

BLACK'S
NEW TESTAMENT COMMENTARIES

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO SAINT JOHN

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 HENDRICKSON
PUBLISHERS

 continuum
LONDON • NEW YORK

First published 2005
Continuum
The Tower Building, 11 York Road, London SE1 7NX
15 East 26th Street, New York, NY 10010

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Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., Edition
Printed by arrangement with Continuum

Hendrickson Publishers ISBN 1-56563-401-2
Continuum ISBN HB 0-8264-7943-X
Continuum ISBN PB 0-8264-7139-0

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Printed in the United States of America

First printing — November 2005

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Lincoln, Andrew T.

[Commentary on the Gospel according to St. John]
The Gospel according to Saint John / Andrew T. Lincoln.
p. cm.—(Black's New Testament commentaries ; 4)

Originally published: A commentary on the Gospel according to
St. John. London : Continuum, 2005.

Includes bibliographical references and indexes.

ISBN 1-56563-401-2 (alk. paper)

1. Bible. N.T. John—Commentaries. I. Title. II. Series.

BS2615.53.L56 2005

226.5'077—dc22

2005025970

British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

Typeset by Fakenham Photosetting Limited, Fakenham, Norfolk

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following Jesus' departure, his disciples may not have his physical presence with them but they have his clear instruction about how to live: **I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. As I have loved you, so you also should love one another.** The commandment is not new because it differs in content from what can be found in the Jewish Scriptures (cf. Lev. 19.18) but because it forms part of the new revelation and the new order that has come with Jesus. It is therefore grounded in his own love for his followers, which entails his death, and it is shaped by and participates in the relationship of love between Jesus and the Father. In particular, Jesus' love for his own (cf. 13.1) serves as the foundation and model for his disciples' love for one another. After Jesus' departure, the carrying out of this command will be the sign of the continuation of his cause and his mission in the world: **By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.** The identifying mark of the community Jesus leaves behind is to be the mutual love of its members.

36–8 In the dialogue between Peter and Jesus that now follows, Peter ignores the challenge of these instructions in order to return to what Jesus has said previously and to press the more immediate question, **Lord, where are you going?** Jesus does not answer this question directly. It will be taken up in the exchange with Thomas in 14.5–6. He focuses instead on Peter's present inability to go with him – **you cannot follow me now, but you will follow later.** Peter's response, though still uncomprehending, does at least recognize that death may be entailed – **Lord, why can I not follow you now? I will lay down my life for you.** It becomes clear at this point that this is a Johannine version of traditional Synoptic material (cf. Mark 14.29–31 par.). In the Synoptics Peter talks about dying with Jesus and this comes after the prediction of his denials. Here in the Fourth Gospel it comes before the prediction and is formulated in more characteristically Johannine terms, as it takes up the language of laying down one's life for others, already employed by Jesus for the noble shepherd and for himself in 10.11, 17–18 and occurring again in 15.13. Ironically, then, in asserting he will lay down his life for Jesus, Peter is depicted as believing himself capable of the sort of love just depicted in v. 34, the love Jesus has for his followers. He has not understood the crucial distinction between 'now' and 'later' in Jesus' words. Not until Jesus' hour has been completed and his love demonstrated in death will Peter have the resources for living out Jesus' model (cf. 21.18–19). Not only that, but his lack of resources is about to be woefully exposed, as Jesus now tells him: **Truly, truly, I say to you, the cock will not crow before you deny me three times.** Again, the double Amen introduction signals a solemn pronouncement rooted in the tradition. The version of the prediction found in Mark 14.30 and Matt. 26.34 is introduced by a single Amen formula. Whereas Mark's prediction and its later fulfillment have the cock crowing twice, Matthew and Luke (cf. 22.34) have a single crowing in

13.31–14.31 JESUS' FAREWELL DISCOURSE (PART ONE)
both prediction and fulfillment. John's version follows Matthew or combines Mark and Luke. In the context of the narrative as a whole the prediction and its later fulfillment (cf. 18.17, 25–7) serve to underline further the reliability of Jesus' words.

