Easter faith perspective. In the Synoptics, Jesus's divine Sonship is depicted in an intimate relationship with the

4. Mary Rose D' Angelo, "Abba and 'Father': Imperial Theology and the Jesus Traditions." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 111, no. 4 (1992): 621-622, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3267435>; O' Larry Yarbrough, "Parents and Children in the Jewish Family of Antiquity," in *The Jewish Family in Antiquity* (Providence, RI: Brown Judaic Studies, 2020), 42, <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvzgb9cp.6>.

5. C.K. Barrett, *The Gospel of John and Judaism*, translated by D.M. Smith (London: SPCK, 1975), 14; Jakob van Bruggen, "The Recognition of the Son of God," in *Jesus the Son of God: The Gospel Narrative as Message*, translated by Nancy Forest-Flier (MI: Baker Books, 1999), 131-132; although Philo does not use the term Messiah, there is evidence that Philo expects return of Diaspora Jews to their homeland in political victory, see Kenneth Schenck, *A brief Guide to Philo* (Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press), 107.

6. Tucker S. Freda, "Naming the Messiah: A Contribution to the 4Q246 'Son of God' Debate," *Dead Sea Discoveries* 21, no. 2 (2014): 150-75. doi:10.1163/15685179-12341313; cf "The Lord's Messiah" is explicit in the earliest hymn book, Odes of Solomon, in early Christianity, e.g. Ode 29:6, 39:11, and Ode 41:15; the Jewish God is called the "the Most High God" by Abraham In Genesis 14:22.

7. Zehnder, Markus. "The Question of the 'Divine Status' of the Davidic Messiah." *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 30, no. 4 (2020): 485-514. doi:10.5325/bullbibrese.30.4.0485; also see Bruggen, "The Recognition of the Son of God," 133-134; John J. Collins, "The Son of God Text from Qumran," in *From Jesus to John: Essays on Jesus and New Testament Christology in Honour of Marinus de Jonge* (Sheffield, England: JSOT Press, 1993), 80-82; Brown, *An Introduction to the Gospel of John*, 138.

Father (Matthew 11:27, Mark 12:6), and in the titular reference of Son of God (Mark 1:1, 15:39, Luke 1:32). Although in the Synoptics, there appears to be no explicit evidence that Jesus refers to himself as Son of God, but the terminology is used by others to depict Jesus's intimacy with God.⁸ So these traces of the concept of divine Sonship in these writings seem to be made more explicit in the Fourth Gospel.⁹ A comprehensive survey of Jesus's divine Sonship in Paul's writings, and the Synoptics is out of the scope of this study, suffice to note that in these writings, claims of Jesus's divine Sonship primarily include categories concerning affinity with Davidic Messiah, narrative of virgin birth and resurrection, and the reference as firstborn of all brothers in new humanity in Jesus's person and work, whereas the claims of the Johannine Jesus's divine Sonship seems explicitly connected to the Word of God, and display distinctive claims in a personal and intimate communication with the Father.¹⁰

For example, the author of the Fourth Gospel interprets the Johannine Jesus consistently in his claims of knowing the Father (e.g. John 7:29, 8:55, 13:3, 17: 25), and his claims of equality to the Father in the language of oneness (e.g. John 5:18, 10:30).¹¹ The portrayal of familial intimacy of the Johannine Jesus with the Father is often viewed by scholars in a development from evangelistic homilies to a kerygmatic gospel in early Christianity.¹² For example, Lindars suggests the presence

8. James D. G. Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, (Michigan: Eerdmans Publishing, 2003), 718.

9. Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St John*, vol.1, 24; "...claim of Jesus is... more exalted than any honorific titles can express." from Walter Kasper, *Jesus the Christ*, (London : T & T Clark, 2011), 91.

10. Ashton, *Understanding the Fourth Gospel*, 325; Loader, *Jesus in The Fourth Gospel*, 334; Brown, *An Introduction to the Gospel of John*, 115.

11. Steven Smalley, *John: Evangelist and Interpreter* (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1998), 230, 238; "...presentation of Jesus...lies at the heart of all that is distinctive..." in D.A Carson, *The Gospel According to John*(Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1991), 95.

12. Brown, *An Introduction to the Gospel of John*, 180; Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, 6; Lindars, *The Gospel of John*, 35; Stephen Smalley, *John: Evangelist & Interpreter* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1998), 192.

of a traditional material to depict Jesus's Son-Father relationship in the Johannine perspective for homiletic purpose.¹³ So, how do the scholarly perspectives differ in their views on the Johannine Jesus's divine Sonship?

A quick survey of the commentaries of modern scholars indicates various perspectives of the Johannine Jesus's divine Sonship in accordance with the scholars' hermeneutical considerations.¹⁴ These perspectives can be broadly grouped into three Christological emphases: ontological (Bauckham, Carson), functional (Brown, Schnackenberg), and moral/spiritual (Barrett, Bultmann, Lindars).¹⁵ The boundaries of these emphases seem fluid, and many scholars adopt a view that represent a combination of these emphases, e.g. ontological and functional (Dodd, Carson), and functional and spiritual (Anderson).¹⁶

Modern scholars who place weight on the ontological connection of the Johannine Jesus tend to focus on his divinity, and integrate the notion of the divine origin of the ascending/descending Son of Man (John 1:51) with the Word of God (John 1:1) in the Jewish Wisdom tradition.¹⁷ For example, Smalley views the Johannine Jesus as of divine origin, and is one in unity with God in his Son-Father

13. Lindars, *The Gospel of John*, 41, 52; Grindheim shows some indication in a study that Luke 10:21-22 and Matthew 11:25-27 retain traditional elements concerning mutually exclusive knowledge between Jesus and God as Son and Father which seems to be further elaborated in The Fourth Gospel, see Sigurd Grindheim, *God's Equal What Can We Know About Jesus' Self-Understanding?* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 174-176.

14. It is not possible to survey all the scholarship, suffice to select ten notable modern commentaries on The Fourth Gospel.

15. Ontological category: Smalley, *John: Evangelist & Interpreter*, 140, 239, 245. Functional category: Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John in two volumes: I – XII* (New York: Doubleday, 1970), 408; Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St John*, vol. 2, 185-186. Moral/spiritual category: Barrett, *The Gospel according to St John* 72; Bultmann, *The Gospel of John*, 83,111, 245-246; Lindars, *The Gospel of John*, 65.

16. Combination of Ontological and Functional, see Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 81, 95-96; Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, 262, 244. Functional and spiritual, see Paul N. Anderson. *The Riddles of the Fourth Gospel*, 131, 134-140, 178-180.

17. E.g. Carson, Dodd and Smalley, see D.A., Carson, *The Gospel According to John* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1991), 96; Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, 248; Smalley, *John: Evangelist and Interpreter*, 244; see also Brown, *An Introduction to the Gospel of John*, 256, 263.

relationship.¹⁸ This interpretation tends to echo the Christian tradition to convey a notion of pre-existence in the Johannine Jesus's divine Sonship, which many modern scholars follow Bultmann's resolve to demythologise such affinities with the personified Wisdom speculation in the Torah, and a heavenly redeemer in Mandaean and Gnostic sources.¹⁹ A resulting synthesis thus renders a reading of the Johannine Jesus's divine Sonship as a moral example par excellence in the perfect unity of will and communion with the Father.²⁰ This synthesis further includes a spiritual reading of the Johannine Jesus's divine Sonship from a post-Easter perspective, especially when Clement of Alexandria is often quoted for claiming the Fourth Gospel as a spiritual gospel.²¹

Scholars who place emphasis on the functional Christology of the Johannine Jesus often argue that the Johannine Jesus is God's agent par excellence in the likes of the prophetic model of Moses (John 5:46).²² Loader seems to infer a metaphorical "family apprenticeship" model, which is more than a prophetic envoy model, as it seems to Loader that the Johannine Jesus's Son-Father relationship is more than a unity of will for prophet-like sons of God in the Old Testament.²³ So, a relational reading of the Johannine Jesus's divine Sonship tends to reflect a personal dimension of engagement between a human father and a son in a household, which may otherwise be subsumed in a functional reading, or an ontological emphasis that sees

18. Smalley, *John: Evangelist & Interpreter*, 245, 272.

19. Bultmann *The Gospel of John*, 23.

20. Barrett, *The Gospel According to St John*, 72; Lindars, *The Gospel of John*, 64.

21. Bultmann, *The Gospel of John*, 64, 145; Paul Anderson, "Prologue: Critical Views of John, Jesus and History," in Paul Anderson, et al., *John, Jesus, and History* (Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2007), 2.

22. Dodd extends his interpretation of Johannine Jesus's divine Sonship beyond the prophetic model of Old Testament to include equal authority to exercise divine prerogatives of judgement and giving life, see Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, 255; Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John in two volumes: I – XII* (New York: Doubleday, 1970), 408-411; Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St John*, vol. 2, 185.

23. Loader, *Jesus in The Fourth Gospel*, 335.

the Johannine Jesus's divine Sonship in terms of an inference of intimate reciprocity and a unity of will.²⁴ Anderson notes a similar relational intimacy in Matthew 11:27 (Q tradition).²⁵ However, Schnackenburg rules out this possible connection with the Johannine Jesus's divine Sonship by differentiating between the conferring of authority and relational intimacy, even though the former seems concomitant with the latter in the Johannine Jesus's Son-Father relationship (e.g. John 3:25, John 5:20-22).²⁶ So for Schnackenburg, the Johannine Jesus's divine Sonship is primarily a functional agency concept originates from a mutual understanding.²⁷

It may seem that neither ontological, nor functional, nor moral/spiritual understanding alone is sufficient to account for the totality of the Johannine Jesus's divine Sonship, for an element of personal relationship based on a blood-tie bond of love between a father and a son is explicitly depicted in John 3:35 as the basis for the Johannine Jesus to receive God's name (e.g. John 17:11), his Sonship identity (e.g. John 3:17), God's commandments (e.g. John 12:49), God's work (e.g. John 5:19), disciples (John 17: 6), divine authority (e.g. John 5:22) and divine glory (e.g. John 8:54).²⁸ The Johannine Jesus is thus depicted as having received from the Father, not in an exchange of benefits predicated on what he does, but on who he is, for the act of bestowing by the Father predicated on the anthropomorphic relational bond of familial identity, affection, and inheritance.

24. Roger Haight, *Jesus Symbol of God* (New York: Orbis Books, 1999) 114.

25. Paul Anderson, "The Message of Jesus in John: An Introduction to the Issues in" *John, Jesus, and History, Volume 3: Glimpses of Jesus through the Johannine Lens*, edited by Paul N. Anderson et al., (Society of Biblical Literature, 2016), 333; Brown, *Introduction to the Gospel of John*, 265.

26. In Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St John*, vol. 2, 179, a distinguishing element is made between intimate character of relational unity of Johannine Jesus's Son-Father relationship vis-à-vis the character of power conferral by the Father to the Son in the Synoptics. However, this study notes a similar power conferral in John 5:27 which seems to indicate that these are two sides of the same coin.

27. Rudolf, Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St John*, vol. 2 (New York: The Seabury Press, 1980), 178-179.

28. Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St John*, vol. 2, 173, 175.

As a contemporary analogy, a son who works for a father who owns a company is very different from an employee of that company, because the son is groomed to eventually inherit the whole company, while the employee will eventually retire or be replaced. The distinguishing difference in the nature and character of these two relationships is depicted in John 8:35 in terms of an intimate familial relationship, which is irreplaceable and cannot be substituted, for the Johannine Jesus indeed “comes from the same cloth” as the Father (John 1:18).²⁹ The author thus makes explicit the Johannine Jesus’s connection to the Word of God (John 1:14), to emphasise a protological relation that originates from an ontological hypostatisation.³⁰

If the above is the case, then the take on the Fourth Gospel as a spiritual gospel may be reconsidered as a gospel for the “spiritually discerning”, to interpret and proclaim the divine reality of God made visible in the Johannine Jesus’s words and deeds through the Johannine lens, either by seeing the Johannine Jesus’s “signs” pre-Easter, or/and by faith post Easter respectively, which in turn depends on the exegete’s take on the theory of composition, and authorship of the Fourth Gospel.³¹ For example, Bauckham opts to interpret the Johannine Jesus’s divine Sonship as an eyewitness account with historiographical features found in a Greco-Roman biography, which suggests an intradivine reciprocal relationship.³²

29. This personal familial relationship is unlike and a stark contrast to the distant gods in Greco-Roman religion, see Schnabel, “Knowing the Divine and Divine Knowledge in Greco-Roman Religion,” 296, 300, 312.

30. Cf Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St John*, vol. 1, 485.

31. Marianne Meye Thompson, “The “Spiritual Gospel”: How the Theologian Writes History,” in Paul Anderson, et al., *John, Jesus, and History*, 106; Paul N. Anderson, *The Christology of the Fourth Gospel: With a New Introduction, Outlines, and Epilogue* (Oregon: Cascade Books, 2010), lxi.

32. Historiographical features, e.g. good knowledge of topography, selectivity of important events, knowledge of Jewish Feasts is indicative of an eyewitness testimony, See Richard Bauckham, *The Testimony of the Beloved Disciple: Narrative, History and Theology in the Gospel of John* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 106, 251.

This understanding seems to echo elements of pre-existing, and co-substantiality of the Johannine Jesus's divine Sonship that most Johannine scholars now deem uncritical without evidence, as eyewitnesses cannot be verified with the passage of time.³³ So, a possible way going forward may be to inquire the Johannine Jesus's divine Sonship as a dialogical reality, predicated on the dialectic character of the author's epistemology concerning the experience of human-divine encounter with the Johannine Jesus in the intention of leading his readers into the same experience.³⁴

2.3 A Proposed Understanding

In sum, this study observes a diverging scholarly understanding of the Johannine Jesus's divine Sonship predicated on the scholar's hermeneutical considerations. For the purpose of this study, the preliminary hermeneutical considerations (as outlined in Chapter 1) will be considered to frame the exegetical analysis of the Johannine Jesus's Son-Father relationship in the Fourth Gospel. As such, this study now turns to the meaning of the two forms of Greek verbs of cognition, γινώσκω and οἶδα, in the selected texts (as outlined in Chapter 1) to make inquiry into the explicit depiction of the Johannine Jesus's cognitive insight of the Father in his Son-Father relationship in the Fourth gospel.

33. Thompson, "The "Spiritual Gospel": How the Theologian Writes History," 106; Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St John*, vol. 1, 25.

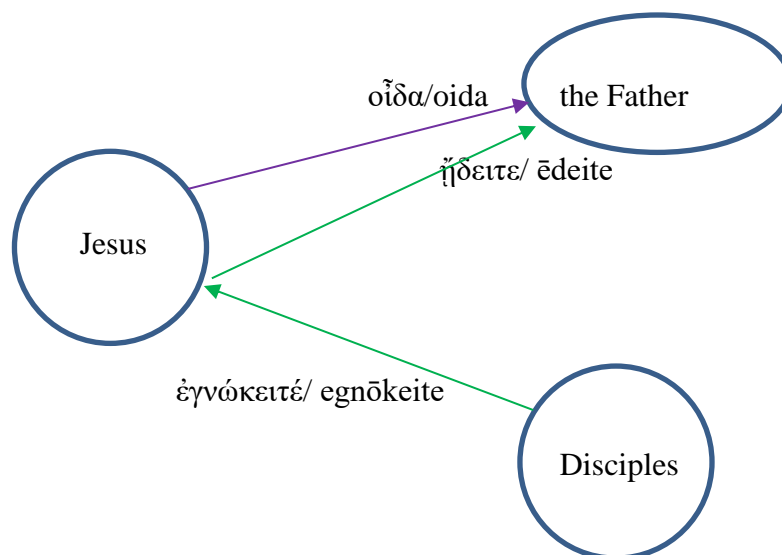
34. Anderson, *The Christology of the Fourth Gospel*, lii, lvi, lvii and lx.

CHAPTER 3: THE MEANING OF GREEK VERBS-OF-COGNITION IN JOHN 7:29; 10:15; AND 17: 8

3.1 Introduction

To express the Johannine Jesus's cognitive acuity regarding the Father, the author uses γινώσκω/ginōskō and οἶδα/oīda in their various verbal forms.¹ These verbs depict the unique cognitive insight of the Johannine Jesus concerning his relatedness with the divine reality of the Father. For example, the Johannine Jesus knows (οἶδα) the Father who gives him all things (John 13:3); if the disciples had known (ἐγνώκειτέ/ egnōkeite) the Johannine Jesus, they would have known (ἤδειτε/ēdeite) the Father (John 14:7). The diagram below shows the Johannine use of γινώσκω and οἶδα, concerning God's divine reality in the above examples (See Figure 1 below).

Figure 1. The Johannine use of γινώσκω and οἶδα



1. See Strong concordance online; γινώσκω: <https://greeklexicon.org/lexicon/strongs/1097/>; οἶδατε: <https://greeklexicon.org/lexicon/strongs/1492/>

In Figure 1 above, the Johannine Jesus is depicted to refer to God as the Father, and that the Father is the source of all things. Such a cognitive insight pertaining to the Father in a unique relationship to the Johannine Jesus is made available to the Johannine Jesus's disciples. So, how does the Johannine use of γινώσκω and οἶδα depict this unique cognitive insight of the Johannine Jesus regarding his distinct relatedness with God? This chapter investigates the use of γινώσκω and οἶδα to determine their nuanced meaning, if any, in the context of the Johannine Jesus's unique cognitive insight of the Father in his Son-Father relationship.

3.2 The Johannine Use of Γινώσκω

Γινώσκω is used 222 times in the New Testament, and 25% is found in the Fourth Gospel.² The Greek meaning of γινώσκω refers to learning something, or someone through a real encounter.³ This is consistent with the importance the Greek places on experience, and observation to ascertain all reality.⁴ Subsequently in LXX, the meaning of γινώσκω includes the Hebraic element of hearing God's words to carry out God's will.⁵ Thus, γινώσκω seems to denote a progressive learning process by observation and experience, e.g. through religious education and/or discipleship/mentorship, to understand God's divine reality.⁶ This understanding seems applicable to the Johannine Jesus's disciples in their attempt to comprehend

2. Schmithals, ed. Baltz, Horst and Schneider, Gerhard, *The Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament*, vol. 1, English Translation (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1990), 248.

3. Frederick W. Danker. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 199-200.

4. Cf. hearing is more important with respect to spiritual matters in Jewish tradition, see Barrett, *The Gospel according to St John*, 162.

5. Hebrew equivalent is שָׁמַע, see Barrett, *The Gospel according to St John*, 162; Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, 161; LXX refers to the Septuagint, which is the Greek translation of books from the Hebrew Bible.

6. G., Abbott-Smith, *A Manual Greek Lexicon of the New Testament*, (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1960), 92-93.

God's divine reality through the Johannine Jesus's discipleship. Nevertheless, with reference to the Johannine Jesus's unique insight of God's divine reality, the author seems to prefer the use of the other Greek verb, οἶδα (see Figure 1). Is this a consistent application in the Fourth Gospel? If so, what are the implications?

3.3 The Johannine Use of Οἶδα

Οἶδα is used 318 times in the New Testament, and 26% is found in the Fourth Gospel.⁷ At first glance, οἶδα may seem similar in meaning to γινώσκω, but οἶδα seems to connote cognitive insight of divine purpose concerning the Johannine Jesus's origin and mission.⁸ Οἶδα is a unique present tense Greek verb of an obsolete verb εἶδω/eido with its etymological root in observation by physical sight, and the verb is still in use when the author writes the Fourth Gospel in the late first century.⁹

The prevalent use of γινώσκω and οἶδα in the Fourth Gospel seems to raise the question of their nuanced difference in meaning. In the example in Figure 1, οἶδα and ἤδείτε both refer to the same Greek root εἶδω, in contrast to the etymological roots of ἐγνώκειτέ, which is a verbal form of γινώσκω.¹⁰ So, there seems to be an apparent difference in terms of etymological meaning between γινώσκω and οἶδα.

3.4 A Nuanced Difference between Γινώσκω and Οἶδα

7. A., Horstmann, ed. Baltz, Horst and Schneider, Gerhard, *The Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament*, vol. 2, English Translation (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1991), 493.

8. Seesemann, ed. Kittel, Gerhard, Geoffrey William Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, abridged in one volume (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965), 673-4; Danker. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 693.

9. Johannes P. Louw and Eugene A. Nida, eds, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains*, 2 vols, Second Edition (New York: United Bible Society, 1989), 483; Timothy Friberg, Barbara Friberg, and Neva F Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000), 483.

10. οἶδα is verb, perfect active indicative, 1st person, singular from εἶδω; ἤδείτε is verb, pluperfect Active Indicative, 2nd person, plural, from εἶδω; ἐγνώκειτέ is verb, pluperfect active indicative, 2nd person, plural, from γινώσκω.

