

THE QUMRAN SCROLLS AND JOHN'S GOSPEL

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1. *The Religio-historical Background*

The language and conceptuality of John are so different from that of the synoptic Gospels that the interpreter is confronted with the question of the religio-historical background of the Fourth Gospel. First and foremost it is the marked dualism and the linguistic forms of expression that are problematic.

Until the discovery of the Qumran Scrolls the main sources available to the scholar were Jewish wisdom literature, Philo, the hermetic books and the Mandaeen writings. As J.H. Charlesworth notes in his preface to the reissued *John and the Dead Sea Scrolls*,¹ this led to many regarding John as the most Greek of the Gospels.

The finding of the scrolls allowed access to source material which was from—or at least used in—Palestine itself, and which revealed remarkable similarities at a number of points with the language and conceptuality of John. Not surprisingly Johannine scholars immediately leaped at this opportunity to conduct comparative studies—with an enthusiasm that on occasion overcame critical, level-headed reflection. Now, 50 years on, we must admit that high-flying theories of a direct link between the Qumran sect and the circle behind the Johannine writings cannot be proved to our satisfaction. H. Braun's sober analysis from 1966² was particularly pertinent on the subject, though M. Hengel

is justified in maintaining that the Qumran discoveries were indeed a milestone in the reevaluation of the religious history of John's Gospel.³ J.H. Charlesworth too is right to claim that among Johannine scholars there is a consensus that John is the Gospel most engaged with Judaism.⁴ However, this does not mean that the Qumran scrolls are sufficient to explain the religio-historical background to John, only that they must be included as an important element in such an exposition.

At the present stage of comparative studies it is impossible to give an unambiguous explanation of the similarities between a number of the Qumran writings and John's Gospel. The possibility of a direct connection continues to exist, but convincing evidence that this is indeed the case is still lacking. This uncertainty stems partly from our inability to know for sure to what degree the world of ideas that we meet in the Qumran writings, and primarily in their dualism, covers a wider circle than the Qumran community itself. J.H. Charlesworth notes in his preface that since the first issue of his book he has for many years studied the Qumran writings along with the apocryphal and pseudepigraphical Jewish writings and has been struck by the fact that dualist expressions such as 'sons of light' and the light-dark paradigm in general appear almost only in the Rule of the Community and then only in columns III–IV. He draws the conclusion that John must have taken over the paradigm from this passage in the manual, though he is unable to say how this came about.⁵

Without mentioning it Charlesworth nevertheless touches on the problem that the Rule of the Community has a very composite nature, with a redaction history that is hard to fathom. He himself, I feel, goes much too far in seeking to limit the dualism that may have influenced the author(s) of John to a particular section of the manual. Dualism in the scrolls finds many other modes of expression than the light-dark paradigm and cannot be confined to The Rule of the Community, far less to a small section within it. Furthermore the similarity between the scrolls and John's Gospel cannot be limited to dualism and its linguistic expressions, but stretches much farther, as George J. Brooke has pointed out. This is a subject to which we shall return.

1. J.H. Charlesworth (ed.), *John and the Dead Sea Scrolls* (New York: Crossroad, 2nd edn, 1991), p. xiii.
 2. H. Braun, *Qumran und das Neue Testament*, I–II (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1966). See also J. Murphy, 'Qumran and the New Testament', in E.J. Epp and G.W. MacRae (eds.), *The New Testament and its Modern Interpreters* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989), pp. 55–71.

3. M. Hengel, *The Johannine Question* (London: SCM Press, 1989), p. 111.
 4. Charlesworth, *John*, p. xiii.
 5. Charlesworth, *John*, p. xv.

Most advocates of a link between the Qumran community and the circle behind John's Gospel favour John the Baptist as the intermediary. If he did indeed belong to the community earlier, or to Essene circles, then that assumption is not unreasonable, since according to Jn 1.35-40 Jesus' first disciples were disciples of John the Baptist. But his link to the community is strenuously debated, being rejected by H. Stegemann,⁶ retained as a possibility by J.C. VanderKam,⁷ and regarded as probable by R. Riesner.⁸ If there were Essenes living in Jerusalem, as recent excavations seem to suggest,⁹ then it is possible that some of them joined the Christian movement and influenced it, in which case the world of ideas in John's Gospel could well be an example.