14.1 The imperatives here set the tone for the body of this first half of the discourse. Its message is to be one of reassurance – **Do not let your hearts be troubled** – but also one that demands full belief – **You believe in God; believe also in me.** The rest of the discussion will elaborate on the relation between Jesus and God in such a way as to show why having faith in God entails having faith in Jesus as the one whom God has sent.

2–4 The reassurance that now follows takes up the traditional language of Jewish and early Christian eschatology: **In my Father's house there are many dwelling places.** Despite 'my Father's house' serving as a reference to the Jerusalem temple in 2.16, there is little warrant for finding here either a reference to rooms in the heavenly temple or to the believing community as a spiritual temple. The imagery is more general and taken from apocalyptic writings about the afterlife, cf. especially 1 *Enoch* 39.4–8, which speaks of 'the dwelling-places of the holy, and the resting-places of the righteous' in heaven, which was pictured as God's house. **If there were not, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you?** When has Jesus told them this? Some avoid this question by offering a different translation – 'If there were not, I would have told you. For I go to prepare a place for you.' But the first sentence of this rendering reads very strangely after Jesus' announcement, and the logic of the connective 'for', which begins the second sentence, is by no means clear. The first translation is to be preferred syntactically, even if it means accepting there is no clear answer to the question raised by its own question. The closest parallel earlier in the narrative is 12.26, where Jesus says that where he is, there will his servant also be, but this requires a major inference in order to find the notion of a place being prepared. An alternative is to hold that the evangelist intends a reference to a traditional saying known to his readers but not included in the narrative. In any case, this announcement now answers Peter's question from 13.36 about where Jesus is going. He is departing to be with his Father in heaven and this will be beneficial to the disciples because he will prepare places for them there. What is more, he will ensure they take up those places – **And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am you also may be.** The language of Jesus coming again and taking believers to be with him is that of early Christian imminent expectation. Mark's apocalyptic discourse speaks of the Son of Man coming and gathering the elect (13.26; cf. Matt. 24.30–1) and Paul in 1 Thess. 4.15–17 awaits the coming of the Lord, which will result in

believers being with the Lord for ever. The Fourth Gospel here follows the pattern of Jewish thought, in which the benefits of the age to come are reserved and guaranteed in heaven for the righteous in the present until the eschaton, and of its Christian adaptation, whereby it is the exaltation of Christ to heaven that secures such benefits until the parousia. Some scholars suggest that the eschatological perspective has already been reinterpreted in these verses so that the reference is to what happens at believers' deaths or to a spiritual relation with Christ after his exaltation. It is more likely, however, that, as with the language of resurrection of the dead and judgement in 5.24–9, traditional future eschatology and a more realized version have been juxtaposed. Here a reference to the parousia and its consequences for believers is maintained (cf. also 21.22–3), but its formulation already contains hints of the reinterpretation of the notions of Christ's coming and of his dwelling together with believers that will be developed later in this chapter. In v. 23, in particular, the same term used here, 'dwelling place' (μονή), refers no longer to a heavenly location but to a presence with believers.

In any case, the statement here serves to develop Jesus' answer to Peter in 13.36. The disciples cannot follow Jesus in his departure to heaven and the Father immediately but they will follow later when Jesus returns for them at the parousia. Not unnaturally, on the basis of what he has said, Jesus adds, **And you know the way to where I am going**, presumably referring to his statement about his coming and taking the disciples with him.

5–6 At this point Thomas, rather than Peter, becomes the representative of the totally uncomprehending disciples with his assertion that they do not know where Jesus is going and so cannot know the way. This is the foil for Jesus' further explanation by means of an 'I Am' saying – **I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except by me**. In a first-century Jewish context this wide-ranging and exclusive claim to embody the avenue to the Father stands over against claims that would have been made for Torah. The Scriptures held that the law provided the way (cf. e.g. Pss. 86.11; 119.30) and the community at Qumran, on the basis of its observance of the law, called itself 'the Way' (cf. 1QS 8.12–16; 9.17–18; CD 1.3). Jesus' statement reiterates in different imagery that of 10.9 – 'I am the gate. Whoever enters through me will be saved . . . ' – and the prologue has made a similar claim for him in contrast to the law in 1.17–18. Because of the preceding discussion in 13.36–14.4, Jesus' claim to be the way is the primary one and the claims to be the truth and the life clarify how and why he is the way. He is the way to the Father because he is the truth as the revelation of God. His mission has as its purpose to bear witness to the truth (cf. 18.37), and his life, death, resurrection and exaltation embody that truth. Jesus is the way

