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# **THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LAW AND LOVE IN THE GOSPEL OF JOHN**

by

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# **THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LAW AND LOVE IN THE FOURTH GOSPEL**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

It would be accepted without any dispute that love and law are two of the very important themes of the Fourth Gospel. And it is not an exaggeration to say that they have so far received scant attention in johannine research. There have been just a few works dealing with love in the Fourth Gospel and still fewer on the theme of law. Their relationship to each other is yet to be explored in a scientific manner. In this sense, the present thesis is a new venture. Taking into consideration the ever-present riddles in johannine studies, we hope that this will make a contribution to unveil the many puzzles behind the Fourth Gospel.

At the first sight, the categories of love and law may seem contradictory to each other. The very term love would evoke in many of us a feeling of warmth. The concept of love, thus, would be viewed by many as something positive. On the other hand, the concept of law may convey to many an idea of limitation or prohibition, implying authority from an external power. In this sense, law could suggest something negative.

If the ultimate aim of law is always the good of the human being, then law should be perceived as something positive. In this way, law is actually complementary to love. Thus, we find an innate relationship between the realities of love and law.

"In this sense, love and law belong together in a necessary correlation..."<sup>1</sup> This unity between love and law is very clearly demonstrated in the Bible. "Love and law are both deeply embedded in biblical faith."<sup>2</sup>

The purpose of law for the Israelites was to love God with one's whole faculties (Deut 6,5; Josh 22,5; Sir 2,15). This was the most important of all the commandments and precepts of the law.<sup>3</sup> The inseparable link between love and law in biblical faith is hereby clearly demonstrated. Law attains its meaning for the Israelites when it works for love. This relationship between love and law acquires a new, deeper dimension in the life and ministry of Jesus. The Synoptic Gospels present Jesus summarising the whole Torah or law in the love of God and the love of neighbor (Matt 22,37-40; Mark 12,28-31; Luke 10,25-28). Though love of neighbor had its importance in the Torah (Lev 19,18), yet it was not on a par with the commandment to love God.<sup>4</sup>

In the Synoptic Gospels, Jesus is presented as raising the commandment to love neighbor to almost equal importance to the commandment to love God. Though

<sup>1</sup> Alan T. DAVIES, "Love and Law in Judaism and Christianity," *Anglican Theological Review* 64 (1982): 454.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Aelred LACOMARA, "Deuteronomy and the Farewell Discourse (Jn 13,31-16,33)," *CBQ* 36 (1974): 73.

<sup>4</sup> G.A.F.KNIGHT, *Law and Grace: Must a Christian Keep the Law of Moses?* (London: SCM Press, 1962), 105.

the Deuteronomic commandment could be explained in terms of loving God and loving neighbor<sup>5</sup> the novelty of the Synoptic world view remains. We are well aware that the New Testament tradition upholds the inseparability of the love of God and the love of neighbor (1 John 4,20-21). Paul goes to the extent of saying that the whole law is summarised in loving the neighbor as oneself (Rom 13,8-10; Gal 5,14). His emphasis on love even above faith and hope (1 Cor 13,13) expresses the value the early Christians attached to love in their lives. Love was the fulfillment of law (Rom 13,10).

The johannine literature, especially the Gospel and the Epistles, presents us with one of the best theological expressions of the concept of love in the New Testament.<sup>6</sup> The source of love is God who is Love Himself (1 John 4,7-8). "God loved the world so much that He sent His only son into the world" (John 3, 16). The uniqueness of johannine love reveals Jesus as the only mediator of his Father's divine love.<sup>7</sup> Unlike the Synoptic Gospels, there is no discussion about the greatest commandment in the Fourth Gospel. Jesus gives a "new" commandment to his disciples to love one another as he loved (John 13,34).

<sup>5</sup> Lothar PERLITT, "Evangelium und Gesetz im Deuteronomium," *The Law in the Bible and Its Environment*, ed. Timo VEIJOLA (Helsinki: The Finnish Exegetical Society; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1990), 32.

<sup>6</sup> A. FEUILLET, *Le Mystère de l'amour divin dans la théologie johannique* (Paris: J. Gabalda, 1972), 5.

<sup>7</sup> STAUFFER, "ἀγάπῃ, ἀγάπη, ἀγάπητο" in *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament*, Vol.1, ed. Gerhard KITTEL (Stuttgart:Kohlhammer,1949), 32.

What does this “newness” consist of? The newness is interpreted by some in connection with the law of the Israelites, the Torah, as a whole, which has now become an “old law” or in particular to one of the precepts of the law to love the neighbor (Lev 19,18).<sup>8</sup> Others would rule out any connection with the Old Testament.<sup>9</sup> However, the newness of the commandment of Jesus to love means a new beginning. Newness certainly implies a contrast to the old way of living, which was based on the vision of the Law of Moses where, for the people of Israel, the commandments of God were made manifest.

Most of the first part of the Fourth Gospel, until the end of Chapter 12, reveals the struggle of the Jews with Jesus over the concept of law. The fact that the theme of love dominates the final part of the Gospel is an indication of Jesus' inauguration of the new way of life which is permeated by love.<sup>10</sup> It is not a coincidence that the Fourth Gospel is structured in such a manner. It illustrates the reality that for Jesus the governing principle of life is love which is the new view of the law for the community of his followers. That is the legacy which Jesus left to his disciples.

To understand the relationship of Jesus' commandment of love (John 13,34;

<sup>8</sup> Ceslas SPICQ, *Agapè dans le Nouveau Testament*, Études bibliques, vol. III. (Paris: J.Gabalda, 1959), 172.

<sup>9</sup> Raymond BROWN, *The Gospel According to John XIII-XXI*, vol.II, The Anchor Bible 29A (New York: Doubleday, 1970), 612-614. Victor FURNISH, *The Love Command in the New Testament* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1972), 138.

<sup>10</sup> Rudolf SMEND, Ulrich LUZ, *Gesetz* (Stuttgart: Verlag Kohlhammer, 1981), 120.

15,12.17) to law of Moses, we have to explore the meaning of these two realities the Fourth Gospel. Though love occupies a place of significance in the johannine letters too, we will restrict ourselves to the Gospel.

In this Introduction, we shall first present the state of the research on the theme of law in the Fourth Gospel, followed by the state of the research on the theme of love, and then the state of the research on the relationship between these two themes in the Fourth Gospel. After this, we shall state our Research Hypothesis and the Methodology we will follow for our study.

## **A. STATE OF THE RESEARCH**

### **1. Works on law in the Fourth Gospel**

Among the four Gospels, the term law, νόμος, is found most often (14 times) in the Fourth Gospel. It is found 9 times in Luke and 8 times in Matthew. Mark does not use the term at all. It is an indication of the importance John attaches to the reality of law in his Gospel. Thus, the theme of law plays a role of greater importance in the Fourth Gospel than it does in the Synoptic Gospels. Nevertheless, law has not occupied a place of significance in johannine research. For Rudolf Bultmann, the

law plays a "strikingly minor" role in the Fourth Gospel," a point shared by many other theologians too. It is no surprise that several theologians maintain that the place of law in the Fourth Gospel is not as central as it is in the Synoptic Gospels.<sup>12</sup> This has been more or less the accepted view among the scholars in johannine circles even now and so we find few works on law in the Fourth Gospel. That law was one of the central ideas of the Fourth Gospel was noticed as early as 1936, when Emanuel Hirsch published his book on the Fourth Gospel.<sup>13</sup> But as yet there have been only two monographs on the theme of law in the Fourth Gospel: Severino Pancaro's *The Law in the Fourth Gospel* and Markku Kotila's *Umstrittener Zeuge*. We shall deal with their monographs later.

In 1964 Dietrich Schirmer published his doctoral dissertation on the presence of juridical procedure in the Fourth Gospel, comparing it with the Jewish legislative procedure found in the Rabbinic texts. This work<sup>14</sup> concentrated on the juridical aspect of the Fourth Gospel, with less emphasis on the theological one. He took

<sup>11</sup> Rudolf BULTMANN, "Hirsches Auslegung des Johannesevangeliums," *Evangelische Theologie* 4 (1937): 128. According to Bultmann, "Aber es ist charakteristisch, dass der Begriff νόμος im 4. Evangelium eine auffallend geringe Rolle spielt." Further on page 129 he says, "Klar aber ist, dass das Thema der Gesetzesfreiheit nicht das Thema des 4. Evangeliums ist, und dass dieses dasjenige Phänomen der jüdischen Gesetzesknechtschaft, das sowohl für Jesus wie für Paulus im Blick steht, nicht berücksichtigt."

<sup>12</sup>GUTBROD, νόμος in *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament*, vol.4, ed. G.KITTEL (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1949): 1075.

<sup>13</sup> Emanuel HIRSCH, *Das vierte Evangelium in seiner ursprünglichen Gestalt verdeutscht und erklärt* (Tübingen: J.C.B.Mohr, 1936).

<sup>14</sup> D.SCHIRMER, *Rechtsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen zum Johannesevangelium* (Berlin: Ernst-Reuter Gesellschaft, 1964).

the passages of John 5,10-15; 7,31-36. 44-52; 9,8-34; 11,46-57 to discover the presence of Jewish legalistic procedure in these pericopes. The theme of law as in the Fourth Gospel was not Schirmer's concern. Our work will almost completely differ from that of Schirmer, since we aim to exegetically discover the concept of law and its relationship to love.

In 1981 Rudolf Smend and Ulrich Luz brought out their work under the title *Gesetz*.<sup>15</sup> This small volume treated the concept of law in the whole of Scripture. The concept of law in John did not occupy much space in their work, yet the discovery about the place of law in the Fourth Gospel was significant, demonstrating that law was an important theme in the Fourth Gospel: "The Law in John occupies a big and predominant place in Jesus' argument against the Jews, which takes a break in the Farewell Discourses, but it finds its culmination in the Passion Narrative."<sup>16</sup> In discussing the new commandment of Jesus in John 13,34, the authors rule out any connection with the Old Testament, while admitting that it would be inconceivable that John did not have in mind the Old Testament commandment of the love of neighbor from Lev 19,18. Only by inferring the existence of an "old" source could the authors justify the attribute of "new" to the

<sup>15</sup> Rudolf SMEND, Ulrich LUZ, *Gesetz*. 119-128. See note 10.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 120. "Das Gesetz gehört also bei Johannes hinein in die grosse, den ganzen Teil des Evangeliums dominierende, durch die Abschiedsreden (Kap.13-17) nur unterbrochene, in der Passionsgeschichte gipfelnde Auseinandersetzung Jesu mit den Juden."

commandment given by Jesus. This would also challenge the position that there is neither a direct or an indirect ethical continuity between the Old Testament Law and christian way of life which is an expression of the union of the community with Christ in faith.<sup>17</sup> The wavering position of the authors with regard to the interpretation of new commandment of Jesus is a pointer to the dilemma faced by johannine scholars on this question. Our thesis will attempt to find an answer to this riddle.

The only English language monograph on the role of law in the Fourth Gospel is the work by the Canadian theologian Severino Pancaro. His 571 page volume<sup>18</sup> investigates the reality of law in the Fourth Gospel. According to Pancaro, the condemnation of Jesus was brought about by the Jewish authorities on the accusation that he violated the law: "It is the Law which, in the eyes of the Jews, demands the condemnation of Jesus as a 'sinner' (violator of the Sabbath Law), a blasphemer, a false teacher, an enemy of the nation" (sic).<sup>19</sup> Jesus was doing just like his Father does (5,17), but in the eyes of the Jews, Jesus was a violator of the law. Jesus is above the law because he is the Son of God.<sup>20</sup> Pancaro offers a detailed discussion on the vocabulary of law in other parts of the Scripture

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 124.

<sup>18</sup> Severino PANCARO, *The Law in the Fourth Gospel: The Torah and the Gospel, Moses and Jesus, Judaism and Christianity according to John* (Leiden: E.J.Brill, 1975).

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 7-8.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 30.

including the Psalms and the Wisdom literature. He finds an interesting connection between *logos* and the whole concept of law in Deuteronomy.<sup>21</sup>

But the relationship of law to love in the Fourth Gospel is not discussed in his huge volume. While discussing the newness of Jesus' commandment in John 13,34 Pancaro rules out any connection between an Old Testament commandment like Lev 19,18 or even with the law in general.<sup>22</sup> Pancaro holds that John presents here something altogether new since the evangelist does not want to give an impression that the commandment of Jesus has anything to do with Judaism. John's intention was to keep distance between Judaism and Christianity in order to avoid conflict with the "orthodox Jews."<sup>23</sup> However, the Gospel illustrates there has been conflict and enmity between the Jews and the followers of Jesus.

Pancaro also points to the possible presentation of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel as the fulfillment of what once the Torah symbols, such as bread, water, light and life, referred to. These symbols, which once pointed to the Torah, now probably point to Jesus.<sup>24</sup> Although he discusses these symbols in relationship to Jesus, he is not

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<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 428.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 445.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 447.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 452-3.

clear on whether these symbols actually refer to Jesus Himself.<sup>25</sup> This is one of the key points which we will discuss in detail during the course of our research.

Another monograph on law is in German by Markku Kotila.<sup>26</sup> This work treats law in the Fourth Gospel from the perspective of history of Theology. Claiming his work as a unique study, he distinguishes his undertaking from that of Pancaro. However, using the literary critical method, he follows practically the similar pattern of analysis as that of Pancaro in dealing with the relevant passages. He deals with John 13,34, discussing Jesus as the giver of the new commandment or a new law.<sup>27</sup> He agrees with scholars like Segovia for whom this passage about the new commandment is a secondary redaction. He is uncertain whether the new commandment of 13,34 has any connection to the Old Testament. He takes no definite position in his argument for which he cites literary critical reasons.<sup>28</sup> He admits that it is not an impossible task, though an uneasy one, to discover the connection of the new commandment of John 13,34 to the Mosaic Law.<sup>29</sup> From the point of view of Kotila, our thesis can be described as an uphill task.

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Markku KOTILA, *Umstrittener Zeuge. Studien zur Stellung des Gesetzes in der johanneischen Theologieggeschichte* (Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia, 1988).

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 181. Refer also p.v where he presents Jesus as new lawgiver.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 191-3.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 193.

A more recent publication on law and Jesus is a monograph by Loader,<sup>30</sup> who attempts to investigate the attitude of Jesus to the law in all four Gospels. After discussing Jesus' attitude towards the law in the Synoptic Gospels, Loader turns his attention to the Fourth Gospel. He divides the twenty-one chapters of the Fourth Gospel into three divisions (1-4; 5-12; 13-21) and comes to a general conclusion of John's presentation of Jesus' attitude to the law. Loader concludes that the chief role of the law in the Fourth Gospel is bearing testimony to Jesus.<sup>31</sup> The law was given by God and this divine origin is the necessary presupposition for such an understanding that the law bears witness to Jesus.<sup>32</sup> And he rightly perceives that the key to John's understanding of Jesus' attitude towards the law is the high Christology of the Fourth Gospel. Curiously, Loader finds it problematic that the failure on the part of the Jews to understand that their Scripture points to Jesus could lead them to judgment whereas the disciples were also in the same position before the gift of the Spirit.<sup>33</sup> If Christology is the central point for John, then this problem of putting the Jews on par with the disciples of Jesus has no chance to emerge. The disciples remained faithful to Jesus in spite of their ignorance of many things, whereas the "Jews" claimed to know everything. For John, being with Jesus is also to know the Scripture, for in Jesus are the words of

<sup>30</sup> William R.G. LOADER, *Jesus' Attitude towards the Law: A Study of the Gospels* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1997).

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 483.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 449; 484; 486; 488.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 490-491.

eternal life (6,68).

Loader's analysis does not make a clear distinction between the law and the Scripture which is easily perceivable in the Gospel. The law and the Scripture are treated almost on equal footing and they are also mentioned together almost always in his conclusions.<sup>34</sup> The important distinction which is present between these two different concepts in the Fourth Gospel seems to be overlooked by him. This is a point which we shall discuss in sufficient detail in our thesis. Loader's work is a good attempt to address the topic of law in the Fourth Gospel, and yet it lacks a treatment of the concept in depth.

### ***The Need for More Research on Law in the Fourth Gospel***

As a summary, we may say that the centrality of law in the Gospel of John requires more attention in johannine research. The number of works produced on law in the Fourth Gospel is greatly disproportionate to the place of significance it occupies. As we have seen in our survey above, there have been only two monographs exclusively on law in the Fourth Gospel, neither of which explores the relationship of law to love in the Fourth Gospel.

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 483-491.

Hirsch's treatment of law is incidental to his treatment of other themes of the Gospel of John. For Smend and Luz, law in the Gospel of John is subordinate to the wider subject of law in the Bible. Schirmer confines himself to the legislative and juridical procedure in the Fourth Gospel, exploring the process which leads Jesus to his condemnation. Given the importance of law in the Fourth Gospel, there is a need for a wider and deeper scientific treatment of the theme of law in johannine studies.