Attempts have also been made to explain the similarity between the dualism in the Qumran writings and that of John's Gospel through sociological causes. As an important methodological principle in comparing the writings of various religious groups S. Talmon has emphasized what he calls a general sociological principle:

Comparable traits in the posture of discrete religious or, for that matter, political groups are wont to arise from analogous societal conditions and credal tenets which were operative in the initial stages of their formation. The very confrontation with established religious or political authorities will often produce surprising similarities of conceptual thought and organization in widely divergent opposition parties, foremost in dissident factions which are in the same historical stream.¹⁰

Such a sociological explanation has been presented by P.F. Esler,¹¹ who draws on the sociologist B. Wilson for his methodology. According to Esler both the Qumran and the Johannine communities were of

6. H. Stegemann, *Die Essener, Qumran, Johannes der Täufer und Jesus* (Freiburg: Herder, 3rd edn, 1994), pp. 292-313.

7. J.C. VanderKam, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Today* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), pp. 168-70.

8. O. Betz and R. Riesner, *Jesus, Qumran und der Varikan* (Gießen: Brunnen Verlag; Freiburg: Herder, 2nd edn, 1993), p. 174.

9. Betz and Riesner, *Jesus*, pp. 176-79.

10. S. Talmon, 'The Community of the Renewed Covenant: Between Judaism and Christianity', in E. Ulrich and J. VanderKam (eds.), *The Community of the Renewed Covenant* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1994), p. 5.

11. P.F. Esler, *The First Christians in their Social Worlds: Social-scientific Approaches to New Testament Interpretation* (London: Routledge, 1994), pp. 70-91.

an introvert nature, one which manifested itself in a sharp division between members and non-members, community and world. Dualism, common to both, reflects the fact that the social reality for both groups was a clear separation between themselves and the surrounding world. It is this reality—nourished by kindred written and cultural traditions—which resulted in a dualist understanding of existence with certain features common to both.

J. Painter also stresses that the influence of dualism was dominant because it gave meaning to the situation in which the two groups found themselves.¹² In his opinion dualism expresses a sectarian consciousness among those who have either, as in the Qumran community, rejected the dominant forms of Judaism of their own time, or, as in John's Gospel, were themselves rejected by the dominant synagogue Judaism of the time.

As important as the sociological factor may be, the similarities between the dualist forms of expression in the Qumran writings and John's Gospel are so striking that a common repertoire of dualist language usage must be presupposed, a potential repertoire that is made topical in a situation characterized by sharp confrontation with the dominant surrounding world.

In the case of John's Gospel it is important to note in this context that the confrontation is with the Jewish synagogue, not with the Samaritans and the Greeks (cf. 4.4-42; 12.20-33). The exclusivity of the Qumran community is one that delineates itself against the dominant temple religion, as is clearly seen in 'Some of the Works of the Torah' (Miqsat Ma'aseh ha-Torah [4QMMT]), where it is emphasized that '[you know that] we have segregated ourselves from the rest of the people and (that) we avoid mingling in these affairs and associating with them in these things'. The Christian community behind John's Gospel, on the other hand, has itself been excluded from the synagogue (9.22; 12.42; 16.2).

The reason why the dualism of John's Gospel appears at its most forceful in the clash with the Jews (8.30-59)—meaning at the time the Gospel was being produced, the Pharisee-dominated synagogue as it was organized in the years following 70 CE—is closely linked to the exclusivity of the Jewish synagogue towards the Christ-confessing Jews. Seen in this light the Johannine dualism is also a weapon in the

12. J. Painter, *The Quest for the Messiah* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 2nd edn, 1993), p. 44.

fight for the right to the inheritance of God's people according to the Holy Scriptures. This too of course is the case with the Qumran community, where, however, there is a much greater awareness of having cut itself off from the official Judaism than is the case with the Johannine community.

This contrast also shows itself in the quite different role that the esoteric plays in the Qumran community, where there are strict rules of entry and a fixed and organized community life with extreme emphasis on cultic purity. The Johannine community on the other hand, with all due respect to its esoteric aspects, is characterized by a marked mission consciousness with a universal dimension (Jn 17.18-20; 20.21). The question is whether this difference leaves its traces on the view of the predestinatory motive in the dualism in the Qumran texts and in John's Gospel.