to the Father because he is the life as the means of participating in the life of God. Again, his mission has as its purpose to bring life (cf. 10.10), and the incarnation of the Logos in whom was life (1.4) is the embodiment of that life (cf. also 11.25). That Jesus alone is the means of access to the Father was a key claim for Johannine Christians in the conflict with the synagogue, but it was one that would also have been upheld over against all rival claims in the Graeco-Roman world to mediate the divine. Its exclusivity is rooted in the claims of Jewish monotheism. In Isa. 43.11, for example, there is no Saviour other than the God who is identified as I Am, and therefore no salvation apart from this God.

7–9 The development of the thought of Jesus' unique mediation of the Father takes up themes from earlier in the narrative. **If you have known me, you will know my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him**. On Jesus' mediation of knowledge of the Father, see 8.19; 10.14, 15, 38; and on his mediation of the vision of the Father, see 1.18; 5.37–8; 6.46; 8.38. The first part of the declaration is similar to what has been said to Jesus' opponents; the second part places the disciples in a different and privileged position. 'From now on', from the completion of Jesus' hour, their relation to the Father will be one of authentic knowledge and sight. Philip, with his dull-witted request for what Jesus has explicitly said to be already granted, now becomes the foil for the expansion of this theme. He is rebuked for his lack of recognition of Jesus, despite the time he has spent with him, and Jesus spells out what should have been obvious – **The one who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'?** This high estimate of Jesus' identity is related to another major Johannine motif – its Christological elaboration on the Jewish notion of authorized agency, whereby the one who is sent represents completely the one who sends. Since Jesus is the one whom the Father has sent, in seeing him one sees the Father.

10–11 Indeed the relationship between Jesus and the Father is such that Jesus can say, **I am in the Father and the Father is in me**, and assert as a consequence that his words are the Father's words and his works are the Father's works. These are by now familiar themes. On the mutual indwelling of Jesus and the Father, see 10.30, 38; on Jesus speaking the Father's words, see 7.16–17; 8.26–8; 12.49–50; and on Jesus doing the Father's works, see 5.17–20, 36; 9.4; 10.37–8. In fact, the exhortation to the disciples – **Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me. If not, believe because of the works themselves** – is formulated in the same way as the challenge issued to Jesus' opponents in 10.38. As has been observed, in a number of places in the farewell discourse the disciples, despite their insider status, are, because of their lack of understanding, temporarily placed in the same situation as that of

outsiders during the public ministry. This is not dissimilar to the depiction of the disciples in Mark, where their failure to understand earns them a rebuke couched in the same terms as were earlier employed for outsiders (Mark 8.17–21; cf. 4.11–12).

12 In the next breath, however, their belief is assumed and they are told that Jesus' departure will put them in the position of being able to continue Jesus' mission by performing the same sort of works as he has done: **Truly, truly, I say to you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and will do greater ones than these, because I am going to the Father.** Both this verse and the following verses about prayer take up Synoptic material. The double Amen formulation again signals a saying from the tradition. In Mark 11.22–3 (cf. also Matt. 21.21) Jesus tells the disciples, as he has just done here, to have faith and promises in an Amen saying that this will enable them to do difficult or seemingly impossible things – 'Have faith in God. Truly I tell you, if you say to this mountain, "Be taken up and thrown into the sea," and if you do not doubt in your heart, but believe what you say will come to pass, it will be done for you.' The works promised in the Johannine version are acts, like those of Jesus, which display the character and power of God. They can be described as greater, presumably not because they are more astounding, but both because they will be done after the events of the hour and are therefore able to reveal the completed story of God's dealings with the world through Jesus, and because they will extend further, making the life and judgement of God known throughout the world. In 5.20 Jesus had earlier talked of his greater works in terms of providing eschatological life and judgement, and the task to which the disciples will be commissioned in 20.23 involves pronouncing a realized judgement of either the forgiveness or the retention of sins.