According to Louw and Nida, a lexical principle is that no two Greek lexical terms are the same, so γινώσκω and οἶδα are found to be associated with different nuances, e.g. γινώσκω seems to associate with the inception and progression of intelligent comprehension of skills, or information about someone or something, while οἶδα refers to a mental comprehension and perception with respect to an observation arising from a personal encounter.¹¹ The exegetical dictionaries seem to view the nuanced meanings of γινώσκω and οἶδα as follows:

i) Γινώσκω pertains to the possession of knowledge in the intellect, or reasoning that is developed by experience to form a certainty of knowledge, in a continuing learning environment (e.g. coming to know, emphasising the continuous act of knowing through education or discipleship/mentorship).¹²

ii) οἶδα pertains to mental acuity of a resulting awareness of something from past seeing (εἶδω/είδω is the sense of physical sight and is the root word for οἶδα).¹³ In other words, it is an observation arising from a past association or relationship, that becomes the basis of present knowing, or mental acuity, or perception. If this is the case, then οἶδα may be used to depict the mental acuity of the Johannine Jesus predicated on his past seeing of God's divine reality, which now becomes his present perception of his relatedness with the Father. If so, then the next question is when does the past seeing of the Johannine Jesus occur? Is this an inference to the Johannine Jesus's protological sight by pre-existence, or spiritual sight by

11. Louw and Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, xvi, 334-335; Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, Ninth Edition (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1940), 350, 483.

12. Louw and Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, 334.

13. Louw and Nida, eds, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, 334-335, 347, 380; Liddell and Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 483; Timothy Friberg, Barbara Friberg, and Neva F Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000), 277.

contemplation? ¹⁴ Or is this an inference to the author's sight of faith in his encounter with the Johannine Jesus on earth, or the author's spiritual sight post-Easter or both?

Before these questions may be adequately responded to, further exegetical analysis to investigate selected texts John 7:29, 8:55, and 17:8, as test cases, are studied to gather evidence for the Johannine use of γινώσκω and οἶδα.¹⁵

3.5 The Exegetical Analysis of Selected Texts

John 7:29

ἐγὼ οἶδα αὐτόν, ὅτι παρ' αὐτοῦ εἰμι καὶ ἐκεῖνός με ἀπέστειλεν
I know Him, because from Him I am and that one me He sent

In this passage, there are two minor textual variances which has no significant impact to the textual meaning:

- (1) an addition of a conjunction between ἐγὼ and οἶδα ¹⁶
- (2) ἀπεσταλκεν replaces ἀπέστειλεν¹⁷

Exegetical Analysis. The broader setting of John 7:29 is the Jewish feast of Tabernacle (John 7:2), where all Jewish diaspora gathers in Jerusalem to celebrate the week-long fall festival as religious observance, to remember the event of the

14. Loader, *Jesus in The Fourth Gospel*, 4.

15. Johannes P. Louw and Eugene A. Nida, eds, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains*, 2 vols, Second Edition (New York: United Bible Society, 1989), xvi; the data-domain of this brief survey is obtained from the online Strong concordance; γινώσκω: <https://greeklexicon.org/lexicon/strongs/1097/>;

οἶδατε: <https://greeklexicon.org/lexicon/strongs/1492/>

16. Variance found in majuscules κ, D and N and some miniscules.

17. Variance found in κ and D, with the replacement of ἀπέστειλεν (verb, aorist, active, indicative, third person, singular, ἀποστέλλω) by ἀπεσταλκεν (verb, perfect, active, indicative, third person, singular, ἀποστέλλω). The perfective indicates a completed state while the aorist seems to be a constative one. See Daniel B., Wallace, *The Basics of New Testament Syntax: An Intermediate Greek Grammar* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 2000), 241.

visible presence of God journeying with their ancestors in their exodus from Egypt.¹⁸ The Temple and the Feast of Tabernacle indicate the Jewish identity of the first readers/audience of the Fourth Gospel in their collective memory of the wilderness experience of their ancestors.¹⁹ To locate the Johannine Jesus in the Temple teaching in a loud voice in the middle of the Feast of Tabernacle is significant from the post-Easter perspective: a) the reminder of God's visible reality in the Jewish festival of Tabernacle in the collective memory of Jewish diaspora; and b) the visible presence of God embodied in the Johannine Jesus's teaching as the divine source and authority.²⁰

The context of John 7:29 is the confrontation of the crowd (or inhabitants of Jerusalem), regarding the source and authority of the Johannine Jesus's teaching (John 7:25-26).²¹ The polemical nature of this confrontation is consistent with the gospel tradition (e.g. Mark 3:6, Matthew 28:15), which is not found in Gnosticism and Hellenistic literature.²² As the scholarly opinions here are not hard evidence, it is equally likely that these confrontations reflect the author's epistemological

18. Exodus 23:14; Brown, *An Introduction to the Gospel of John*, 160; Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, 306. Ruth Agnes Evans, "JESUS AT THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES: A Reflection on the Human Struggle of Jesus," *The Way* 55, no. 2 (April 2016): 99–101, <https://search-ebSCOhost-com.ipacez.nd.edu.au/login.aspx?direct=true&db=lsdar&AN=ATLAIgFE160829000304&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

19. Lindars, *The Gospel of John*, 38.

20. Barrett, *The Gospel according to St John*, 315; Bultmann, *The Gospel of John*, 295; Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St John*, vol. 2, 145; Ruth Agnes Evans, "JESUS AT THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES: A Reflection on the Human Struggle of Jesus," *The Way* 55, no. 2 (April 2016): 99–110,

<https://search-ebSCOhost-com.ipacez.nd.edu.au/login.aspx?direct=true&db=lsdar&AN=ATLAIgFE160829000304&site=ehost-live&scope=site>; Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St John*, vol. 2, 1; ἔκραξεν/ekraxen is verb, aorist, active, indicative, 3rd person singular, κράζω/ krazō.

21. Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St John*, vol. 2, 144; the Jews is a generalised group who is antagonistic towards Johannine Jesus; the crowd is the common people from Jerusalem who are aware of the hostility of the Jews towards Johannine Jesus (John 7:15), see Brown, *Introduction to the Gospel of John*, 165; Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St John*, vol. 2, 145.

22. Ashton, *Understanding the Fourth Gospel*, 146, 150; Brown, *An Introduction to the Gospel of John*, 157; Lindars, *The Gospel of John*, 37; Keener, *The Gospel of John*, 76, 78; Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St John*, vol. 2, 147.

reflection of past controversies in the Johannine Jesus's ministry, and post-Easter interpretation concerning his identity.²³

The immediate context (John 7:25-29) indicates a direct challenge to the Johannine Jesus's origin and authority of his teaching.²⁴ The Johannine Jesus's Messianic origin (John 7:27) is the issue at hand.²⁵ The notion of the unknown origin of the Jewish Messiah may be seen to resemble the metaphysical dualism, which may characterise the Gnostic redeemer myth pertaining to the return of divine emanation in human to the metaphysical pleroma.²⁶ However, the scholarly debate concerning the Gnostic redeemer myth in the Fourth Gospel is inconclusive. Schnackenburg highlights the absence of a personal God in the Gnostic redeemer myth, vis-à-vis the Fourth Gospel.²⁷ If this is the case, the absence of Greek noun γνῶσις/gnosis vis-à-vis the frequency of the use of Greek cognitive verbs γινώσκω and οἶδα in the Fourth Gospel, may be indicative of the author's intention to avoid association with the Gnostic notion of γνῶσις in the depiction of the Johannine Jesus's active cognitive acuity of God.²⁸

In John 7:29, the Johannine Jesus is depicted to be the true Messiah of God, who reveals the Father in his teachings and miracles.²⁹ This is consistent with the author's persistent depiction of the Father as He who sends the Johannine Jesus. The confrontation with the Jerusalem crowd in John 7:29 is an informal debate, which

23. Keener, *The Gospel of John*, 79. The author's post Easter reflection include the subsequent redacting activity of the text into its final written form.

24. Edward Klink III, *John: Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016). 361.

25. Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St John*, vol. 2, 146.

26. The Gnostic redeemer myth primarily revolves around metaphysical elements of cosmic dualism, and knowledge (Gnosis) of the Gnostic redeemer sent from heaven, see Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, 101, 103; Schnackenburg, *The Gospel According to St. John*, vol. 1, 550.

27. Schnackenburg, *The Gospel According to St. John*, vol. 1, 549.

28. Barrett, *The Gospel according to St John*, 81; Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, 151.

29. Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, 351; Benjamin Reynolds and Gabriele Boccaccini. *Reading the Gospel of John's Christology As Jewish Messianism: Royal, Prophetic, and Divine Messiahs* (Boston: BRILL, 2018), 170.

results in the Johannine Jesus's emphatic dismissal of Jewish messianic speculations.³⁰

The primary clause in John 7:29 is ἐγὼ οἶδα αὐτόν, with οἶδα as the main verb. The use of οἶδα here indicates the present perception of the Johannine Jesus is predicated on a past cognition of God's divine reality – from Him (παρ' αὐτοῦ/par autou).³¹ The causal conjunction ὅτι indicates genitive pronoun of source/origin αὐτοῦ as God's divine reality in the Johannine Jesus's awareness. The third person personal pronoun (κάκεινός/ kakeinos) consists of a crasis used to connect movement of thought of the author, from the preceding ὅτι clause to the third and final clause with the verb ἀπέστειλεν, which Schnackenburg suggests is in the same thought as the primary clause.³² αὐτόν refers to the expression “the one who send me” (ὁ πέμψας με) in John 7:28b, which again depicts the Johannine Jesus's awareness of the divine origin (παρ' αὐτοῦ) of his commission. Hence, the relatedness of the Johannine Jesus and the Father is personal.

The aorist verb ἀπέστειλεν/apesteilen explicitly connects the commission of the Father in the expression of με ἀπέστειλεν, to the Johannine Jesus's self-awareness of his origin and his mission.³³ The emphatic placement of the word ἀπέστειλεν at the end of the passage depicts the emphasis of the Johannine Jesus's pre-existing

30. Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, 228; Loader, *Jesus in The Fourth Gospel*, 126; for definition of informal debate see Klink III, John, 57.

31. The etymological meaning of the root of οἶδα is εἶδω, which denotes physical seeing, inferring that Jesus's unique knowing comes from his past seeing; οἶδα is verb, perfect, active, indicative, first person, singular, εἶδω; Wallace, *The Basics of New Testament Syntax*, 249; Abott-Smith, *A Manuel Greek Lexicon of the New Testament*, 311; Brown, *The Gospel According to John in two volumes: I – XII*, 317; Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 318.

32. Lidija Novakovic, *John 1-10 : A Handbook on the Greek Text* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2020), 251. Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St John*, vol. 2, 147.

33. Barrett, *The Gospel according to St John*, 323; Beasley-Murray, *John*, 111; Bultmann, *The Gospel of John*, 298; Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St John*, vol. 2, 147; This expression is repeated in John 8:55 and John 17:25. The verb ἐγνώκατε is perfect, active, indicative, second person, plural, γινώσκω is used once, and οἶδα twice in 8:55. The verb ἔγνω is aorist, active, indicative, third person, singular, γινώσκω. ἔγνω is verb, aorist, active, indicative, first person, singular, γινώσκω and ἔγνωσαν is verb, aorist, active, indicative, third person, plural, γινώσκω are used in John 17:25.

relatedness with the one who sends him.³⁴ So, the verb οἶδα does seem to denote a continuing awareness in the mental acuity of the Johannine Jesus, regarding the source of his commission.³⁵

The hostile confrontation between the Johannine Jesus, and the crowd is very brief and compressed, indicating a pointed and terse verbal exchange that heightens the hostility leading to the violent response of an angry mob (John 7:30).³⁶ The hostile confrontation in the wider context of John 7 and John 8 may reflect historical situation of the Jews and the Johannine Jesus, which subsequently leads to the expulsion of the Johannine community from the Synagogue post-Easter.³⁷

John 7:29 is the emphatic summation of the Johannine Jesus's response to the crowd's challenge in John 7:27. The crowd's expectations (John 7:17) of an unknown Jewish Messiah may be a rabbinic tradition.³⁸ The Johannine irony (John 7:42) heightens the polarisation of the crowd, concerning the Johannine Jesus's identity, which leads the readers/audience to sift through the conflicting meaning of the claims of the Johannine Jesus in John 7:29 for themselves.³⁹

The Johannine Jesus is depicted to defy all Jewish expectations of a royal mandate of a political Davidic Messiah to recover the kingdom of Israel from the Romans as a political king for the Jews.⁴⁰ By the time of the controversy in John 7:29

34. Barrett, *The Gospel according to St John*, 323.

35. Bultmann, *The Gospel of John* 289; Loader, *Jesus in The Fourth Gospel*, 335.

36. Characteristic of a Johannine dramatic flair in discourses, see Lindars, *The Gospel of John*, 53.

37. Brown, *Introduction to the Gospel of John*, 70; George Beasley-Murray, *John* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1999), 104.

38. The expectation of origin of Messiah is hidden (e.g. Pseudepigrapha: 1 Enoch 48:6, apocrypha: 4 Ezra 13:52) and the common knowledge of the crowd place Johannine Jesus in Nazareth in the family of Joseph and Mary, Beasley-Murray, *John* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1999), 111; Brown, *An Introduction to the Gospel of John*, 139; Lindars, *The Gospel of John*, 293; Novakovic, *John 1-10 : A Handbook on the Greek Text*, 250; J. Ramsey Michaels, *The Gospel of John* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2010), 451.

39. J. Ramsey Michaels, *The Gospel of John* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2010), 451.

40. Jewish expectation of the political Messiah seems to predicate on the prophecy in Isaiah 9:1-6, see Loader, *Jesus in The Fourth Gospel*, 323; Zehnder, "The Question of the 'Divine Status' of the Davidic Messiah," *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 30, no. 4 (2020): 485–514,

occurs, there is a shift from human “messianic” agents, e.g. human priests and prophets, who are anointed by God, to a royal “Davidic Messiah” of God’s promise.⁴¹ The notion of “the Messiah” is not the political “King of the Jews”, for God’s divine Kingdom is not that of this world (John 18:36).⁴² The Johannine Jesus’s true identity is then associated with the divine origin and mission of God in an intimate familial context, but not in a political dimension.⁴³ Thus, Brown suggests the apparent rarity of the Synoptic expression of the “kingdom of God” is likely due to its transposition to the Johannine Jesus’s relatedness to the Father to carry out the Father’s mission.⁴⁴

Although Schnackenburg differentiates between the apocalyptic notion and the origin of Messiah, these two notions are intertwined. Thus, the Jewish expectation of the coming of “the Messiah” is now a realised reality in the Johannine Jesus in a new and Christian way.⁴⁵

The author’s use of ἐγὼ (*egō*) in John 7:29 is a direct correspondence with the Johannine Jesus’s response of ὑμεῖς in John 7:28b (i.e. you do not know), which indicates an emphatic counter challenge by the Johannine Jesus (John 7:27), relating to the Messiah’s unknown origin. The connection between John 7:29 and John 7:28 is known by scholars as an *asyndeton*, which denotes a semantic connection without a syntactic conjunction.⁴⁶ So, the resulting impact is that the Johannine Jesus

doi:10.5325/bullbiblrese.30.4.0485; Schenck, *A brief Guide to Philo*, 107; Qumran literature also echoes messianic overtones, see Collins, “The Son of God Text from Qumran;” 80-82.

41. Ashton, *Understanding the Fourth Gospel*, 255; Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, 92, 228, 361; investigation into the development of Jewish expectations is out of scope of this study.

42. Adela Yarbro Collins, “The Suffering Servant: Isaiah 53 as a Christian Text,” in *Hebrew Bible of*

43. Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, 92; Loader, *Jesus in The Fourth Gospel*, 437.

44. The expression of the “kingdom of God” is found only in John 3:3 and John 3:5, and scholars seem to find it originates from pre-Johannine oral tradition; see Barrett, *The Gospel according to St John*, 207; Brown, *Introduction to the Gospel of John*, 228; Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St John*, vol. 2, 367.

45. Ashton, *Understanding the Fourth Gospel*, 406; Brown, *Introduction to the Gospel of John*, 239;

46. The use of ἐγὼ...εἶμι...here may echo the self-identification of God in the Old Testament, but its use in other places in The Fourth Gospel is more explicit and the formula of ἐγὼ εἶμι is primarily expressed in connection with a metaphor e.g. the bread of life (John 6:35), the good shepherd (John 10:11) and the light of the world (John 8:12); see Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St John*, vol. 2, 79.

emphatically claims that he knows his origin is from the Father, who sends him even if the crowd does not.

If we trace a movement of οἶδα and γινώσκω from John 7:27 to John 7:29, we may gather further information regarding their usage. The crowd knows (οἶδαμεν - from past seeing that becomes a common knowledge) the birthplace of the Johannine Jesus, but they do not yet know by learning (γινώσκει - from proof of facts) of the identity of the Johannine Jesus, or the Father who sends him.⁴⁷ In John 7:28, the emphatic use of οἶδατε (three times) pertains to the crowd's ignorance concerning the true identity and mission of the Johannine Jesus from the Father's divine reality.⁴⁸

This divine reality of the Father is described by the author (John 7:28b) with a predicate adjective ἀληθινός/aléthinos, meaning true and authentic, with a connotation of truthfulness, which indicates the combined meaning of trustworthy (Greek), and faithful (Hebrew).⁴⁹ ἀληθινός may also refer to an impersonal ultimate reality (Hellenistic), or a true and therefore trustworthy divine reality that is established (Hebrew), or both.⁵⁰ If this is the case, it may seem οἶδα is used instead of γινώσκω to depict the Johannine Jesus's unique cognitive perception of God's true divine reality, which differs from the crowd's, and also to infer protological sight (i.e. past knowing).⁵¹ This study now continues to investigate the use of οἶδα and γινώσκω in John 8:55.

47. Bultmann, *The Gospel of John*, 297, 298.

48. John 7: 28 ἐκραξεν οὖν ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ διδάσκων ὁ Ἰησοῦς καὶ λέγων· Καμὲ οἶδατε καὶ οἶδατε πόθεν εἰμί· καὶ ἀπ' ἐμαντοῦ οὐκ ἐλήλυθα, ἀλλ' ἔστιν ἀληθινός ὁ πέμψας με, ὃν ὑμεῖς οὐκ οἶδατε· Also see Novakovic, *John 1-10*, 250-251.

49. Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, 170, 173, 174, 175.

50. Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, 175, 178.

51. Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, 175, 177. Cf. Keener suggests γινώσκω and οἶδα are use at random and interchangeably, see Keener, *The Gospel of John*, 246.

John 8:55

καὶ οὐκ ἐγνώκατε αὐτόν, ἐγὼ δὲ οἶδα αὐτόν·
and not (you) have known him, I but have known him:
κὰν εἶπω ὅτι οὐκ οἶδα αὐτόν,
if I say that not (I) have known him,
ἔσομαι ὅμοιος ὑμῖν ψεύστης·
I will be like you a liar:
ἀλλὰ οἶδα αὐτόν καὶ τὸν λόγον αὐτοῦ τηρῶ.
But (I) have known him and the word him (I) keep.

The textual variance in this verse is the alternate reading of the phrase ἔσομαι ὅμοιος ὑμῖν.⁵² The alternate reading represents a transposition of words in the phrase and has no significant impact in the exegetical analysis in this study.

Exegetical Analysis. This passage is located in the wider context of hostile verbal confrontation between the Johannine Jesus and the Jews.⁵³ The use of the term “Jewish authority” in the Johannine terminology “οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι”, or “the Jews” in relation to this text, refers to the generalised group of Jewish opponents, who exhibit significant influence in the community, and who are hostile to the Johannine Jesus’s claims of divine authority for his teaching.⁵⁴ The term includes the Pharisees, and the

52. The reading of ὅμοιος ἔσομαι ὑμῖν is found in D and ἔσομαι ὅμοιος ὑμῶν is found in manuscripts P⁶⁶ κ C K L N Γ Δ Ψ 070 f¹³ 33.579.700.892.1241.1424 ℵ. The textual reading is supported by P⁷⁵ A B W Θ f¹ 565. See Nestle Aland 28, 327.

53. Barrett, *The Gospel according to St John*, 333; Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, 305; Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St John*, vol. 2, 187; the presence of literary aporias in John 8 is more likely due to a reworking of material rather than a subsequent merging of disparate literary sources, see also Lindars, *The Gospel of John*, 280; Smalley, *John*, 100; Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, 346; Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St John*, vol. 2, 187.

54. This is consistent with Bultmann’s interpretation, Bultmann, *The Gospel of John*, 86, although subsequently, scholars argue for various identifiable references but is inconclusive; Cornelis Bennema, “The Identity and Composition of Οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι in the Gospel of John,” *Tyndale Bulletin* 60, no. 2 (2009): 240, 242,

<https://search-ebscohost-com.ipacez.nd.edu.au/login.aspx?direct=true&db=lsdar&AN=ATLA0001750634&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

chief Temple priests in their religious role as distinguished from the Jewish racial identity as a whole.⁵⁵ This is consistent with Barrett's view that religious leaders in Jerusalem reject the Johannine Jesus's claims of divine authority in his teaching.⁵⁶ If this is the case, then Johannine terminology of "the Jews" is not anti-Jewish, but against the Jewish leadership that leads to the ultimate expulsion of the Johannine community from Judaism post-Easter.⁵⁷

The immediate context of John 8:55 is the confrontation between the Johannine Jesus and the Jewish authority concerning his word.⁵⁸ This dialogue seems to find similarity with Johannine homily pattern, where a passage in Old Testament or Torah is quoted, and followed by its exposition and conclusion by reiterating the passage again (e.g. John 6:31-58).⁵⁹ So, the dialogical context in John 8:52-56 starts with a charge against the Johannine Jesus of being a Samaritan, who is demon possessed (John 8:48, 52), and followed by explanation, rebuttal against the charge, and the reiteration of the main issue as conclusion (see Table 1 below).