2. Dualism and Predestination

In the Qumran writings dualism and predestination are combined in a relationship which is a much-debated question. Since dualism, seen in the light of the confession of God as Creator, is placed under the creation faith of biblical Judaism, it is God in the final instance who is behind it:

From the God of knowledge stems all there is and all there shall be. Before they existed he made all their plans and when they came into being they will execute all their works in compliance with his instructions, according to his glorious design without altering anything. In his hands are the laws of all things and he supports them in all their needs. He created man to rule the world and placed within him two spirits so that he would walk with them until the moment of his visitation: they are the spirits of truth and of deceit. In the hand of the Prince of Lights is dominion over all the sons of justice; they walk on paths of light. And in the hand of the Angel of Darkness is total dominion over the sons of deceit; they walk on paths of darkness (1QS 3.15-21)... He (God) created the spirits of light and of darkness and on them established all his deeds (1QS 3.25).¹³

The children of light are also exposed to attack by 'the angel of darkness', who seduces them (1QS 3.22), but 'the God of Israel and the

13. Unless otherwise acknowledged the Qumran writings are quoted from F.G. Martínez, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Translated: The Qumran Texts in English* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1994).

angel of his truth assist all the sons of light' (1QS 3.24-25a), just as humankind's opportunity for choice in the matter of joining the covenant is occasionally underlined. Thus we find in 1QS 5.11-12:

For they are not included in his covenant since they have neither sought nor examined his decrees in order to learn the hidden matters in which they err.

An unresolved tension thereby arises between predestination and freedom, and J.H. Charlesworth is unwise to ignore the possibility of human decision that is also to be found in The Rule of the Community.¹⁴ On the other hand I cannot follow J. Painter and isolate predestination and dualism from one another.¹⁵ Dualism and predestination do not completely eliminate a human possibility of choosing.

There is no attempt in the Qumran scrolls to explain this dualism. It is regarded as an expression of God's secret plan. In this context it is also clear that dualism and predestination are placed in an eschatological perspective, inasmuch as the Qumran community expects that in the end God will do away with the powers of evil (1QS 4.18b-23a).

It is equally characteristic that dualism at Qumran has a markedly ethical component, clearly seen in the contrasting division of the two groups' way of life into a catalogue of virtues and vices (1QS 4.2-18a).

In John's Gospel just as in the Qumran writings we are faced with the question of the relationship between dualism, predestination and the human freedom to choose. On the one hand we read:

For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him (3.17).

I have come into the world as a light, so that no-one who believes in me should stay in darkness (12.46).

And thus the challenge is to:

Put your trust in the light while you have it, so that you may become sons of light (12.36a).

On the other hand we find:

All that the Father gives me will come to me (6.37a).

No-one can come to me unless the father who sent me draws him (6.44a; cf. v. 65).

14. Charlesworth, *John*, p. 114.

15. Painter, *Quest*, pp. 39-40.

But you do not believe because you are not my sheep (10.26).

Why is my language not clear to you? Because you are unable to hear what I say. You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire (8.43-44a; cf. 12.37-40).

The problem is whether it is their origin that determines people's decision against Jesus, or whether it is in the actual taking of a decision for or against Jesus that their origin is revealed.

This use of 'origin' terminology is probably one of definition, but importance is attached to the fact that those who reject Jesus' message are thereby revealed as people who prefer an existence under the sway of the Devil, the prince of this world, and are thus shown to be his children (cf. 15.22-25). It would seem that humankind's decision plays a significant role in John's Gospel, whereas it is only vaguely stressed in the Rule of the Community. This hangs together with John's emphasis on the idea of mission, which presumes that humankind must be confronted with the gospel of salvation, with a view to receiving it (cf. 3.17).

The ethical orientation of dualism, which is obvious in the Qumran writings, is also a distinctive feature of John's Gospel.¹⁶ This is clear in 3.19-21:

This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what he has done has been done through God.

In contrast to the Qumran community, John's Gospel never says that God is behind the dualist antithesis, but that as in The Rule of the Community the accomplishment of God's plan of salvation means that the forces of darkness are annihilated and dualism thereby abolished. Whereas at Qumran this event is in the future and receives detailed treatment in the War Scroll (1QM), in John's Gospel it has essentially taken place with Jesus' exaltation through his death and resurrection (12.31-33). This means that even though the Johannine community experiences the time as one of tribulation, it lives in the consciousness that Jesus has defeated this world (16.33). The exalted Christ is, so to

16. Cf. J. Becker, *Das Heil Gottes* (SUNT; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1964), pp. 232-37.

speak, the space in which the community experiences victory over the hostile world ('I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace' (16.33a). This existence is mediated through the Spirit, who will glorify the exalted Christ among them and in that sense he will return to them again (Jn 16.14, 16.22b-24). This leads us on to the question of whether there are Qumran texts that can illuminate the temple metaphor in the Fourth Gospel.