The present research, while exploring the role of law in the Fourth Gospel, will also demonstrate that it is connected to the reality of love which Jesus entrusts to his followers as the New Commandment. This thesis will endeavor to show that law is not an independent reality in the Gospel of John and that the place of law in the Fourth Gospel becomes clear only in the light of its relationship to love. This does not, however, underestimate the studies which focus only on law in the Fourth Gospel. But the picture of law in the Fourth Gospel will become quite clear only when it is seen in its connection to love in the Fourth Gospel.

## 2. Works on Love In the Fourth Gospel

I would divide the works on love in the Fourth Gospel into two categories. The first category contains the works which treat the theme of love in the Fourth Gospel as only part of a wider analysis. The second category, the works which deal exclusively with love in the Fourth Gospel or the johannine literature.

In the first category is James Moffat's *Love in the New Testament*,<sup>35</sup> which presents christian love as the best example and definition for the concept of love itself. In Moffat's view, the most defining evidence of love in any realm of ideas is that which is manifested in the death of Christ. Be it Greek philosophy or Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism or even the Old Testament, the fullest concept of love and its true meaning is found only in the New Testament.<sup>36</sup> And the best illustration of love in the New Testament is found in the johannine literature.<sup>37</sup> Moffat deals with the theme of love in John in order to draw support for his effort to redefine the meaning of love in a world which more and more abuses even the very term of love. "Love is too good and great a term to be dropped, simply because it has been thus profaned in the vocabulary of religion or of theology; yet if it is to be retained it ought to be redefined..."<sup>38</sup> That was the main purpose of his

<sup>35</sup> James MOFFAT, *Love in the New Testament* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1929).

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 17-18.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

work, which aims to elevate the very term *love* and its concept to its proper dignity. Moffat's work was not a detailed study about the concept of love in johannine literature. However, it was an invitation to explore the meaning and concept of love in the New Testament and especially in johannine literature. Our work aims to explore the concept of love in the Fourth Gospel in detail.

Anders Nygren published the first volume of his widely known *Eros und Agape* in 1930.<sup>39</sup> In Nygren's view, the johannine literature captured the full meaning of love and he described John, the author, as "apostle of love."<sup>40</sup> Besides finding the whole idea of love in the New Testament summed up in the johannine literature, Nygren found the identity between God and the concept of love to be raised to a higher level.<sup>41</sup> After describing the johannine concept of love so positively, he later ascribed to it an uncertain position between "unmotivated" and "motivated" love.<sup>42</sup> Nygren's inconsistency later changed into contradiction and finally ended up with a negative assessment of johannine love that was inferior in quality to the concept of love in the Synoptic Gospels.<sup>43</sup> For Nygren, johannine love was "limited

<sup>39</sup> Anders NYGREN, *Eros und Agape. Gestaltwandlungen der christlichen Liebe* (Gütersloh: C. Bertelsmann, 1930-1937).

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 126.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 128: "all das Wesentliche, was das Neue Testament hinsichtlich des Agapegedankens enthält, uns in den johanneischen Schriften gesammelt begegnet. Aber bei Johannes werden wir durch die hier aufgestellte Identität zwischen Gott und Agape noch einen Schritt weitergeführt."

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 131.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 132.

to a narrower circle" excluding outsiders and enemies."<sup>44</sup>

Nygren's subsequent negative assessment of johannine love invited justified criticism from several quarters. One of the works produced to correct the idea of Nygren on johannine love was by Victor Warnach,<sup>45</sup> who stated: "We do not understand the motifs as does the Lutheran Bishop of Lund, who by the way, belongs to Kantian Immanentism."<sup>46</sup> Warnach's aim was not much different from that of Moffat. Warnach perceived danger to the concept of love, particularly from the theologians of Scripture.<sup>47</sup> With this purpose in mind, Warnach explores the meaning of love in Scripture from the Old Testament to different books in the New Testament. And for Warnach, too, the climax of the concept of love in Scripture is to be found in johannine literature: "It is John who emphasizes that love is full of life, as that which has its origin in God and that which becomes in us deed and truth."<sup>48</sup> Here Warnach finds John to be stronger than Paul because John's concept of love is living and creative. Although the object of study for Warnach is not only the Gospel but also the johannine epistles, we can say that Warnach's

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 133.

<sup>45</sup> Victor WARNACH, *Agape. Die Liebe als Grundmotiv der neutestamentlichen Theologie* (Düsseldorf: Patmos Verlag, 1951).

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 6: "Wir sehen demnach in den Motiven nicht wie der lutherische Bischof von Lund, der übrigens vom kantischen Immanentismus herkommt..."

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 174: "Gerade Johannes betont, dass die Agape ein lebendig aus Gott Gezeugtes ist, dass sie in uns "Tat und Wahrheit" werden will. Indessen, noch stärker als Paulus hebt er das ontische Moment in dieser Liebe hervor; sie ist ihm eine seinshafte und seinschaffende Liebe, zumal als die für uns tiefste Seins- und Wesensäußerung Gottes."

work is a good attempt to show that the johannine concept of love is not negative. This ongoing discussion in scholarly circles whether the johannine love is confined only to the believers will also be taken up in our thesis when we discuss the johannine concept of love. However, we will approach this question in a detached and objective manner with no apologetic aim.

Ceslas Spicq, too, had as one of his main aims in writing his three-volume classic on love<sup>49</sup> to correct the view of Nygren. Spicq is compelled to take up the task of analysing the concept of love in John since Nygren has seriously misunderstood it. "A.Nygren - dont l'ouvrage fait autorité, et pour ne citer que lui - s'est gravement mépris sur le sens néo-testamentaire d'agapè...Il nous a donc paru indispensable... de reprendre l'analyse..."<sup>50</sup> Spicq correctly criticises Nygren for failing to recognise the deeper meaning of the concept of love which is present throughout the New Testament. Like Warnach, Spicq maintains that only in the New Testament one can find the best definition for love. And the best expression of love in Scripture is in johannine literature. Spicq holds that the epistles and the Gospel of John were written by John, the Apostle. And contrary to Nygren, he finds johannine love universal.<sup>51</sup> The work of Spicq, though much larger in detail,

<sup>49</sup>Ceslas SPICQ, *Agapè dans le Nouveau Testament*, Études bibliques, 3 vols. (Paris: J.Gabalda, 1959).

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 21.

was not different from that of Warnach. What motivated these two authors was to respond to Nygren who had criticised the Johannine concept of love. They considered Nygren's criticism not merely as an attack on the Johannine concept of love but on the whole christian concept of love. In order to counter this attack, they began to explore the whole christian concept of love as found in the books of the New Testament. Thus their study of the concept of love in johannine literature forms only part of their investigation about love in the whole New Testament. Our thesis will concentrate on the concept of love exclusively in the Fourth Gospel. It is true that the epistles of John have such classical expressions as "Love comes from God," (1 John 4,7) "God is love" (1John 4,16) etc., yet the concept of love in the Gospel and in the epistles is not exactly the same. The Gospel and the epistles differ from each other even in the employment of the term love: the Gospel shows a preference to the active form of the verb, whereas the epistles the noun form. The epistles focus on the fraternal love of the believers for each other whereas in the Gospel more emphasis is laid on the love of the disciples for Jesus.

In 1964 two small books appeared which, in this context, warrant only passing reference. Heinrich Schlier dealt with johannine love in his treatise.<sup>52</sup> The

<sup>52</sup> Heinrich SCHLIER, *Besinnung auf das Neue Testament, Exegetische Aufsätze und Vorträge II* (Freiburg: Herder, 1964).

important contribution of Schlier is the emphasis on the relationship between the concepts of believing, recognizing and loving. According to Schlier to love is to believe and to believe is to love.<sup>53</sup> Faith and love are interchangeable. The work of Thomas Barrosse<sup>54</sup> explored the meaning of love in different books of the New Testament. For Barrosse, the manifestation of love in johannine literature is found in the passion-resurrection of Christ.<sup>55</sup> He finds the johannine concept of love similar to that of the Synoptics and Paul. He follows the traditional way of considering the whole johannine writings as one corpus.

Victor Furnish's work,<sup>56</sup> published in 1972, found the johannine Commandment to love one another as the very center of the moral and spiritual legacy of the Farewell Discourse.<sup>57</sup> Furnish does not find any connection between law in the Gospel and the Torah per se. Following the line of Raymond Brown, he would consider also "dubious" any connection between the new commandment of John 13,34 and Lev 19,18. And yet Furnish does not offer a definite explanation for the newness of the commandment.<sup>58</sup> While explaining the newness of the commandment in the christological-eschatological context in one place,<sup>59</sup> he also

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 291-293.

<sup>54</sup> Thomas BARROSSE, *Christianity, Mystery of Love* (Notre Dame: Indiana, 1964).

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 64.

<sup>56</sup> Victor Paul FURNISH, *The Love Command in the New Testament* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1972).

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 135.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 138. Footnote no. 15.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 138.

tries to find its newness in the context of the new covenant.<sup>60</sup> But he is not certain of his interpretation in the latter instance and he explains it as a hypothesis. This is indicative of the uncertainty of johannine scholars with regard to the new commandment of Jesus in John 13,34, an issue that we will address later. Furnish considers the author of the Epistles to be someone other than the Evangelist.

Finally, in this first category, we mention three other authors. PHEME PERKINS<sup>61</sup> compared the function of keeping the commandments of God in Hellenistic Judaism with the Gospel of John. For Perkins, the new commandment in John 13,34 is neither summary nor fulfillment of the law.<sup>62</sup> Her treatment of the love commandment in the Gospel of John forms only a part of her study on the New Testament love commands. WILHELM LÜTGERT, in his revised edition of an earlier 1905 work,<sup>63</sup> described the different dimensions of johannine love comparing it with the concept of love in the Synoptic Gospels.<sup>64</sup> Analysing the complementarity of Jesus' love and his call to keep his commandments, he described the disciples' obedience to Jesus as freedom. Jesus' commandment is not a compulsion. It is love and therefore freedom. "That is why love is freedom from the law."<sup>65</sup> And

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 139.

<sup>61</sup> PHEME PERKINS, *Love Commands in the New Testament* (New York: Paulist Press, 1982).

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 107.

<sup>63</sup> WILHELM LÜTGERT, *Die Liebe im Neuen Testament* (Giessen/Basel: Brunnen Verlag, 1986).

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 165.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 160: "Darum ist Liebe Freiheit vom Gesetz."

Simon Légasse,<sup>66</sup> affirming John as theologian of love, pointed out the universal aspect of love in johannine literature, particularly in the Gospel of John. He called for a correct understanding of the Fourth Gospel, which needs to take into account the historical and theological context in which it was written.

In our second category, we shall briefly survey those works which focus exclusively on love in the Fourth Gospel or the johannine literature.

Rudolf Frieling's small volume on love in the Fourth Gospel<sup>67</sup> discussed the triangular nature of love in the Fourth Gospel, which exists between the Father, the Son and the disciples. Dealing with the new commandment of John 13,34, Frieling described the newness in the nature of the commandment itself. This newness draws its origin from the giver himself who creates a new heaven and a new earth.<sup>68</sup> Describing the concept of love in the Fourth Gospel as unique, he concluded that it cannot be grasped as a single and static idea; rather, what one deals with here is a living organism.<sup>69</sup> According to Frieling, though the idea of love in 1 John comes close to that of the Gospel, yet it is not the same.<sup>70</sup> The idea

<sup>66</sup> Simon LÉGASSE, *Et qui est mon prochain? Étude sur l'agapè dans le Nouveau Testament*. (Paris: Les Editions du Cerf, 1989).

<sup>67</sup> Rudolf FRIELING, *Agape. Die göttliche Liebe im Johannesevangelium* (Stuttgart: Verlag Urachhaus, 1967).

<sup>68</sup>Ibid., 54.

<sup>69</sup>Ibid., 66: "Es ist nicht ein Gedanke, dessen man durch einen einzigen Griff bequem habhaft werden könnte. Man hat es vielmehr mit einem lebendigen Organismus zu tun."

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.: "Jedoch ist die Agape im Brief nicht so streng und ausschliesslich gefasst..."

of love in 1 John is not as strictly and exclusively formulated as in the Gospel. Besides it does not speak of the disciples' love for God.

A. Feuillet's treatise on love in johannine theology was published in 1972.<sup>71</sup> It was a detailed study on the terminology of agape and the theology of love in the Gospel of John. An ardent advocate of johannine love, Feuillet does not spare the theologians who have had a negative understanding of the concept of love in johannine theology. Calling them detractors,<sup>72</sup> he sets out the purpose of his undertaking: johannine love is gratuitous and unmotivated.<sup>73</sup> By treating the Gospel and the Epistles together, Feuillet presents John as providing the best and the last word of revelation in describing God as love.<sup>74</sup> Feuillet's contribution to understanding the concept of love in johannine Theology is indeed enriching, though his treatise is more apologetic than analytic.

In 1975 Michael Lattke's work<sup>75</sup> was published with special focus on the terms of "agape," "agapan" and "philein" in the Gospel of John. Lattke, being a faithful adherent of the school of Rudolf Bultmann, is preoccupied with the influence of

<sup>71</sup> André FEUILLET, *Le mystère de l'amour divin dans la théologie johannique*. Études bibliques (Paris: J. Gabalda, 1972).

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 6.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., 180.

<sup>75</sup> Michael LATTKE, *Einheit im Wort. Die spezifische Bedeutung von "agape," "agapan" und "philein" im Johannes-Evangelium* (München: Koesel-Verlag, 1975).

Gnostic ideas, rather than that of the Old Testament. It is no surprise that even when he deals with John 13,34, he discusses it purely from the gnostic point of view.<sup>76</sup> What is new in the new commandment is the insight on revelation, which, in the Fourth Gospel, is all pervaded with Gnosticism.

Ernest Lussier traces the connection of John 13,34 to the Old Testament tradition in his book.<sup>77</sup> The new commandment of Jesus is presented as differing only in quality from Lev 19,18. He sees its newness also against the background of Jeremiah's new covenant (Jer 31,31-34).

Spicq published a work<sup>78</sup> exclusively on love in johannine literature in 1978. While still considering the Gospel and the Epistles as coming from the same hand, yet Spicq treats the passages of love in the Gospel and the Epistles separately. The newness of the commandment of Jesus is seen in the context of the new covenant and the new kingdom. Love, like the Eucharist, brings the presence of Christ among believers.

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<sup>76</sup>Ibid., 214: It is "Gnosis des Heils, Gnosis zum Heil, Gnosis, die als solche das Heil (=die Entweltlichung) ist."

<sup>77</sup> Ernest LUSSIER, *God is Love according to Saint John* (New York: Alba House, 1977).

<sup>78</sup> Ceslas SPICQ, *L'amour de Dieu révélé aux hommes dans les écrits de saint Jean* (Paris: Éditions du feu nouveau, 1978).

Salvador Vergés,<sup>79</sup> who published his book in 1982, studied johannine love, tracing its origin to the Old Testament literature. He distinguished between the concept of eros and johannine love. The former is egocentric, while the latter is theocentric.<sup>80</sup> The salvific effect of God's love through Jesus was elaborated in this work. God's love becomes concretised in the person of Jesus and in the sharing of this love among the believers.

Fernando Segovia's dissertation on love relationships<sup>81</sup> appeared in 1982. The point of Segovia's thesis was that the author of the first letter of John had inserted the passages of John 13,34-35 and 15,1-17 into the Fourth Gospel and so they do not belong to the original gospel. The meaning of the 'new commandment' in the Gospel and in 1 John is viewed as identical.<sup>82</sup> But it is strange that Segovia fails to recognise that 1 John speaks also of the 'old commandment' (1 John 2,7-8).

In 1990, Urban von Wahlde published a monograph on the johannine Commandments.<sup>83</sup> The main purpose of this work was to trace out the tradition behind the Gospel and the Epistles. His methodology was similar to Segovia's,

<sup>79</sup> Salvador VERGÉS, *Dios es Amor* (Salamanca, Spain: Secretariado Trinitario, 1982).

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 25.

<sup>81</sup> Fernando SEGOVIA, *Love Relationships in johannine Tradition: Agape/Agapan in 1 John and the Fourth Gospel* (Chico: Scholars Press, 1982).

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, 122-125.

<sup>83</sup> Urban C. VON WAHLDE, *The Johannine Commandments: 1 John and the Struggle for the Johannine Tradition* (New York/Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1990).

yet the conclusion was different. For Urban von Wahlde it is unlikely that the author of 1 John was the redactor of the Fourth Gospel.<sup>64</sup> And he considers the johannine concept of love to be parochial in comparison to the synoptic presentations.<sup>65</sup>

A similar work on the johannine commandments appeared in 1993. Jörg Augenstein's work<sup>66</sup> studied the love commandment in the "Corpus Johanneum." Although his subject of study is the commandment, yet he briefly discusses also the theme of love in the Fourth Gospel. The term love outside the Farewell Discourses, according to him, indicates the Father's love for Jesus in the background of Deut 6,4f, whereas in the Farewell Discourses, it connotes Jesus' relationship to his disciples.<sup>67</sup> His research on the love commandment, however, does not encompass the reality of law in the Gospel of John.