The immediate context of John 8:55 is a self-contained formal debate between the Johannine Jesus and the Jewish authority (John 8:52-56).⁶⁰ The issue of the debate is the Johannine Jesus's understanding of God's divine reality, as compared to the Jewish authority (John 8:55).

If we compare the dialogue in John 8:52-56 with the preceding one in John 8:48-51, there seems to be a continuous rhetorical movement toward the focus of God's word, which is articulated as equivalent to the word of the Johannine Jesus

55. Ashton, *Understanding the Fourth Gospel*, 134, 152; Brown, *Introduction to the Gospel of John*, 163, 167.

56. Barrett, *The Gospel according to St John*, 172.

57. Barrett, *The Gospel according to St John*, 334.

58. Beasley-Murray, *John*, 136; Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St John*, vol. 2, 188.

59. Lindars, *The Gospel of John*, 51; Smalley, *John*, 110; this may be indicative of varying source theory for Johannine narrative and dialogues that is collated into its final form according to authorial intent, see Smalley, *John*, 114.

60. Klink III, *John*, 55, where formal debate is defined as one involving a principal or a law.

(compare John 8:51 and John 8:55). Thus, the attention of the readers/audience is drawn unequivocally toward God’s word, and that of the Johannine Jesus (Table 1), which may seem to infer a language of oneness between the word of God and the word of the Johannine Jesus.⁶¹ This language of oneness will be studied further in Chapter 4.

John 8:48-51	Main Issue of Debate	John 8:52-56	Main Issue of Debate
v 48	First charge of demon possession	v 52	Second charge of demon possession
v 49	Honour God-the-Father	v 53	Who does Johannine Jesus think he is to claim his word gives life?
v 50	God-the-Father glorifies Johannine Jesus	v 54	God-the-Father glorifies Johannine Jesus
v 51	Those who keeps Johannine Jesus's word shall not see death	v 55	Unlike his opponents, Johannine Jesus knows God-the-Father and keeps God's word.
		v 56	Abraham welcomes Johannine Jesus

Table 1. Example of Johannine homily in John 8:48-51 and John 8:52-56

The use of λόγον in John 8:55 is important, which may imply the pre-existing Word of God (ὁ λόγος/ho logos) in John 1:1, or refer to the revelation of God to human in the Torah through Moses, or to depict God’s word in the Johannine Jesus’s words to defy death (John 8:51).

In John 8:55, it seems God’s divine reality is depicted in terms of the Johannine Jesus’s unique understanding of his origin and commission from the Father. It presents a two-level epistemological insight of God’s divine reality that is

61. The pattern of Johannine dialogues starts with a topic statement that sets the development of the debate, see Jerome H Neyrey, “John 3: A Debate over Johannine Epistemology and Christology,” *Novum Testamentum* 23, no. 2 (April 1981): 116, <https://search-ebscohost-com.ipacez.nd.edu.au/login.aspx?direct=true&db=lsdar&AN=ATLA0000783852&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

embedded in different nuances of the Johannine use of γινώσκω and οἶδα, i.e. between the Johannine Jesus's true understanding, and the Jewish authority's false understanding that constitute a lie (the Johannine Jesus calls the Jewish authority a liar, ψεύστης/pseustés), for false witness of God's divine reality is seen as falsehood (John 8:44).

The accusation of the Jewish authority that attributes the work of the Johannine Jesus to the devil (John 8:48) may be similar to a primitive Synoptic tradition e.g. Luke 11:15. However, Luke 11:15 refers to exorcism but in this text passage, the issue is the divine authority of the Johannine Jesus's word. By the time this particular confrontation in John 8:55 occurs, the Jewish authority is increasingly uneasy with the large multitude that the Johannine Jesus seems to draw for his teaching (John 8:2), which may account for their obvious attempt to demonise and discredit the Johannine Jesus in the eyes of the multitude.

The reference to Abraham in John 8:52 is used ad hominem against the Johannine Jesus, that is subsequently rebutted in John 8:58, which points to the superiority of the Johannine Jesus over Abraham, denoting an element of pre-existence.⁶² In Exodus 6:3, Abraham is depicted to recognise God's divine reality as El Shaddai, and Moses as YHWH Elohim, but the Johannine Jesus addresses God as Father (John 8:27, 54). This infers a closer intimacy and relatedness for the Johannine Jesus with God than either Abraham, or Moses. The emphasis (ἐγὼ is emphatic) that the Johannine Jesus knows (οἶδα) “*their* God”, but the Jewish authority does not know (ἐγνώκατε) (John 8:55) “*their* God” places the referent “*their* God” in the same personal category of the divine reality of both the Jewish

62. Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St John*, vol. 1, 222; the inference of pre-existence seems indicative by the use of present tense εἰμί for Johannine vis-à-vis the use of aorist indicative γενέσθαι/genesthai for Abraham's existence in John 8:58. Further analysis regarding “I am” sayings are out of the scope of this study.

authority and the Johannine Jesus.⁶³ The emphatic affirmation of the Johannine Jesus that his true perception of God’s divine reality is not a lie because of their intimate relatedness as Father and Son.⁶⁴ This also echoes the emphatic “ἐγὼ οἶδα αὐτόν” in John 7:29 as analysed earlier.

Structurally and semantically speaking, the converse of the condition in John 8:55 is true, but the reverse of the condition is false.⁶⁵ If we look at the possibility of the author’s intent to rebuke the Jewish authority indirectly in a typically Johannine ironic manner, then it makes good sense for the author to opt for the contingent and subtle third-class condition structure over an uncompromising and explicit second-class condition in John 8:55.⁶⁶

The Johannine use of ἐγνώκατε (from γινώσκω) and οἶδα *at the same time* in John 8:55 not only indicates their nuanced etymology as discussed earlier in this Chapter, but is also a deliberate choice of the author.⁶⁷ So, the Johannine Jesus’s cognitive acuity (οἶδα) of “*their* God” is an understanding based on his past seeing (οἶδα) of God’s divine reality, which differs from the Jewish authority’s false understanding (γινώσκω) of the divine reality acquired in their learning process (i.e. ἐγνώκατε, which denotes an extensive perfect emphasising their past learning process, e.g. religious education).⁶⁸

63. Novakovic, *John 1-10*, 311.

64. Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, 172; κἂν εἶπω ὅτι οὐκ οἶδα αὐτόν, ἔσομαι ὅμοιος ὑμῖν ψεύστης (If I say that I do not know Him, I shall be a liar like you) is a third-class condition denoting by the conjunction κἂν (Crisis for καί/kai and ἐάν/ean) and the subjunctive εἶπω/eipon, verb, aorist, active, subjunctive, 1st person, singular, λέγω/legō.

65. Wallace, *Greek Grammar beyond the Basics*, 685, 686.

66. Greek conditional sentences assume a portrayal of reality, so second-class conditional sentence in Greek indicates an assumption of untruth for the sake of argument (with the use of imperfect verbs in both protasis and apodosis to assert a present contrary-to-fact condition. A third-class conditional sentence indicates the condition is uncertain of fulfillment but still likely, see Wallace, *Greek Grammar beyond the Basics*, 695, 696, 703.

67. Wallace, *The Basics of New Testament Syntax*, 246.

68. Wallace, *The Basics of New Testament Syntax*, 248-250.

A question may then arise as to how does the Johannine Jesus see God's divine reality in the past? Another question may also arise as to what is the timeframe for "past seeing" with reference to the Johannine Jesus? Scholarly opinions may in part attribute this past seeing of the Johannine Jesus to a heavenly vision in the likes of those of the patriarchs in the Jewish tradition, e.g. Abraham sees a heavenly vision of God in Genesis 18:1 and Jacob in Genesis 32:30.⁶⁹ It seems the Jewish authority recognises that the Johannine Jesus's learning is not acquired formally (John 7:15), e.g. through a renown Jewish Rabbi as is the custom of the day, so it may infer an authorial supposition of protological sight, which is consistent with the pre-existing element noted earlier in John 8:58.⁷⁰ However, this supposition does not seem to account for the Johannine Jesus's "past seeing".⁷¹ Ashton's suggestion of the post-Easter conviction of faith provides a plausible explanation for the Johannine Jesus's past seeing, and present knowing.⁷² This is consistent with the dialectical Johannine situation discussed earlier. If this is the case, then the nuanced difference in the Johannine use of οἶδα and γινώσκω may reflect the dialectical thinking of the author of the Fourth Gospel, which arises from the development of the pre-Easter faith of the Johannine believers, in relation to their post-Easter faith conviction concerning the identity of the Johannine Jesus.

Furthermore, there is indication that the Johannine Jesus's earthly discipleship pre-Easter does enhance the cognitive perception of his first disciples to

69. Ashton, *Understanding the Fourth Gospel*, 355; John Ashton, "The Johannine Son of Man: A New Proposal," *New Testament Studies* 57, no. 4 (October 2011): 516-517, 527-528, doi:10.1017/S0028688511000178.

70. Cf. in Luke 2:52, although the development of Jesus's wisdom and stature may be construed as obtained through informal learning-process, but the superiority of his learning is beyond the teachers in the temple in Luke 2:47, indicating that no teachers can teach what Jesus knows. As this is beyond the scope of this study, no further investigation is done except to note the superiority of Jesus's cognitive ability beyond the teachers of his day in both The Fourth Gospel and Luke's.

71. Ashton, *Understanding the Fourth Gospel*, 354.

72. Ashton, "The Johannine Son of Man," 519-520.

form a true perception of God's divine reality. For example, Thomas (John 14:5) claims the disciples have no understanding (οὐκ οἶδαμεν/*ouk oidamen*) of the divine reality of the Johannine Jesus's heavenly destination, and hence have no insight (εἰδέναι/*eidénai*) to access God's divine reality.⁷³ With the use of three verbal variations of γινώσκω (i.e. ἐγνώκατέ/*egnokate*, γνωσεσθε/*gnosesthe*, γινώσκετε/*ginōskete*) consecutively in John 14:7, the Johannine Jesus repeatedly affirms that Thomas has already developed cognitive insight of the divine reality of the Father in his discipleship to understand the relational identity of the Johannine Jesus and the Father.⁷⁴ This study notes the movement of these three consecutive verbs from perfect, to future and then to present. The verbal movement seems to indicate the emphasis of the completed process of the Johannine Jesus's discipleship with Thomas, to explain the divine origin and authority of the Father, and to indicate the importance of obedience by keeping God's word in the Johannine Jesus's discipleship (e.g. John 15:7).

To keep (τηρῶ) God's word (λόγον, direct object of τηρῶ/*tēreō*) in John 8:55, depicts an emphatic link between knowing God and keeping God's word.⁷⁵ Keeping God's word connotes the understanding of the revelatory purpose of God in the work and life of the Johannine Jesus.⁷⁶ The authority of God's word is thus evidenced in the portrayal of the Johannine Jesus's full submission to obey the Father to carry out his divine mission.⁷⁷ By keeping God's word, the Johannine Jesus not only

73. οἶδαμεν is perfect, active, indicative, first person, plural, οἶδᾶ ; εἰδέναι is perfect, active, infinitive of οἶδᾶ.

74. ἐγνώκατέ/*egnokate* is verb, perfect, active, indicative, second person, plural, γινώσκω; γνωσεσθε/*gnosesthe* is verb, future, middle, indicative, second person, plural, γινώσκω and ἐγνώκειτέ/*egnokete* is verb, present, active, indicative, second person, plural, γινώσκω;

the textual variance of a pluperfect ἐγνώκειτε in place of the perfect ἐγνώκατέ does not impact the nuance of the meaning of the verbs for the purpose of this study, Lidija Novakovic, *John 11-21 : A Handbook on the Greek Text* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2020), 118-119.

75. τηρῶ is verb, present, active, indicative, 1st person, singular, τηρῶ;

76. Beasley-Murray, *John*, 138; Bultmann, *The Gospel of John*, 301.

77. Barrett, *The Gospel According to St. John*, 351; Lindars, *The Gospel of John*, 334;

demonstrates the authority of God in his life but also correlates to his demand for his disciples to keep his word, as he keeps God's word, because the source and authority of his word is identical to God's word (e.g. John 8:31, 15:7,8). So, a true disciple of the Johannine Jesus is required to keep his word just as the Johannine Jesus is himself a true disciple-par-excellence of the word of the Father.⁷⁸

So it seems that in John 8:55, the author's use of ἐγνώκατε and οἶδα *at the same time* is intended to highlight the nuanced difference in the Johannine Jesus's epistemology, vis-à-vis that of the Jewish authority concerning the true knowledge of the divine reality of "their God".⁷⁹ The readers/audience are then drawn to the increasing polarisation of the controversial debate concerning the word of the Johannine Jesus that points ultimately to his passion.

Thus far, the exegetical analysis of texts passages of John 7:29, and John 8:55 seem to support the author's use of the nuanced difference between γινώσκω and οἶδα to refer to the Johannine Jesus's specific revelatory content of the true divine reality of the Father, in terms of his relatedness with the Father, his commission from the Father, his identity as the true Messiah of the Father, and his full access to God's word.⁸⁰

In addition, the specificity of the revelatory content of the Johannine Jesus examined thus far are objectifiable, e.g. God is the Father who sends the Johannine Jesus, the Johannine Jesus is God's true Messiah, God's word brings life, and the Johannine Jesus keeps God's word.⁸¹ This revelatory content is different in nature and character from a metaphysical contemplation (Greek philosophies), or a vision

78. Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 356.

79. ἐγνώκατε/egnōkate is verb, perfect, active, indicative, 2nd person, plural – γινώσκω.

80. Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, 168, 397; Kasper, *Jesus the Christ*, 97; Loader, *Jesus in The Fourth Gospel*, 285, 314, 325; also see Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St John*, vol. 1, 556. Smalley, *John: Evangelist & Interpreter*, 239.

81. Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, 158; Loader, *Jesus in The Fourth Gospel*, 61, 284.

of God (Philo), or a redeemer myth (Gnosticism), or other forms of contemplation leading to an ultimate reality that is abstract, impersonal and distant; for the relatedness of the Son-Father relationship of the Johannine Jesus is specific, personal and immanent.⁸² The revelation of God's word in the Johannine Jesus's discipleship and life is thus seen as completely consistent with God's true divine reality.⁸³ Further investigation concerning God's word is discussed below in the exegetical analysis for John 17:8.

John 17:8

ὅτι τὰ ῥήματα ἃ ἔδωκάς μοι δέδωκα αὐτοῖς,
 because the words which you gave me I have given to them
 καὶ αὐτοὶ ἔλαβον, καὶ ἔγνωσαν
 and they received, and they knew
 ἀληθῶς ὅτι παρὰ σοῦ ἐξῆλθον, καὶ ἐπίστευσαν ὅτι σύ με ἀπέστειλας.
 Truly that from you I came forth, and they believed that you me sent

Textual variances in this verse are:

- (1) ἔδωκάς is replaced by δεδωκάς⁸⁴
- (2) καὶ ἔγνωσαν is omitted⁸⁵

Exegetical Analysis. John 17 is often called the high priestly prayer by scholars, and it is a literary unit, which is sandwiched between the end of the farewell

82. Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, 153, 168, 399; Keener, *The Gospel of John*, 243; Loader, *Jesus in The Fourth Gospel*, 61, 315; in *The Fourth Gospel*, God's divine reality is depicted in a concrete manner as signs, see E.F. Scott, "The Hellenistic Mysticism of the Fourth Gospel," *The American Journal of Theology* 20, no. 3 (1916): 352, 354, 357, <https://doi.org/10.1086/479709>.

83. Bultmann, *The Gospel of John*, 298, 301.

84. Variance found in κ K L N Γ Δ Θ Ψ0109 f^{1.13} 565^s.892^s.1424. 1844 M and the textual reading is supported by A B C D W 594, see Nestle Aland 28, 360.

85. Omitted variance found in κ* A D W a e q sa^{mass} ly pbo⁸⁵ and the textual reading is adopted. See Nestle Aland 28, 360.

discourse of the Johannine Jesus to his disciples in John 16, and the passion narrative beginning in John 18.⁸⁶ The format of summarising a farewell discourse with a prayer seems to exhibit similar elements in Jewish writings, Hermetic literature, and depict some influence from Synoptics tradition.⁸⁷ A distinguishing characteristic of the prayer is its objectifiable personal relatedness of the Johannine Jesus's oneness with the Father, which is extended to his disciples at the decisive hour toward his completing his mission, and his returning to the Father (John 17:21,22).⁸⁸ This prayer is thus seen as different from the Lord's prayer (e.g. Matthew 6:9-15), and the Gethsemane prayer (Mark 14:36). Instead, it is an unparalleled solemn personal prayer to the Father to sum up his earthly ministry on the eve of his passion.⁸⁹ This prayer articulates the concerns of the Johannine Jesus, which is primarily for the mutual glory of the Father and his, and the preservation of unity of his disciples in God's word after he returns to the Father.⁹⁰

John 17:8 is thus set in this background of the Johannine Jesus's personal prayer to the Father at the dawn of the Johannine hour (John 17:1). The Johannine hour is the decisive time when the Johannine Jesus glorifies the Father through making known his Father's mission to humans, and to receive the Father's glory by accomplishing his mission.⁹¹ It is a mutually glorifying event on the cross, when the Johannine Jesus accomplishes what he is sent to do, and there is no mention of

86. Barrett, *The Gospel according to St John*, 500; Beasley-Murray, *John*, 293-294.

87. Barrett, *The Gospel according to St John*, 499, 500, 501; Beasley-Murray, *John*, 293.

88. Barrett, *The Gospel according to St John*, 500; Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, 419, 422.

89. Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St John*, vol. 3, 167.

90. Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St John*, vol. 3, 168; although the subdivision of the prayer by its content is uncertain, there is no impact on this study, so the subdivision of Barrett is adopted, i.e. four subdivisions – John 17:1-5, John 17:6-19, John 17:20-4 and John 17:25-26, see Barrett, *The Gospel according to St John*, 499.

91. Beasley-Murray, *John*, 296; Bultmann, *The Gospel of John*, 492; Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St John*, vol. 3, 170. Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St John*, vol. 2, 398.

suffering in this prayer.⁹² None is able to harm the Johannine Jesus before the hour (e.g. John 7:30). So, scholars call this the eschatological event, in which God's glory is visibly seen in the work of the Johannine Jesus on the cross.⁹³ The visible glory of the Father in the earthly work of the Johannine Jesus thus culminates in the actualisation of the glory of the Father concerning the impending hour, which is the hour when both the Father and the Son-Revealer are glorified together as one on the cross in John 12:23, and when the Johannine Jesus accomplishes the mission for which he is sent to do.⁹⁴ Thus, the Johannine hour infers the visible glory of God in the time and space that Johannine soteriology and anthropology are bound up together as one in the Johannine Jesus's revelation, which makes available God's divine life to humans (John 17:3).⁹⁵

Hence, the concept of glory in this prayer identifies the Johannine Jesus with the glorified Christ as the true dwelling place of God among humans.⁹⁶ This indicates a subsequent synthesising in line with the epistemological understanding of the first author's pre-Easter sight to post-Easter faith, indicating a primitive Christian kerygma.⁹⁷

The immediate context of John 17:8 is the Johannine Jesus's prayer to the Father for his disciples who he is leaving behind.⁹⁸ In John 17:8, the Johannine Jesus's purpose for praying for his disciples is to preserve their unity in God's word.⁹⁹

92. Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St John*, vol. 2, 403.

93. Bultmann, *The Gospel of John*, 493; Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St John*, vol. 2, 402, 403, 404; Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St John*, vol. 3, 167.

94. Bultmann, *The Gospel of John*, 493; Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St John*, vol. 2, 403, 404;

95. Beasley-Murray, *John*, 297, 298; Bultmann, *The Gospel of John*, 495; Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St John*, vol. 3, 168.

96. Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St John*, vol. 2, 407, 409.

97. Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St John in volume 2*, 398; Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St John*, vol. 3, 168.

98. Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St John*, vol. 3, 168.