3. *The Use of the Temple Metaphor*

a. *The Incarnation of the Logos* (1.1-51)

G.J. Brooke has noted that the Temple Scroll contains a use of Jacob traditions that links them to the reform of the temple, inasmuch as the revelation to Moses recorded in Exodus 33-34 is related to the covenant with Jacob at Bethel in Gen. 28.10-22 (11QT 1-3; 29.8-10).¹⁷ This revelation supercedes the proto-Massoretic Torah in its description of the organization of the temple in the final days, including the festival year. Brooke sees a parallel with the combination of Exodus 33-34 and the Jacob traditions in the two prologue sections of John's Gospel (Jn 1.1-18; 1.19-51). In Exodus 33-34 the revelation of Yahweh's glory as seen in Moses' face plays an important role (Exod. 33.18-23; 34.29-35). Seen in this light the emphasis on the incarnated Logos as the place where God's glory is revealed (Jn 1.14a), as the fulfilment of the Sinai revelation, as well as the fullness of 'grace and truth' in this revelation (Jn 1.14b, 17) marks the consummation of the Law that was given to Moses (Exod. 34.6) where God presents himself as the one 'the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness'.

According to Brooke the relationship between 'the Law that was given to Moses' and the 'grace and truth' that has come 'in Jesus Christ' (Jn 1.17) should therefore not be seen as one of antithesis but—as in the Temple Scroll and also indeed in Jubilees—one of supersequence: not until now has the true content of the Law been revealed in Jesus Christ, who is the Law's personification.

Brooke also believes that this emphasis on no-one having seen God, not even Moses, (cf. Exod. 33.20), may contain an allusion to Jacob at

17. G.J. Brooke, 'The Temple Scroll and the New Testament', in *idem* (ed.), *Temple Scroll Studies* (JSFSup, 7; Sheffield: Sheffield University Press, 1989), pp. 181-99.

Bethel (Gen. 28.13-15). Thus a common tradition can be glimpsed behind the Johannine prologue and the Temple Scroll and Jubilees.¹⁸

In the second part of the prologue the use of the Jacob traditions is obvious, particularly in the culmination in Jn 1.51, which takes up the revelation to Jacob at Bethel, as Jesus promises his disciples:

You shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of man.

The interpretation of this passage is disputed. On the basis of the Targum traditions I am inclined to see it as expressing the belief that Jesus is the place where God's *shekinah* (glory) is revealed.¹⁹

If we compare the endings of the first and second sections of the prologue (Jn 1.18 and 1.51), we can see that Jn 1.18 is orientated towards the Sinai covenant in Exodus 33-34, whereas Jn 1.51 is orientated towards the covenant with Jacob in Gen. 28.10-22. In this way the two covenants are combined, as is the case with the Temple Scroll, and in both Jn 1.18 and 1.51 Jesus is presented as the real content of the revelation. It is therefore not unlikely that John wishes to suggest that it was in reality the pre-existent Logos that Jacob saw (cf. Jn 8.56, 58 [Abraham]; 12.41 [Isaiah]).

In the Temple Scroll we find the law that introduces the correct temple cult to the unclean Jerusalem cult, whereas in John's Gospel it is a question of underlining that the real law is grace and truth, revealed in the incarnate Logos that was before Abraham, Jacob, Moses and Isaiah. As in the Temple Scroll the revelation of this real law in John's Gospel involves a temple reform, as is clear from the narrative of the cleansing of the temple.

b. *The Cleansing of the Temple* (2.14-22)

As is well known John's placing of this narrative differs considerably from the synoptics.²⁰ John uses it to introduce Jesus' mission, giving it a programmatic significance for his work as a whole. When the Jews demand that Jesus should justify his right to cleanse the temple by a

18. G.J. Brooke also includes Sir. 24, where the Law is identified with wisdom, and where the Jacob traditions also play a role (Sir. 24.8, 23). In addition he notes that the covenant with Jacob at Bethel (Gen. 28.13-15) in the Temple Scroll (11QT 29) appears to be a renewal of the covenant with Abraham (Gen. 12.2-3, 7), and that this covenant in its second revelation to Jacob (Gen. 35.10-12) is formulated in language from the priestly blessing in Gen. 1.22 (*Temple Scroll*, p. 187).