Sjef van Tilborg's<sup>68</sup> study, published in 1993, was based on the relationship between the different characters in the Fourth Gospel. Criticising the hitherto discursive readings of the Fourth Gospel, which have merely focused on Christology, Truth or the johannine community, he claimed to undertake a study of

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<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 266.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 265.

<sup>66</sup> Jörg AUGENSTEIN, *Das Liebesgebot im Johannesevangelium und in den Johannesbriefen* (Stuttgart: Verlag W. Kohlhammer, 1993).

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 64-65.

<sup>68</sup> Sjef VAN TILBORG, *Imaginative Love in John* (Leiden, New York, Köln: E.J.Brill, 1993).

narratology in the Fourth Gospel, comparing his venture to that of "charting a new road in a virtually unknown terrain."<sup>89</sup> He cites ample Greco-Roman parallels to illuminate the understanding of the Fourth Gospel, although some of these parallels postdate the Fourth Gospel by decades or in some cases even centuries. He rightly remarks, "The johannine Gospel pictures a value, which is of certain importance in the modern discussion on love and love relationships."<sup>90</sup> But Van Tilborg's conclusion that Jesus' love for the beloved disciple was the center of his affective life which influenced all of his love relationships almost amounts to a portrayal of Jesus as a homosexual which in fact is not the case.<sup>91</sup> "It is a preferential love, which colors all other relationships: the relationship with his mother, his father, his disciples, with women and men as well."<sup>92</sup> Van Tilborg does not treat the theme of law in the Fourth Gospel.

### ***The hitherto Incompleteness of the Research on Johannine Love***

Almost all of the above-mentioned works, though exploring the theme of love in the Gospel of John or in the johannine literature, do not delve deeply enough to discover its relationship to law. Most of them do only a limited study on johannine

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<sup>89</sup> Ibid., 1.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., 252.

<sup>91</sup> D. Moody SMITH, *Journal of Theological Studies* 46 (1985):637; Mark KILEY, *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 57 (1995):197.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid., 252.

love with a limited purpose and only as part of their major study. And this limited purpose is more often than not apologetic, either to defend it from wrong teaching or to redefine the meaning of love in a world which tends to corrupt it.

Under the former category come the works of Warnach, Spicq, Légasse and Feuillet. In the latter category, with an endeavor to redefine the meaning and concept of love from a philosophical or spiritual point of view, come the works of Moffat, Nygren, Schlier, Barrosse, Lütgert, Lussier and Vergés. Since their studies of johannine love, for which they include the Epistles too, have such a limited horizon, they do not touch upon the relationship between love and law in the Fourth Gospel.

Furnish, Perkins, von Wahlde and Augenstein restrict themselves only to the commandments of love in the johannine literature or in the New Testament. Love as a theme in the Fourth Gospel is beyond the field of their research.

Segovia's dissertation included also 1 John. His main aim was to demonstrate that the author of 1 John was the final redactor of the Gospel too. Lattke's exclusive study on love, unfortunately, confined itself to Gnosticism.

Frieling's small monograph exclusively on love in the Fourth Gospel did indeed bring forth some beautiful insights in an exceptional manner among all the works so far we have now surveyed. But he fails to perceive the relationship of love to law in the Fourth Gospel. He does analyse the commandment of love, though briefly, in the same manner as Furnish and Perkins. But the significance of law itself in the Fourth Gospel does not come into picture. A study on love in the Fourth Gospel will not be complete if it does not sufficiently deal with its connection to law.

### **3. Works on love and law in the Fourth Gospel**

Before concluding this section on the present state of research on the themes of law and love, two articles should be mentioned which touch the combination of law and love in the Fourth Gospel.

An article published by Aelred Lacomara in the *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 36 (1974): 65-84 under the title "Deuteronomy and the Farewell Discourse," compares Moses' farewell Discourse in the book of Deuteronomy with that of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel. According to Lacomara, Jesus, like Moses, is also a lawgiver. "It is not a code of law that is proposed by Jesus for the disciples; his

community is governed by the law of love.<sup>83</sup> He notes that the similarities between Deuteronomy and the Farewell Discourse in the Fourth Gospel are certainly more than coincidental. He finds "elements" of covenant-form in the Farewell Discourse, although the covenant itself is not explicitly mentioned. In the opinion of Lacomara, John does this deliberately to avoid giving too legalistic a setting. What motivates the author of the Fourth Gospel even to mention the "elements" of the covenant-form? Lacomara does not venture into such details in his analysis. He contents himself with a mere comparison.

The other article<sup>84</sup> which touched upon the themes of law and love in the Fourth Gospel was published by Johannes Beutler. Beutler touches on the relationship between love and law in the Gospel of John. But strangely, he calls it only "Hauptgebot" (main commandment) and not a new commandment. And not even a mention is made of the newness of Jesus' commandment in the Fourth Gospel. After presenting the brief outline of the works of Pancaro, Lattke and Lacomara, Beutler studies the love of God as law of the Old Testament in the light of the vehement argument between Jesus and the Jews in chapters 5 and 8. He discusses the love of God and the love of Jesus in the Farewell Discourses. He

<sup>83</sup> Aelred LACOMARA, "Deuteronomy and the Farewell Discourse," *Theology Digest* 22 (1974): 232-9.

<sup>84</sup> Johannes BEUTLER, "Das Hauptgebot im Johannesevangelium," in *Das Gesetz im Neuen Testament*, ed. K. KERTELGE (Herder: Freiburg/Basel/Wien 1986), 108: 222-36.

limits himself to these events in the Fourth Gospel. The self-imposed literary restriction which Beutler stated early in his article has prevented him from capturing the full impact of the relationship between love and law that is implicit in the Fourth Gospel.<sup>96</sup>

As it is evident, the works so far produced on the themes of love or law in John have not succeeded in discovering the relationship between these two important themes of the Fourth Gospel. The relationship between these two themes, in my opinion, has played an essential role in determining the composition of the Gospel.

## **B. RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS**

What is the relationship between love and law in the Gospel of John?

The present research will point to the fact that these two terms - love and law - are predicates expressing the identity and function of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel. From the johannine perspective, the tension between love and law finds its solution and culmination in the person of Jesus, who reconciles these two realities into an indissoluble bond in his own self. John expresses and establishes this identification throughout the Gospel. He picks up from the Old

<sup>96</sup> Ibid., 222.

Testament the well-known symbols of the law to illustrate his point: Moses in a certain manner as the personification of the law itself (5,45.46; 7,22; 9,28.29), but also the symbols of water (4,10f), bread (6,34.35.48.51), light (8,12;9,5), life (11,25;14,6), the truth (14,6), the way (14,6) etc. on the one hand, to apply to Jesus, in whom, on the other hand, is realised the love of God for humanity (3,16). Thus love and law find their meeting point in the person of Jesus.

John has written the Gospel so that its readers and listeners may come to believe, and by believing they may have life (John 20,31). Indeed, this goal (life) is attained, when this union of love and law, which is nothing other than the identity of Jesus himself, finds its actualisation and universalisation in the hearts of the believers. From the perspective of the johannine world view, the believers have no law other than to love one another as Jesus did. Love is the new law, the new commandment (13,34) and the only commandment (15,12) It is the johannine way of resolving the apparent universal tension existing between law and love. And it is also the only possible way to Life.

## C. METHODOLOGY

Generally speaking, we could say that there are two main approaches in the study of the biblical texts today. One is the diachronic approach which attempts to study the text in its different stages of formation. The other is the synchronic approach, which studies the text in its final stage - as seen in its completed form - without alluding to the history of its formation. However, both these approaches are not mutually exclusive, but are indeed complementary.

### 1. Our Position

The approach of this study will be fundamentally synchronic. We shall study the Fourth Gospel in its present form, as it is. In line with a good number of recent authors, among whom we would include R.A. Culpepper,<sup>96</sup> Martin Hengel,<sup>97</sup> Xavier Léon-Dufour,<sup>98</sup> Eugen Ruckstuhl,<sup>99</sup> and Klaus Wengst,<sup>100</sup> we consider the Fourth Gospel in its present form as a literary unity.

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<sup>96</sup> *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel: A Study in Literary Design* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983).

<sup>97</sup> *Die johanneische Frage: ein Lösungsversuch* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1993).

<sup>98</sup> *Lecture de l'évangile selon Jean*, vol. iv, (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1996).

<sup>99</sup> *Die literarische Einheit des Johannesevangeliums* (Freiburg: Paulus Verlag, 1951, 1987).

<sup>100</sup> *Bedrängte Gemeinde und Verherrlichter Christus: Ein Versuch über das Johannesevangelium* (München: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1992).

However, we do not deny the existence of sources. But we would also consider fact that the source theory in johannine research is still highly debated. The presence of different traditions is also obvious in the Gospel of John. They are easily perceived, for example, in the lack of geographical coherence in chapters 5 and 6. But we maintain that the redactor has obviously organised the material and the traditions available to him, not according to historical or geographical sequence but giving priority to theological coherence. For instance, in chapters 5 and 6, it is possible to discern that the redactor has arranged the traditional material in such a way that the thematic continuity - Jesus' interaction with people - takes precedence over historical or chronological details.

In the same way, we do not rule out the possibility of several stages in the formation of the present johannine text, though this still remains hypothetical. It is also almost established that the Farewell Discourse in the Fourth Gospel is comprised of three different discourses: chapter 16 is viewed as a repetition of chapter 14, and chapter 15 apparently does not fit into the present position. But what concerns our investigation is the Fourth Gospel in its present order - as it is offered to the readers today.

We are undertaking a thematic study. That is, we will take theological concepts, in this case, the two ideas of law and love, and examine their use throughout the Gospel of John, in order to establish the relationship between them. Such a study presupposes a theological coherence in the Fourth Gospel. In a sense, this approach falls under the category of redactional critical method, since it deals with the analysis of the final redaction of the text.

While it is true that the redactional critical method has always been perceived as belonging to the diachronic approach, still recent studies have demonstrated a modified version of this method, which is “a holistic variation of redaction criticism in which the work itself..., viewed rigorously and persistently in its entirety, becomes the primary context for interpreting any part of it.”<sup>101</sup> According to this “variation of redaction criticism” the text will be treated in its unity. This is how we will understand the method in this thesis. Thus, our redaction critical method with its holistic variation will diverge from the older, strictly diachronic approach, but will be essentially synchronic.

This variation of the redaction critical method has also been termed by some

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<sup>101</sup> F.Scott SPENCER, *The Portrait of Philip in Acts* (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992), 21.

scholars as "Intra-comprehension" or "Composition Criticism." It takes the text as an integral whole. It asks such questions as "What is the theological meaning of this term or passage in its immediate context and in the context of the whole Gospel?," "What is the significance in the usage of this term or character in this particular instance?," etc. This method does not start with such questions as "What would have been the situation of the redactor/author when he edited or wrote this text?," or "What should have motivated the writer to compose this text?," or "To which community or in what historical context did he write?" However, if such historical or geographical details do emerge in the course of analysis, they will not be excluded.

Robert O'Toole's justification in applying this method to his work on Luke-Acts will also fit in for our study of the Fourth Gospel:

Thus, the dominant methodology in this book will be a form of redaction criticism which might more properly be called composition criticism. Obviously, redaction criticism, which considers how an author modified his source(s), proves extremely useful in studying Luke's Gospel where we know the sources he used but it would be much less useful in Acts. Luke did compose both his Gospel and Acts, and he wove his ideas throughout these works. Therefore, the use of composition criticism, which like literary criticism analyzes the whole of an author's work, seems often to be the better method.<sup>102</sup>

<sup>102</sup> *The Unity of Luke's Theology. An Analysis of Luke-Acts* (Wilmington, Delaware: Michael Glazier, 1982), 266.

Even though the situation with Luke-Acts does not correspond with ours, the approach of composition criticism which analyses a single work of an author "intra-murally" or by "intra-composition" is pertinent. Luke and John differ in several ways including literary style and grammatical presentation. Luke does not make verbal distinctions.<sup>109</sup> This is not the case with John. Our method of analysis will demonstrate that John not only carefully chooses terms but also the manner of presenting them to readers so that a distinct meaning is conveyed. So the use of Composition Criticism should prove more effective for studying the Fourth Gospel.

The basic presupposition of Composition Criticism is that there is theological unity in the work. Although O'Toole and we agree on this presupposition, one will find a world of difference between our steps of procedure and his. According to him, the unity of Luke's theology is that God continues his saving work in Jesus. He proceeds to prove this point in his work by dividing it into three parts which are further subdivided into ten chapters: 1. God Continues to Bring Salvation to His People, Israel, Who are Now the Christians. This part is divided into two chapters. 2. Luke's Description of How God Makes His Salvation in Jesus present to the Christians. This part is divided into five chapters. 3. Discipleship. How Christians

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<sup>109</sup> Ibid., 223. Robert F. O'TOOLE observes that Luke does not draw a fine distinction among terms.

Act in the Presence of God's Salvific Activity. This part is divided into three chapters. Each chapter revolves around a selected theme to prove that God's salvific act is present in Jesus in a special manner. He discusses verses, passages or events in the Gospel of Luke to prove his point.

O'Toole does not use a single footnote or endnote in the whole of his work. After the conclusion he presents a brief bibliography. He is justified in not presenting a single footnote because Composition Criticism seeks to interpret the text by itself. That is why it is termed Intra-Comprehension and is considered a scientific approach because it excludes speculation. However, it should be mentioned that although we have presented here, in a summarised manner, the work of O'Toole in order to demonstrate the way in which he employs Composition Criticism, we will not be imitating him nor will he be our model. O'Toole and we agree in our basic presupposition, that is, there is a theological unity in the work which we are going to study.

The theological meaning is what characterises Composition Criticism. <sup>104</sup> For this method, "the meaning resides in the text's theological (or ideational) content."<sup>105</sup>

Composition Criticism "extends the tradition of redaction criticism by reason of an

<sup>104</sup> Stephen D. MOORE, *Literary Criticism and the Gospels: The Theoretical Challenge* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1989), 7.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

overriding interest in the evangelists' theologies..."<sup>108</sup>

Our approach proceeds with the presupposition that there is unity and coherence in the whole work. In our case, with the Fourth Gospel, the methodological presupposition is confirmed by the redactor himself who tells the reader that his final work coheres around a particular christological and kerygmatic view: "There were many other signs that Jesus worked in the sight of the disciples but they are not recorded in this book. These are recorded so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing this you may have life through his name" (John 20,30-31). Out of the many signs available to him, John selected these particular ones because he found them most fitting to convey his message. And these selected materials were knitted together by the thread of theological coherence which reflected the core message he wanted to convey. This core message of John unfolds itself in the form of literary devices such as narratives, discourses etc., revolving around certain themes. The main themes and their interaction with each other contribute to this theological and christological purpose of the redactor. The present thesis will endeavor to show that among these themes, love and law, precisely because of their christological content, play a pivotal role in the whole Gospel.

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<sup>108</sup> Ibid., 7.

## **2. Our Plan**

Our work will be divided into two main parts: the study of law in the Gospel of John, the study of love in the Gospel of John, followed by a conclusion highlighting the relationship between law and love in the Gospel of John.

### **a. The study of law in the Fourth Gospel**

The first part of our thesis, the study of law, will be divided into three chapters. The first two chapters will deal with the explicit mention of the term νόμος and the third one with symbols. Since our objective is to fully comprehend the meaning of law in John in a critical manner, we chose only those instances where the term *law* is explicitly mentioned. The third chapter will study the four johannine symbols, bread, water, light and way to determine if they imply the Torah. These three chapters will help us determine the terminology and the theology of law as John presents them to his readers.

### **i. The uses of the term νόμος**

Our first chapter will examine in detail the term νόμος in John 1,17, its first occurrence in the Gospel. We will present an overview of the literary context of that verse, namely, the Prologue (John 1,1-18). Then we will determine John's use of the term law in 1,17. With this initial orientation, we will then proceed to our second chapter to examine all the other mentions of law in the Fourth Gospel. We will treat each verse in turn. Our hypothesis is that the johannine use of law in 1,17 should provide us with a window on the reality of law in the Fourth Gospel.

### **ii. The uses of johannine symbols**

Then we will move to a consideration of four johannine symbols which the Old Testament also uses in reference to the law. Here, we will treat the symbols of bread, water, light and way, each in turn. We will look at the use which John makes of it, always in reference to Jesus. We will scrutinise if these symbols now refer to Jesus in a supreme manner in the Fourth Gospel. And we will also verify whether or not the symbolic designation of the law is in accordance with the meaning which the term has in the Fourth Gospel.

## **b. The study of love in the Fourth Gospel**

The second part of our thesis, the study of love, will be divided into two chapters. Our analysis of the concept of love will follow much the same pattern as our analysis of law.

### **i. The uses of the terms *agapan* and *philein***

An initial philological discussion of the two Greek terms for love, *agapan* and *philein*, will be followed by an examination of John 13,34 and 15,12.17. These verses were chosen because they connect love with commandment. Here again, the pivotal verses will provide a window on the reality of love in the whole Gospel. This will be the fourth chapter of our thesis.