99. Barrett, *The Gospel according to St John*, 499.

The characteristics of these disciples are: i) they are from the world (i.e. not heaven), ii) they receive revelation of God's name from the Johannine Jesus, and they keep God's word, and iii) they have learnt (ἔγνωσαν/*egnōkan*) that the Father is the source of all things (i.e. πάντα ὅσα/*pavnta osa*) in the Johannine Jesus (John 17:6,7).¹⁰⁰

With the causal link ὅτι/*hoti*, the author continues in John 17:8 to explain all things to mean τὰ ῥήματα/*ta rhemata*.¹⁰¹ This continuing developing of a theme in a widening circle of explanation belongs to the Johannine style as discussed earlier.¹⁰² John 17:7,8 explains John 17:6 by the adverb link νῦν/*nyn* in John 17:7, and the causal conjunction ὅτι in John 17:8, and together these passages relate to the summation of the Johannine Jesus's discipleship with his disciples.¹⁰³

The use of aorist verb ἔγνωσαν in John 17:8 echoes the perfect verb ἔγνωσαν in John 17:7.¹⁰⁴ The movement of the verb indicates the shift of understanding of the disciples that the Father is the giver of all things in the Johannine Jesus (ὅτι πάντα ὅσα δέδωκάς/*dedōkas moi/moi, παρὰ/pará σοῦ/sou εἰσιν/ eisin*), and their convictions that the coming of the Johannine Jesus corresponds to the sending by the Father (παρὰ σοῦ ἐξῆλθον/*exerchomai*). The perfect verb in John 17:7 emphasises the continuing conviction of the disciples to recognise the Father as the source of all things in the Johannine Jesus (including his life and ministry of his words), while the aorist verb in John 17:8 is likely a constative aorist that denotes progressive understanding, depicting that the disciples has now come to learn of the Johannine

100. Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, 417; Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St John*, vol. 3, 177; ἔγνωσαν is verb, perfect, active, indicative, third person, plural, γινώσκω, some minor variants are noted but seems attributable to scribal assimilation and correction that has no significant impact on this study, see Novakovic, *John 11-21*, 196 and Barrett, *The Gospel according to St John*, 505.

101. Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St John*, vol. 3, 177

102. Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St John*, vol. 3, 177.

103. Barrett, *The Gospel according to St John*, 505.

104. ἔγνωσαν is verb, aorist, active, indicative, third person, plural, γινώσκω.

Jesus's commission and authority from the Father.¹⁰⁵ So, it seems the basis of the author's faith conviction and proclamation of the true divine reality in the Johannine Jesus's word predicates on the visible manifestation of God's divine reality in the Johannine Jesus's life and ministry, which is experienced by his first disciples, and also the author's sight of faith post-Easter.¹⁰⁶

If the above is the case, then the primary influence in this passage is neither Gnostic, Greek, Judaism, Hellenistic but Christian. Unlike the speculative contemplation of cosmology, anthropology and theology (e.g. Hermetists), or the knowledge of the realm of being (e.g. Gnostics), the author in this passage concretises and objectifies the knowledge of God in terms of the relatedness of the true divine reality in the teaching of the Johannine Jesus, and his mission in his Son-Father relationship.¹⁰⁷ Hence, it may be said that the disciples learn to recognise the true relational reality of the Father and the Johannine Jesus, as indicated in this passage in two ways: a) the transmission of the words of God (τὰ ῥήματα/ta rhemata), and b) the formulaic expression in Johannine ὅτι clause, ὅτι σύ/sy με/me ἀπέστειλας/apesteilas, which relates to the Johannine Jesus's commission from the Father.¹⁰⁸

The shift from depicting God's word as λόγον in John 17:6 to τὰ ῥήματα in John 17:8 is noted in this study. Is there a difference? Dodd and Schnackenburg do not seem to find any significant difference, Barrett identifies ῥήματα as the sayings of the Johannine Jesus, and Carson attributes ῥήματα to the actual utterances of the

105. Wallace, *The Basics of New Testament Syntax*, 247, 241.

106. Barrett, *The Gospel according to St John*, 504-505.

107. Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, 151, 152, 159.

108. Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, 163; ἀπέστειλας is verb aorist, active, indicative, 2nd person, singular, ἀποπέλλω /apostellō, the aorist again denotes the process of sending Johannine Jesus is ingressive, emphasising the initiation of The Father in sending Johannine Jesus on the mission, see Wallace, *The Basics of New Testament Syntax*, 241.

Johannine Jesus.¹⁰⁹ If the principle that no two Greek lexical terms are the same is to be applied consistently in this Chapter as discussed earlier, then there is likely to have a nuanced difference between the Johannine use of ῥήματα in this passage vis-à-vis λόγον.

Both λόγον and ῥήματα refer to God's word in the above-mentioned passages. Obviously, the former is singular while the latter is plural. This seems to cohere with Barrett's understanding that λόγον (i.e. word of God, which can be written or spoken) is the subject matter that is broken down into many ῥήματα (i.e. spoken words or utterances of the Johannine Jesus).¹¹⁰ Thus, both λόγον and ῥήματα depict the gift of the word of God (δέδωκα/dedoka). Although LXX views both terms as synonymous for the Hebraic equivalent davar (דבר), ῥήματα here seems to carry a nuanced connotation of the word of God made audible in the utterances of the Johannine Jesus in his speech (e.g. John 3:34), vis-à-vis God's word as a whole (λόγον e.g. John 14:24).¹¹¹ In John 17:8, the disciples receive the Johannine Jesus's utterances of God's word (τὰ ῥήματα) that become the basis of their understanding of God's true divine reality, which supports the Johannine Jesus's claim that he is sent by the Father.

This conviction of the disciples is denoted by the verb ἐπίστευσαν/episteusan in the last ὅτι clause in John 17:8, which in turn is directly connected to the cognitive verb ἔγνωσαν in the preceding ὅτι clause by the conjunction καὶ/kai in John 17:8.¹¹² Hence, the author depicts that the disciples' understanding of God's true divine

109. Barrett, *The Gospel according to St John*, 506; Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, 560; Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St. John*, vol. 1, 483.

110. Barrett, *The Gospel according to St John*, 506; δέδωκα is verb, perfect, active, indicative, 1st person, singular, δίδωμι.

111. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey William Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological dictionary of the New Testament*, abridged in one volume (MI: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1985), 508, 510; signs of Johannine Jesus are linked to his revelatory work, see Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to John*, vol. 1, 517.

112. ἐπίστευσαν is verb, aorist, active, indicative, 3rd person, plural, πιστεύω.

reality corresponds to the disciples' receiving (ἔλαβον/élabon) the ῥήματα (i.e. utterances of the Johannine Jesus), where receiving is analogous to doing the words of the Johannine Jesus (i.e. obedience), leading to their faith in God's true divine reality in the Johannine Jesus's words and ministry.¹¹³

3.6 A Summary of Findings and Implications

Having analysed the Johannine use of οἶδα and γινώσκω in the above selected passages as test cases, this study notes a consistently nuanced shift between them that seems indicative of the author's view of the discontinuity between the epistemology of the Johannine Jesus, and that of the Jewish diaspora concerning God's true divine reality, which may in turn depict a diverging two-level epistemology in the author's dialectical thinking, which is supported by the persistent depiction of the author that the Johannine Jesus knows (e.g. John 8:15 - οἶδα) he is from above (e.g. John 8:23).¹¹⁴

This study thus finds the following characteristics concerning the Johannine Jesus's cognitive perception of the Father in his Son-Father relationship:

(i) It represents a unique understanding of the relatedness with the Father that is not known to be formally taught, and that which is present in the dialectic thinking of the author of the Fourth Gospel.¹¹⁵

(ii) The Johannine Jesus's discipleship bridges the two-level discontinuity of the epistemological horizon of his disciples and his own concerning God's divine

113. Barrett, *The Gospel according to St John*, 506; Bultmann, *The Gospel of John*, 499; Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, 560; Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St John*, vol. 3, 178; ἔλαβον is verb, aorist, active, indicative, 3rd person, plural, λαμβάνω; τετήρηκαν/téterekan in John 17:6 is verb, perfect, active, indicative, 1st person, singular, τηρέω, with the meaning of keeping and observing.

114. See also John 3:31

115. L. W. Hurtado, "God," In *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*, edited by Green, Joel B., McKnight, Scot, Marshall. and I. Howard (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1992), 275.

reality pre-Easter, which seems to continue in the eyes of faith of Johannine believers post-Easter.¹¹⁶

The implications of these findings are as follows: firstly, the pre-Easter Johannine Jesus is connected to the post-Easter Christ in early Christianity, which is prominent in the author's depiction of the Johannine Jesus's relatedness to the Father as a human being with unique cognitive insight of God's true divine reality, which dismisses potential inclination of docetic inference in early Christianity.¹¹⁷

Secondly, if the Johannine use of οἶδα relates to the Johannine Jesus's present knowing of God's true divine reality (pre-Easter) with implication of protological sight in the author's dialectic thinking (e.g. John 8:26, 8:58), then it is indicative of a pre-supposed element of pre-existence in the dialogical content in the encounters between the Johannine Jesus and his disciples, and also with his opponents.¹¹⁸

Thirdly, if the author depicts the Johannine Jesus's ῥήματα as *one* with the word of the Father (λόγον) in his utterances, then it seems the emphasis of the author falls on the *oneness* of unity and purpose in the Johannine Jesus's relatedness with the Father who sends him.¹¹⁹

Fourthly, the disciples of the Johannine Jesus (but not the Jews and the Jerusalem crowd) receive the word of God in the Johannine Jesus's utterances that enables them to receive insight which in turn bridges the two-level epistemological

116. James D. G. Dunn, *Unity and Diversity in the New Testament: An Inquiry into the Character of Earliest Christianity*, 3rd ed. (London: SCM Press, 2006), 325; also see Keener, *The Gospel of John*, 238.

117. Dunn, *Unity and Diversity in the New Testament*, 222-224, 231; 327, 329; Hurtado, "God," In *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*, 275.

118. Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, 167; Ernst Kasemann, *The Testament of Jesus* (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1968), 25.

Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St John*, vol. 1, 556.

119. Loader, *Jesus in The Fourth Gospel*, 312, 314.

horizon of God's divine reality, as depicted by the Johannine use of οἶδα and γινώσκω. The author seems to infer that God Himself *fully* reveals His relatedness with humanity in the Johannine Jesus's words and mission. This revelation is continued by the mediation of the Spirit post-Easter in the vision of the resurrected Christ.¹²⁰ Thus, the Johannine Jesus's relatedness to the Father is seen as the truth of God's relationship with humanity. This depicts a turning point for the new beginning for humanity to relate with God's true divine reality, which is consistent with Paul's "new Creation in Christ" in 2 Corinthians 5:17.¹²¹ Further investigation into the role of the Spirit in this learning process post-Easter, though important, is limited by the scope of this study.

Finally, the Johannine Jesus is not only Jesus-the-Revealer, as Bultmann would suggest, but also Jesus-the-Son, who knows God as the Father, and is sent by Him to make audible, and visible His true divine reality in the midst of humanity, through the life and ministry of the Johannine Jesus.¹²² This perspective arises from the author's dialectical thinking from his close encounter with the Johannine Jesus in past seeing (i.e. in the Johannine Jesus's ministry pre-Easter), and his spiritual engagement with the resurrected Christ (i.e. post-Easter) by the mediation of the Spirit, when he first writes the Fourth Gospel, which in turn is carried on by several other editors until completion.¹²³ The author's (including subsequent editors) dialectical thinking together with the two-level epistemology concerning God's

120. Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, 168.

121. Barrett, *The Gospel according to St John*, 74; Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, 168, 169, 244.

122. Bultmann views Johannine Jesus's revelatory role only as an existential epiphany event in the likes of the Gnostic's redeemer, and thus denies protological connection with the divine reality of God, see Bultmann, *The Gospel of John*, 9, 65; cf. Ernst Kasemann, *The Testament of Jesus* (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1968), 23.24.

123. James McGrath, *John's Apologetic Christology: Legitimation and Development in Johannine Christology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 229; Paul N Anderson, *The Riddles of the Fourth Gospel* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2011), 130-131.

divine reality is reflected in the portrayal of the Johannine Jesus's encounters with individual humans in the Fourth Gospel.¹²⁴

For example, the dialogues depicting the encounters of Nicodemus (John 3:1), and the Samaritan Woman (John 4:7) with the Johannine Jesus are not mere epiphanies, but dialogical conjunctive for them to receive cognitive insight to bridge the two-level epistemology in their cognitional structure pertaining to God's true divine reality in His relatedness with them.¹²⁵ These dialogical encounters with the Johannine Jesus thus depict a more robust understanding of God's divine reality and His relatedness with humans, as compared to other channels of enlightenment of the ultimate reality (e.g. Gnosticism).

3.7 A Suggested Conclusion

As the above findings show, the cognitional structure of the Johannine Jesus is depicted to fully identify with the divine reality of the Father, with implications of oneness with the Father in his relatedness (e.g. John 10:30). The next chapter will continue to analyse three text passages, as test cases, to investigate the language of oneness in the Son-Father relationship of the Johannine Jesus with the Father.

124. Johannine use of lengthy dialogues is unique as compared to the Synoptics, see Anderson, *The Riddles of the Fourth Gospel*, 131.

125. According to Bultmann, encounters of Johannine Jesus in John's gospel are epiphanies, which are not a sensory experience nor spiritual but mere sight of faith beyond human's existential experience, see Bultmann, *The Gospel of John*, 69,70; Loader, *Jesus in The Fourth Gospel*, 4.

CHAPTER 4: THE CLAIMS OF EQUALITY IN THE LANGUAGE OF ONENESS IN JOHN 1:14; 4:34; AND 5:19

4.1 Introduction

The Johannine Jesus's Son-Father relationship is couched not only in terms of the Johannine Jesus's unique cognitive insight of God's divine reality (Chapter 3), but is also expressed in his explicit claims of equality (e.g. John 5:19, 12:49) in the language of oneness.¹ In this chapter, attention is given to the exegetical analysis of the language of oneness in the Johannine Jesus's claims of equality with the Father in "the Word" (John 1:14), purpose of God (John 4:34) and in the divine authority and activity of God (John 5:19).

4.2 The Johannine Language of Oneness

The language of oneness in the claims of Johannine Jesus's is distinctively consistent in his relatedness with the Father, which is frequently expressed by scholars in terms of his functional obedience predicated upon the agency concept (e.g. as a prophet in John 4:44, John 13:16) attested to in the Jewish and Synoptic traditions.² These traditions may further be seen as an allusion to the Shema (Deuteronomy 6:4-6) tradition, by which all Israelites, including God's human agents (e.g. prophets), and their descendants in the Jewish diaspora are commanded to comply with.³

1. Examples of explicit expressions of language of oneness are John 10:30, John 17:11b and John 17:22b; only once in John 12:28 The Father is depicted as acting independently from Johannine Jesus.

2. Deuteronomy 18:18, Mark 9:37, see Ashton, *Understanding the Fourth Gospel*, 313.

3. Ashton, *Understanding the Fourth Gospel*, 316; synoptic tradition can be seen in Mark 12:29; Lori Baron, "Interpreting the Shema: Liturgy and Identity in the Fourth Gospel," *Annali Di Storia Dell'Esegesi* 27, no. 2 (July 2010): 55,

<https://search-ebscohost-com.ipacez.nd.edu.au/login.aspx?direct=true&db=lsdar&AN=ATLA0001957897&site=ehost-live&scope=site>; Loader, *Jesus in The Fourth Gospel*, 362.

However, the functional obedience to God based upon the concept of agency cannot fully account for the Johannine Jesus's claims of equality with the Father in the language of oneness, e.g. oneness in the personal identification of the Johannine Jesus with the Word (Λόγος) of God that became flesh (John 1:14), and the deeds of God in the Johannine Jesus, e.g. work of God (John 4:34, John 5:19).⁴

The Johannine Jesus's explicit claims of equality with the Father (e.g. John 5:19) does not point to an alternate second god, as the Johannine Jesus's opponents suggest, for that is a blasphemous concept in Jewish monotheism, where offenders are stoned to death (e.g. John 8:59).⁵ However, the Johannine Jesus's claims of equality in the language of oneness is subjected to the assertion that he is fully subordinated, and dependent on the Father (John 4:35, 5:30, 6:38, and 19:30) to carry out His will.

So, it may seem apparent that the obedience of the Johannine Jesus in the concept of agency only partially accounts for his claims of equality functionally in the language of oneness in the Fourth Gospel.⁶ This explanation seems partial because it does not consider the full measure of the nature of the Johannine Jesus's claims of equality that subsequently leads to his crucifixion for the charge of blasphemy. An alternative explanation suggested by Ashton seems to elucidate the nature of the Johannine Jesus's claims in the context of the familial relationship.⁷ This context places God as the head (Father) over the Johannine Jesus in a very close bond analogous to the natural blood ties of a father and son, where the Johannine

4. Ashton, *Understanding the Fourth Gospel*, 324; Loader, *Jesus in The Fourth Gospel*, 355, 361.

5. Loader, *Jesus in The Fourth Gospel*, 355.

6. In this study, a working definition of dialogic tension is the apparent logical inconsistency regarding the claims of equality and subordination of Jesus to God in The Fourth Gospel see Anderson, *The Riddles of the Fourth Gospel*, 28; Hurtado, "God," In *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*, 274.

7. Ashton, *Understanding the Fourth Gospel*, 324.

Jesus is the sole recipient of the authority and rights of the Father.⁸ This privilege is not known to be applicable to other humans, or angelic agents of God, except the Johannine Jesus. In this sense then, the Johannine Jesus's obedience is interpreted not as the functional obedience of an agent to fulfil the purpose of God, but as an obedience of a loving son, to willingly submit to the will and purpose of the Father. Hence, the relational obedience in the context of a familial relationship connotes a freedom that is absent from the functional obedience in the agency concept.⁹ Even if human agents may be depicted as very close to God e.g. Moses, the primary issue is the degree of closeness to God, in which the Johannine Jesus is depicted in the language of oneness.

4.3 The Exegetical Analysis of Selected Texts

This chapter proposes to examine three selected passages, as test cases, to further elucidate the Johannine Jesus's claims of equality in "the Word", purpose, and divine activity in the language of oneness in his Son-Father relationship with the Father.¹⁰

Oneness in "the Word" in John 1:14

The setting of this text passage in John 1:14 is the Prologue, which is subjected to much scholarly debate.¹¹ The primary issue of the debate, concerning whether the Prologue forms part of the original text from a literary perspective, seems resolved by Schnackenburg's middle-of-the-road stance.¹² It is not within the scope of this study to revisit the debate, nor to examine the reconstruction of the Prologue,

8. Ashton, *Understanding the Fourth Gospel*, 324.

9. Ashton, *Understanding the Fourth Gospel*, 324.

10. Loader, *Jesus in The Fourth Gospel*, 360-361.

11. Barrett, *The Gospel according to St John*, 149.

12. Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St John*, vol. 1, 223.

suffice to say that the text passage in this study is considered with the view that it is most similar to ancient hymns in the Jewish wisdom literature (e.g. Wisdom 10, Sirach 1:1-10) but is extended to highlight the progressive movement of “the Word” from God’s divine reality to human existential reality.¹³

The Johannine use of the Prologue is seen as a preamble, or a lead-in similar to the Synoptic tradition.¹⁴ However, the author of the Prologue is not necessary the author of the Fourth Gospel, hence the author of the Prologue is differentiated from “the author” or “the author of the Fourth Gospel” in this study. With this in mind, John 1:14 is examined as follows.

John 1:14.

- (a) Καὶ ὁ λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο (b) καὶ ἐσκήνωσεν ἐν ἡμῖν,
And “the Word” flesh became and tabernacled among us,
(c) καὶ ἐθεασάμεθα τὴν δόξαν αὐτοῦ,
(d) and (we) gazed the glory of him
(e) δόξαν ὡς μονογενοῦς παρὰ πατρός, πλήρης χάριτος καὶ ἀληθείας·
glory as of an only one, from father, full of grace and truth.

There is no noted textual variance in NA 28.

Exegetical Analysis. This text passage is the beginning of a new division in the structure of the Prologue.¹⁵ “the Word” (ὁ λόγος) is mentioned three times in John 1:1, which is now repeated for the fourth and last time in John 1:14. Thus, the repetition of “the Word” in 1:14 forms a Johannine inclusion that resonates with John 1:1 to highlight a new progression of “the Word”, ὁ λόγος/ ho logos, from the divine

13. Barrett, *The Gospel according to St John*, 154; Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St John*, vol. 1, 224, 484; Matthew Gordley, “The Johannine Prologue and Jewish Didactic Hymn Traditions: A New Case for Reading the Prologue as a Hymn,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 128, no. 4 (2009): 786, <https://doi.org/10.2307/25610219>; Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St John*, vol. 1, 226.

14. E.g. Mark 1:1-15, see Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, 292; Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St John*, vol. 1, 226.

15. Barrett, *The Gospel according to St John*, 150; Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St John*, vol. 1, 227.

reality of God in the beginning.¹⁶ This study notes that semantically, the subject (i.e. “the Word”) refers to the nature of God qualitatively in John 1:1c, which dismisses any inference of modalism.¹⁷ The use of the conjunction καὶ/kai at the beginning of John 1:14 thus depicts the continuity of consciousness of the author of the Prologue concerning the progressive movement of “the Word” from God’s divine reality, which climaxes in the human existential reality of the “flesh” (σὰρξ/sárx) in John 1:14.¹⁸

Although the Greek term ὁ λόγος may infer Platonic implication, the concept is likely Jewish as it alludes to the creation motif in the beginning in Genesis 1:1.¹⁹ Various Christian and non-Christian influences are identified by the scholars for the meaning of “the Word” in John 1:14. Christian influences include the Jewish concept of Wisdom (e.g. Proverbs 8:22, Wisdom 9:1), “the Torah” in rabbinic Judaism, Dabar-YHWH (i.e. word of the Lord) in the Septuagint (Greek Old Testament), Aramaic “Memra” (“the Word” of the Lord,” e.g. in Genesis 15:1) in the Targums of the Old Testament, and Philo’s Hellenistic Logos.²⁰ For non-Christian influences, the prominent influences identified are Stoic’s logos, and Gnostic’s mythical envoy.²¹

In John 1:14, the climatic action of “the Word” becoming “flesh” is depicted by an aorist verb ἐγένετο/egéneto, implying that the action is viewed as a whole event

16. Brown, *An Introduction to the Gospel of John*, 287; Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St John*, vol. 1, 266; the connection between “the Word” and creation account may also be glimpsed from Ben Sirach 1:1-10.