19. See Brooke, *Temple Scroll*, pp. 188-89.

sign (2.18), Jesus says that they can break down this temple, but he will raise it up in three days (2.19). The Jews misunderstand him and speak of the absurdity of raising in three days a temple that took 46 years to build (2.20). To which the evangelist remarks that Jesus was speaking of 'the temple of his body' (2.21), and that his disciples remembered these words after the resurrection and this in turn led to them believing the Scripture and the words Jesus had spoken (2.22).

This reference to the disciples' memory also appears in the evangelist's narrative of the cleansing of the temple, an act that caused them to recall the words from Ps. 69.10: 'Zeal for your house will consume me' (Jn 2.17).

The disciples' memory is referred to in time, partly to the time of the cleansing of the temple, which makes them recall the Scripture, partly to the time after Jesus' resurrection. It is not until the final memory, however, that the disciples come to believe the Scripture and Jesus' words. Is the evangelist hinting that it is only in the light of Jesus' resurrection that they realize the meaning of Ps. 69.10? For Psalm 69 is used not only in conjunction with the cleansing of the temple but also with Jesus' death (Jn 19.28-29; Ps. 69.22).

This leads us to a peculiarity in the link between the Jews' demand for a sign and Jesus' answer. At first glance his reference to the breaking down and raising up of the temple appears to be the sign that legitimizes his right to cleanse the temple. In the light of the evangelist's remark in Jn 2.21, though, it is debatable whether it is not in fact the case that the cleansing in the Johannine sense is the sign pointing to himself as the true temple of God, the place for God's eschatological revelation. In which case the meaning of the quotation from Ps. 69.10 is that the reason for Jesus' death is his claim that as the incarnate Logos he is the true place for God's revelation, because the Law's personification is the revelation of God's being (cf. Jn 1.18, 4.24). He is this in the person of the man, Jesus of Nazareth (cf. Jn 1.14; 19.19).

This point may also be valid in the Gospel's second reference to Psalm 69, namely in v. 22: so that Scripture might be fulfilled Jesus says, 'I thirst' (Jn 19.28). The words are not spoken until he knows that everything has already been accomplished, and thus when he receives the drink he can say, 'It is finished' (Jn 19.30). In other words he has finished his task as the incarnate Logos of being the place for the revelation of God's glory, the true eschatological temple.²⁰ In the light of

20. Such an interpretation does away with the contradiction that otherwise

the temple pericope there may therefore be in Jn 1.14 a reference to the incarnate Logos as being the eschatological temple.²¹ We would thus find the same motif in Jn 1.51: the incarnate Logos is Bethel, God's house.

c. *The Conversation with Nicodemus* (3.1-21)

In an extension of the temple pericope the conversation with Nicodemus provides the theme for the question of entry into the kingdom of God (3.3, 5). It is common knowledge that here we find the only two references to the kingdom of God in John's Gospel. On the other hand the theme of Jesus as king plays an important part at the beginning and end of the Gospel. Nathanael confesses Jesus as the Son of God and the King of Israel (1.49), to which Jesus replies by referring to the revelation at Bethel (1.51).

There is however a link between the temple and the kingdom in both the Old Testament and the Qumran Scrolls. As an example of the former we can mention Ps. 11.4, where we read:

The Lord is in his holy temple;
the Lord is on his heavenly throne.

An obvious example from Qumran is the Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice, from which it appears that the Qumran community had access to worship in the heavenly temple, where praises to God's kingdom are constantly being sung.²²

Characteristically John's Gospel alternates between the phrases 'to see the kingdom of God' and 'to enter into the kingdom of God'. To

appears between Jesus' zeal for the temple in Jerusalem and his abolition of every earthbound temple in his conversation with the Samaritan woman (Jn 4.21).

H. Hübner discusses the contradiction and notes: 'Man wird die Intentionen beider Perikopen nicht kramphaft harmonisieren dürfen' (*Biblische Theologie des Neuen Testaments* [3 vols.; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1995], III, pp. 162-63). But he considers Jesus' cleansing of the temple to be an act of judgment that signifies the abolition of the temple cult, after which the true cult is underlined in ch. 4.