### **ii. Categorising of the terms *love***

Following this, in our fifth chapter, we will choose without exception all the other explicit mentions of the term love in the Fourth Gospel. The abundant material will be organised into nine categories. In the same manner as we did for the analysis of law, we will identify and discuss the literary context of each passage within the Gospel of John. By a careful and critical analysis of all the explicit mentions of love, we will be able to grasp, in a comprehensive and objective manner, what

they stand for.

### **c. The relationship between law and love**

Our study will then move to draw the relationship between law and love in the Fourth Gospel. The christological orientation of law and love discovered in the preceding analyses will be summarised and we will show that the identification of the two themes in the person of Jesus makes of him, in johannine thought, the source of life for believers. This material could have constituted a distinct third part of the thesis but, because the realities of law and love so clearly find their meaning, fulfillment and unity in Jesus himself, we have chosen to present it as the conclusion of the entire thesis.

### **3. Our Procedure**

Having explained the plan of our thesis, we will now mention the steps of our procedure.

**a. Term**

As already stated, with the purpose of keeping our investigation as objective as possible, we choose the explicit mention of the terms law and love in the Fourth Gospel. All of the occurrences of these two terms in the Fourth Gospel will be analysed. Our examination of the term will also pay careful attention to its distinct grammatical usage, if any, in that particular instance. For example, a noun used with or without a definite article or a noun used in different case forms to convey a distinct theological meaning, etc.

**b. Context**

Having chosen the terms, as the next step, we probe into the context of the verse in which the term occurs and then also the context of the unit. We will identify and discuss its literary context within the Gospel of John. For example, law could stand for the law of Moses or law of the "Jews" or the Scripture in general etc. We will allow the text to speak to us.

### **c. The Old Testament**

We will see if the term or verse has any reference to the Old Testament in an explicit or implicit manner. We will identify and discuss any Old Testament texts, themes or figures introduced, evoked, or alluded to by the passage in order to discover what the term points to. In the Gospel there are ample examples where John explicitly states that he is quoting from the Scripture. We will not have recourse to extra-biblical sources since we propose to explain John by John. However, if we consider that some extra-biblical reference may be worth quoting, we will do so, although our analysis will not rely on it as a source.

### **d. Theological meaning**

After this, we will explore the theological meaning underlying the term. For instance, we will try to discover the reality indicated by the term law or love and whether it points to a positive or negative concept. And we will reflect on the meaning of law or love in the verse(s) to see if the meaning of 1,17 or of 13,34 and 15,12.17 is validated in each subsequent passage.

**e. Function**

We will determine the function of law or love in the particular context. For example, the term law in that particular instance could denote its witnessing function to Jesus, the Scripture or a norm of judgment etc. We will also examine if the term is related to any other concepts or characters. Where pertinent, we will discuss the literary function of salient characters in the passage.

**f. Comparison with other passages**

We will compare the use of the term from that particular context to John's use of the same term in other passages. This will enable us to discover if there are similarities or differences in the use of the term among different passages.

**g. Theological coherence**

Finally, we shall arrive at the core message of these concepts *law* and *love*. Our aim is not only to discover the meaning of the concepts of law and love but also the relationship between them. Once we have arrived at the fundamental meaning of the concepts of law and love, we will be able to synthesize their

meanings and conclude whether John presents them as complementary or contradictory to each other. This will also lead us to know the significance which these two concepts occupy in the theological coherence of the Fourth Gospel and thereby its core christological and kerygmatic message.

These are the steps we intend to follow in our method, though not always in the same sequence as we have presented above. By following these steps of our analysis, we hope that we will be able to achieve our plan that we have presented above

**PART ONE**

**LAW IN THE FOURTH GOSPEL**

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **JOHN 1,17 AS WINDOW TO THE REALITY OF LAW IN THE FOURTH GOSPEL**

#### **Introduction**

Severino Pancaro, while analysing John 1,17 in his monograph on law in the Fourth Gospel, writes: "An examination of this verse will allow us to specify more accurately the manner in which Jn views the relationship of the law to Jesus."<sup>1</sup> We agree with Pancaro that an analysis of this verse will provide us a glimpse of what John intends to tell about the law in his Gospel. This verse which introduces law, Moses, and Jesus Christ for the first time in the Gospel provides us a clear indication of what is to come.

S.A.Panimolle,<sup>2</sup> who has written a monograph on 1,17, remarks that it contains the central theme of the johannine theology. This verse has the uniqueness of containing in microform the realities of law and love which develop in macroform in the rest of the Gospel. John 1,17 is one of the hermeneutical keys to understand the whole johannine work.<sup>3</sup> It is for this reason we find it appropriate and even necessary to examine this verse right at the beginning of our study,

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<sup>1</sup> S. PANCARO, *The Law in the Fourth Gospel. The Torah and the Gospel, Moses and Jesus, Judaism and Christianity according to John* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1975), 534.

<sup>2</sup> S.A.PANIMOLLE, *Il Dono della Legge e la Grazia della verità* (Roma: Editrice A.V.E., 1973), 25.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 258.

not merely because it is the first verse in the Gospel introducing the term law.

On this point we disagree with Pancaro for whom examining this verse at the beginning of his treatise would have proved unintelligible to the reader.<sup>4</sup> But Pancaro admits the fact that the rest of the Gospel is “of little assistance”<sup>5</sup> for the complete analysis of 1,17. Since our approach considers the Gospel as a coherent whole, including the Prologue, it will just be proper and logical to our method to take this verse as our point of departure.

## **A. GENERAL VIEW OF THE PROLOGUE**

### **1. The Prologue and the Rest of the Gospel**

Treating this verse 1,17 will naturally bring us to the question of the relation of the Prologue to the rest of the Gospel. The fact that the verses 1-18 are called Prologue indicate its liaison with the Gospel. Some would assign to it the role of Introduction<sup>6</sup> to the Gospel and some others would see in it the summary<sup>7</sup> of the

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<sup>4</sup>PANCARO, *The Law*, 534.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., 537.

<sup>6</sup>A. HARNACK, “Über das Verhältnis des Prologs des vierten Evangeliums zum ganzen Werk,” *ZTK* 2 (1892): 189-231; R.BULTMANN, *Das Evangelium des Johannes* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1941), 1; C.H. DODD, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel* (Cambridge: The University Press, 1955), 192. Dodd calls it “proem” for which he includes the whole first chapter.

<sup>7</sup>E.C. HOSKYNS, *The Fourth Gospel*, ed. F.N.DAVEY (London: Faber and Faber, 1941), 137; S.R. VALENTINE, “The Johannine Prologue: A Microcosm of the Gospel,” *Evangelical Quarterly* 68 (1996): 291-301.

**Gospel. Whether it is perceived as an introduction or summary in relation to the Gospel, it underlines the fact that the Prologue really belongs to the Gospel. The unity of the Prologue with the rest of the Gospel is also evident from the fact that many of the central concepts of the Prologue are further developed in the rest of the Gospel.**

**The concepts of Life, Light, Glory, Truth , Believing in Christ, etc., which are central to johannine Christology, occupy also a central place in the Prologue. The themes of darkness (8,12; 12,35.46) and the world play important roles in the Prologue as well as in the body of the Gospel. The connection between the terms “knowing” and “believing” are found both in the Prologue and in the Gospel. The statement that no one has seen God (v.18) is repeated (5,37; 6,46) later in the Gospel. The notion of preexistence which is a unique johannine theme is found again in the rest of the Gospel (6,46.62; 8,58; 16,27-28; 17,5). Accepting Jesus or rejecting him (v.11) is also a predominant theme in the first section of the Gospel. Further common themes between the Prologue and the Gospel are: children of God, witnessing, flesh, blood, law, Moses, John the Baptist, etc.**

**It is as if these themes which are found in the Prologue are further developed in detail in the rest of the Gospel or the themes which are found in detail in the rest**

of the Gospel are already introduced in the Prologue. In a sense, the Prologue itself functions as a microgospel. Treating the Prologue as a separate entity apart from the Gospel would not do justice to any method of interpretation. If the purpose of the whole Gospel is that the believers may become the children of God (20,31), then this is what has been explained in v.12 of the Prologue. Thus we may very well say that the Prologue finds its completion in the rest of the Gospel.<sup>8</sup>

The questions about the origins of the Prologue, whether it has come down to us as a reformulation of an original hymn,<sup>9</sup> are well beyond the scope of our study. However, there is a near consensus among the scholars that a devotional hymn must have been the origin of the present text of the Prologue. Furthermore, according to our synchronic approach this question is of little relevance to us.

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<sup>8</sup> Mary COLOE, "The Structure of the Johannine Prologue and Genesis," *Australian Biblical Review* 45 (1997): 54-55.

<sup>9</sup> S.de AUSEJO, "Es un himno a Cristo el prólogo de San Juan?" *EstBib* 15 (1956): 223-277, 381-427; R.E.BROWN, *The Gospel According to John I-XII*, vol.I The Anchor Bible 29 (New York: Doubleday, 1966), 20.

## 2. The Structure and Style of the Prologue

It can easily be observed that the structure of the Prologue is in the form of a sacred poem to Christ. I observe two main divisions in this structure: 1) vv.1-9: The preexistent Logos. We may even call this division under the title, *The Word with God*. 2) vv.10-18: The Logos incarnate. We can call this division under the title, *The Word in the World*. Different divisions have been discussed among johannine scholars. Several of them divide the 18 verses of the Prologue as vv.1-14 as the first division and the rest as the second division.<sup>10</sup>

It is striking that the beginning verses of these two divisions have a similar rhyming pattern. Both (v.1 and v.10) have three parts. In all its three parts v.1 mentions Logos three times, whereas v.10 mentions cosmos three times. I discover a real poetic structure here which is divided equally in two parts. The first part tells about the positive role of Logos in his relationship to God and humanity, whereas the second part tells about the negative attitude of the cosmos toward the Logos-Incarnate. This structure could not have been just by mere chance. A close observation of the structure of the Prologue reveals the principal meaning it wants to convey.

<sup>10</sup> Michael THEOBALD, *Die Fleischwerdung des Logos* (Munster: Aschendorff, 1988), 182.

Each of the two divisions is interrupted by the mention of John the Baptist (vv.6-8 and v.15). In both instances the mention of John the Baptist apparently breaks the continuity. In the first division, v.5 talks about the light which is continued in v.9 after the interruption by the passages of John the Baptist at vv.6-8. Similarly the mention of fullness and grace in v.14 is continued only in v.16 after the interruption by the passage of John the Baptist at v. 15. Though it may seem that without the passages of John the Baptist there would have been a continual flow of meaning in both instances, we will see, at a later stage, that these passages concerning John the Baptist have a definite role to play in both divisions of the Prologue.

The style of most of the verses, especially in the first division of the Prologue, is simple and short but full of meaning. One of the fascinating characteristics of the Prologue is that the last word of a part of a verse is picked up by the immediately next part of the verse almost for its beginning. This poetic phenomenon is observable in vv.1,4,5 and 10 where they seem to have also a musical rhythm. This feature is found mostly in the first division.

Another characteristic style, also observable mostly in the first division of the Prologue, is the repetition of a statement quite often by different words. Verse 2

is a repetition of v.1ab. The two parts of v.3 mention the same idea, though in different words. The same thing is found in v.5.

The second division of the Prologue has longer verses compared to the short and simple ones of the first division. It introduces also concepts such as world, children of God, blood, flesh, grace, truth, fullness, etc. If we may call the first division a hymn of praise to Christ, the preexistent Logos, the second division could be termed as a theological exposition about the Logos-incarnate.

It should also be mentioned that the narration in the first division of the Prologue has been only in the third person. But it changes to first person plural at vv.14 and 16 of the second division. The change, as I perceive it, is due to the fact that the narrator tells something which is not outside of himself, but rather derives from his own experience of believing in Christ. He identifies himself with the ones who accepted the Logos-Incarnate at v.12. And as such I find the key verse of the Prologue is v.14. This verse tells about the preexistent Logos becoming Logos-Incarnate. And at such a key point the narrator identifies himself with the narrated. The climax of the revelation of Logos is nothing other than the revealing of himself. And this is demonstrated in v.14 where John, the narrator, tells about the Logos' revealing himself in the form of flesh, which, for him and for believers like him, is the greatest revelation.

### **3. The Design of the Prologue**

The structure of the Prologue itself reveals the design or the plan of the Prologue. If v.14, which mentions of the preexistent Logos becoming the Logos-incarnate to reveal his glory, is the key point of the Prologue, it is clear that the revelation of the Logos is the central theme of the Prologue. The Logos reveals himself by taking flesh and living among the believers. The text of the Prologue moves first by showing the preexistent Logos in his divinity, his creating and enlightening role and then his coming into the world. The privilege of perceiving the revelation of Logos and his glory is granted only to those who accept him.

The verses after v.14 are explanations about the revelation which has been brought by the Logos who is now explicitly called Jesus Christ (v.17). The relationship of the only begotten Son to the Father is demonstrated in the last verse of the Prologue. Due to the fact that the first and the last verses of the Prologue speak of the relationship between the Son (the Logos) and the Father, there is often the tendency to discover a chiastic structure in the Prologue. The movement of the Prologue text becomes clear when we compare the two main divisions of the Prologue: the preexistent Logos (first division) comes into the world to reveal himself in flesh (second division). The last verses of the second

division of the Prologue (vv.16, 17, and 18) explain the quality and the content of this unique revelation by the Logos.

## **B. JOHN 1,17 IN THE PROLOGUE**

ὅτι ὁ νόμος διὰ Μωϋσέως ἐδόθη, ἡ χάρις καὶ ἡ ἀλήθεια διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐγένετο.

**For the Law was given through Moses, the grace and the truth came through Jesus Christ.**

### **1. The Conjunction ὅτι,**

The conjunction ὅτι, which begins 1,17, connects it with the previous verse 1,16 which in turn begins with another ὅτι. Even those who discuss the origin of these verses admit the connection of both these verses through the conjunction ὅτι." The connection of 1,17 with the previous verses is obvious because of the mention of the term grace in all these verses (vv.14-17). Grace seems to be the connecting link of all these verses. But only in v.17 grace along with the term truth is placed directly in parallel to law. The mention of the realities grace and

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<sup>11</sup> J.JEREMIAS, "Μωϋσῆς," in *TWNT*, vol. 4, ed. G.KITTEL, (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1949), 877; R.SCHNACKENBURG, *Das Johannesevangelium* 1, 205: note 1. He writes: "Die beiden ὅτι sind kein Indiz dafür, dass v 17 ebenso wie V16 noch zum Hymnus gehören müsste. Im Gegenteil sind sie eher ein Hinweis auf die Bearbeitung durch den Evangelisten."

truth vis-à-vis the law and the personalities Jesus Christ and Moses against each other has contributed to a good amount of discussion which is yet to find a consensus.

## **2. The Uniqueness of 1,17 in the Prologue**

As per our division of the Prologue, 1,17 is in the second one and comes almost at the end of the Prologue. It is one of those verses, as above mentioned, which explain the quality and the content of the revelation by the Logos. It is the first verse which introduces Jesus Christ by name. We can very well say that it is through this verse that we come to know that this poem is indeed a christian hymn. It explains the identity of Logos. Besides, it introduces also Moses along with the law for the first time. It explicitates the theological ideas which have been so far implicit in the Prologue.

The two parts of 1,17 stand directly opposite to each other.

ὁ νόμος vs. ἡ χάρις καὶ ἡ ἀλήθεια  
 διὰ Μωϋσέως vs. διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ  
 ἐδόθη vs. ἐγένετο

This verse is also unique in the Prologue because of this parallelism of terms. As we have already mentioned, It has been a characteristic of the Prologue to repeat the same idea through different terms. But in v.17 it is just the opposite.

By placing the terms in parallelism, this verse places also the realities they indicate directly in parallel to each other.

### 3. The johannine law is not pauline

Not a few authors have found in this verse pauline theology.<sup>12</sup> It is not surprising that the term ὁ νόμος in parallel to ἡ χάρις καὶ ἡ ἀλήθεια immediately brings to mind the well-known pauline arguments on the law, where Paul too places it in opposition to grace (Rom 4,16; 6,14; Gal 5,4). But the term law in the Fourth Gospel does not have the same meaning as that in Paul. For Schnackenburg, the johannine concept of law is not as problematic and sharply antithetic as that of Paul.<sup>13</sup> We have to avoid the temptation of trying to find pauline features in the johannine concept of law, notwithstanding some similarities between them.

In order to explore the meaning of the law in 1,17, we have to also find out the meaning of grace and truth, as both are wound up together. The key to the meaning of the law rests with the terms grace and truth which are placed directly in parallel to the former. The term ὁ νόμος occurs in the Prologue only once

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<sup>12</sup>R.BULTMANN, *Das Evangelium des Johannes*, 53; J.GNILKA, *Johannesevangelium* (Würzburg: Echter Verlag, 1983), 16.

<sup>13</sup>R. SCHNACKENBURG, *Johannesevangelium* 1, 252: "So muss auch die erste Aussage über das Gesetz des Moses aus der joh. Gedankenwelt erklärt werden, die nicht von derselben Problematik und scharfen Antithetik wie die paulinische beherrscht ist."

whereas *χάρις* occurs four times and *ἀλήθεια* twice. Thus it is inevitable that we analyse all these terms in 1,17 in order to understand the meaning of the term law in 1,17.