13–14 Just as the Father's works are done through Jesus, so Jesus' works will be done through the disciples and this will be made possible through their prayers: **And whatever you ask in my name I will do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask me for anything in my name, I will do it.** This is a Johannine elaboration of the verse that follows the Markan passage just cited – 'whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours' (Mark 11.24; cf. also Matt. 21.22). Similar teaching is found in Luke 11.9–10 – 'Ask, and it will be given you . . . For everyone who asks receives' (cf. also Matt. 7.7–8). In contrast to the Synoptics, in the Fourth Gospel no instruction about prayer is given to the disciples during Jesus' public mission. All the teaching is clustered in the farewell discourse, underlining that this is an activity that will be especially important for disciples in the period after Jesus' departure. The repeated assertion 'I will do . . .' makes

clear that it is Jesus who will be at work in the mission of his followers and the repeated phrase 'in my name' indicates that the praying that results in their works will be carried out by the disciples as the authorized representatives of Jesus. For this reason an unconditional response is linked to such prayer. It will be answered because it will represent Jesus, who is completely in line with God's will. The prayer of Jesus that will follow in chapter 17 provides a model for what it is to pray in his name. 'Whatever you ask', then, in effect means whatever the disciples ask in line with Jesus' prayer, because this represents what he stands for and what his mission in the world entails. The continuity of believers' activity in prayer with the mission of Jesus is further seen in that the purpose of Jesus' response to such praying – 'so that the Father may be glorified in the Son' – is the same as the goal of his mission (cf. 7.18; 11.4; 12.28; 13.31–2; 17.1).

15–17 If the first section of the body of this first part of the discourse has stressed belief as the necessary response of the disciples (cf. vv. 1, 8–10), now the second section emphasizes the response of love (cf. vv. 15, 21, 23–4, 28). To love Jesus is shown to involve keeping his words or commands. Here the focus is on the latter – **If you love me, you will keep my commandments.** A response of love for Jesus will result in obedience to his commands and at the same time that obedience will be an indicator of whether genuine love is present. Talking of Jesus' farewell instructions as his commandments may well be meant to recall the Mosaic law as the summation of the divine commandments and to suggest Jesus' teaching as the new norm for disciples. The commandments immediately in view are to wash one another's feet (13.14–15) and to love one another (13.34), though the command to believe in Jesus (14.1) should not be ignored. In what follows those who love Jesus in this way are made a number of promises. The first is **I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate to be with you for ever, the Spirit of truth.** This constitutes the first occurrence in the narrative of the term *παράκλητος* as a designation of the Spirit. It will be found again in 14.26, 15.26 and 16.7. Its only other use in the New Testament is in 1 John 2.1, where it refers to Christ. The term has a clear primary meaning in Greek – advocate in a legal context (*advocatus* is the Latin equivalent of the Greek term) – and it was a loan word in Hebrew and Aramaic with precisely this meaning. This need not be taken to imply that 'Paraclete' was the designation for a professional legal office. Instead a person of influence, a patron or sponsor, could be called into a court to speak in favour of a person or their cause, thereby providing advocacy. The most likely background for the term is in the Jewish Scriptures and Second Temple Judaism with their interest in intercessory figures who functioned as advocates, sometimes in the heavenly court, and whose advocacy could sometimes take the form of counter-accusation. Some dismiss the trans-

lation 'Advocate' on the grounds that the Paraclete is a prosecuting rather than defending counsel in the Fourth Gospel. But this is to ignore the fact that the Paraclete does have the role of speaking in favour of Jesus and his cause. He witnesses about and glorifies Jesus (15.26; 16.14). The Paraclete also has an advocacy role in relation to the disciples, aiding the disciples in their witness, since his witness takes place through theirs (15.26–7). This role of the Spirit is to be found already in the context of trials in the Synoptic tradition (cf. Mark 13.9–11; Matt. 10.17–20; Luke 12.11–12) and it may well be that precisely such a forensic function in the tradition was the catalyst for the fourth evangelist to adopt the title 'Advocate' for the Spirit. The objection about the Paraclete having a prosecuting function also ignores the fluid and paradoxical characteristics in the presentation of the protagonists in scriptural lawsuits and here in John, in which the witness for the defence can also be the prosecutor and indeed the judge. Those who prefer to interpret the title 'Paraclete' as exhorter, encourager or consoler in terms of the use of *παράκλησις* and *παράκλησις*, found elsewhere in the New Testament but not in this Gospel, ignore the fact that it is precisely the appellation *παράκλητος* and not the verb 'to exhort' or the noun 'exhortation' that is used of the Spirit and his role in this narrative. To be sure, the contexts in the Fourth Gospel qualify and add to this primary meaning of advocate, so that the Spirit's forensic role also encourages and consoles the disciples and helper and teacher can be seen as supplementary roles, but advocate in a trial remains the core referent of the title 'Paraclete'.