21. Cf. R. Kieffer, *Nytestamentlig teologi* (Lund: Berlings, 2nd edn, 1979), pp. 97-98: 'Det [Logos] tar sin boning blandt människorna, såsom Guds närvaro under ökenvandringen uppenbarade sig kring förbundsstället.'

22. See A.M. Schwemer, 'Gott als König und seine Königsherrschaft in den Sabbatsliedern aus Qumran', in M. Hengel and A.M. Schwemer (eds.), *Königsherrschaft Gottes und himmlischer Kult* (WUNT, 21; Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1991), pp. 45-118.

see the kingdom of God is to see the kingly glory of the incarnate Logos as the site of the true temple and thus the place for God's kingdom. Just as the Logos comes from above, so is the condition for seeing the kingdom of God, that is, Jesus as king, a birth from above, of water and Spirit (cf. 1QS 4.21). Undoubtedly the evangelist has baptism in mind as the entry into the true temple.

It is thus quite natural that after the question of entry into the kingdom of God, understood as the true temple, has been dealt with, the subject of the site of the true temple and true worship is raised in the subsequent conversation with the Samaritan woman.

d. *The Conversation with the Samaritan Woman* (4.4-26)

In her conversation with Jesus the Samaritan woman underlines the disagreement between the Samaritans and the Jews about Garizim or Jerusalem being the right place for worship (4.20). To these alternatives Jesus stresses that the time is coming when they will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. What is important is not the geographical location of the worship but its character: it will be in spirit and truth (4.21, 23).

Entry into the kingdom of God is through 'water and spirit', therefore the question of the place of worship becomes a question of its character, in 'spirit and truth'. The background for this lies in the understanding of God: 'God is spirit, and his worshippers must worship in spirit and truth' (4.24), that is, through the incarnate Logos. In the light of 1.14, 18, 51; 3.19, 21 Jesus' answer states that it is he who is the place of worship, meaning that the place and nature of the worship coincide. Jesus thus reveals himself as being the true temple, as the one in whom the true worship can become reality.²³

e. *The Rejection of the Logos Revelation* (12.37-43)

John's Gospel links the hardening of the people's hearts in Isa. 6.10, which in the synoptic Gospels is related to Jesus' parables (Mk 4.10-12

23. Brooke raises the possibility that the use of the Jacob traditions in Jn 4.5-6.12 may be linked to CD 6.4-11, since the well mentioned in Num. 21.18 is here interpreted as the Law, which is identified with the covenant that the faithful will keep in accordance with Deut. 7.9 and which may include the covenant with Jacob at Bethel (cf. the references to Deut. 7.9 in 11QT 2.7-11 and to the covenant at Bethel in 11QT 29.7-10). Even though Brooke's thesis is ingenious, I doubt whether it is tenable (*Temple Scroll*, p. 191).

par.), to Jesus' signs (Jn 12.37). However, the interesting point is that John combines Isa. 53.1 with Isa. 6.10, and expressly states that Isaiah saw his glory (12.38-41). It is thus possible, as mentioned, that the evangelist is asserting that it was the pre-existent Logos that Isaiah saw in the heavenly temple. When the angels praise Yahweh's glory filling all the earth, they are also praising the pre-existent Logos, which is the means of creation (cf. 1.1-5). This praise of God's kingly glory which is so prominent in Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice, must therefore, according to John's Gospel, also include the pre-existent Logos in the heavenly temple. As the incarnate Logos he is the presence of God's heavenly temple and thus God's glory in the world. It is this presence that Jesus' signs reveal, and it is this revelation that is rejected.

f. *The Conversation between Jesus and Pilate* (18.33-38)

In the conversation between Jesus and Pilate the theme of kingship is resumed following its first appearance in Nathanael's confession (1.49) and its second in the conversation between Jesus and Nicodemus (3.1-21). The conversation between Jesus and Pilate is about Jesus' status as a king and his kingdom. Jesus impresses upon Pilate that his kingdom is not of this world, and that his kingly mission consists of witnessing to the truth (18.36-37). We are hereby returned to the prologue and the incarnate Logos as the revelation full of grace and truth (1.14, 17), to Nathanael's confession of Jesus as the Son of God and the king of Israel (1.49) and to Jesus' words about the kingdom of God (3.3, 5). But at the same time we are also directed to Jesus' promise of the eschatological realization of the Bethel tradition in Jn 1.51. The status of the temple and the power of the king are thus identical, just as the heavenly temple in the Songs of the Sabbath is the place where God's kingdom is praised.