### C. THE LAW IN JOHN 1,17

#### 1. Introduction

We have to analyse this verse 1,17 closely in order to understand its implications. We will start with the realities it mentions (law vis-à-vis Grace and Truth) before discussing the personalities (Moses and Jesus). Although the name Moses at times stands for the law, here in this particular verse, we will have to maintain a distinction between the reality of law and the person of Moses as the verse itself does. Failure to maintain this distinction may not do justice for the exegesis of this verse. Trying to interpret what John means here by the term law by comparing his presentation of the figure of Moses in the rest of the Gospel may lead us to preformed conclusions which we shall try to avoid.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>An example for this would be the conclusion of R. BROWN for the term law in 1,17: "The theory that vs.17 contrasts the absence of enduring love in the law with presence of enduring love in Jesus Christ does not seem to do justice to John's honorific reference to Moses (i 45, iii 14, v 46)." *The Gospel According to John* 1, 16. Although often Moses is equated with the law, yet we would maintain the distinction between Moses and the law. John 1,17 itself maintains such a distinction when it mentions law and Moses separately in parallel to grace and truth and Jesus.

**a. The Whole Scripture or The Mosaic Law?**

The term law, ὁ νόμος, in the Fourth Gospel is a comprehensive one which stands not only for the Mosaic law or Pentateuch but at times also for the Old Testament in general. Thus the term law is used at 10,34; 12,34; 15,25 in a wider sense for the whole Scripture. Though the term law comprises the whole of the Old Testament, more than the first Five Books of the Old Testament, yet for John, the law and the Scripture are not one and the same. We will have a study of these both terms later in our analysis. However, in 1,17 it is obvious the term the law refers to the Mosaic law as it is being mentioned of having been given through Moses.

**b. Law in relation to Grace and Truth: Synthetic or Antithetic?**

Those who view the law in 1,17 as complementary to grace and truth maintain that grace and truth do in a fuller sense what law did before the coming of Christ. Such synthetic parallelism between the law and grace in 1,17 has been

upheld by some.<sup>15</sup> But for some others<sup>16</sup> it would be an antithetic parallelism to indicate that grace and truth are found only in Jesus Christ and not in the law.

A few others hesitate to categorise it into synthetic or antithetic parallelism and find both elements in this contrast of the law vis-à-vis grace and truth. A. Feuillet agrees with J. Jeremias to find a synthetic parallelism in 1,17 but a little later discovers also "a certain antithesis."<sup>17</sup> For Schnackenburg it is some sort of an antithesis, but not an absolute one.<sup>18</sup> The lack of a clear consensus on this point indicates that johannine experts are not yet certain about John's position with regard to the Mosaic law.

For an objective interpretation of the text 1,17, we have to pay attention to the key terms ἐδόθη and ἐγένετο. These two key terms should enlighten us to understand the reality of the law in 1,17.

<sup>15</sup>BROWN, *The Gospel* I 16; J. JEREMIAS, *ibid*; W.A. MEEKS, *The Prophet-King. Moses Tradition and Johannine Christology* (Leiden: E.J.Brill, 1967), 287-288.

<sup>16</sup>M.-E. BOISMARD, "Moses or Jesus?" An essay in Johannine Christology, trans. B.T. Viviano (Leuven: University Press, 1993), 94; BULTMANN, *Das Evangelium*, 53; DODD, *The Interpretation*, 82; E. GRÄSSER, "Die Antijüdische Polemik im Johannesevangelium," *New Testament Studies* 11 (1964): 74-90; HOSKYNS, *The Fourth Gospel*, 152; M.-J. LAGRANGE, *Évangile selon Saint Jean* (Paris: J.Gabalda, 1927), 26; J. WELLHAUSEN, *Das Evangelium Johannis* (Berlin: G.Reimer, 1908), 111; A. WIKENHAUSER, *Das Evangelium nach Johannes, Regensburger Neues Testament* 4 (Regensburg: Pustet, 1961), 50; T. ZAHN, *Das Evangelium des Johannes*, (Wuppertal: Brockhaus, 1983), 94.

<sup>17</sup>A. FEUILLET, *Le prologue du quatrième évangile* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1968), 125-126.

<sup>18</sup>SCHNACKENBURG, *Das Johannesevangelium* 1, 205.

## 2. Analysis

### a. ἐδόθη vs. ἐγένετο

#### i. Analysis of the terms

The importance of these two terms in the exegesis of 1,17 has been noticed as early as 1934,<sup>19</sup> but has not been paid sufficient attention to.<sup>20</sup> Whereas the law **was given** (ἐδόθη) through Moses, grace and truth were not. Rather, they **came** (ἐγένετο) through Jesus Christ. The passive and active voices of these terms mark also the nature of these realities. The term “given” here naturally implies something external to the receiver, be it Moses or the readers. The *external nature* of the law to the receiver is here thus brought into focus. On the contrary, grace and truth were not “given,” but rather they (be)came through Jesus Christ. Here John points to the nature of the realities of grace and truth to Jesus. They are not external to Jesus. They are the *manifestations of his person*. John employs the term ἐγένετο with grace and truth in order to emphasize this aspect.

In the first chapter of Genesis in LXX ἐγένετο is the term utilised to illustrate the fulfilment of God's creative word which brings all things into existence. This

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<sup>19</sup>Hugo HUBER, *Der Begriff der Offenbarung im Johannes-Evangelium* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1934), 122.

<sup>20</sup>PANIMOLLE, *Il Dono*, 399.

“creative” meaning of the term ἐγένετο is obvious in verses 3, 10, 14 and 17 of the Prologue. John’s use of other similar terms such as the beginning, life, light, etc., from the LXX creation narrative of Genesis in the Prologue confirms our observation.

It was the life-giving *Word* which brought into being all things at the beginning of the creation in Genesis. God said and it came to be. God said, “Let there be light!” and light came into existence. And it is now the same life-giving *Word* which brings into existence grace and truth by means of his own incarnation. This is the new creation by the Logos. The Word not only gives life, it is the source of life, in other words, the Word is life itself (1,4) which John explains as the light of human beings. Grace and truth are not realities external to the life-giving Word, but they are the Word itself.

According to John, grace and truth belong not to the category of impersonal existence, like that of the law, rather they are the Person of the Logos Himself. Bultmann perceives in the reality of grace and truth something of the person of God which he distinguishes between God Himself and His communication with the believers.<sup>21</sup> But he calls it only Godly being (Gottes Wesen), not person. They

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<sup>21</sup>BULTMANN, *Das Evangelium*, 49 : “Denn χάρις und ἀλήθεια beschreiben Gottes Wesen; jedoch nicht ‘an sich’...”

are for him the description of God rather than God Himself.<sup>22</sup> John uses the term ἐγένετο precisely because he wants to emphasize that grace and truth are not inanimate objects but the person of Jesus Christ himself. Whereas the law is external and inanimate, grace and truth are realities internal to the Logos and they are the person of Logos Himself. This is the parallel John draws between the law on the one hand and grace and truth on the other.

The term ἐγένετο which is used for the becoming of grace and truth at v. 17 is also used for the Word assuming flesh in v.14. It is also used in the infinitive form for becoming the children of God in v.12. It is certainly not coincidence that the term ἐγένετο is used in these instances. The Word which became flesh (v.14) is the same Word which becomes grace and truth (v.17). John points to the incarnated Word as being full of grace and truth with the glory of the only begotten Son. The opportunity to experience the grace and truth in the form of glory is directly the result of the Logos **becoming** in flesh. And this is a privilege granted only to those who receive the Logos. John naturally identifies himself with this privileged group or community by using the first person plural. Those who accept the Logos becoming flesh receive the power to **become** the children of God. Here we see the descending and ascending order; while the Logos descends to assume flesh he empowers and elevates his believers to become

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<sup>22</sup>Georg RICHTER, "Die Fleischwerdung des Logos im Johannesevangelium," *NT 13* (1971): 88.

the children of God. This becoming of the children of God is the birth they attain from God. This birth is totally different from the birth by blood,<sup>25</sup> or by the will of the flesh or even by the will of the human being (v.13). Only those who are born of God can possess grace and truth. All the others who do not progress to the degree of being "born of God" remain stagnant in the other level, i.e., being born of blood, or the will of the flesh or the will of the human being.

Believers would have no possibility to become the children of God if the Logos did not come in flesh. The only begotten Son makes all his believers like himself: making them children of God. As the Logos is full of grace and truth, the children also receive grace and truth from him. And this is what is explained in 1,17. The comparison between grace and truth and the law has to be viewed in this perspective. The law alone was not able to make its believers become children of God. The law was merely a passive gift, given through the mediation of Moses.

It should be noted that the verb become in v.12 is in infinitive form whereas it is in the aorist tense in vv.14 and 17. In the latter instances they denote events which have been accomplished whereas in the former the verb become denotes a possibility which is open to be accomplished by anyone like John himself who

<sup>25</sup> John uses the term "blood" here (v.13) in the plural which is a hapax in the Fourth Gospel.

believes in the Logos incarnate. The power to become the children of God is proper only to those who accept the Logos made flesh. Although this power to become the children of God is granted by the Logos universally to all human beings, yet it is appropriated only by those who believe in him. The Logos transforms the spiritual nature of his believers, because they attain another birth, the birth by God (v.13). The Logos shares his nature with his followers. It was not possible for the law to share its nature with the believers. It belongs to the category of the inanimate objects, while grace and truth belong to the person of Jesus Christ.

The instrumental preposition  $\delta\acute{\alpha}$  before Moses and Jesus Christ indicate that the real subject of the verbs is implicit. If the law was given **through** Moses, who was the giver of the law? The same applies also for the grace and truth **through** Jesus Christ. Behind  $\acute{\epsilon}\gamma\acute{\epsilon}\nu\epsilon\tau\omicron$ , as was true for the passive  $\acute{\epsilon}\delta\acute{\omicron}\theta\eta$ , we suspect the presence of another subject, which is God. The origin of the law and the grace and truth are God Himself. In this sense, law could also be perceived as grace (v.16) heralding the fullness of God's grace and truth (v.16) which has now been revealed in Jesus Christ (v.17). This is denoted by the preposition  $\acute{\alpha}\nu\tau\grave{\iota}$  in v.16 .

What is the relationship between the realities (the law vs. the grace and the truth) brought by Moses and Jesus Christ? The relationship is again implied in the terms ἐδόθη and ἐγένετο. God gave the law through Moses, whereas God Himself has (be)come as grace and truth in Jesus Christ. The distinction in relationship between both these realities is that which exists between the gift and the giver himself. The presence of the person himself is the climax in any relationship. The giving of the gift is only the beginning of such a relationship. If we view these realities from this perspective, the giving of the law through Moses by God was the prelude of a relationship with his people which reaches its climax in the incarnation of the Logos who gives himself to them as full of grace and truth possessing the glory of God (1,14).

We see now a clear picture of the johannine idea of the law emerging in this comparison. For John the function of the law was in preparation for the coming of Jesus Christ who is the only mediator between God and man and in whom we have the full revelation of God.

## II. New Creation

It is clear that the Word of God in the book of Genesis and here in the johannine Prologue fulfills its role in effecting creation. But where lies the distinction between the creation in Genesis and in the johannine Prologue? In the johannine new creation the Logos gives the power to the believers to become **children of God** (1,12). This is the creation which belongs to the spiritual order, which is not of the will of the flesh or that of the man but of God (1,13). The first creation belonged to the physical realm and now the second creation belongs to the non-physical one. Both these creations are effected by the same Logos <sup>24</sup> who, by coming in the flesh, takes the name Jesus Christ. Grace and truth belong to these children of God of the new creation by virtue of the right granted by the Logos to those who believe in his name (1,12). The new creation, which is a spiritual creation, is not attained by every one but only by the believers, who accept the Logos incarnate, Jesus Christ. Grace and truth are the property of these children of God.

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<sup>24</sup>Paul LAMARCHE, *Christ vivant, Essai sur la christologie du Nouveau Testament, Lectio Divina* 43 (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1966), 122.

As we have already seen, John's parallelism between the law and the grace and truth should be understood here. If grace and truth are able to effect new creation in the believers, the law cannot. However, this is in no way a negative perception of the law by John. That John is not at all negative towards the law is made clear through the construction of the sentence in 1,17. That the negative particle *ἀλλὰ* which is found in vv.8 and 13 is not found here points out the absence of contradiction between the two parallel realities. Thus we can conclude the parallelism between the law and grace and truth is certainly neither antithetic nor synthetic but climactic.

It is in 1,17 that John mentions Jesus Christ for the first time in the Gospel. Jesus Christ is the Logos incarnate. For John, the historical time has a radical distinction before and after the Logos Incarnate. The coming of the Logos in the flesh divides the world essentially and existentially before and after his arrival. The witnessing function of John the Baptist to the Logos is brought to our attention before the coming of Logos into the world (1,6-8) and after his having come (1,15). Grace and truth become attainable to the believers only after the coming of the Logos Incarnate, Jesus Christ.

### **iii. The witnessing function of the law and that of John the Baptist to Jesus**

The function of the law was that of a prelude in the relationship between God and His people. In the sense of a prelude or beginning, it also paves the way for the future fullness of this relationship. The giving of the law, viewed from this perspective, is to prepare the people for the coming of the Logos in flesh which is the climax of this relationship. What is implicit here will be made explicit by John later through one of the first disciples of Jesus. Philip tells Nathanael: "We have found him of whom Moses in the Law and the prophets wrote, Jesus, son of Joseph, from Nazareth" (1,45). Thus the law had the function of witnessing to Jesus before his coming into the world, just like John the Baptist. Now that Jesus has come into the world, the witnessing role of the law has been accomplished.

It is interesting to note that the the witnessing of John the Baptist to Jesus is indicated by the verb μαρτυρει which is in the present tense. The witnessing of John the Baptist to Jesus is ever valid, possessing a transtemporal validity. John the Baptist is described as the voice (φωνη) in the wilderness (1,23) whereas Jesus is the Eternal Word (λογος); John the Baptist is a lamp (λυχνος) lit and shining (5,35), whereas Jesus is the true Light (φως), who possesses Life (1,4.9).

The law and John the Baptist have thus witnessing roles to Jesus in the Fourth Gospel. However, the law bears witness to Jesus before his coming; John the Baptist bears witness to Jesus before his coming (1,6) and after his coming (1,15). The law was merely the beginning, but the coming of the Logos in the flesh is the fulfilment.

**b. ἡ χάρις καὶ ἡ ἀλήθεια** of 1,17

### **i. The importance of articles**

Grace and truth are mentioned also earlier in 1,14. But in 1,17 they are mentioned with articles. The words grace and truth at v.14 form part of a qualifying phrase πλήρης χάριτος καὶ ἀληθείας. Verse 1,14 which is the central one to the Prologue according to our analysis is also a crucial one to our exegesis here. Whom does this phrase “full of grace and truth” qualify? There are several possibilities: Logos, glory, the only begotten (Son) or the Father? This qualifying phrase along with the other qualifying phrase “the glory of the only begotten of the Father” forms part of v.14c. It is obvious that the other qualifying phrase modifies the noun “glory” which it explicitly repeats.

We can very well observe in the Prologue that John uses certain terms with articles and the same terms at an earlier or later instance without articles. A few striking examples of this we find in the Prologue itself in vv.1 and 4. In verse 1, the use of the definite article with the word God should mean God the Father and the ones without the article the Logos. Creative work belongs to the Logos and in the instances (vv.6,13,14,18) where θεὸς in the Prologue is mentioned without the definite article it is the Logos in action. Similarly, ζωη and ἡ ζωὴ (v.4) makes also a distinction between the life in Logos in himself and the life which the Logos communicates to people. The communication of this life to human beings is light. Thus the usage of the definite articles demonstrates the distinction in relationship, be it in the sphere of divinity or between divinity and humanity. The same applies for the word glory in v.14. With the article it means the glory which the believers (who are denoted by the pronoun "we") saw and without the definite article the glory which the Son possesses from the Father in the sphere of divinity.

In the same manner grace and truth in v.14 without the definite articles and in v.17 with definite articles implies a distinction in relationship. The former implies grace and truth in the sphere of divinity and the latter grace and truth in

relationship to the people who believe in Jesus Christ. In v.14 grace and truth explain the glory which the Son possesses from the Father. The construction of the sentence in v. 14 is such that grace and truth could be taken either to modify the Son, the Father or the glory. But the main word in the sentence is the glory which is explained as belonging to the Son who comes from the Father. The Son and the Father are brought into the picture in order to explain the source of the glory which for John is grace and truth. Bultmann too observes that glory is the main word in 1,14cd.<sup>25</sup> The adjective πλήρης is often treated also as indeclinable which I think is the case here too.

Our analysis reveals that the term glory according to John is God Himself. Glory is not an objective reality separate from God (Exod 33,18.22) not only in the Old Testament but also in the Prologue. It is this glory which is described as grace and truth. The followers of Jesus become children of God by believing in Jesus and consequently have the privilege of seeing the glory of God and possessing the grace and the truth.