17. Wallace, *Greek Grammar beyond the Basics*, 269.

18. Loader, *Jesus in The Fourth Gospel*, 375.

19. Bonnefoy, *Christ and the Cosmos*, 72, 121, an alternative understanding of “in the beginning” may allude to the beginning of the constitution of Israel as the people of God in the OT but due to limitation of space, this is not further investigated, see Loader, *Jesus in The Fourth Gospel*, 373; a working definition of Platonism in this study refers to the philosophy originates with Plato where transcendent and divine realities are prior to and explains the physical world we see around us.

20. Barrett, *The Gospel according to St John*, 152, 153; Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, 263, 280; Keener, *The Gospel of John*, vol. 1, 345, 349, 354, 361; Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St John*, vol. 1, 484, 485, 487.

21. Brown, *An Introduction to the Gospel of John*, 129; Bultmann, *The Gospel of John*, 25-26; Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St. John*, vol. 1, 482, 492.

(without detailing the inner working of that event) from the past perspective of the author of the Prologue.²² ἐγένετο is used six times as a singular verb in the Prologue (twice in John 1:3, once each in John 1:6, 10, 14, and 17), and is placed at the end of this clause for emphasis. The meaning of the verb is often rendered “became” or “came into being”, with a connotation of birth (which incidentally seems to connect with ἐγεννήθησαν/ egennēthēsan in John 1:13), or coming into full human reality.²³ So, the climatic action of “the Word” in the Prologue is emphatically the incarnation of “the Word”, which is a temporal event according to the author of the Prologue.²⁴

The anarthrous σὰρξ emphasises the nature of “flesh” is “the Word”, implying the embodiment of “the Word” in temporal human reality, and so “the Word” does not cease to be “the Word” when embodied in “flesh”.²⁵ The incarnation of “the Word” in “flesh” thus depicts oneness of “the Word” and “flesh”.²⁶ This understanding thus excludes any suggestion of the guise of mere appearance of human flesh, or the metaphysical inference of Jewish wisdom speculations that is similar to the syncretic confluence of metaphysical contemplation of Hellenistic Logos.²⁷

Semantically, it is well recognised that the Greek predicate nominative construction of “the Word” became flesh” in John 1:14 is qualitative, which means “the Word” partakes qualitatively in the nature of “flesh” as the fully human person.²⁸

22. ἐγένετο is aorist middle deponent third person singular γίνομαι; Wallace, *The Basics of New Testament Syntax*, 241; the author of the Prologue is not concerned with the details of the event but the event itself.

23. Concept of birth is suggested by Barrett, see Barrett, *The Gospel according to St John*, 165; Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St John*, vol. 1, 268.

24. ἐγεννήθησαν is verb, aorist, passive, indicative, 3rd person, plural, γεννάω/gennaó(i.e. to beget).

25. Semantically, the anarthrous noun (σὰρξ) emphasises the kind of σὰρξ, see Wallace, *Greek Grammar beyond the Basics*, 244; Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St John*, vol. 1, 267.

26. Barrett, *The Gospel according to St John*, 165; Bultmann, *The Gospel of John*, 61; Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St John*, vol. 1, 268.

27. E.g. inference of Docetism by Kasemann; Beasley-Murray, *John*, 14; Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, 271; Loader, *Jesus in The Fourth Gospel*, 375.

28. Wallace, *Greek Grammar beyond the Basics*, 264.

The author of the Prologue thus affirms his intentional depiction of the incarnation of “the Word” as a fully human person.²⁹ The author of the Prologue does not seem interested to describe the “how” in the depiction of the incarnation of “the Word”, but only to focus on the resulting climax of the new progression of “the Word”, which is now embodied in “flesh”.³⁰ The qualitative nature of “the Word” embodied in the fully human person is discussed later in connection with John 1:14d.³¹

This study further notes the semantic relationship between “the Word” (ὁ λόγος), and the singular predicate nominative “flesh” (σὰρξ) in John 1:14a, which is seen as a subset proposition that are not interchangeable, and which implies they are of separate and different categories that are mutually exclusive.³² So John 1:14a depicts the climatic movement of “the Word” across mutually exclusive categories semantically.³³

This climatic movement indicates not only a semantically inconvertible subset proposition, but also an epistemologically unthinkable, and a spiritually indiscernible proposition. By the use of the simple aorist verb ἐγένετο (John 1:14a), the author of the Prologue explicitly depicts the connection of two mutually exclusive semantic categories of “the Word” to “flesh” as a one-time only new event, to reveal the climatic significance of the new category of “the Word in flesh” (see Figure 2 below).³⁴ Semantically speaking, the inconvertible subset proposition is now convertible only in this one singular event, where the category of “flesh” came to

29. Ashton, *Understanding the Fourth Gospel*, 421.

30. “...but main interest is centred on the Logos,” see Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St John*, vol. 1, 266.

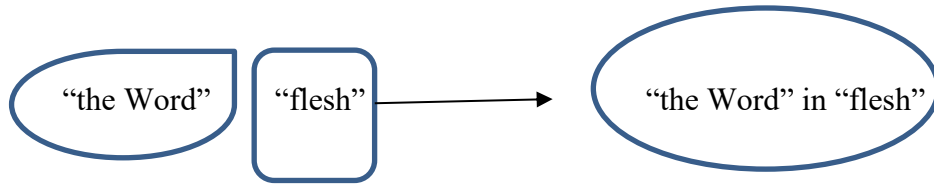
31. Loader, *Jesus in The Fourth Gospel*, 376; the description of the incarnation of “the Word” can be seen as a mystery for the believers or a myth to the semi- or non-believers, with scholarly basis in each perspective, hence it cannot be disproved or proved by either. Due to limitation of space, this is not further investigated.

32. Wallace, *Greek Grammar beyond the Basics*, 41-42.

33. Loader, *Jesus in The Fourth Gospel*, 374.

34. Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St. John*, vol. 1, 266.

embody the mutually exclusive category of “the Word”, which results in a singular and unique new category called “the Word in flesh”.



Mutually Exclusive Semantic Categories

A New Semantic Category

Figure 2. Semantic categories of “the Word” and “flesh”

Bultmann calls this new semantic category “an offence”.³⁵ Scholars seem to attribute this new semantic category of “the Word in flesh” to an intentional anti-docetic depiction (e.g. Richter), or a paradox (e.g. Bultmann).³⁶ It is more likely that it represents the dialectical insight of the author of the Fourth Gospel in his pre- and post-Easter perspectives when the Prologue is first adapted for evangelistic purpose (e.g. John 30:31).³⁷

In John 1:14a, the author of the Prologue has not identified the singular “flesh” who embodies “the Word”, but to highlight “the Word” lives as a human being among humanity (i.e. ἐσκήνωσεν ἐν ἡμῖν in John 1:14b). Although not all humans behold the glory of “the Word” in “flesh, but “the Word” is in the human community as “flesh”.³⁸ The “Word in flesh” is further elucidated by the conjunction καὶ/kai in John 1:14c as the Revealer, which is suggested by Bultmann.³⁹ It is here in this passage that the Revealer is identified as he who embodies “the Word” with

35. Bultmann, *The Gospel of John*, 63.

36. Loader, *Jesus in The Fourth Gospel*, 373.

37. Schnackenburg, vol. 1, *The Gospel according to St. John*, 224.

38. ἡμῖν refers to humanity; Barrett, *The Gospel according to St John*, 143.

39. Bultmann, *The Gospel of John*, 70 ; Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St John*, vol. 1, 270.

visible glory (τὴν δόξαν/tēn doxan). “Glory” is the direct object of the verb ἐθεασάμεθα/etheasametha.⁴⁰ This verb depicts the amazing wonder of discovering the glory of the Revealer.⁴¹

The aorist verb ἐσκήνωσεν/eskēnōsen in John 1:14b occurs only here in this text passage, and in Revelation.⁴² It connotes a sense of taking up a temporary residence like that of living in a tent in the Greek usage.⁴³ It seems to allude to the earthly dwelling place of the presence of God in Moses’s tent of meeting (Exodus 25:8.9, 33:9), which in turn is associated with the Feast of Tabernacle in John 7:2, and the reference to Moses by the Johannine Jesus himself in John 7:19.⁴⁴ However, this allusion is debatable as Wisdom can also be metaphorically depicted as a dwelling place for the wise and virtuous, who adhere to the teachings of the Torah (e.g. Deuteronomy 4:6, Baruch 3:38, Sirach 24:8).⁴⁵ The allusion to Moses’s tabernacle in the theme of Exodus is therefore inconclusive.⁴⁶ So a plausible interpretation for John 1:14b is “the Word in flesh” is now present in the midst of humanity, and to take up temporary residence as a fully human person. The pronoun “us” in John 1:14b can refer to humanity, or more narrowly, to the apostles and disciples of the Johannine Jesus. For the purpose of this study, the “us” refers to those who see “the Word in flesh” as a fully human person with physical eyes (pre-Easter) and with eyes of faith (post-Easter).⁴⁷

40. ἐθεασάμεθα is verb, aorist, middle deponent indicative, first person, plural, θεάομαι/theomai, Novakovic, *John 1-10*, 13.

41. Michaelis, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, abridged volume, 707, 708.

42. Michaelis, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, abridged volume, 1043.

43. ἐσκήνωσεν is verb, aorist active indicative, third person, singular, σκηνώω, literally means to encamp in a tent; Michaelis, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, abridged volume, 1043; cf. God’s permanent residence in the redeemed in Revelation 7:15.

44. Beasley-Murray, 14;

45. Lindars, *The Gospel of John*, 94; Michaelis, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, abridged volume, 1041; Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St John*, vol. 1, 269.

46. Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St John*, vol. 1, 281.

47. Beasley-Murray, *John*, 14 cf. Bultmann, *The Gospel of John*, 69; Lindars, *The Gospel of John*, 94, cf. Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St. John*, vol. 1, 270.

For the Jewish diaspora, the accusative phrase τὴν δόξαν αὐτοῦ (“the glory of him”) may recall the theophany of Moses of the burning bush (Exodus 3:3), and the glory of God in the wilderness (Exodus 13:31), the Moses’s tent of meeting (Exodus 40:34), and the Solomon’s temple (2 Chronicles 5:14). However, “the glory” in John 1:14d is further defined by the comparative particle ὡς/hōs in John 1:14e, i.e. the glory in the divine reality of God in the fully human person.⁴⁸ The adjective μονογενοῦς qualifies the glory of the divine reality of God in the Revealer.⁴⁹

The meaning of μονογενοῦς can be rendered as “beloved”, or “one-of-a-kind”, or “only begotten”.⁵⁰ Scholars recognise that the etymology of μονογενοῦς is not begetting but existence, and in LXX “beloved” is an alternate rendering of “one-of-a-kind”, and so μονογενοῦς can refer to both “one-of-a-kind” and “beloved”.⁵¹

God is thus the “Father of one and only”, who possess the full measure of grace and truth.⁵² This connection is explicit in John 1:14e, i.e. μονογενοῦς παρὰ πατρός. Thus, μονογενοῦς παρὰ πατρός does not only refer to an ontological hypostasis, but is also an expression of relational oneness in terms of sharing in the full measure of the divine nature of “grace and truth” of the Father, i.e. πλήρης χάριτος καὶ ἀληθείας/ plērēs charitos kai alētheia.⁵³ παρὰ πατρός is the genitive of source qualifying μονογενοῦς.⁵⁴ Hence, Bultmann’s Revealer is also Jesus-the-Son, who possesses the full measure of the divine nature of the Father.

48. That is in the phrase δόξαν ὡς μονογενοῦς παρὰ πατρός/doxan hōs monogenous para patros in 14e; Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St. John*, vol. 1, 270.

49. Bultmann, *The Gospel of John*, 71.

50. Harris, Murray J, *Jesus As God : The New Testament Use of Theos in Reference to Jesus* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1992), 86.

51. Beasley-Murray, *John*, 14; Buchsel, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, abridged in one volume, 607; Harris, Murray J, *Jesus As God*, 86; Novakovic, *John 1-10*, 13.

52. Beasley-Murray, *John*, 14; Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St. John*, vol. 1, 271.

53 Harris, Murray J, *Jesus As God*, 87, cf. Dodd, *Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, 281.

54. Novakovic, *John 1-10*, 13.

Although Πλήρης is the adjective that can describe either “the glory” (τὴν δόξαν), or “one-of-a-kind” (μονογενοῦς), the scholarly preference seems to be μονογενοῦς.⁵⁵ This means the nature of the Father is fully revealed in the Revealer, who is also the Son.⁵⁶ This full measure of “grace and truth” is revealed for the benefit of humanity.⁵⁷

It is in this manner that the glory of the divine nature of “grace and truth” is seen in the *constancy of revelation* depicted by the author to be found in the human person who embodies “the Word”, and who is from the Father.⁵⁸ This depiction of “the Word in flesh” is explicitly in contrast with the influences on the meaning of ὁ λόγος, e.g. in Wisdom literature, Torah, Old Testament, and Hellenistic literature of Philo, because none of these influences equate a fully human person to the full reality of God’s divine nature, i.e. grace and truth.⁵⁹

This study notes that the Greek word χάριτος/charitos is used thrice repetitively starting in John 1:14, 16 and 17. Thus, χάριτος links the Revealer to the Johannine Jesus in John 1:17 to denote relatively more weight than the word truth, ἀληθείας, with regard to the Revealer.⁶⁰ Thus, the climatic progression of “the Word in flesh” comes to rest in the identity of the Johannine Jesus as the one of a kind Son of God, who is one in “the Word in flesh” with the grace and truth of the divine reality of God’s nature.⁶¹

55. Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St. John*, vol. 1, 272.

56. Beasley-Murray, *John*, 14, 15; Novakovic, *John 1-10*, 14.

57. Bultmann, *The Gospel of John*, 73.

58. Beasley-Murray, *John*, 15.

59. Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, 285.

60. Χάριτος in John 1:14 is noun, genitive, singular, χάρις.

61. Lindars, *The Gospel of John*, 95; Χάριτος may also be seen to correspond to the notion of the Greek word ἔλεος/éleos, to depict divine mercy in the mercy seat, see Dodd, , *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, 175.

Truth is also a nature of the true divine reality of God.⁶² This is briefly discussed in Chapter 3. In John 1:14, the word truth by itself carries a confluence of Greek's intellectual notion of authentic fact, and a Jewish moral notion of steadfastness, and faithfulness.⁶³ It represents the divine reality of the nature of “the Word”.⁶⁴

χάριτος καὶ ἀληθείας together represents a unique combination in Greek that seems to allude to Old Testament source, e.g. Genesis 24:49, Exodus 34:6, Psalm 85:10, and Proverbs 20:8.⁶⁵ This expression seems to be a hendiadys where the second term “truth” supports and enlarges the concept of the first term “grace”.⁶⁶ It seems significant that the paired expression of grace and truth is the depiction of the revelation of the divine reality of God of “the Word in flesh”. If the expression “grace and truth” is taken as a hendiadys, then the truth of the divine reality of God is seen as grace. If these two terms are to be taken as a paired expression of two distinct features of God's divine reality in the Johannine Jesus, then it may be seen as grace and truth together depict the nature of the divine reality of God in the Johannine Jesus, which in turn indicates a constancy of benevolence that is accessible and open to all humans.⁶⁷ In either case, “the Word in flesh” affirms the oneness of the Johannine Jesus and the Father in the full measure of grace and truth in the “the Word”.

62. Dodd, , *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, 171.

63. Dodd, , *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, 171, 173; Lindars, *The Gospel of John*, 95; ἀληθείας, noun, genitive, singular, ἀλήθεια.

64. Dodd, , *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, 175.

65. According to Dodd, this is a unique Greek expression originates from a Hebrew source that finds close parallel with the Hebraic expression of עֵמֶת /emet and חֶסֶד /hesed , which means loving kindness and truth of the validity of the divine reality found in the Torah, but the author in The Fourth Gospel now substitutes Christ for the validity of the divine reality found in the Torah in this expression, see Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, 175-176.

66. Hendiadys is paired words where the second word emphasises the first word e.g. nice and warm, wet and cold, grace and truth.

67. Bultmann, *The Gospel of John*, 73; Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, 175; Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St. John*, vol. 1, 272.

Oneness in the will of God in John 4:34

John 4:34.

λέγει αὐτοῖς ὁ Ἰησοῦς· Ἐμὸν βρῶμά ἐστιν ἵνα ποιήσω τὸ θέλημα
says to them Jesus, “My food is so that to do the will
τοῦ πέμψαντός με καὶ τελειώσω αὐτοῦ τὸ ἔργον.
of him who sent me and to complete of him the work.

Exegetical analysis. The location of this text passage is in the city of Sychar in Samaria, where Jesus rests by Jacob’s well enroute to Galilee waiting for the return of his disciples, who leave him by the well to go into the city to buy food (John 4:4-8).⁶⁸ In their absence, the Johannine Jesus strikes a conversation with the lone Samaritan woman to elucidate the divine reality of God’s abundant supply of living water (John 4:14).⁶⁹

The immediate context of John 4:34 is the dialogue of the Johannine Jesus with his disciples, who return from their shopping trip (John 4:27) to interrupt the Johannine Jesus’s dialogue with the Samaritan woman, who just realises that she may have encountered the Messiah (John 4:26, 29).⁷⁰

After the departure of the Samaritan woman, the Johannine Jesus is urged by his disciples to eat the bread they bought, and the dialogue in John 4:34 is the response of the Johannine Jesus to his disciples to dispel their misunderstanding.

This Johannine misunderstanding between Jesus and his disciples concerns the double meaning of the Greek word βρῶμά/bróma (bread), which primarily pertains to a contrast of spiritual food, vis-à-vis the physical food.⁷¹ The purpose of this misunderstanding in this passage is to emphasise the will (ποιήσω τὸ θέλημα/roieō

68. Bultmann, *The Gospel of John*, 178.

69. Beasley-Murray, *John*, 65.

70. Beasley-Murray, *John*, 65.

71. Brown, *An Introduction to the Gospel of John*, 289; Loader, *Jesus in The Fourth Gospel*, 412.

to thelēma) of the Father in the Johannine Jesus's work, τὸ ἔργον/to ergon.⁷² This double meaning is not to be rendered as a devaluation of the material reality in favour of the spiritual reality, but to emphasise the singularity of God's will (τὸ θέλημα) in the Johannine Jesus's work.

The transition from water-that-satisfies-thirst to food-that-satisfies-hunger is intentional and complementary, which is to bring across the notion that the divine reality of abundant supply is not subject to the limitation of the physical supply of water and food (John 4:14). This seems beyond the disciples (John 4:32), for they cannot comprehend the divine reality as does the Johannine Jesus.⁷³ In this context then, bread as food may echo Deuteronomy 8:3, which is repeated in the Synoptics narration of the temptation of Jesus (e.g. Matthew 4:4 and Luke 4:4).⁷⁴ Food in this context may also allude to the manna the Israelites receive from heaven to satisfy their hunger in the wilderness (e.g. Exodus 16:4).

Textual variance in John 4:34 pertains to an alternate reading of ποιῶ/ποιέω in the ἵνα/hina clause.⁷⁵ This study favours the option of an aorist subjunctive verb as the work of the Johannine Jesus is to be viewed as a whole, rather than some point in time in the future. Grammatically, ἵνα with the subjunctive verb ποιήσω/ποιέσω functions substantively as the predicate nominative.⁷⁶ Hence, to do God's will is a staple food for the Johannine Jesus, which is as vital to his spiritual life, as bread is

72. ἔργον is noun, accusative, singular; θέλημα is noun, accusative, singular, direct object of ποιήσω, verb, future, active, indicative, 1st person, singular, ποιέω.

73. See Chapter 3 of this study for the Johannine use of verbal cognate of οἶδα; Dodd, *Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, 317; cf. Bultmann, *The Gospel of John*, 195.

74. Behm, "βρῶμα," in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, eds. Kittel, Gerhard, Geoffrey William Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich (MI: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1964), 1:644; Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, 228.

75. The reading of the text is supported by papyrus 66 and 75, B, C, D, K, L, N, W^s, Θ, Ψ, 083.1.33.565.579.1844.12211, while the alternate reading is supported by κ, A, Γ, Δ, f13, 700.892.1241.1424 M. ποιήσω can be either verb, future active indicative, first person, singular, ποιέω or aorist, active, subjunctive, first person, singular, ποιέω; Novakovic, *John 1-10*, 131.