In this context Fragment 491 from Cave 4 may be of some interest. Its reconstruction is admittedly disputed, but according to M. Smith there is talk of a human person's exaltation to God's throne. Among other things the speaker says of himself.

[The status of a holy temple,] not to be violated,
has been attributed to me, and who can compare with me in glory?²⁴

24. M. Smith, 'Two Ascended to Heaven—Jesus and the Author of 4Q 491', in J.H. Charlesworth (ed.), *Jesus and the Dead Sea Scrolls* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), pp. 290-301 (296).

In John's Gospel Jesus is the pre-existent Logos, incarnated into and exalted out of this world. As such he is God's true temple in that he is the very revelation of God's glory as one of grace and truth. It is simultaneously a revelation of the kingdom of God and Jesus (Jn 3, 3.5). With regard to the combination of Isaiah 53 and 6 in Jn 12.38-40 we can ask whether a high priest motif is present in the Gospel's Christology, and whether there are scrolls from Qumran that can illuminate this point.

g. *Jesus as High Priest in the Light of 4QTL^{Levi}*

Some of the fragments of Levi's Testament found in Cave 4 might suggest that the Lord's suffering servant from Isaiah 53 is interpreted as the high priest and temple builder of the end of the days.²⁵ Just as quantitatively the temple motif is not dominant in John's Gospel, so it is with the priest motif. There are however priestly features: Jesus is the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world (1.29, 36). Peter confesses him as 'the Holy One of God' (6.69). Jesus prays to God to sanctify his disciples in the truth, that is, in his words (17.17), and Jesus sanctifies himself for them, so that they may be sanctified in the truth (17.19). Jesus' undergarment remains undivided (19.23-24), and his bones are not broken, but a spear is stuck into his side, from which blood and water flow (19.34). The importance of these features for the evangelist is clear since they point to the fulfillment of Scripture (Ps. 22.19, 34.21; Zech. 12.10).

The interpretation of the 'blood and water' is, of course, disputed, but the concept of a cultic atonement cannot be excluded. In that case Jesus is the eschatological high priest whose death brings about this atonement.

R.E. Brown points out that Zech. 12.10 ('They will look on me, the one they have pierced') has been related to the promise of living water which will flow from Jerusalem according to Zech. 14.8, which in turn draws on Ezek. 47.1-12 and the spring that pours from the temple in

25. Cf. G. J. Brooke, '4QTestament of Levi and the Messianic Servant High Priest', in M.C. de Boer (ed.), *From Jesus to John: Essays on Jesus and New Testament Christology in Honour of Marinus de Jonge* (SNTS, 84: Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993), pp. 83-100.

Jerusalem. Lastly Zech. 12.10 has also been linked to the Lord's suffering servant in Isa. 53.5, 10. The last mentioned would fit in with the role that the Isaiah text plays in Jn 12.37-43. It is not impossible therefore that there is a priestly element in John's Christology.²⁶

If John's use of the Jewish festival calendar to structure his Gospel is meant to emphasize that it is not Jerusalem but Jesus who is the true place of worship, it is certainly worth noting that the Passover is mentioned no fewer than three times. On the first occasion Jesus points to himself as the true temple (2.13-22), on the second he points to himself as the true bread that has come down from heaven (6.4, 32-33, 35, 50-51) and on the third he is exalted to the Father (13.1).

Jesus is thus temple, king, priest and atoning victim. On this point there is a line to the apocalypse of John (e.g. Rev. 1.5-7). It is particularly remarkable that there is no temple in the New Jerusalem, for 'the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple' (Rev. 21.22). It is thus worth considering whether the study of the Qumran writings can also help to cast some light on the relation between the Gospel of John and the apocalypse of John.²⁷

4. *Background for the Kinship between the Qumran Scrolls and John's Gospel*

G.J. Brooke presents a possible explanation for the similarities between the Temple Scroll and John's Gospel in that the Jews of Essene character, who have linked their hopes to a temple reform of Herod's temple building, have been disappointed, and have instead joined the Christian community.²⁸ This is a possibility, but the more likely explanation is that Jesus' first disciples, according to John's Gospel, were disciples of John the Baptist. Whether or not John the Baptist himself was connected to the Qumran community, his baptismal activity seems to imply

a critical attitude to the temple institution. I therefore venture the possibility that he had knowledge of some of the same traditions that we meet in the Qumran writings and that via those of his disciples who joined the Christian community these have been related to Jesus and reinterpreted in that light.