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<sup>25</sup>BULTMANN, *Das Evangelium*, 49: In note n.1 he says: "V.14d ist durch das Stichwort δόξα mit 14c verbunden." But on note 2 he remarks: "Das πλήρης gehört wohl nicht zu δόξα."

## **II. Glory as Grace and Truth**

Though glory is described as grace and truth,<sup>28</sup> yet there is a distinction between them. Glory belongs to the realm of divinity. The believers can only see the glory, not possess it or share it as "glory" itself. They can possess it only as grace and truth. When at 17,22 Jesus speaks of having given his disciples the glory which he received from the Father, it should be understood this way. Jesus mentions this in the course of his prayer to his Father. The context at 17,22 belongs to the realm of divinity. Jesus would tell the Father that he has given them the glory which he received from Him. But he would not tell the disciples, "I have given you the glory which I received from my Father." The privilege of seeing the glory of God is made possible for the believers by Jesus. It is a unique privilege for the followers of Jesus, which was not granted even to Moses in spite of his earnest request to God to see His glory (Exod 33,18). Grace and truth belong to the believers as the result of their belief in Christ.

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<sup>28</sup>BULTMANN, *Das Evangelium*, *ibid*. While asserting that in 1,14 glory is described as grace and truth, Bultmann further says it is the reality of God which is bestowed as gift.

### III. The reality of Grace and Truth

What does John mean by describing God's glory as grace and truth? The expression grace and truth is not a Greek one, rather it is Semitic. It is the johannine presentation of **חַסֵּד וְאֱמֻנָה** of the Old Testament to describe God's steadfast love and fidelity to his people. In our observation until now we have seen that John uses repeatedly Old Testament ideas and terminology in the Prologue, particularly from Genesis and Exodus. God was commonly known in the Old Testament as the God of **חַסֵּד וְאֱמֻנָה** (Gen 34,6; Ps 25,10). Let us analyse the meanings of these two terms separately.

**אֱמֻנָה** in 1,17

That the term **אֱמֻנָה** has been rendered as "steadfast love," "faithful love," "loving kindness," "mercy," and so on in different translations is an indication that it is a concept which escapes comprehension by terminology. **אֱמֻנָה** is translated by

LXX not as **χάρις** but as **ἔλεος**. This gives rise to the question that if John follows <sup>27</sup>BROWN, *The Gospel I*, 14; DODD, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, 175; L.J. KUYPER, "Grace and Truth," *Interpretation* 18 (1964): 4; J.A MONTGOMERY, "Hebrew *Hesed* and Greek *Charis*," *Harvard Theological Review* 32 (1939):100; W.A. MEEKS, *The Prophet-King*, 288; PANCARO, *The Law*, 540.

the LXX, as he does in his use of parallel terms of creation from the book of Genesis, why does he use the term *χάρις* here instead of *ἔλεος*? According to Dodd, in the later stages of the LXX and in the Hellenistic Judaism after the LXX, *χάρις* was preferred to *ελεος* to translate the Hebrew term **רַחֲמִים**.<sup>28</sup> J.A. Montgomery and Raymond Brown hold the same view.<sup>29</sup> Schnackenburg also insists that grace and truth in 1,17 is the equivalent of **רַחֲמִים רֵדְפָנוּ** of the Old Testament as this double expression is not a Greek style. He finds Philo using the term *χάρις* with a special liking to describe God's creative and saving action.<sup>30</sup>

Though the LXX translates **רַחֲמִים** mostly as *ἔλεος* yet there are a few instances where it is translated as *χάρις*: Esth 2,9; Sir 7,33; 40,17. As we have noted above **רַחֲמִים** is a term which almost escapes definition. It could be translated as *χάρις* or as *ἔλεος* according to the context. When it is to describe God's attribute, **רַחֲמִים** for the LXX is always mercy. In the Old Testament this term is always associated with beseeching God to be loyal to his covenant (Ps 6,5; 25,6). This is often in a situation when a person has failed in his commitment to God and then acknowledging his failure asks God to remain faithful to his covenant in spite of the violation. In this sense, it involves the dimension of forgiveness from

<sup>28</sup>DODD, *Interpretation*, 175.

<sup>29</sup>MONTGOMERY, "Hebrew *Hesed* and Greek *Charis*," 100; R.BROWN, *The Gospel* I, 14.

<sup>30</sup>SCHNACKENBURG, *Johannesevangelium* 1, 248.

God by appealing to his mercy (Isa 63,7; Jer 16,5; Hos 2, 21; Jonah 4,2.). Thus, when **רַחֻם** is employed as an attribute of God it expresses a meaning of forgiveness and faithfulness in contrast to human weakness. In this context LXX translates **רַחֻם** as mercy focusing on God's readiness to forgive.

If God is ready to forgive, it is because he is faithful even when humans are unfaithful. Thus we see the Hebrew term **רַחֻם** expresses the dimensions of mercy, forgiveness and unwavering faithfulness on the part of God. It is this **רַחֻם** which is personified in Jesus and which also the believers possess. It is fitting to call this "enduring love"<sup>31</sup> or even as the Revised Standard Version translates it, "steadfast love," because this love is such that it includes all these dimensions of endurance, steadfastness and faithfulness. This love which is described by John as **רַחֻם** is not an abstract concept but the person of God Himself. To reduce the importance of grace in favor of truth while analysing John 1,17 is not doing justice to the interpretation of the text.<sup>32</sup> Even for de la Potterie, for whom truth (not grace) is the main term in 1,17, **רַחֻם** implies a sentiment of God which expresses love and mercy equivalent of *ἔλεος* in LXX. For John both

<sup>31</sup> BROWN, *The Gospel* 1, 4.

<sup>32</sup> I.DE LA POTTERIE, *La Vérité dans Saint Jean*, Tome 1 (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1977), 121. According to de la Potterie: "le mot théologiquement important n'est pas la 'grâce' mais la 'vérité.'"

the terms grace and truth in 1,17 have equal value, although the term grace does not occur in the rest of the Gospel. The meaning of χάρις in 1,17 is the personification of God's love in Jesus.

Now let us examine the term ἀλήθεια.

אמת in 1,17

ἀλήθεια is one of the key terms in the Gospel. Volumes have been written<sup>25</sup> on the theme of truth in the Fourth Gospel. Our purpose here is not to give a detailed discussion about the concept of truth in the Fourth Gospel, but rather to determine what the term truth means in 1,17. Unlike the term χάρις which we find only in the prologue, ἀλήθεια recurs often in the Gospel. The term ἀλήθεια is found in the Gospel of John twenty five times in comparison to the Synoptics where it occurs only seven times.

The LXX commonly translates the Hebrew term אמת as ἀλήθεια and sometimes also as πίστις or δικαιοσύνη. אמת translated as ἀλήθεια shows the Greek way of expression while its translation as πίστις and δικαιοσύνη shows the Hebrew one.

This is an indication of the influence of the Hellenistic and Semitic shades of

<sup>25</sup> S.AALEN, "Truth. A Keyword in St. John's Gospel," *StudEvang* II, TU 87, ed. F.L. CROSS (Berlin: Verlagsakademie, 1964): 3-24; I.DE LA POTTERIE, *La Vérité dans Saint Jean*, 2 vols. (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1977); Yu IBUKI, *Die Wahrheit im Johannesevangelium*. Bonner Biblische Beiträge 39 (Bonn: Peter Hanstein Verlag, 1972).

meaning in the LXX translation of the term אמת from the Hebrew into Greek. Bultmann finds partly Semitic and partly Greek-Hellenistic use of the term אמת for its equivalent ἀλήθεια in the whole New Testament.<sup>34</sup> For example, the expression “to do the truth” (3,21) is purely Semitic, though in most other instances of the Gospel of John ἀλήθεια has Greek connotation. Though אמת implies a moral category and ἀλήθεια an intellectual category, yet both meanings often overlap in the New Testament.<sup>35</sup> The meaning of ἀλήθεια in the Fourth Gospel should be understood in the context of this reality. As Dodd puts it, “...while the mould of the expression is determined by Hebrew usage, the actual sense of the words must be determined by Greek usage.”<sup>36</sup> According to Aristotle<sup>37</sup> truth means knowing the things as they are: a perception beyond their appearance. The function of philosophy is to lead the mind from the appearance of things to their true reality. Philosophy unveils the glory in order to reach the truth. Glory (δόξα) is the term he uses for the appearance of the things.

All these terms are found also in the second part of the Prologue. This points to us the possibility of the Greek influence in the thought behind the Prologue. However, as we have seen above, there is certainly also the pattern of Hebrew

<sup>34</sup>BULTMANN, *Das Evangelium*, 49f.

<sup>35</sup>DODD, *Interpretation*, 173.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., 176.

<sup>37</sup>*Metaphysica*, 984a 18f; *De Interpretatione* 1,16 a 6ff.

thought behind the Prologue. Thus the johannine expression of ἀλήθεια is a combination of several variant meanings from the tradition.<sup>38</sup>

The word truth forms part of the double expression “grace and truth,” which, as we have examined, is the explanation of the glory of God. It occurs the first time in the Prologue in 1, 14. In Hebrew usage אמת means something which is firm or strong.<sup>39</sup> It implies reliability and strength. When John describes God’s glory as grace and truth, he means God whose love encompasses forgiveness but also the one who is firm and reliable. God who forgives is also the God who is strong. It is such a God whom the believers possess through grace and truth.

Truth is a reality which belongs to the realm of God<sup>40</sup> and it is the expression of divinity. The meaning of ἀλήθεια in the Prologue has its source in the Old Testament<sup>41</sup> and in the common Hellenistic usage which seems to have been influenced by the Greek world.<sup>42</sup> Whatever may be the different shades of meanings from Semitic and Hellenistic usage, it indicates Christ Himself, who is

<sup>38</sup>DODD, *Interpretation*, 246.; J.B.BAUER, “ἀλήθεια” in *Bibeltheologisches Wörterbuch*, vol.2, ed. J.B.BAUER (Graz,Wien,Köln: Verlag Syria): 1198; Waldemar MOLINSKI, “Truth,” in *Encyclopedia of Theology*, ed. Karl RAHNER (London: Burns & Orates, 1993): 1771.

<sup>39</sup>QUELL, “ἀλήθεια” in *TWNT* Vol.1, ed. KITTEL, 233; H.G.LINK, “Wahrheit” in *Begriffs Lexikon zum Neuen Testament*, vol.II/2, ed. Lothar COENEN (Wuppertal: R.Brockhaus, 1970): 1346.

<sup>40</sup>BULTMANN, “ἀλήθεια,” *ibid.*, 247.

<sup>41</sup>AALLEN, “Truth: A Keyword,” *see note 32.*

<sup>42</sup>DODD, *Interpretation*, 177.

not only the revealer of ἀλήθεια, but He Himself is the Truth.<sup>43</sup> (John 14,6).

### **Conclusion of our analysis: Grace and Truth are the manifestation of the Person of Christ**

As we have already seen, Grace and Truth in 1,17 are not objective realities but they manifest Jesus Christ Himself who is the Logos come in flesh (1,14). Grace and Truth manifest the two dimensions of the Logos-Incarnate, who is merciful (faithful love) and powerful.<sup>44</sup> If grace describes God in His sentiments of love and mercy,<sup>45</sup> truth expresses God in his state of majestic power. God, who is merciful and powerful, has given Himself to the believers in the person of Jesus Christ, who is the eternal and glorious Word, now become flesh. Thus the believers have access to God and have the privilege of seeing the glory of God, since it is the Only begotten Son who reveals His Father (1,18). This is a unique privilege which has changed human history.

If the law was given through Moses, who was not granted his request of looking at God (Exod 33,18-23), now the believers themselves see God in His divine glory of grace and truth through the person of Jesus Christ. Not only the person

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<sup>43</sup>Ibid; BULTMANN, "ἀλήθεια," *ibid*; Yu IBUKI, *Die Wahrheit im Johannesevangelium*. Bonner Biblische Beiträge 39 (Peter Hanstein Verlag: Bonn, 1972), 205.

<sup>44</sup>BOISMARD, *Moses*, 98.

<sup>45</sup>DE LA POTTERIE, *La Vérité*, 135-6.

of Moses is placed in contrast with Jesus, but the reality of law itself. Just as the law was identified with Moses, now grace and truth are identified with Jesus. By possessing grace and truth, the believers now have the privilege of seeing the glory of God. This is possible because the Word of God has come in flesh.

The reason for the Word coming in flesh is given in John 3,16: it is the love of God. God loved the world so much that He gave His only Son. God's love causes the Son come into the world, who in turn becomes love incarnate in the reality of grace and truth. In grace the believers experience the forgiving and the faithful love of God, whereas in the reality of truth, they experience the kingly power of God.

The last verse of the Prologue (v.18) is an explanation of 1,17. The natures of Moses and that of Jesus Christ are implicitly described in these verses. For Ibuki, the term truth in 1,17 expresses the unity of the Father and the Son in their Being and in their union of love.<sup>48</sup> For him, 1,18b is a confirmation of this unity of love between the Father and the Son. The expression εἰς τὸν κόλπον indicates the intimate relationship between the Father and the Son. The same expression is also found in 13,23 to denote the intimate love between Jesus and the disciple whom he loved. The whole Gospel is the description of the

<sup>48</sup>IBUKI, *Die Wahrheit*, 205: "Das Geschehen der Wahrheit ist also die Auslegung der Wesens- und Liebeseinheit des Sohnes mit dem Vater durch den Sohn selbst."

Father's love which remains on the Son.<sup>47</sup> Love is a presupposition for the proclamation of the Word. Jesus proclaims the Father's Word because there is this union of love between him and the Father. In the same way, the disciple whom Jesus loved is able to witness to the Word because he remains in union of love with Jesus. The whole history of salvation and the purpose of incarnation is thus based on love. Jesus declares about His Father because he remains in His Father's love. The proclamation of Jesus' message too was based on love. Love is the pivotal point not only for the Prologue but also for the whole Gospel. Schnackenburg finds in 1, 18 the bridge between the Logos hymn and the rest of the Gospel.<sup>48</sup> It is this love of God which is personified in Jesus Christ, which John places in parallel to the law given by Moses.

Moses and the law bear witness to Jesus. Moses wrote the law in order that it may bear witness to Jesus (1,45; 5,46). In this sense, the law is not opposed to love, which is personified in Jesus, but rather supports it. The purpose of the law is to lead one to Jesus, who is love incarnate. If Jesus is the song, the law is just a prelude. To take prelude as the song would be to miss the song.

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<sup>47</sup>Ibid.: "Das ganze Evangelium ist also die "Auslegung" desjenigen, auf dem die Liebe des Vaters in einzigartiger Weise ruht."

<sup>48</sup>Johannesevangelium 1, 256.

### **c. Moses vs. Jesus Christ**

John 1,17 compares not only law against grace and truth but also Moses against Jesus. The degree of comparison between the realities is similar in proportion to that of the personalities too. If the function of the law was relative, so was the witnessing function of Moses. The parallelism of Moses-Jesus and that of the law against grace and truth occupy a central place in the Fourth Gospel.<sup>6</sup> The parallelism becomes clear when we compare the relationship of the personalities (Moses - Jesus) to the realities they have brought. Though law was given through Moses, it was something external to him. But grace and truth are the Person of Jesus Christ Himself. As we have already seen, the law was given through Moses who had not even seen God, whereas grace and truth came through Jesus, who is one with God. Actually to speak of parallelism between Jesus and Moses is itself a contradiction since, according to John, Jesus is incomparable. And yet to follow Moses instead of Jesus is ignorance par excellence, or in other words, spiritual blindness (9.28). This is fundamental to johannine Christology.

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<sup>6</sup>PANIMOLLE, *Il Dono*, 258.

If 1,17 presents Moses as the mediator of the law, the purpose of his mediation was to witness to Jesus (1,45; 5,46). If the witnessing function of Moses is not understood, Moses himself would become the accuser (5,45). According to John, even Moses does not claim absoluteness for himself. If anyone gives Moses the absolute function of mediation, then it is a great fallacy. John corrects this fault all through the Gospel. The temptation to give absoluteness to the witnessing function of Moses made the people even to forget God as the source of all goodness. John rectifies this theological misconception and affirms the purely intermediary role which Moses had. It was not Moses who gave the bread from heaven but the Father. The grammatical construction of 6,32 expresses the theological idea of John: whereas the Father **gave** (δέδωκεν=perfect tense) the *bread* from heaven earlier, now the Father **gives** (δίδωσιν=present tense) the *true bread* from heaven. The event of feeding in the wilderness is a historical thing of the past. What the Father now continues to give is not the bread of the past, but the true bread which is Jesus Himself. In the feeding of the wilderness, Moses played a mere intermediary role, which the people later forgot and attributed to him the role of "bread giver." Moses was just a means and God was the source. To consider the means as the end is a gross misunderstanding.

In Jesus, the means and the end form a unity as He and the Father are one. For this reason He is able to give the living bread while at the same time being the same bread (6,27.51). In the same manner, he provides grace and truth (1,17) while at the same time being the truth himself (14,6). The same cannot be said of Moses. Bread here is also symbolic of the law,<sup>50</sup> which we shall see later in our thesis.