76. Wallace, *The Basics of New Testament Syntax*, 207.

for his physical life. The Johannine Jesus reveals the will of God as well as the message of God to humans.⁷⁷ There may also seem to be a connection between wisdom/words of God and physical food, as both are to be absorbed for well-being (e.g. 2 Esdras 8:4, Wisdom 16:20, Jerimiah 15:16, Psalms 119:103), but this point is not to be pressed. So, the spiritual food that sustains the Johannine Jesus is unknown to his disciples (John 4:32), and it pertains to the completion of the will of God in the Johannine Jesus's work depicted by the verb τελειώσω/teleiōs, which in turn denotes an imperative singularity of purpose and oneness of intent.⁷⁸ So, Dodd suggests that the Johannine Jesus's total commitment to the oneness of purpose to the divine will constitutes an unity in intimacy through the action of the Son, which in turn discloses the action of the Father.⁷⁹ The will of God in this passage thus relates to the disclosed will of God for the good of humanity, and does not refer to a mystical metaphysical contemplation, or esoteric experience.⁸⁰

The Father in the Fourth Gospel is frequently depicted as “the one who sends me” (τοῦ πέμψαντός με/tou pempantos me) in the Johannine Jesus's dialogues.⁸¹ This depicts the subordination of the Johannine Jesus to the will of the Father in his work (τὸ ἔργον).⁸² Although this Johannine expression is analogous to the sending of pre-existing personified Wisdom (Wisdom 9:9), the emphasis of the author of the Fourth Gospel is on the Johannine Jesus's work in the midst of humans.

77. Ashton, *Understanding the Fourth Gospel*, 405, 522; Johannine Jesus of himself and for himself is not nothing as Bultmann suggests but is depicted by the author of The Fourth Gospel as “the Word” in flesh and to carry out the will of God, cf. Bultmann, *The Gospel of John*, 195.

78. Τελειώσω is the verb, aorist, active, subjunctive, first person, singular, τελειόω; τὸ ἔργον is the direct object of the verb Τελειώσω. Novakovic, *John 1-10*, 131.

79. Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, 194.

80. Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, 192; Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St. John*, vol. 1, 447.

81. E.g. John 4:34; 5:30; 5:37; 6:38; 7:33; 8:29; 12:45; 13:16; 14:24; 17:3.

82. Loader, *Jesus in The Fourth Gospel*, 423.

In the Johannine expression τοῦ πέμψαντός με, the use of various verbal cognates of the verb πέμπω is unique.⁸³ It seems synonymous to the equally prevalent use of the verbal forms of ἀποστέλλω/apostellō. However, it is noted that the verbal forms of πέμπω is used when the Johannine Jesus refers to God as “the Father who sent me” (e.g. John 12:49), or “him who sent me” (e.g. John 4:34), while the verbal forms of ἀποστέλλω is used when the Johannine Jesus refers to God as “the Father sent me” (e.g. John 5:36) *only* in the perfect, aorist indicative, or perfect passive participle.⁸⁴ So, it may seem that the differentiation is only grammatical, and not in their meaning. The notion of πέμπω displays double perspectives that not only looks backward to the Father, but also forward to the disciples of the Johannine Jesus as he sends them out in John 20:21.⁸⁵

The significance of this expression is Christological. It depicts the twofold agency of the Father and the Son in unison in their relatedness that spans across the heaven and the earth to benefit humans.⁸⁶ So, Loader suggests this is the classic Revealer-Envoy model, which is framed in the cosmic dualism of heaven and earth, which in turn corresponds to the Johannine Jesus’s expression of “coming from the Father and going to the Father” (e.g. John 16:28).⁸⁷ However, the Revealer-Envoy is different from Bultmann’s Gnostic redeemer, who is not sent from the will of God, but is predicated on the mythical notion of a redeemer in human form to redeem pre-existing souls snatched away by darkness through the speculative contemplation of a knowledge of human’s destiny to seek the path to the heavenly home.⁸⁸ The

83. πέμψαντός is verb, aorist, participle, masculine, genitive, singular, from πέμπω; Novakovic, *John 1-10*, 131.

84. C.C. Tarelli, “JOHANNINE SYNONYMS,” *The Journal of Theological Studies* 47, no. 187/188 (1946): 175, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23952695>.

85. Ashton, *Understanding the Fourth Gospel*, 314.

86. Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, 257.

87. Bultmann, *The Gospel of John*; Loader, *Jesus in The Fourth Gospel*, 422.

88. Bultmann, *The Gospel of John*, 65.

Revealer-Envoy model is largely predicated on the agency notion of Moses type prophet in the Old Testament, where a prophet of God is sent to speak of what he has seen and heard from God (Deuteronomy 18:18).⁸⁹ However, the Johannine Jesus is more than a Moses-type prophet, and he embodies “the Word” to affirm his total commitment to accomplish the will of God for the benefit of humanity in a unique and unprecedented manner.⁹⁰

Ashton questions the connection between the Johannine Jesus’s Sonship with his work/mission and concludes that the connection is predicated on the juridical concept of authority of “plenipotentiary powers” accorded to the first-born sons, but not associated with the concept of agency.⁹¹ The authority of the Johannine Jesus is further investigated in John 5:19 later in this Chapter.

In sum, to do God’s will for the Johannine Jesus is more than mere obedience as a prophet-agent but is depicted as his privileged commitment to the Father to accomplish the work he is sent to do in one accord with the divine will.

The work (τὸ ἔργον) is singular, and different from other tasks.⁹² It emphasises the singularity of the divine eschatological work of Jesus-the-Son connected to the formulaic expression τοῦ πέμψαντός με as discussed above.⁹³ This eschatological work of the Johannine Jesus is the sole purpose of the divine commission of Jesus-the-Son.⁹⁴ So, the singular verb τελειώσω and the singularity of purpose of τὸ ἔργον in the last clause is connected by conjunction καὶ to depict the singular focus of the Johannine Jesus in oneness of God’s will.⁹⁵ The verb τελειώσω is used only in the

89. Ashton, *Understanding the Fourth Gospel*, 316, 471.

90. Loaders, *Jesus in The Fourth Gospel*, 423.

91. Ashton, *Understanding the Fourth Gospel*, 323, 324.

92. Ashton, *Understanding the Fourth Gospel*, 522; Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St John*, vol.1, 447.

93. Barrett, *The Gospel according to St John*, 241; Novakovic, *John 1-10*, 131.

94. E.g. 5:36, 6:38, 9:3, 10:25, 14:10 and 17:4; Barrett, *The Gospel according to St John*, 240.

95. Τελειώσω is the verb, aorist, active, subjunctive, first person, singular, τελειώω; τὸ ἔργον is the direct object of the verb Τελειώσω. Novakovic, *John 1-10*, 131.

Fourth Gospel to refer to the eschatological work of the Johannine Jesus in various verbal forms, e.g. τετέλεσται/tetelestai in John 19:28, 30 and τελειώσας/teleiōsas in John 17:4.⁹⁶ The deliberate shift from the use of aorist τελειώσω in John 4:34 to perfect τετέλεσται in John 19:28,30 is an authorial emphasis to depict the completed mission of the Johannine Jesus on the cross in John 19:28, 30 with continuing result into the present.⁹⁷

In the wider context, the singularity of the work of the Johannine Jesus in John 4:34 refers to God's eschatological purpose, which is seen as the triumph of God as a gift for humans.⁹⁸ This understanding corresponds to the prayer of the Johannine Jesus in John 17: 4, where the participle form τελειώσας/teleiōsas is used to emphasise the resulting effect of the divine eschatological work denoted by the action verb δέδωκάς/dedōkas.⁹⁹ So, the Son and the Father is seen as one in the triumphant glory for the successful completion of the eschatological purpose, and work for humanity in one accord.¹⁰⁰

Oneness in divine authority and activity in John 5:19

The various scholarly support for, and argument against the transposition of John 5 is inconclusive.¹⁰¹ As the transposition theory does not make a significant impact on the exegetical analysis of this study, John 5:19 is taken to stand without transposition.¹⁰²

96. τετέλεσται is verb, perfect, passive, indicative, third person, singular, τελέω.

97. Bultmann, *The Gospel of John*, 675; Wallace, *The Basics of New Testament Syntax*, 246.

98. Beasley-Murray, *John*, 353; Loader, *Jesus in The Fourth Gospel*, 126.

99. τελειώσας is verb, aorist, participle, active, nominative, masculine, singular, τελειώω; δέδωκάς is verb, perfect, active, indicative, second person, singular, δίδωμι.

100. Bultmann, *The Gospel of John*), 199, 492; Carson, *The Gospel According to John* Company, 621; Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St John*, vol. 3, 285.

101. Bultmann and Schnackenburg supports the transposition while Barrett, Dodd and Lindars prefer to take the text in the order as it stands, see Bultmann, *The Gospel of John*, 238; Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St John*, vol. 2, 5-8; cf. Barrett, *The Gospel according to St John*, 23-24; Dodd, *Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, 290; Lindars, *The Gospel of John*, 461.

102. The investigation into the transposition of John 5 is out of the scope of this study.

John 5:19

Ἀπεκρίνατο οὖν ὁ Ἰησοῦς καὶ ἔλεγεν αὐτοῖς· Ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν
Answered then Jesus and was saying to them, “Truly I say to you,
οὐ δύναται ὁ υἱὸς ποιεῖν ἀφ’ ἑαυτοῦ οὐδὲν

(a) not is able the Son to do nothing from himself nothing

ἐὰν μὴ τι βλέπῃ τὸν πατέρα ποιῶντα· ἃ γὰρ ἂν ἐκεῖνος ποιῇ,
(b) except what he sees the Father doing For what that one is doing,
ταῦτα καὶ ὁ υἱὸς ὁμοίως ποιεῖ.

(c) These and the Son likewise is doing.

Exegetical analysis. Most scholars agree that textual variance in this text passage is insignificant.¹⁰³ Hence, the textual reading is adopted in this study.

John 5:19 stands in the immediate context of the pericope in John 5:19-22, which is structured around four consecutive explanatory conjunctions, i.e. γὰρ (gar). The γὰρ in John 5:19 is the first of the four, and the pericope of John 5:19-22 starts with the expression of double ἀμὴν/amén in John 5:19, which is a unique Johannine feature.¹⁰⁴

The use of double ἀμὴν indicates a serious and solemn introduction to the content of the monologue.¹⁰⁵

In the Old Testament and Judaism, the term ἀμὴν is used to validate what follows as an authoritative declaration and affirmation, which depicts John 5:19 as a doubly authoritative and solemn speech.¹⁰⁶

John 5:19 explicitly elucidates the nature of the relationship of the Johannine Jesus, and the Father in his activity, which invokes increasing hostility and charge

103. Variance noted are: (i) Some manuscripts omit “ὁ Ἰησοῦς/ho Iēsoûs”; (ii) An alternative reading of εἶπεν/eîpen (A, D, K, N, W, Γ, Δ Θ, Ψ, f13, 33.700.1424 M) and λεγει/légei (f1 1241), and the textual reading is well supported in papyrus 66 and 75, A, D, K, L, W, Γ, Δ Θ, Ψ, f1.13, 33.565.579.700.892.1241.1424. 1844. 12211. M; (iii) An insertion of του ανθρωπου/ tou anthrôpou between “υἱὸς” and “ποιεῖν/ poieîn” is found in D and f1.13; (iv) An insertion of τι/ti between “ποιεῖν” and “ἀφ/ aph” in D; (v) An alternative reading of ουδε εν/oude en instead of οὐδὲν/ouden (papyrus 66, , f1 and 565) and av/an is used instead of ἐάν/eán (κ and B). However, the textual reading of ἐάν seems well supported (papyrus 66 and 75, A, D, K, L, W, Γ, Δ Θ, Ψ, f1.13, 33.565.579.700.892.1241.1424. 1844. 12211. M), and (vi) A minor transposing of “the Word” “ὁμοίως ποιεῖ/ homoiôs poiei” (κ D it).

104. Novakovic, *John 1-10*, 51, 161; Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St John*, vol. 1, 320.

105. H. Schlier, “amen” in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, abridged in one volume, 53; Novakovic, *John 1-10*, 51.

106. Schlier, “amen” in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, 53.

against him (John 5:18) for his claims of being equal with God (John 5:17).¹⁰⁷ The nature of the Johannine Jesus's relationship with the Father is seen to represent the Johannine community's conviction post-Easter, and also the author's own dialectical thinking concerning the Johannine Jesus pre- and post-Easter.¹⁰⁸

The wider setting of John 5:19 follows the healing of the lame man at the pool of Bethesda on Sabbath, which is commonly acknowledged by scholars as from a common tradition but independent of the Synoptics.¹⁰⁹ The Johannine Jesus's act of healing a lame man on a Sabbath gives rise to the hostile persecution of him (John 5:16) from the Jews (John 5:18).¹¹⁰ The primary issue for the Jews' furious hostility is not only breaking the Sabbath per se, but also the Johannine Jesus's claim of equality with the Father (John 5:18), and that he can do what God does in an identical manner, and thus constitutes blasphemy in the highest order against Jewish monotheism.¹¹¹ McGrath further pinpoints the heart of the issue for the Jews is that the Johannine Jesus puts himself on par with God as a divine alternate.¹¹²

However, the Jews misinterpret the meaning and intent of the Johannine Jesus's claims of equality, for the author ascribes the Johannine Jesus's activity to the activity of the Father (John 5:19) in same manner (ὁμοίως/hómoios), which is in relation to the divine authority of the Father in the Son alone (John 5:20).¹¹³ In John

107. Barrett, *The Gospel according to St John*, 257; Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St John*, vol. 2, 91.

108. James McGrath, *John's Apologetic Christology* (Cambridge :Cambridge University Press, 2001), 81.

109. Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St John*, vol. 2, 96; though there seems to be close similarity with Mark 2:1-12, their differences outweigh their similarities, see McGrath, *John's Apologetic Christology*, 82.

110. The identity of the Jews is not specified in this text passage, but this study suggests these are the Rabbinic custodians for the Rabbinic laws of keeping the Sabbath holy; Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, 324; McGrath, *John's Apologetic Christology*, 87.

111. Bultmann, *The Gospel of John*, 245; Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, 324; Lindars, *The Gospel of John*, 219.

112. McGrath, *John's Apologetic Christology*, 89.

113. Bultmann, *The Gospel of John*, 246, 251; Loader, *Jesus in The Fourth Gospel*, 334.

5:19, this understanding is made explicit in the light of a reverse antithetic parallelism, where the first line v.19 (a), and third line v.19 (c) refer to the activity of the Johannine Jesus, but v.19 (a) is negative while v.19 (c) is positive.¹¹⁴

This reverse antithetic parallelism highlights an exception in 19 (b), which refers specifically to the divine activity of the Father. The deponent verb Ἀπεκρίνατο/Apekrinato indicates the Johannine Jesus's polemic response to further elucidate the nature of his relationship to the Father with a third-class condition in the ἐάν/ eán clause.¹¹⁵ The emphasis of a double negative οὐ ...οὐδέν/ou ouden in the apodosis (19 (a)) reinforces that the Johannine Jesus's activity originates from the Father, and confirms the authoritative assertion of the double positive ἀμὴν that the Johannine Jesus's activity is fully subjected to the divine authority of the Father.¹¹⁶ Hence, the Johannine Jesus's claim of equality includes both dependence upon, and subordination to the divine authority of the Father. If so, the divine activity demonstrated in the Johannine Jesus's activity are not seen as two but one, where the Johannine Jesus's activity is *identical* to the activity of the Father.¹¹⁷ Also, there may be an embedded notion of a son learning the Father's trade as an apprentice in John 5:19, which the author seems to suggest.¹¹⁸

Hence, it seems that the key emphasis of the antithetic parallelism in John 5:19 highlights the subordination of the Johannine Jesus to God as the "Son Apprentice". This relational connection is different from the concept of agency, especially with reference to the Moses-like prophetic envoy model in the Old

114. Brown, *An Introduction to the Gospel of John*, 284.

115. Novakovic, *John 1-10*, 51, 161.

116. The double ἀμὴν seems to be a Johannine characteristic to proclaim a solemn declaration. Novakovic, *John 1-10*, 51, 161; Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St John*, vol. 2, 102.

117. Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St John*, vol. 2, 103.

118. Beasley-Murray, *John*, 75; cf. Carson *The Gospel According to John*, 250; in Jewish families, father-son relationships are very significance, especially for fathers to teach their sons a trade, see O' Larry Yarbrough, "Parents and Children in the Jewish Family of Antiquity", 42, 44.

Testament.¹¹⁹ Ashton aptly surmises the primary difference as that of a temporary functional category with limited authority of an agent, vis-à-vis a permanent category with full authority predicated on a natural son-father relationship.¹²⁰ So, Ashton asserts that there is “no natural association between the idea of sonship, and the idea of mission”.¹²¹ Hence, the envoy prophetic model of carrying out the divine activity in the Old Testament and Judaism is not the same in character as the Johannine Jesus’s carrying out of the divine activity as the “Son Apprentice” of the Father.¹²²

The primary Christian influences of the depiction of the Johannine Jesus’s Son-Father relationship may be seen in a) the parable of the wicked vine-dressers (Mark 12:6), b) the synoptic material that God is addressed as Abba, and c) Dodd’s argument for the parable of the apprenticed son in the traditional material of the primitive Christian community, all of which the author of the Fourth Gospel further develops and applies to the Johannine Jesus’s relationship to the Father.¹²³

Although there are very similar points of contact with the Gnostic’s use of absolute “Son” and “Father” in Odes of Solomon (e.g. Odes of Solomon 3:7, 23:16, 41:13) and Gospel of Truth (e.g. 39:19 and 40:16), these differ from the depiction of the Son-Father relationship of the Johannine Jesus and the Father, primarily in the historical nature and divine activity revealed in the Fourth Gospel. The Gnostic redeemer is a non-material mythical figure from a realm not identified with the same divine sphere of the Father in the Fourth Gospel.¹²⁴

119. Ashton, *Understanding the Fourth Gospel*, 313; Bultmann, *The Gospel of John*, 250.

120. Ashton, *Understanding the Fourth Gospel*, 318, 319.

121. Ashton, *Understanding the Fourth Gospel*, 318, 319.

122. Ashton, *Understanding the Fourth Gospel*, 316; Loader, *Jesus in The Fourth Gospel*, 335.

123. Beasley-Murray, *John*, 75; C.H. Dodd, *Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963), 386; Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St John*, vol. 2, 178-180.

124. Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St. John*, vol. 1, 549.

Although the Johannine Jesus does not refer to himself as the Son of God, in John 5:19, the Johannine Jesus seems to be depicted to be self-conscious of his relationship to God as “the Son”, i.e. references of absolute ὁ υἱὸς/ho huios in his response is used twice in John 5:19. The debate concerning historical Jesus’s self-consciousness does not concern this study, for it is obvious that the Johannine use of “the Son” in John 5:19 does not lead to an inference of self-consciousness of the Johannine Jesus, but the dialectical thinking of the author of the Fourth Gospel in emphasising the relationality between the Johannine Jesus and God.

In LXX, υἱὸς usually refers to the Hebrew word meaning son (בן), which is a most common term of relationship in the Old Testament.¹²⁵ The significance of “the Son” in the Fourth Gospel is thus a relationship term that specifically points to the Son-Father relationship of the Johannine Jesus and the heavenly Father, i.e. τὸν πατέρα/τόν πατέρα, in a totally unique standing, and in oneness with “the Word” (John 1:14), the divine will (John 4:34), and the divine activity, which is fully subordinated to the divine authority of the Father (John 5:19).¹²⁶

Every relationship has a starting point, and the starting point of the Son-Father relationship of the Johannine Jesus is the Father, who also gives the Son all things (John 13:3), for example, the divine name (John 17:12), the divine glory (John 17:22) and the divine authority over all humanity (John 17:2), and to gather humanity in one family under the headship of the Father (John 17:21, 26).¹²⁷ In this sense, the Johannine Jesus is said to inaugurate the new humanity who honours the Father in a bond of familial love with unlimited access to the everlasting life of the Father (John

125. Schneemelcher, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, eds. Kittel, et al., (MI: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1972), 340, 353, 358, 366.

126. Beasley-Murray, *John*, 75; the Johannine term of the Son without genitives is a term of relationship, unlike the titular references of Son of God, Son of David, and Son of Man, see Schneemelcher, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, 365, 370.

127. Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St John*, vol. 2, 175.

3:16), and to mediate to humans the divine reality of God in which the Johannine Jesus stands uniquely alone in his full dependence, and obedience as the Son.¹²⁸

Thus, the depiction of the Son-Father relationship of the Johannine Jesus defines *all* of his speech (e.g. John 12:49), and *all* of his work/activity (e.g. John 14:10). This is evidenced in his concluding prayer in John 17:4 and 17:8, where he expresses his full loving obedience as "the Son", who completes the work of the Father to glorify, and honour the divine name of the Father, and to give the divine words to his disciples.¹²⁹ This Son-Father relationship of the Johannine Jesus is a new and unique understanding in primitive Johannine community. Unlike the Gnostic redeemer, or the prophet-envoy model, the activity of the Father in the Johannine Jesus "takes place at the same time" and "as one" with "the Son".¹³⁰ Hence, the delegation of divine authority to "the Son" is not a single transaction, but an abiding "sign", or the demonstration of the full measure of divine activity in "the Son".¹³¹

In addition, the notion of the exalted Son of Man to depict the activity of "the Son" (e.g. John 8:28, 12:23, and 13:31), refers to the event of the cross in the Johannine Jesus's eschatological work in the present.¹³² It indicates the divine empowerment of "the Son" as the eschatological judge (John 5:22, 27).¹³³ The context of the eschatological work may further be elucidated by the three subsequent

128. Barrett, *The Gospel according to St John*, 144; Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, 195, 247; Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St John*, vol. 2, 99, 177.