The one whom the Father will give to the disciples is *another* Paraclete. This underscores the narrative's presentation of Jesus. His mission also can be seen to involve advocacy. Both his earlier witness in the public ministry and his later witness before Pilate are that of a Paraclete, advocating and prosecuting both God's and his own case in the trial of truth with the world. In the case of the man who was born blind, which has a forensic context, Jesus comes to the aid of the man, both defending him and accusing his judges (cf. 9.35–10.6). At the same time, the description 'another Advocate' means that the Spirit is Jesus' designated successor who will continue the forensic role of Jesus in the ongoing trial after the glorification of Jesus. The gift of this new Advocate is to the advantage of the disciples in the period after Jesus' departure, because he will be with them for ever in a way that Jesus in his physical presence could not be.

The synonym for the Advocate is 'the Spirit of truth' (cf. 15.26; also 16.13). It may well be that the contrast drawn in Second Temple Jewish writings between the spirit of truth and the spirit of deceit or wickedness has contributed to this formulation (cf. *Test. Jud.* 20.1–5; 1QS 3.18–19; 4.23), but frequently in these traditions the two spirits are the equivalent to the good and evil inclinations within humanity, whereas here the Spirit is clearly the Spirit of God, who is not conceived of as already within

humans. In the Fourth Gospel truth is the true judgement about God and God's relation to the world that is embodied in Jesus, and it is that which is at stake in the trial, in which Jesus' mission plays the crucial role. Just as Jesus is the witness to this truth (18.37) as he embodies it (14.6), so the Spirit as the successor of Jesus is the revealer of the same truth in the continuing trial.

Just as there has been a difference between the response of the world (humanity in its alienation from and hostility to God) and that of the disciples to Jesus, so there is a difference with respect to the Spirit, **whom the world cannot receive because it neither sees nor knows him**. The world cannot receive the Spirit, otherwise it would cease to be the world in its Johannine sense. It was previously unable to receive (1.11; 3.11; 5.43; 8.43; 12.48), see (9.41; 12.39–40) and know Jesus (1.10; 8.14, 19; 9.29). The disciples, on the other hand, are depicted as those who already **know him because he remains with you and will be in you**.

18–20 Discussion of the plight of followers who are left by their teachers in terms of being orphans can be found elsewhere (cf. Plato, *Phaedo* 116a; Epictetus, *Dis.* 3.24.14–15). Jesus, however, gives his disciples the assurance, **I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you. In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me, because I live and you will live**. The earlier reference to Jesus' coming in 14.3 had in view the parousia, but this return, unlike the public parousia at the end of history, is one not visible to the world, and the events described will take place 'in a little while' and so are associated with Jesus' more immediate departure (cf. 13.33). The most natural reference, therefore, is to Jesus' manifestation of himself to his disciples after the resurrection, the event which demonstrates that he lives and whose consequence for believing followers is that they will live (cf. 11.25–6). The focus of the assurance provided by this return from the dead, however, is not on external appearances but on internal relationships – **On that day (this phrase has reference to the post-resurrection period in 16.23, 26) you will know that I am in my Father and you are in me and I in you**. Jesus' exaltation to the Father confirms his relationship with the Father as one of indwelling (cf. v. 10) but his relationship with believers will also be one of mutual indwelling.

21 What is more, this relationship is not confined to the few followers who saw Jesus after his resurrection but involves a self-manifestation of Jesus for all who love him and keep his commandments – **The one who has my commandments and keeps them is the one who loves me. The one who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love and reveal myself to that person**. The chain of relationships just expressed in terms of indwelling is now formulated in terms of love. Again keeping