There is another type of comparison between Moses and Jesus at John 3,14 and 7,37f. Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness so that people might have life. He also provided the people drink by striking the rock. The comparison here is actually not between Moses and Jesus but rather the objects of Moses' actions. It was the bronze serpent which gave life to the people (Num 21,8). The bronze serpent is an antitype of Jesus. It is now Jesus who provides life after his being lifted up. In the same manner, in 7,37f, it is not Moses who is compared to Jesus, but rather the object of his action: the rock. The rock becomes the antitype of Jesus. Though it is not explicit who replaces Moses in these salvific events, the focal point here is the life-giving source and not the actions themselves. Jesus is the life-giving source.

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<sup>50</sup>Thomas Francis GLASSON, *Moses in the Fourth Gospel* (London: SCM Press, 1963), 47.

But it should be said the reference to Moses here is not at all negative. He is presented here again as the mediator of such living action, a messenger of God. These few examples provide us sufficient evidence that Moses is not at all a negative figure in the Fourth Gospel. Even if the parallel presentation of Moses and Jesus by John could be viewed by some scholars as antithetic, yet the role of Moses in the Fourth Gospel, if viewed in proper perspective, cannot be termed as negative.

The mention of Moses at 7,22 as the giver and "non-giver" of circumcision could appear as a downplaying of his importance. John here points out the inaccuracy of his opponents and the illogicality of their behavior. The practice of circumcision is part of the law which was always attributed to Moses (Lev 12,1ff). But circumcision was in practice from the time of Abraham much before the law was given (Gen 17,10). John demonstrates here his better knowledge of tradition and the way of arguing. It is not the role of Moses which is here downplayed but rather the faulty argument of the opponents of Jesus. That circumcision traces its origin to the Fathers is a historical fact.

On the other hand, John also illustrates here a situation where undue prominence has been attributed to Moses, by which the revelation brought by Jesus has not been accepted. This undue prominence to Moses has been not out of ignorance but by arrogance. This is not at all the mark of true discipleship of Moses, it is the pseudo-discipleship for which Moses himself will accuse them. Thus the hypocrisy of the opponents of Jesus is exposed. If the opponents of Jesus were authentic disciples of Moses, they would have understood the witnessing role of Moses to Jesus. If the self-proclaimed disciples of Moses had really kept the law of Moses, they would not seek to kill Jesus (7,19). In this sense, we once again see the complementary role of Moses and law to Jesus. Moses and law are not in contradiction to Jesus. It is the people who claim false allegiance to the law of Moses who distort its meaning and purpose. This situation is found not only in the Fourth Gospel but also in the Synoptics (Matt 15,1ff; Mark 7,1ff).

Moses was an intermediator<sup>51</sup> in a relative and limited sense. The fullest and absolute sense of mediation comes through Jesus Christ who is the personification of the Father's love manifesting his glory in the dimensions of grace and truth to all those who accept him. The quality of the mediation of

**Moses and Jesus has to be considered in the light of their relationship with God.**

<sup>51</sup>J.JEREMIAS, "Μωϋσῆς" *TWNT* Vol.4, ed. KITTEL, 857; PANIMOLLE, *Il Dono*, 258f; DE LA POTTERIE, *La Verité*, 160.

Moses' distance and Jesus' closeness to God are striking parallels in 1,18. No human being, which includes Moses too, has ever seen God; but Jesus is one with God. Since Moses stands in distance from God, his revelation (the law) is also inadequate vis-à-vis the revelation of Jesus as the only begotten Son and God Himself.

The purpose of the Son's coming into the world was to share the love of the Father with the believers (17,26). This love is initiated by the Son declaring the Father's name to the disciples. This love is the continuation of the Father's love for the Son before the foundation of the world (17,25). The theme love occurs prominently in the Second Section of the Gospel (chapters 13-21) to demonstrate "how the life eternal, which has been set forth in sign and promise in the Book of Signs, is realized in the experience of the disciples... This in turn is construed in terms of divine ἀγάπη..."<sup>22</sup> Dodd also draws attention to how the mutual indwelling (of the Father and the Son) passes into ἀγάπη in 15,1-17 and 17,20-26. While life and light have been the key-words in the First Section, in the Second Section they are replaced by love. Dodd considers this not accidental. It is done with intention by the evangelist as he wants to "emphasize the truth that the final reality of life and light is given in ἀγάπη. It is in the exercise of ἀγάπη that man knows God and shares His life, that God and man are made one, and

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<sup>22</sup>DODD, *Interpretation*, 398.

that the creature returns to the Creator through the eternal Word through which all things were made."<sup>53</sup> Thus we discover that the climax of the Prologue is found in the Second Section of the Fourth Gospel.<sup>54</sup> As Moses and his law are preparation for the coming of Jesus, so the First Section of the Fourth Gospel serves as a preparation for the climax which we find in the Second Section of the Gospel. Thus 1,17 is not only the climax of the Prologue, in a way, it is also the summary of the whole Gospel.<sup>55</sup> This verse opens a real window on the reality of the law in the rest of the Gospel.

### **Summary**

Now we may sum up what the law means in 1,17. It is very clear that for John the law is not negative at all. The law has a relative role in its preparatory function for the full climax which is to be found in the incarnation of God in Jesus Christ. In this sense, the value of the law from the johannine perspective is not negative, but relative.

It is clear that John is not an antinomian. And it is more than clear that John has no prejudice against the Jewish law, the Torah. An objective interpretation of this

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<sup>53</sup>Ibid., 399.

<sup>54</sup>Klaus HAACKER, *Die Stiftung des Heils*, Untersuchungen zur Struktur der johanneischen Theologie, Arbeiten zur Theologie 47 (Stuttgart; Calwer Verlag, 1972), 9.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 35.

verse brings out this fact without any doubt. Failure to properly understand the johannine concept of law could furnish an additional argument to those who consider the redactor of the Fourth Gospel as the Father of christian anti-Semitism. It is always an easy temptation to assign to the Fourth Gospel an anti-semitic function<sup>56</sup> when one fails to take sufficiently into account the johannine world view in the interpretation of the text.

However, it is also possible to find in the Fourth Gospel some pro-Semitic elements. In this sense, the Fourth Gospel can be exploited not only by the anti-semitic extremists but even by the pro-Semitic advocates. Both the groups can make use of the Fourth Gospel to support their viewpoint. That is why one has to be very cautious not to misuse the Fourth Gospel<sup>57</sup> and produce a subjective analysis of the text.

The existence of the law had its meaning only in correspondence to Jesus who is now the Absolute. The relative value of the law gives way to the Absolute Presence of Jesus. This Presence of Jesus, the Logos-Incarnate, is grace and truth. Because the law by nature was relative in its witnessing function, its revelatory dimension is also inadequate. The law has been given through

<sup>56</sup>Walter GRUNDMANN, *Jesus der Galiläer* (Leipzig: G.Wigand, 1940), 224; Emanuel HIRSCH, *Das vierte Evangelium in seiner ursprünglichen Gestalt verdeutscht und erklärt* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1936).

<sup>57</sup>W.W.SIKES, "The Anti-Semitism of the Fourth Gospel," *Journal of Religion* 21 (1941): 23.

**Moses, who was not able to see God, but grace and truth has been attained by the believers through Jesus who not only sees the Father but who himself is in the bosom of the Father (1,18).**

**Before examining the other occurrences of the law in the Fourth Gospel, let us now briefly summarise the characteristic of the law, as it appears in 1,17. This verse, as we have explored its meaning in this chapter, gives us a clear illustration of what the concept of the law means in the Fourth Gospel. The function of the law, according to John, was in preparation for the coming of Jesus Christ who is the one and the only mediator between God and humans. The gift of the law by God through Moses was only the beginning of a loving relationship of God with His people which reaches its fullness in the coming of the Logos, the only begotten Son, in flesh. The Incarnation is the climax of this relationship where God's love is fully revealed to humans.**

**Since the law has played such a role in the revelation of God to humans, John is not at all negative with regard to his view of the law. Therefore, Moses and the law have a witnessing function (1,45; 5,46). The purpose of the law is to lead one to Jesus. John is very consistent in this view of the law throughout the Gospel. We will discover this in our examination of the occurrences of the term**

**law in the rest of the Gospel. John 1,17, which mentions the law, Moses and Jesus Christ for the first time in the Gospel, thus serves indeed as a window to the reality of law in the Fourth Gospel.**

## CHAPTER TWO

### LAW IN THE REST OF THE FOURTH GOSPEL

#### A. THE MENTION OF LAW IN THE REST OF THE FOURTH GOSPEL

The analysis of 1, 17 in the previous chapter has demonstrated to us that the johannine perception of the law in that verse is positive and certainly not negative. The law is viewed as a prelude in God's relationship with His people which is to culminate in the coming of His Son in flesh. In this sense the incarnation of Jesus Christ is the climax of God's communication with His people which began with the giving of the law. If the johannine theology of the law is well-defined and consistently worked out' then this should be verified in our examination of the rest of the passages where law occurs in the Fourth Gospel. Our findings about the johannine idea of the law in 1, 17 should also echo in the rest of the Gospel.

Besides 1,17, there are altogether twelve verses where the term occurs in the Fourth Gospel. They are:

1. 1,45: Philip finds Nathanael and says to him, We have found him, of whom Moses in the law and the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, son of Joseph.

2. 7,19: (Jesus answered) Did not Moses give you the law? And none of you keeps the law?

<sup>1</sup> PANCARO, *The Law*, 2.

**3. 7,23:** (Jesus answered) If a man on the Sabbath day receives circumcision, that the **law** of Moses should not be broken, are you angry with me because I made a whole man healthy on the Sabbath day?

**4. 7,49:** (The Pharisees answered) But these people who do not know the **law** are cursed.

**5. 7,51:** (Nicodemus said to them) Does our **law** judge any man before hearing him...?

**6. 8,5:** (The Scribes and the Pharisees say to him) Now Moses in the **law** commanded us...

**7. 8,17:** (Jesus answered) It is also written in your **law** that the testimony of two men is true.

**8. 10,34:** Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your **law**, *'I said you are gods?'*

**9. 12,34:** The people answered him we have heard from the **law** that Christ lives forever.

**10.15,25:** (Jesus said) That the word written in their **law** may be fulfilled.

**11.18,31:** Pilate said to them, Take him and judge him according to your **law**.

**12.19,7:** The Jews answered him, we have **law** and by the **law** he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God.

Besides these twelve occurrences, there are a few other instances where the law could have been implied. For example, the controversy on the Sabbath (5,18) or the question about the scriptures (5,39-47) could also lead to arguments about the law. But the list could go on endlessly, giving rise to fresh controversies. However, to get a good understanding of what John means by the law in the Fourth Gospel, it is sufficient for us that we examine the passages where the law is explicitly mentioned.

## **A. THE ANALYSIS OF VERSES**

**1,45: Philip finds Nathanael and tells him of having found the one whom Moses in the law and the prophets wrote: Jesus of Nazareth, son of Joseph.**

This verse forms part of the section 1,43-51, which in turn is a part of the bigger division 1,35-51, the calling of the first disciples of Jesus. The division 1,35-51 comprises the two sections of the calling of the disciples: 1,35-42 speaks of the calling of Andrew and his unnamed companion, and the following section 1,43-51 narrates the calling of Philip and Nathanael. Philip was directly called by Jesus (1,43). Philip, who hails from Bethsaida just like Andrew and Peter (1,44), passes on the invitation to Nathanael.

Philip's description of Jesus as the one about whom Moses wrote in the law underlines the fact that Jesus is the fulfilment of the Old Testament. The expression of Philip is quite emphatic: "Ὁν...εὕρηκαμεν = "We have found the one whom....," because it expresses Philip's relief in having found the Messiah. Philip's words, "We have found," reveal to Nathanael that they have now reached the end of their common search.

We saw during the analysis of 1,17 in the previous chapter that the law was given in preparation for the coming of Jesus. According to 1,45, the writings of the prophets have the same function too. Not only Moses wrote about the coming of Jesus, the prophets also did the same. The writing of Moses and that of the prophets are put on par in 1,45: ἔγραψεν Μωϋσῆς ἐν τῷ νόμῳ καὶ οἱ προφῆται. The law and the writings of the prophets witness to the incarnation of Jesus. What was implicit in 1,17 becomes explicit in 1,45 through the exclamation of discovery by Philip. We see the same function of the law being repeated in 1,45.

However, in order to find out the meaning of the law in 1,45 in detail, we will have to examine the literary function of the characters of Philip and Nathanael.

### ***The literary function of the character of Phillip***

Philip belongs to the circle of the early disciples called by Jesus (1,43) after Andrew, the unnamed disciple and Peter. Only the Fourth Gospel gives him some role in the narrative, whereas in the Synoptics only his name is mentioned in the list of the twelve. Besides, 1,43-45, Philip is mentioned in the Fourth Gospel on three other occasions.

At 6,5, it is Philip whom Jesus asks how one can supply bread to such a big multitude. The reason for Jesus' asking Philip is given at 6,6: Jesus was testing (πειράζων) him. Philip thinks of solving the problem by means of money, while the solution is to be found in Jesus himself. The solution was simple, although in terms of Philip's calculation it appeared quite complicated. Philip is yet to come to the awareness that the solution is not outside the person of Jesus, rather Jesus himself is the solution. Jesus' testing of Philip was to drive home this point.

At 12,21, the Greeks who come to the feast tell Philip that they want to see Jesus. Philip brings them first to Andrew and then Andrew and Philip together bring them to Jesus. Philip still goes the roundabout way instead of bringing the Greeks straight to Jesus.

At 14,8, Philip asks Jesus to show the Father and Jesus expresses surprise at his lack of understanding. At 14,7 Jesus had just told the disciples that having known him is to have known the Father as well and also to have seen him.

An examination of all these episodes conveys to us the literary role assigned to the character called Philip. He seems to be looking for the solution at mundane level, while the answer lies at a more profound level. Whether it is at 6,5 to feed the crowd without money or at 12,21 to bring the Greeks straight to Jesus by

himself or at 14,8 to understand that having seen Jesus is to have seen the Father Himself, Philip remains at the peripheral level of things. Jesus enlightens him and disciples like him in the Farewell Discourses. Jesus instructs them on the true reality of things. It is in this background that the roles played by Philip and Thomas (14,5; 20,27-29) have their own literary functions in the Fourth Gospel.

Our observation is that Philip has definitely a unique role to play in the Fourth Gospel, which is more prominent than the one which is assigned to him in the Synoptic Gospels. Our analysis of the figure of Philip from the above instances should in no way lead to a misconception of underrating Philip's problem-solving skill nor his intellectual capacity. Nor does it single Philip out as an inadequate disciple. Jesus was aware of the weaknesses of his disciples. Among the earliest disciples mentioned in the Fourth Gospel, Philip has the distinction of having been called by Jesus himself (1,43).

Jesus invites Philip (14,9ff) to see the former's divine origin. Jesus wants Philip to realise that the solution to the problem of feeding the crowd remains in the heavenly sphere and it cannot be approached by earthly means (6,5). Jesus can solve it in a divine manner, because Jesus Himself is of divine origin: Jesus and the Father are one (14,10). Jesus was well aware that Philip should be able to

perceive Jesus not only from his earthly origin, but much more from his heavenly origin.

We may remember that at 1,45 Philip perceives Jesus only from the view point of his earthly origin: "Jesus of Nazareth, son of Joseph." To see Jesus merely from the perspective of his earthly origin, is not the real knowledge of Jesus and it runs the risk of losing sight of his heavenly origin. One has to go beyond the level of perceiving Jesus merely from the earthly origin, such as "son of Joseph," because Jesus is Son of God. That is the true understanding of Jesus. Jesus would tell the crowd who claimed to know his earthly origin that they did not know his heavenly origin (6,42; 7,28).

Though Philip may often get stuck at the earthly perception of the reality, it is he who declares to Nathanael that it was about Jesus that Moses wrote in the law. The message, which John wants to convey through the role of Philip, is this: it does not demand an extraordinary insight to discover that the function of the law was to announce the coming of Jesus. To realise that Jesus and the Father are one, however, would require the disciple to be with Jesus and learn from him (14,9ff). Jesus is the one about whom Moses and the prophets wrote and this Jesus is the Son of God. An ordinary person, who comes into contact with Jesus even for the first time, would be able to say that Moses wrote about Jesus in the

law. But to proclaim Jesus as the Son of God, one needs to go beyond the earthly perception of the reality, which we find in the literary function of the character of Nathanael.

### ***The Literary Function of the Character of Nathanael***

Besides 1,45-49, Nathanael is mentioned in the Fourth Gospel only in 21,2 where he is said to come from Cana of Galilee, a region not known at all for any religious activity (7,52).