129. This oneness is depicted as the abiding presence of The Father in Johannine Jesus, possibly inferring the presence of the embodied "the Word" in Johannine Jesus and in John 14:10, as Beasley-Murray suggests, the words and deeds of Johannine Jesus is "conjoined" and thus Johannine Jesus is sent by The Father as the embodied "the Word" to demonstrate and reveal the acts of The Father, see Beasley-Murray, *John*, 75; also see Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, 196.

130. Bultmann, *The Gospel of John*, 251; Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 251; Loader, *Jesus in The Fourth Gospel*, 335; Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St John*, vol. 2, 103.

131. Loader, *Jesus in The Fourth Gospel*, 335.

132. Ashton, *Understanding the Fourth Gospel*, 371; Bultmann, *The Gospel of John*, 251; Loader, *Jesus in The Fourth Gospel*, 335; Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St John*, vol. 2, 106, 398, 399.

133. Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St. John*, vol. 1, 532.

explanatory γὰρ-conjunctions in John 5:20-22, which are in terms of “greater works”(John 5:20), raising the dead and making alive (John 5:21), and judgement of humans (John 5:22, 27).¹³⁴ A further exegetical analysis for John 5:20-22 is limited by scope and word counts.

For Bultmann, the exaltation of the Son of Man is the accomplishment of the eschatological work of “the Son”.¹³⁵ Unlike Bultmann’s support for the connection with the Gnostic redeemer myth, many scholars acknowledge that the Johannine Son of Man motif is the result of the author’s effort to integrate, and expand primitive Christian tradition, e.g. Daniel 5:27, 7:13-14, Matthew 8:38, 28:18, and Luke 10:22, 12:8, and to connect Jesus-the-Son with the notion of Son of Man, e.g. John 5:27, which is in relation to the Johannine Jesus’s heavenly origin, and his exaltation in the event of the cross.¹³⁶ Schnackenburg surveys the Johannine use of the Son of Man terminology, and affirms primitive Christian influences.¹³⁷ However, the Johannine reference of the Son of Man recasts the apocalyptic association (e.g. Apocalypse of Ezra 13:13, 52), and symbolic reference (e.g. a heavenly man who is the archetype of humanity) in the pre-Christian tradition of Hellenistic Judaism, and to coalesce various pertinent meanings in these traditions for authorial intent of evangelism.¹³⁸ So, Dodd concludes that Johannine Son of Man is the Son of God, and the Johannine Jesus’s Son-Father relationship is depicted as the archetypal relationality of God with His people.¹³⁹

134. Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St John*, vol. 2, 105.

135. Bultmann, *The Gospel according to St John*, 152, 251, 256.

136. Loader, *Jesus in The Fourth Gospel*, 431, 439; Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St. John*, vol. 1, 531, 535, 536, 537.

137. Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St. John*, vol. 1, 541.

138. Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, 70-71, 244-246.

139. Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, 244, 247.

The present subjunctive verb βλέπη/blepē in the protasis (i.e. 19 (b)) is followed by the accusative direct object τὸν πατέρα.¹⁴⁰ This present tense verb in protasis, and together with the infinitive verb ποιεῖν/poiein, constitute a present general condition of a third-class negative conditional sentence.¹⁴¹ The negative condition emphasises the Son’s work is *identical* to that of the Father.¹⁴² The verb βλέπη seems to indicate the ability to perceive the Father’s divine reality.¹⁴³ So, it may include the protological sight of the Johannine Jesus, which infers his pre-existence, but more so, it emphasises his continuing communication with the Father, and his access to the divine reality in the present.¹⁴⁴ The double accusative construction in the protasis consists of using ποιοῦντα/poiounta as the accusative object-complement (adjectival) for τὸν πατέρα.¹⁴⁵ Hence, the divine activity of the Father is the *only* source for “the Son” to do the *same* (i.e. ὁμοίως/ homoiōs, means identical), and the Son is fully dependent on the Father, as is indicated by the Johannine prepositional phrase ἀφ’ ἑαυτοῦ/aph heautou.¹⁴⁶

There are three present active verbs-of-doing in the protasis, namely, ποιοῦντα, ποιῆ/poiē, and ποιεῖ/poiei.¹⁴⁷ The Johannine use of these verbs refer primarily to the work of “the Son”.¹⁴⁸ They seem to denote the unchanging nature of

140. Verb, present active subjunctive (with ἐάν), third person, singular, βλέπω. Novakovic, *John 1-10*, 51, 161.

141. ποιεῖν is verb, present active infinitive, ποιέω. Wallace, *The Basics of New Testament Syntax*, 313.

142. Bultmann, *The Gospel of John*, 251; Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St John*, vol. 2, 103.

143. Michaelis, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament in Abridged Volume*, 710.

144. Loader, *Jesus in The Fourth Gospel*, 333, 335.

145. ποιοῦντα is present active participle, masculine, accusative, singular, ποιέω. Wallace, *The Basics of New Testament Syntax*, 84.

146. Novakovic, *John 1-10*, 161, 162; Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St John*, vol. 2, 176.

147. ποιῆ is present, active, subjunctive (with ἄν), third person, singular, ποιέω. ποιεῖ is verb, present, active, indicative, third person, singular, ποιέω.

148. W., Radl, eds. Baltz, Horst and Schneider, et al., *The Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament*, vol. 3, English Translation (MI: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1993), 123-124.

work, which Bultmann refers to as “constancy” in the Son’s mission, which the Johannine Jesus subsequently accomplishes on the cross.¹⁴⁹

So, “the Son” (ὁ υἱός) in John 5:19 is an intentional relational term in Johannine usage to encapsulate the Johannine Jesus’s privileged Sonship in his activity which is *identical* to the Father as one.¹⁵⁰ Hence, the Johannine Jesus’s full subordination to God’s authority in John 5:19 reveals the divine activity in the Johannine Jesus, and they are but “two sides of the same coin”.¹⁵¹ Such an understanding indicates the dialectical reflections of the author of the Fourth Gospel with the historical tradition of the Johannine Jesus from the pre- and post-Easter perspectives, especially in view of the situation of increasing Jewish hostility in the later Johannine community of believers.¹⁵²

4.4 A Summary of Findings and Implications

The above exegetical analysis suggests that the language of oneness in the Johannine Jesus’s claims of equality with God is seen primarily in terms of his privileged relationality with God in terms of his nature and mission, which in turn elucidates his origin, purpose, and work. Hence, the Johannine Jesus is not just the Revealer in the likes of a redeemer-envoy of the Gnostics, or the eschatological prophets of God, but “the Son” in relation to the Father. This supports the author’s depiction of the Johannine Jesus’s unique cognitive insight of the Father pertaining to his identity and mission as analysed in Chapter 3.

149. In John 19:30, τετέλεσται is verb, perfect passive indicative, third person, singular, τελέω, and the use of perfect verb τετέλεσται/tetélestai from post-Easter perspective of the author in John 19:30 is compared with the use of active verbs ποιῶντα, ποιῆ/ποιῆ, and ποιεῖ/ποιεῖ here.

150. Anderson, *The Christology of the Fourth Gospel*, 260; Bultmann, *The Gospel of John*, 251; Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 251; Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St John*, vol. 2, 103.

151. Anderson, *The Christology of the Fourth Gospel*, 261.

152. Anderson, *The Christology of the Fourth Gospel*, 260.

The seamless relationality of the Father *in* “the Son” is depicted in the language of oneness in the character and nature of “the Word” (John 1:14), the will of God (John 4:34) and the work of God (John 5:19). This is the indwelling of the life of the Father in “the Son” that sustains the singularity of “the Son’s” sole intentionality to accomplish the task he is sent to do, by the laying down of his own human life.¹⁵³ This demonstration of the privileged and unprecedented relationality between the Father and the Son is not a metaphysical speculation, but the new representation of the relationality of God and humans.¹⁵⁴ This twofold agency of the Father and the Son is for the benefit of humanity, and is thus the intent of authorial focus from a post-Easter perspective in early Christianity.¹⁵⁵

4.5 A Suggested Conclusion

The full dependence of the Son upon the Father reinforces the continuing oneness of “the Word in flesh”, and the work of the Father in the Son, which in turn is demonstrated in the full obedience of the Johannine Jesus, and his full submission to the full authority of the Father. So, apart from the seamless relationality of the Father and the Son, God’s divine reality remains hidden and unmediated. Thus, the author of the Fourth Gospel depicts the Son-Father relationship of the Johannine Jesus as the unique one-off revelatory event, which fully discloses God’s divine reality beyond the confinement of time and space in the human existential reality, which is often compressed into the immediate tasks of satisfying physical hunger and seeking physical security. In other words, “the Word” comes in “flesh” so that human existence may experience abundant life (John 10:10).

153. Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, 197.

154. Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, 195.

155. Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, 257.

CHAPTER 5: THE THEOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE AND IMPLICATIONS IN CONTEMPORARY CONTEXT

5.1 The Theological Significance

The findings in this study seem to indicate that there are lines of integration from Jewish traditions, and Hellenistic thoughts in the cognitive understanding of the author, with regard to the Son-Father relationship of the Johannine Jesus. These lines of integration are cumulative, and are fed by streams of consciousness that cannot be clearly delineated, and categorically summarised, nor be presupposed backward without due consideration for the explicit authorial intent, e.g. in the use of Greek verbs-of-cognition for the Johannine Jesus's cognitive insight of God's divine reality, and the author's depiction of the Johannine Jesus's claims of equality in the language of oneness.¹ The author's construction of the Johannine Jesus's unique cognitive insight, and his claims of equality in the language of oneness, is a consistent and pervasive depiction in the Fourth gospel, which is not a simplistic labelling, e.g. in terms of a Revealer-envoy in the likes of prophet-like Moses, or an ancient mythology as this study shows.²

Although explicit allusions to the Jewish tradition, e.g. Deuteronomy 6:4, may be inferred, the author's own creative shaping, that represents the dialectical thinking pre- and post-Easter in his authorial intent, cannot be ignored.³ This study shows that the author's two-level epistemology reflects the present inbreaking of the

1. Lindars, *The Gospel of John*, 65.

2. Ashton, *Understanding the Fourth Gospel*, 552; Beasley-Murray, *John*, lxxxiv.

3. Andrew J. Byers, *Ecclesiology and Theosis in the Gospel of John: Volume 167* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 108-109, Accessed April 2, 2022, ProQuest Ebook Central; Barrett, *The Gospel according to St John*, 30, 55; Jonge de Marinus, *Christology in Context* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1988), 146; Michael Labahn, "Deuteronomy in The Fourth Gospel," in *Deuteronomy in the New Testament*, eds., Maarten J.J. Menken and Steve Moyise (London: T&T Clark, a Continuum Imprint, 2007), 88.

Johannine Jesus's life and ministry, which in turn elucidates the presence of the true temporal and spatial divine reality of the Father. The author's consistent depiction of a two-level epistemology of the divine reality of the Father, which is as revealed in the Johannine Jesus's cognitive insight, serves to bring remembrance to the Jewish diaspora of the monotheistic God of their ancestors, and is in the context of a pluralistic Greco-Roman Hellenistic culture.⁴ This persistent depiction of the characteristics of the Son-Father relationship of the Johannine Jesus in this study reflects the authorial focus on portraying Jesus-the-Son (e.g. John 20:31), who shapes the communal identity of the Jewish diaspora in a new identity as the "children of God", which in turn extends to all humanity.⁵ Therefore, Jesus-the-Son opens up a new beginning for God and humanity to engage one with another in an all-inclusive divine-human engagement with the Father.⁶ The Johannine Jesus is not an alternate god, nor a second god, but "the Son". Hence, the author prioritises the immanence of God's divine reality in the relational unity of the Son and the Father in the Johannine Jesus's life and ministry.⁷

If the above is the case, then the unique relational unity of the Son with the Father is primarily Christological, and it lies in a fundamental image of oneness in

4. See Summary of Findings and Implications in Chapter 3 of this study.

5. Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, 90; Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St. John*, vol. 3, 335; Daniel I. Block, "How Many Is God?: An Investigation into the Meaning of Deuteronomy 6:4-5." *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 47, no. 2 (June 2004): 211, <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=ip,shib&db=lsdar&AN=ATLA0001457891&site=ehost-live&scope=site>; N T Wright, "One God, One Lord," *The Christian Century* (1902) 130, no. 24 (2013): 22-23; Karl Rahner, and Wilhelm Thüsing, *A New Christology* (London: Burns and Oates, 1980), 155.

6. Neil Ormerod, "A Trajectory from Augustine to Aquinas and Lonergan: Contingent Predication and the Trinity," *The Irish Theological Quarterly* 82, no. 3 (2017): 215, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0021140017709423>; Rahner and Thüsing, *A New Christology*, 109.

7. This priority is obvious in the author's persistent depiction of Jesus's unique cognitive insight (Chapter 3 of this study) and his claims of equality with God (Chapter 4 of this study) in the language of oneness (e.g. John 17:21); Anderson, Paul N. *The Christology of the Fourth Gospel*, lii; Klaus Scholtissek, "The Johannine Gospel in Recent Research," in *The Face of New Testament Studies*, McKnight, Scot and Grant R. Osborne, eds., (MI: Baker Academic, 2004), 470; see also Ford, *The Gospel of John*, 11.

the revelation of God's true divine reality, His words, and His will for humanity in the life and ministry of the Johannine Jesus.⁸ Hence, the theological significance of the Fourth gospel is the renewed Christological emphasis of the relational unity of the Johannine Jesus, and the Father (indicating a departure from Judaism and Jewish traditions), which in turn depicts the prominent immanence of God in the Johannine Jesus's Son-Father relationship. Moreover, this Christological emphasis of the immanence of God is bound up with an anthropological insight of relatedness between God and human, which is depicted as encapsulated in the cognitive insight, words, and the revealed will of God in the life, ministry, passion and the ultimate glorification of "the-Son" on the cross.⁹ The theology in the Fourth gospel can thus be seen from the Christological reflection (pre- and post-Easter) in the author's dialectical view of the immanence of God in the relational unity of the Son with the Father, so that to know the relational unity of the Father and the Son is to know God, which in turn leads to the knowledge of the destiny of humanity (Galatians 3:26).¹⁰ This unique relatedness of the Son and the Father exemplifies a new relatedness of God and humanity through the Son's full revelation of the nature of God's divine reality.¹¹ It is prioritised in the author's creative genius by his consistent overemphasis of the Johannine Jesus's unique cognitive insight (see Chapter 3), and in the claims of equality in the language of oneness (see Chapter 4).¹² It is in this relational unity of Jesus-the-Son and the Father, that the believers are gathered

8. Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St. John*, vol. 1, 155-156, 158-159, also see Chapter 3, and 4 of this study.

9. Gary W. Deddo, *Karl Barth's Theology of Relations* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc., 1999), 12, 16; Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, 397; Rahner and Thüsing, *A New Christology*, 95; Scholtissek, "The Johannine Gospel in Recent Research," 470.

10. Ashton, *Understanding the Fourth Gospel*, 69; Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, 169; Rahner and Thüsing, *A New Christology*, 96.

11. Rahner and Thüsing, *A New Christology*, 143.

12. Baron, Lori. "Interpreting the 'Shema': Liturgy and Identity in the Fourth Gospel." *Annali Di Storia dell'Esegesi* 27, no. 2 (2010): 56, 58; Beasley-Murray, *John*, lxxxii, lxxxiv; Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, 95; Jonge de Marinus, *Christology in Context*, 18.

together in early Christianity as children of God, in their confessions of “one Lord and one Baptism” (Ephesians 4:5), which in turn indicates their spiritual bond of continuing relational unity with Jesus-the-Son and the Father (e.g. John 17:21, 23, 1 John 1:3) post-Easter.¹³

The Fourth Gospel can thus be seen as the author’s personal theological reflection in search for the promised salvation of God rooted in the Jewish tradition, resulting in his pre- and post-Easter encounter with the Johannine Jesus, where his search ends with great joy in the recognition of the long-awaited salvation of God present in Jesus-the-Son.¹⁴ Human destiny in Jesus is now “the reverse of an apocalypse” in a long and justifiable pause (i.e. “Selah” in Hebrew, translated as intermission in the LXX), hence the seemingly present orientation of eschatological emphasis in the Fourth Gospel.¹⁵

If theology in the Fourth Gospel is primarily Christological predicated on the priority of relational unity of the Son with the Father, then it may seem reasonable that Johannine Christology focuses on the relational unity of the Son with the Father, which depicts a new engagement of relatedness of God with humans.¹⁶ Hence, the Johannine perspective of the relational unity of Jesus-the-Son and the Father provides a theological standpoint that on the one hand, moves theological inquiry away from unresolved scholarly debates over ontological implications of “high and ascending Christology” in the Fourth Gospel, and on the other hand, stands in continuity with

13. Rahner and Thüsing, *A New Christology*, 102-103, 189.

14. John 20:31; the theological task of faith seeking understanding is applicable to the author of The Fourth Gospel, see Anthony Towey, *An Introduction to Christian Theology* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2013), 168; Daniel L. Migliore, *Faith Seeking Understanding : An Introduction to Christian Theology, third ed.* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2014), 17; Rahner and Thüsing, *A New Christology*, 7, 156.

15. Ashton, *Understanding the Fourth Gospel*, 553; Lindars, *The Gospel of John*, 58; Beasley-Murray, *John*, lxxxvi; Brown, *An Introduction to the Gospel of John*, 239.

16. Exclusive attention to particular Christological titular references in The Fourth Gospel tends to skew focus from the relational unity in the author’s depiction of Jesus’s Son-Father relationship in the gospel, see Lindars, *The Gospel of John*, 64.

the identity of “One Lord, One Baptism” of the faithful believers.¹⁷ This all-inclusive theological perspective in the relational unity of Jesus, and the Father can be seen as an engagingly new direction going forward for various expressions of engagement between a believer and “the Other”, which may adequately address the culturally diverse religious pluralism in contemporary context.¹⁸ .¹⁹ It may seem appropriate at this point to paraphrase Barrett, “the future of humanity lies in the truth of the relational unity of the divine grace of the Father and the Son together in words, deeds and glorification”.²⁰

5.2 The Implications In Contemporary Context

The Johannine Jesus’s relational unity with the Father as depicted by the author in the Fourth Gospel is unique, distinctive, and inclusive in meaning. This study proposes the following implications for a contemporary believer of faith:

(1) A Believer’s Spiritual Identity

Christians often affirm their commitment to God and if genuine, has a profound effect on how they think about God and Jesus in their spiritual experiences. The language of oneness between the Johannine Jesus, and the Father anchors the identity of believers in the immanent and faithful presence of God in their confessions of faith. The author of the Fourth Gospel proposes a theology set within the familial

17. Matthew C. Ogilvie, *Faith Seeking Understanding* : *The Functional Specialty, “Systematics,” in Bernard Lonergan’s Method in Theology* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2001), 45.

18. McGrath, *John’s Apologetic Christology*, 234; Towey, *An Introduction to Christian Theology*, 422; “the Other” in this study refers to the neighbours, the strangers, and acquaintances who are different from one’s own self in one way or the other.

19. Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St. John*, vol. 1, 161.

20. Barrett, *The Gospel according to St John*, 99.

context of the purpose of the Father in the life and ministry of Jesus-the-Son to inaugurate a new beginning for human destiny.²¹

The emphasis is on the unified activity and purpose of the Father and the Son, who undertake the redemption of the world together in their relational unity.²² God is here with humans and for humanity. The portrayal of the immanent presence of the self-sacrificing divine love of the Father in Jesus's life, death and glorification on the cross substantiates the faith of the believers in early Christianity, so that their convictions are not merely Christian rhetoric, but is also transformative in the shaping of their identities as children of God. It encourages believers today to be mindful of both the Father and Jesus-the-Son working in unison for the flourishing of humanity. It depicts a shift in religious epistemology, from an exclusive focus on the letter of the harsh commandments of God to the Spirit of the all-inclusive grace of God, that is actualised and present in the work of Jesus-the-Son on the cross, which in turn effect a new beginning and new life for humanity, and that which is also the "impulse to discipleship".²³

Intentional discipleship thus lies in the spiritual formation of the believers' identity predicated on a renewed understanding of the relational unity of Jesus with the Father in the grace of divine love for His children.²⁴ It is an identity that is rooted in continuity as well as discontinuity with the Jewish tradition for human flourishing when the God-human mediator is situated in Jesus-the-Son, who actualises God's promise of eternal life in the present existential reality.

21. Ashton, *Understanding the Fourth Gospel*, 323; Loader, *Jesus in The Fourth Gospel*, 471.

22. Deddo, *Karl Barth's Theology of Relations*, 47; Loader, *Jesus in The Fourth Gospel*, 471.

23. Deddo, *Karl Barth's Theology of Relations*, 48; Roger Haight, *The Future of Christology* (London: Continuum, 2005), 31, Loader, *Jesus in The Fourth Gospel*, 474.