5. *The Function of the Temple Metaphor in John's Gospel*

Finally let us turn to the question of the temple metaphor and its function in John's Gospel. How are we to explain that a close reading of the Fourth Gospel shows how the temple metaphor plays a central role, whereas in a normal reading of the Gospel it in no way dominates? Part of the explanation may be the actual situation in which the Gospel was written. The temple has gone and there is now a confrontation between the Pharisee-dominated synagogue and the Johannine community. The synagogue invokes Moses' authority, while John's Gospel maintains that the true content of the Law, its pre-existent reality, has been revealed in Jesus Christ (1.17).

But on the question of God's revelation the temple metaphor makes its presence felt, since the revelation of God's glory is linked to it and can therefore be used by John to emphasize that Jesus is the revelation of God's true nature: God is spirit (4.24). So Jesus also reveals the entry to God's glory (water and spirit, 3.3) and the true place of worship: in spirit and truth (4.14), which is himself.

Jesus is the one on whom the Spirit came down and remained (1.33). He is therefore the place for the revelation of God's glory, God's true temple (2.21-22). In the confrontation with the world that makes the dualist language topical, the community behind John's Gospel experiences that it has peace in the incarnated and exalted Logos as the true temple (16.33), where the Spirit is present. Because the temple as the place of revelation is a common point of reference for the Johannine community and the Jewish synagogue, the temple metaphor is meaningful both internally, to express the Johannine community's self-understanding, and externally, in the confrontation with the synagogue, just as it was for the Qumran community in its confrontation with the temple authorities in Jerusalem (cf. IQS 8.5-10; 9.3-6; 4QFlor 1.2-7).

We can perhaps say that the temple metaphor in John's Gospel constitutes a depth structure that only comes to the fore in brief glimpses on the surface of the writing, but which nonetheless can be proved to be

26. R.E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John* (AB, 29A; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1970), p. 955.

27. On the question of the relation between the Qumran writings and the Johannine apocalypse see H. Ulfsgård, 'Uppenbarelseboken och "Sabbarsofferslagerna" från Qumran och Masada', in L. Færum and M. Müller (eds.), *Tro og historie* (Festschrift Niels Hyldahl: Forum for bibelsk eksegesis, 7; Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanums Forlag, 1996), pp. 285-300.

28. Brooke, *Temple Scroll*, pp. 191-94.

a fundamental element in the work. Even if there should be no connecting lines between the Qumran scrolls and John's Gospel, the study of these writings can thus help to draw attention to such depth structures in John's Gospel and thus to its deep anchorage in the Old Testament Jewish tradition.

DEUS SEMPER MAIOR? ON GOD IN THE JOHANNINE WRITINGS

Birger Olsson*

The one who actually makes it difficult for us with any great precision to describe God in the Johannine writings is Jesus. His words and deeds in these texts, and others' testimony about him (not least the author's) all add to complicate matters. At the same time it is Jesus who reveals God according to Johannine thought (Jn 1.18). The Gospel of John is in form a narrative about Jesus, but its contents are in fact a narrative about what God has done and continues to do through Jesus.¹ The First Epistle of John presents God simply as someone alongside Jesus. It is thus Johannine *Christology* that in many ways characterizes Johannine *theology*, if we take the term in its strict sense. 'Seit dem Christus-geschehen sind Theo-logie und Christologie nicht voneinander zu trennen'² (since the Christ event Theo-logy and Christology can not be treated independently).

We may also hesitate to describe God in the Johannine writings because we quite simply do not know how to go about the matter. There is a number of books about Johannine Christology, but no really thorough presentation of God in the Johannine writings. The accounts offered in theologies of the New Testament, in monographs and in articles, are all very different.³

* This article has been translated by James Starr.

1. Emphasized by F.J. Moloney, 'Johannine Theology', in R.E. Brown, J.A. Fitzmyer and R.E. Murphy (eds.), *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1990), pp. 1417-26.

2. W. Thüsing, 'Das Gottesbild des Neuen Testaments', in J. Raetzinger (ed.), *Die Frage nach Gott* (OD, 56; Freiburg: Herder, 1972), pp. 59-86 (59).

3. According to E. Malatesta, *John's Gospel 1920-1965: A Cumulative and Classified Bibliography of Books and Periodical Literature on the Fourth Gospel* (Anbib, 32; Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1967); and G. van Belle, *Johannine*