24. Deddo, *Karl Barth's Theology of Relations*, 49; Rahner and Thüsing, *A New Christology*, 95, 102.

This is the conviction of the author of the Fourth Gospel, who recognises with great joy at the good news (εὐαγγέλιον/euangelion) that the Johannine Jesus is the ultimate mediator between God and humanity (John 20:31). The future of human destiny thus rests in the present relational unity of the Johannine Jesus with the Father, upon which the assurance of hope is made certain in the present actualisation of divine love, by which the divine reality of eternal life is brought forth for the children of God.²⁵ This identity becomes a “coherent self-image” of believers in the face of hostile persecution from the Jewish religious authority then, and also for believers now, who face the fear and uncertainty of Covid pandemic in 2020, and the harsh reality of Ukraine war with its global consequences in 2022. A stable and coherent self-image not only serves to lessen the harshness of existential reality, but also imbues the believers of an assurance of peace in the eye of the storm (John 10:11, 28, 29).²⁶

From this perspective then, Christian discipleship entails the intentional building up of the “coherent self-image” of believers in the common identity predicated upon the theological foundation of the relational unity of the Johannine Jesus and the Father, which provides the strength to overcome fear and anxiety over existential uncertainties and hope to continue living in the certainty of the grace of the Father for His children.

The situatedness of a believer’s own self with regard to “the Other” can be distinct yet non-antagonistic, as the centre of “coherent self-image” of the believer shifts from ideology (i.e. metaphysical and dogmatic) to relationship and relatedness with “the Other”, and enlarges possibilities of new dialogical connections in an

25. Scholars recognise that eschatology in The Fourth Gospel inclines towards the present horizon, see Beasley-Murray, *John*, lxxxvi; Brown, *An Introduction to the Gospel of John*, 239; Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St. John*, vol. 2, 430.

26. Ogilvie, *Faith Seeking Understanding*, 46.

atmosphere of responsive openness, rather than a defence of rhetoric.²⁷ This non-rhetorical approach in a dialogical encounter with “the Other” is exemplified by the Johannine Jesus in his conversation with his disciples (e.g. John 14:8-9 and the Samaritan woman (e.g. John 4:7-10), and are indicative of critical participation in careful listening in the cultural context of “the Other” to bridge epistemic gap concerning the true nature of God’s divine reality.²⁸

(2) A Believer as a Transcultural Mediator

Human existential contexts vary from person to person, especially in today’s increasingly interconnected, yet disconnected space through internet and social media. So, it is reasonable to expect varying degree of epistemic parity to arise from various religious experiences, especially when multiple cultural forms come in contact with a believer’s contemporary sphere of consciousness.²⁹

Hence, a believer’s renewed understanding of the relational unity of the Johannine Jesus and the Father, is situated firmly in the context of the believer’s experience in a human encounter.³⁰ In this way, the believer’s experience is personal, authentic, and inclusive, e.g. in the Johannine Jesus’s encounter with the Samaritan woman, the conversation involves authentic personal detail of the Samaritan woman, which serves to bridge different epistemic insight, and to promote inclusivity that succeeds in closing cultural differentiation with people who are formerly strangers to

27. Anderson, *The Christology of the Fourth Gospel*, lii; Haight, *The Future of Christology*, 121; Michael J. Scanlon, “Postmodernism and Theology,” *New Theology Review* 13, no. 1 (February 2000): 71,

<https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=ip,shib&db=lsdar&AN=CPLI0000267589&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

28. Haight, *The Future of Christology*, 134; Scanlon, “Postmodernism and Theology,” 72; Towey, *An Introduction to Christian Theology*, 425-426.

29. Haight, *The Future of Christology*, 129.

30. Haight, *The Future of Christology*, 33-34, 138; Ogilvie, *Faith Seeking Understanding*, 52-53; Towey, *An Introduction to Christian Theology*, 359.

one another (e.g. a Samaritan village and the Johannine Jesus in John 4:40-42).³¹ A believer is now a mediator between cultures, where “the Other” becomes aware of the distinctive gospel culture of the relational unity of the Son with the Father.³² There is thus a continuity with gospel cultural tradition in a transcultural orientation. Just as the Johannine Jesus mediates transculturally, when he shows the Samaritan women the true way to the Father.³³ As such, a believer with a renewed understanding of the relational unity of Jesus with the Father is also a transcultural mediator of the gospel culture with “the Other”, to mediate diverse streams of faith experiences in the church body at large towards the goal of true ecumenism, without “reducing the Other to the same”, and in the common bond of the relational unity of the Johannine Jesus with the Father as the *one* flock of the *one* Shephard (John 10:16, John 17:11).³⁴

This renewed recognition of relational unity of the Son with the Father is foundational to shape the Church in the language of “ecclesial oneness”, with spiritual and theological significance (John 13:34, 35).³⁵ This is true for the Johannine community, and can be a reality in contemporary context, which is in relation to the goal of relational unity in the prayer of the Johannine Jesus in John

31. Roger Haight, *Jesus Symbol of God* (New York: Orbis Books, 1999), 14; Haight, *The Future of Christology*, 143; Scholtissek, “The Johannine Gospel in Recent Research,” 469.

32. Robert L. Manzinger, “Kenosis as Creating Space: The Ethics of Emmanuel Levinas on Violence and the Other in Conversation with Sarah Coakley and Miroslav Volf,” *American Baptist Quarterly* 35, no. 2 (Sum 2016): 123,

<https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=ip,shib&db=lsdar&AN=ATLAIGEV171016004069&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

Ogilvie, *Faith Seeking Understanding*, 46.

33. At the well in John 4, Johannine Jesus’s dialogue with the Samaritan woman depicts his mediation between his Jewish culture with that of the Samaritan woman’s Samaritan culture and the divine cultural reality of the Father.

34. Byers, *Ecclesiology and Theosis in the Gospel of John*, 143; Towey, *An Introduction to Christian Theology*, 414.

35. Byers, *Ecclesiology and Theosis in the Gospel of John*, 240; John H. Wright, “Meaning and Structure of Catholic Faith,” *Theological Studies* 39, no. 4 (December 1978): 708.

<https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=ip,shib&db=lsdar&AN=ATLA0000768810&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

17:23.³⁶ Hence, a transcultural mediator aims to break down stereotypical barriers of the in-between spaces of the dominant socio-political secular society in contemporary context, e.g. the migrant space, the gender space, etc., and to restore wholesome, distinct and coherent self-image.³⁷

(3) A Believer's Life of Faith

Scholars often associate the knowledge of God in the Fourth Gospel with faith, and the knowledge of God is in turn predicated on the cognitive insight of the Johannine Jesus, and his claims of equality with God in the language of oneness in the Son-Father relationship as discussed in this study.³⁸ The author of the Fourth Gospel is thus seen to present a coherent theology of God's immanence at the core of his Christological focus of the Son-Father relationship of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel. If this is the case, then the revelatory knowledge of the Father in the Johannine Jesus's Son-Father relationship has significant implication for a believer's life of faith.³⁹ Barrett seems to distinguish between the state of faith, vis-à-vis a life of faith for a believer.⁴⁰ The knowledge of the relational unity the Son with the Father can be seen as the epistemological ground for a believer's state of faith in God's immanent presence in humanity.⁴¹ This is consistent with Bultmann's suggestion that faith in God is only possible when it is mediated through faith in the Johannine Jesus, whose relational unity with the Father provides a believer the epistemological ground of faith in the true nature of God's divine reality of grace.⁴²

36. Byers, *Ecclesiology and Theosis in the Gospel of John*, 240.

37. Anderson, *The Christology of the Fourth Gospel*, lii; Manzinger, "Kenosis as Creating Space," 125.

38. Barrett, *The Gospel according to St John*, 82, 163, 306; Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, 179.

39. Scholtissek, "The Johannine Gospel in Recent Research," 469.

40. Barrett, *The Gospel according to St John*, 287, 397.

41. Bultmann, *The Gospel of John*, 600.

42. Bultmann, *The Gospel of John*, 600.

The knowledge of God revealed in the relational unity of the Johannine Jesus with the Father extends beyond the intellectual focus of the Greek's, the moral element of Judaism, the abstract mystical theme in Gnosticism, and the syncretic milieu of Hellenism.⁴³ It also extends beyond the liturgical confession of early Christianity toward living a life of faith in the true knowledge of the relational unity of the Son with the Father.⁴⁴

So, it may be said that a believer is empowered to stand in faith in relation to the Father in symbolic parallelism to the relational unity of the Johannine Jesus with the Father.⁴⁵ Thus, a believer's experience of the divine reality in a life of faith does not occur in a metaphysical abstraction, or a vacuum, or in the imagination of the mind, but in the experiential reality of human life.⁴⁶ It moves from the often emotional and random vision of God to the epistemological certainty of the relational unity of Jesus and God, which invites the believers to encounter the divine reality of grace and truth to "illuminate human existence".⁴⁷

Nonetheless, a life of faith entails a continual renewal of cognitive insight of the gift of life in the divine reality of eternal life in the present time.⁴⁸ It can be seen that eternal life presents an epistemic depth to existential life in the present, which is not equated with "timelessness", but is instead encapsulated in the relational unity of the Son with the Father.⁴⁹ It speaks of a believer's participation in God's divine reality in the present in the relational unity of the Johannine Jesus's personal identification with the Word of God, his work with the will of God, and his death and

43. Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, 153, 154, 180.

44. Bultmann, *The Gospel of John*, 609; Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, 169.

45. Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, 195.

46. Haight, *Jesus Symbol of God*, 193.

47. Bultmann, *The Gospel of John*, 436; Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, 191, 194.

48. Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, 150.

49. Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, 150.

resurrection (John 17:3) with the glory of God.⁵⁰ This life of faith calls for a personal commitment to live in view of the words, life and ministry of Jesus-the-Son, predicated on the Son's relational unity with the Father on earth.⁵¹ It enables a believer to continually recognise, and witness to the grace of divine reality in human experiences, and to correlate to the believer's declaration of faith in Jesus-the-Son, who may be seen as the symbol of the Father.⁵²

It is thus consistent with the concept of theistic faith, where God is present and active in all existential plane of human affairs, as well as the ultimate source of divine reality in the midst of humanity.⁵³ Furthermore, God's divine reality of grace and truth is fully revealed through the Johannine Jesus's Son-Father relationship, even in the face of evil, e.g. oppression by the Jews and Roman authority (e.g. John 7:30, John 8:52, John 19:16). If God seems hidden in His transcendence in the Synoptics, God is fully revealed in His immanence in the Son-Father relationship of the Johannine Jesus's words, life and ministry (including death and resurrection) in the language of oneness as this study shows.⁵⁴ A believer's life of faith is thus empowered to accept the existential reality of evil, while looking forward with hopeful confidence to the fullness of divine grace and truth immanent in the redemptive power of Jesus's death and resurrection, and with an openness to let God be God in the fullness of His radiance in the resurrection glory of Jesus-the-Son.⁵⁵

50. Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, 201; Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St John*, vol. 2, 355.

51. Michael L Cook, "Call to Faith of the Historical Jesus: Questions for the Christian Understanding of Faith," *Theological Studies* 39, no. 4 (December 1978): 691, <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=ip,shib&db=lsdar&AN=ATLA0000768809&site=ehost-live&scope=site>; Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St John*, vol. 2, 360; Wright, "Meaning and Structure of Catholic Faith," 716.

52. Cook, "Call to Faith of the Historical Jesus," 691; Haight, *Jesus Symbol of God*, 14.

53. Wright, "Meaning and Structure of Catholic Faith," 706. <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=ip,shib&db=lsdar&AN=ATLA0000768810&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

54. Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St John*, vol. 3, 392.

55. Haight, *Jesus Symbol of God*, 193; Wright, "Meaning and Structure of Catholic Faith," 712.

The corruption that holds humans to their weaknesses is now broken by the immanent presence of the divine reality in the relational unity of the Father and the Son.⁵⁶ By the divine gift of eternal life, humans are now able to access the fullness of God's grace and truth, through faith in the relational unity of the Father in the Son.⁵⁷

A believer's life of faith thus necessitates an attitude of trust in the present divine reality of grace and truth in the Son-Father relationship of the Johannine Jesus.⁵⁸ Pilate asks, "What is truth?" (John 18:38). It seems the relational unity of the Johannine Jesus and the Father is incomprehensible to Pilate, who seems receptive only to the epistemological view of the existential world.⁵⁹ Pilate's unanswered question thus seems to indicate the cognitive disjunction of the true divine reality of God in Pilate's own existential experience, and Pilate does not seem interested in the possibility of knowing the true divine reality, even when he encounters Jesus before the crucifixion.⁶⁰ So, Pilate is depicted by the author as of the world, who does not know the true divine reality of the Father (John 17:6, 14).

If the above is the case, then a believer's life of faith entails bearing witness to the relational unity of the Father in the Son, by imitating the Johannine Jesus in the obedience of faith, by affirming the truth of the divine reality revealed in the Johannine Jesus's words and ministry on earth pre-Easter, which is subsequently validated by the Johannine Jesus's resurrection from a post-Easter perspective.⁶¹ The obedience of faith refers not to the compliance of the letter of the law of Moses, but to the truth of relational unity of the Father and the Son.⁶² This is the life of faith in

56. Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St John*, vol. 3, 393.

57. Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St John*, vol. 2, 355, 361.

58. Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St. John*, vol. 1, 575.

59. Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, 176, 177, 178.

60. Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St. John*, vol. 2, 360.

61. Wright, "Meaning and Structure of Catholic Faith," 717; Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St. John*, vol. 2, 361; Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St. John*, vol. 3, 207-208.

62. Loader, *Jesus in The Fourth Gospel*, 463.

the context of the Johannine Jesus's relational unity with the Father in his words, deeds and glorification.⁶³

(4) A Believer's Household of Faith

Although Brown's scholarly hypothesis of the development of Johannine community is much applauded, the primary distinguishing mark of the Johannine community of faith is encapsulated in the prayer of the Johannine Jesus in John 17:23, which is based on the relational reality of the Father and the Son.⁶⁴ In other words, Johannine community is an assembly of believers who bear witness to the truth of the life of faith (John 15:27 and see paragraph in (3) above), and relate to one another in a spiritual bond of love as "siblings of faith" that centres in the relational unity of the Father and the Son.⁶⁵ Schnackenburg sees this as a spiritual union of believers and Christ in the truth of relational unity of the Father and Son in the fulfilment of divine love.⁶⁶ This seems to affirm Coloe's suggestion that an expression of "household of faith" is an apt self-understanding of the Johannine community, which is gathered together as an object of God's divine grace, which in turn affirms the Son-Father relational unity in the Fourth Gospel.⁶⁷

Believers not only bear witness to the divine reality of grace by their obedience of faith, but also live by the new commandment of Jesus (John 15:12) in loving service to one another (John 13:14, 35).⁶⁸ These believers are called "children

63. Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, 199.

64. Brown, *An Introduction to the Gospel of John*, 73; Mary Coloe, "Households of Faith (Jn 4:46-54; 11:1-44): A Metaphor for the Johannine Community." *Pacifica* 13, no. 3 (October 2000): 327. <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=ip,shib&db=lsdar&AN=ATLA0000005045&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

65. Barrett, *The Gospel according to St John*, 86, 93, 94, 95; Loader, *Jesus in The Fourth Gospel*, 463.

66. Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St. John*, vol. 1, 161.

67. Barrett, *The Gospel according to St John*, 87, 99; Mary Coloe, "Households of Faith," 334.

68. Brown, *An Introduction to the Gospel of John*, 227; Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St. John*, vol. 1, 162.

of God” (John 11:52), whose identity is predicated upon the relational unity of the Son with the Father.⁶⁹ The authority of the words of the Johannine Jesus is notable in the believers’ obedience of faith to the teachings of the Johannine Jesus (e.g. John 1:12, John 8:31), which is also an integral element of discipleship in the household of faith.

The collective reference to believers as “one flock of one shepherd” (e.g. John 10:16), and “children of God” (e.g. John 1:12, 13) is not only pervasive, but also unique in the Fourth Gospel, more so than other ecclesial expressions depicted in the Synoptic gospels, and other New Testament writings.⁷⁰ The language of oneness inferred in the depiction of “one Shepherd” and “One Father” is implicit in these expressions.⁷¹ It also speaks of the universal action of the Father to gather up all believers as one in the relational unity of the Father and the Son (John 11:52, 17:21).⁷² The ecclesial expression of “kingdom of God” is rarely used in the Fourth Gospel.⁷³ In John 18:36, kingdom is depicted as explicitly connected to the world, instead of the divine reality of the Father. The implication is the dialectical relational reality between the world and the household of faith.⁷⁴ This dialectical relational reality denotes a) a vertical separation of existential and divine reality, and b) an ethical or moral separation between the world and the Johannine Jesus’s teaching.⁷⁵ Although

69. Coloe, “Households of Faith,” 334.

70. For example, “people of God” and “body of Christ” see Brown, *An Introduction to the Gospel of John*, 222.

71. Brown, *An Introduction to the Gospel of John*, 227.

72. Barrett, *The Gospel according to St John*, 96; Brown, *An Introduction to the Gospel of John*, 227.

73. The ecclesial expression of “kingdom of God” is pervasive in the Synoptics, but explicit references in The Fourth Gospel seem to occur only twice in Jesus’s encounter with Nicodemus (John 3:3, 5) to depict the truth of the nature of divine reality that Nicodemus consistently misunderstands, see Brown, *An Introduction to the Gospel of John*, 228.

74. The early believers are not only expelled from the synagogue but also ostracised by the Roman world, so scholars see the dialectical relation between household of faith and the world present in the latter stage of development of the Johannine community, see Ashton, *Understanding the Fourth Gospel*, 173; Brown, *An Introduction to the Gospel of John*, 229.

75. Ashton, *Understanding the Fourth Gospel*, 207.

this depiction may seem incomprehensible to various cultural forms, it is nonetheless a valid depiction in view of increasing hostility towards Christian values and morals in a post-Christian liberal Western cultural reality.⁷⁶ While the world is increasingly oblivious to the divine reality of the Father and the Son, the household of faith continues to illuminate the truth of the divine grace of the Father and the Son in the increasingly dark recesses of human suffering.⁷⁷

If the above is the case then believers of the household of faith are invited to be transcultural mediators in the world (see discussion in paragraph (2) above), not to subdue the world under the rubric of “kingdom of God”, but to come alongside human suffering to point to the truth of the divine grace to bring forth the eschatological newness of life (John 17:17) in the relational unity of the Son with the Father.

5.3 Suggestions for Further Investigations

Some reflections arising from this study that may seem beneficial for further investigations are as follows:

(a) At the onset of this study, a limitation of scope pertaining to the role of the Spirit is indicated. So, an inquiry into the Spirit’s role in the relational unity of the Johannine Jesus with the Father is significant, which may extend the findings of this study with regard to the understanding of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit of God upon human flesh in early Christianity, e.g. in Acts and the development of the concept of *Missio Dei* in contemporary context.⁷⁸

76. Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St. John*, vol. 3, 391.

77. Ashton, *Understanding the Fourth Gospel*, 174; Barrett, *The Gospel according to St John*, 96.

78. For the purpose of this study, *Missio Dei* is defined as the Latin theological terminology to refer to the “mission of God” that gains traction in missiology and is first coined by German missiologist Karl Hartenstein in 1934.

(b) Intertextual tools such as Genette’s taxonomy of hypertextual relationship can be employed to further identify and investigate the intertextual relationship of the language of oneness in the Fourth Gospel with reference to Deuteronomy 6:4, and 1 Timothy 2:5. Such an investigation can be beneficial to establish hypertextuality in these texts with theological implications for Christology, Eschatology, Ecclesiology, Pneumatology and Soteriology.⁷⁹

(c) The image of the relational unity of the Johannine Jesus’s divine Sonship in the language of oneness in the Fourth Gospel may be further investigated and analysed in relation to the Synoptics, other New Testament writings (e.g. Revelation) and Old Testament writings (e.g. Exodus), by the use of dialogical intertextual tool to draw out further implications with theological significance of the motif of oneness in a complementary study.⁸⁰

(d) An investigation into the theological basis of the notion of the relational unity of Jesus and the Father in notable philosophers and theologians, e.g. Emmanuel Lavinas, Karl Barth, may yield theological implications for contemporary phenomenology of religion for contemporary believers of faith.⁸¹

5.4 Conclusion

The exegetical analysis of the author’s depiction of the Johannine Jesus’s unique cognitive insight of the divine reality, and his claims of equality with God in the language of oneness in this study, seems to recover a theological standpoint

79. B. J. Oropeza, B. J and Steve Moyise, eds., *Exploring Intertextuality : Diverse Strategies for New Testament Interpretation of Texts* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2016), 17. Accessed April 8, 2022. ProQuest Ebook Central.

80. Oropeza and Moyise, eds., *Exploring Intertextuality: Diverse Strategies for New Testament Interpretation of Texts*, 4-5.

81. I V Kirsberg, I V (Igor' Viktorovich), “How Can Phenomenology Be Preserved in the Study of Religion?: A Proposal.” *Journal for the Study of Religion & Ideologies* 18, no. 52 (Spr 2019): 153, <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=ip,shib&db=lsdar&AN=ATLAI FZ K190514000815&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

pertaining to the author's two-level epistemological focus of the relational unity of Jesus-the-Son with the Father, which in turn seems to affirm the theological significance of relational unity in an all-inclusive connectedness of human-divine engagement in the Johannine Jesus's Son-Father relationship in a contemporary context.

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