The character of Nathanael appears at 1,45-49, almost in direct contrast to that of Philip. If Philip often gets stuck at the earthly perception of the reality, Nathanael is one who would like to scrutinise the earthly things in order to see their heavenly origin. When Philip describes Jesus from the earthly perspective (Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph), Nathanael proclaims Jesus from his heavenly origin: Son of God, King of Israel. The description of Philip about Jesus and the proclamation of Nathanael stand directly in contrast to each other. Jesus, who is perceived by Philip as a remarkable person from the little known village of Nazareth, is perceived as the King of the whole of Israel by Nathanael. It is interesting to note that Philip does not use the title Messiah for Jesus, as Andrew does in 1,41, but merely says *Ὁν ἔγραψεν Μωϋσῆς ἐν τῷ νόμῳ καὶ οἱ προφῆται.*

The narrative gives us clues that Nathanael and Philip had a good understanding of each other. Philip expresses solidarity with Nathanael when he gives the latter a share in his discovery of the Messiah: εὐρήκαμεν (we have found). The fact that Philip wants to share his credit of discovery with Nathanael is certainly an expression of friendly generosity. On the other hand, Nathanael's question whether anything good can come out of Nazareth should also be viewed on the basis of his understanding of Philip's tendency. Nathanael's query is not only a doubt about Nazareth's merit to produce anything good but also his eagerness to verify the discovery of Philip. Given the tendency of Philip to get stuck at the surface level of things, Nathanael wants to make doubly sure whether the one about whom Moses wrote in the law and the prophets has really been found. In the answer of Philip, Ἔρχου καὶ ἴδε (come and see) some detect his hesitation to enter into a theological discussion with his friend Nathanael<sup>2</sup>. The expression would then imply Philip to be saying, "No more discussion. Come and see for yourself. Then you will be convinced."

Nathanael's eagerness to scrutinise Philip's statement becomes more intelligible when we visualise the situation where it was the precise answer which Nathanael was looking for. Nathanael's proclamation of Jesus as the Son of

<sup>2</sup> Johannes SCHNEIDER, *Das Evangelium nach Johannes* (Berlin: Evangelische Verlag, 1976), 77.

God and the King of Israel at 1,49 confirms our observation.<sup>3</sup> The title King of Israel corresponds to a traditional expectation of the people of Israel that the Messiah would be a king who would restore the kingdom of God.<sup>4</sup> But it is on a higher level that the title Messiah is mentioned in v.41.<sup>5</sup> The title, Son of God, would also belong to the Messianic title.<sup>6</sup>

It is interesting to note that the different proclamations of Philip and Nathanael reveal their contrasting roles in the narrative.

### ***Nathanael under the fig tree***

What was Nathanael doing under the fig tree? There has been much speculation about this. The fig tree is associated only with good things in the Old Testament (Mic 4,4; Zech 3,10). The fig tree was a favorite place of meditation for the Rabbis.<sup>7</sup> C.F.D. Moule notes that it was customary to allude to peace and security by referring to "sitting under the vine and under the fig tree."<sup>8</sup> The study of the law is also associated among the Rabbis with sitting under a fig tree.<sup>9</sup> The

<sup>3</sup> SCHNACKENBURG, *Das Johannesevangelium* I, 316: "Beide zusammen sollen die Ankündigung des Philippus bestätigen, dass Jesus der schriftverheissene Messias ist (V 45), aber auch die besondere Art der Messianität Jesu ins Licht heben."

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> BROWN, *The Gospel* I, 87.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> J.Ramsey MICHAELS, "Nathanael under the Fig Tree," *Expository Times* 78 (1966-67): 182. Michaels speculates that Nathanael must have been meditating about the life of Jacob. Michaels himself admits that this is "sheer guess."

<sup>8</sup> C.F.D.MOULE, "A Note on 'Under the Fig Tree,'" *JTS* 5 (1954): 210.

<sup>9</sup> M.-E.BOISMARD, *Du Baptême à Cana* (Paris:Les Éditions du Cerf, 1956), 92.

rabbis sometimes taught the Torah to their disciples under the fig tree or even the law itself is compared to a fig tree.<sup>10</sup> It would not have been improbable that Nathanael was studying the law under the fig tree. Nathanael's question about anything good coming out of Nazareth could mean that according to his knowledge of the law such a thing was unheard of. As we know, the people will raise the same question later in the Fourth Gospel (7,41f). People who had studied the Scripture were expecting the Messiah not from Galilee (where Nazareth was situated), but from Bethlehem which was the birthplace of David (7,42).

However, the surprise of Nathanael at 1,48 must have been due to his own assumption that it would be impossible for anyone to observe what he was doing under the fig tree. Even Philip had not seen Nathanael under the fig tree as the answer of Jesus indicates: "Before Philip called you..." Philip called Nathanael only after he had come away from the fig tree. It was not impossible that one could do things unobserved under trees (Dan 13). But a guileless person like Nathanael could have performed nothing other than a good act under the fig tree. In all probability, we can say that what Nathanael was doing under the fig tree was to find out whom Moses wrote about in the law. This speculated research of Nathanael has prompted some authors to regard him as "a disciple

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<sup>10</sup> *bErubin 54a* in I. EPSTEIN, *The Babylonian Talmud Seder Mo'ed* (London: The Soncino Press, 1938), 379.

too learned."<sup>11</sup> That Moses wrote about Jesus will recur in the Fourth Gospel (5,39. 46). Now Nathanael has found the answer when he meets Jesus. A true Israelite proclaims Jesus as Son of God and King of Israel.

Viewed from this perspective, it is clear that John presents Nathanael as a type of true Israelite. Nathanael represents the true Israelites, unlike the Jews who claimed themselves to be the disciples of Moses. As it is commonly known, John's usage of the term "Israelite" is always positive in comparison to his use of the term "Jews" which is, in the Fourth Gospel, more often than not, negative. Léon-Dufour has discovered several positive meanings in the Biblical use of the term 'Israelite.'<sup>12</sup> The literary function of the figure of Nathanael has been thus illustrated by John at 1,45.

The roles portrayed by Philip and Nathanael in these verses bring to us once again John's positive view about the law. Philip represents a common man with mundane views of the reality, while Nathanael a studied man, well versed in the law. Both would recognise in Jesus of Nazareth, son of Joseph, the Messiah, Son of God and King of Israel, the one about whom Moses wrote in the law.

<sup>11</sup> BOISMARD, *Du Baptême*, 92.

<sup>12</sup> LÉON-DUFOUR, Xavier, *Lecture de l'Évangile selon Jean I* (Paris:Éditions du Seuil, 1988), 195. According to Léon-Dufour, "Selon l'emploi biblique, cette expression signifie 'non rusé' (à la différence de son ancêtre Jacob: Gn 27,35-36), sans tromperie ni mensonge (Ps 32,2; Is 53,9), non prostitué aux faux dieux et donc fidèle (cf.Ap. 14,5): tel est cet 'Israélite authentique'."

**2. 7,19: Did not Moses give you the law? Yet none of you keeps the law? Why do you seek to kill me?**

This is one of the verses in the Fourth Gospel where Jesus, though a Jew himself, speaks about the law of the "Jews." The context is provided in vv. 14-15. Jesus speaks to the Jews in the temple, the center of their religion. It was also during a feast, the feast of Tabernacles, when many of the Jews flock to Jerusalem. Even Jesus' brothers were there (7,10). Jesus' questioning about the Jews keeping their law forms part of Jesus' reply to the Jews who wondered at the source of his knowledge. Jesus speaks to the Jews about their law. John presents Jesus as dissociating himself from the Jews, though himself a Jew. Jesus will again speak about their law in 8,17 and 10,34.

John 7,19 forms part of the pericope 7,14-24 which most of the scholars consider to belong to the conclusion of chapter 5.<sup>13</sup> The one work done by Jesus on the Sabbath (7,21-23) would easily make the connection between this passage and the healing on the Sabbath in chapter 5. The terms *γράμμασιν* (5,47) and *γράμματα* (7,15) occur only in these passages of the Fourth Gospel. However, the term law itself does not occur in the passages of chapter 5. But to

<sup>13</sup>BULTMANN, *Das Evangelium*, 177f; BROWN, *The Gospel I*, 315f; SCHNACKENBURG, *Das Evangelium*, II, 183: Schnackenburg treats this pericope in his commentary already at the end of chapter 5; PANCARO, *The Law*, 174; C.E. HOSKYNS, *The Fourth Gospel*, ed. DAVEY (London: Faber & Faber, 1947), 314; Harold W. ATTRIDGE, "Thematic Development and Source Elaboration in John 7:1-36," *CBQ* 42 (1980):160-170.

absolutely deny" this passage the place it presently occupies in the Fourth Gospel does not do justice to its structure. We mention this just in passing to indicate our awareness of the problem of this passage. According to our method, we proceed herein on the basis of the Fourth Gospel in its present structure, and therefore we will take this passage as belonging to its present position in spite of its apparent connection with chapter 5. Moreover, the idea of trying to rearrange the passages in the Fourth Gospel on the basis of the similarities between them could invite the justified criticism of doing something which belongs to the realm of conjecture.<sup>15</sup>

As in 1,17, in 7,19 John connects Moses with the law. But unlike 1,17, here Moses is mentioned explicitly as the lawgiver. Our exegesis of 1, 17 showed that the implication there is that God was the lawgiver and Moses was just a mediator. That position is not altered in 7,19, although here Moses is stated to be the lawgiver.<sup>16</sup> The questions at 7,19 are those directed to the Jews from their own perspective. It is they who claim to be the disciples of Moses (9, 28f) and acknowledge Moses as the only representative of God. They claimed that the greatness they attributed to Moses would go much beyond any human ruler on

<sup>14</sup> BULTMANN, *Das Evangelium*, 177: According to Bultmann the division 7,14-24 is in the wrong place here. In his own words, "Dieses Stück ist an seinem jetzigen Platz unmöglich."

<sup>15</sup> PANCARO, *The Law*, 174. He rightly observes that "Any attempt to rearrange the pericopes raises more problems than it solves and destroys evident patterns, which show every sign of being neither forced nor artificial, in order to create new patterns, which are merely conjectural."

<sup>16</sup> SCHNACKENBURG, *Das Evangelium* II, 186.

earth.<sup>17</sup> Jesus uses their own logic. If they claim Moses as their master and the only person to whom God spoke, then why do they now blatantly disobey their own master and leader par excellence? Jesus points very poignantly to their self-contradiction. If they indeed kept the law of Moses, as they always claimed, they would not seek to kill Jesus. If they believed in Moses, then, of course, they would believe in Jesus too (5,46). The whole purpose of Moses' writing the law was to bear witness to Jesus. The law was only a preparation for the coming of Jesus. This is the johannine concept of the law which we find in the Fourth Gospel.

Once again we observe the fact that neither Moses nor the Torah mediated by him comes in contradiction with Jesus in the Fourth Gospel. The accusation of the Jews that Jesus violated the law by healing on the sabbath (5,16) is not based on the law but on the misinterpretation of the law by the Jews. We can better call it as the pseudo-law of the Jews. This verse once again shows that John is not at all negative with regard to Moses or the law. This consistent view of the law vis-à-vis Jesus in the Fourth Gospel we shall further confirm in the rest of the verses.

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<sup>17</sup> *Midr Ruth 3* in Samuel RAPAPORT, *A Treasury of the Midrash* (New York: Ktav Publishing, 1968), 163 narrates an example of an argument between Emperor Hadrian and Rabbi Jehoshua. The latter challenged the former who claimed superiority over Moses. The rabbi cited the example of the precept of Moses not to light a fire on the Sabbath (Exod 35,3) which was being upheld by every Jew, even though Moses was dead.

**3. 7, 23 (Jesus answered) If a man on the Sabbath day receives circumcision , that the law of Moses should not be broken, are you angry with me, because I have made a whole person well on the Sabbath day?**

This verse too, belongs to the same division 7,14-24 from where we examined the verse 7,19 immediately above.

Moses prescribed in the Torah that a male child born should be circumcised on the eighth day (Lev 12,3). Though this was an ordinance in the law, yet the tradition of circumcision as a sign of the covenant with God went back to the Fathers (Gen 17,10; 21,4). If a child was born on a Sabbath day, circumcision would also take place on the Sabbath day, because the ordinance prescribed the child should be circumcised on the eighth day. Though work was forbidden on the Sabbath, circumcision, which would be counted as a work of religious activity, takes priority over the Sabbath. It was quite well known in the rabbinic circles that just as the precept of circumcision takes precedence over the Sabbath, in case of an emergency the saving of a human life was permitted on a Sabbath. If circumcision, the rabbis argued, which concerned only one of the 248 parts of the body, could take priority over the Sabbath, then saving the whole person should naturally take priority over the Sabbath.<sup>18</sup> The implication

<sup>18</sup> Hermann LSTRACK und Paul BILLERBECK, *Das Evangelium nach Markus, Lukas und Johannes und die Apostelgeschichte erläutert aus Talmud und Midrash.*, vol.II (München: C.H.Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung,1974), 488. Strack and Billerbeck quote TSchab 15,16 (134) and Jona 85ab to cite the argument of rabbi R.Eliezar (90 a.d) who justifies for the overruling of Sabbath law by the rite of circumcision.

here is that the rite of circumcision is an act of healing for a part of the body.<sup>19</sup>

There is a big question here. Do the Jews break the law or uphold the law by circumcising on the Sabbath? According to the rabbinic circles, they uphold the law, not break it. And they are right since the intent of the law is the well-being of the human, whether individual or society. God's purpose in giving the law through Moses was that it should lead to life.<sup>20</sup> If the Jews agree to this point, then what Jesus has done now is nothing other than fulfilling this law. The Jews indeed agree to this point as is evident in the practice of circumcising on the Sabbath. As John clearly points out, they circumcise on the Sabbath that they may not break (ἵνα μὴ λυθῆ ὁ νόμος) the law (7,23). By circumcising a man on the Sabbath, they do not break the law, indeed they fulfill the law. And what Jesus has done is exactly the same. He has not broken the law, rather fulfilled it by healing a man on the Sabbath. Even according to the rabbinical argument of *a minori ad maius* the action of Jesus should be considered valid. Jesus has not broken the law even from the viewpoint of the Jews.

Another objection on the part of the Jews was whether the healing performed on the Sabbath by Jesus was really urgent. The circumcision on the Sabbath would be considered indispensable because it was the obligation demanded by the law to circumcise on the eighth day, whereas the healing by Jesus was neither

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid ; PANCARO, *The Law*, 162.

<sup>20</sup> PANCARO, *ibid.*, 165.

urgent nor indispensable on the Sabbath. The argument of the Jews is that Jesus could have waited another day to perform his healing, thus preventing the conflict. The answer to this question has to be found from johannine Christology. If Jesus had to wait another day in order to avoid the violation of the Sabbath, then it would imply that the Sabbath controlled Jesus. According to johannine Christology, the Sabbath cannot control Jesus; it is Jesus who controls the Sabbath. It is not Jesus who fulfills the law, but the law is fulfilled in Jesus. Presenting Jesus as one who obeys the law would amount to present Jesus as inferior to the law. That the Sabbath question in the Fourth Gospel is intertwined with Christology has now been well recognised.<sup>21</sup>

As we have already seen in our thesis, the law has a witnessing function to Jesus. The whole purpose of Moses writing the law was to prepare for the coming of Jesus in flesh. The purpose of the very existence of the law is for the good of man, let alone Jesus, the Son of God. Humans are not for the Sabbath but vice versa. And Jesus, the Son of Man, is Lord of the Sabbath too. If the law was written by Moses to bear witness to Jesus (1,45; 5,46), then it is the law which is subordinate to Jesus. For John, it is the law which has to find its fulfillment and meaning in Jesus rather than Jesus having come to fulfill the law.

The law has foretold all that Jesus does and so his actions are in conformity with

<sup>21</sup> Herold WEISS, "The Sabbath in the Fourth Gospel," *JBL* 110 (1991): 311-321; Jean-Marie SEVRIN, "Jésus et le sabbat dans le quatrième Évangile," in *La loi dans l'un et l'autre Testament*, *Lectio Divina* 168 (Paris: Cerf, 1997), 235.

the law. It is not Jesus who is subservient to the law, but vice versa.

Thus, the law is not above Jesus. The One who is above Jesus is none other than His Father. The law is only subordinate to Jesus. What now comes to echo in our mind is the Synoptic statement that Jesus is the Lord of the Sabbath (Mark 2,28). What the Synoptics proclaim explicitly, John makes here implicit. The Sabbath episode in the Fourth Gospel illustrates this saying. The Sabbath is only a part of the law: a precept, which was subordinate even to the precept of circumcision. Jesus is not dependent on the law, rather it is the law which is dependent on Jesus. Jesus is dependent only on the Father, who continues to work even on the Sabbath. The Father shows Jesus what He Himself does and the Son does the same (5,17-20). God works on the Sabbath too. God is always non-stop doing good. This is the answer to Jesus' healing on the Sabbath. If Jesus continues to work as His Father does, nothing on earth, including the law, has the power to stop him. If Jesus has to stop his healing activity (his work) on the Sabbath, then it would mean also that his work is not consonant with that of his Father who works also on the Sabbath. The freedom of Jesus cannot be curtailed by the Sabbath.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> BULTMANN, *The Gospel of John, A commentary*, transl. G.R.BEASLEY-MURRAY (Basil Blackwell: Oxford, 1971), 247.

Some authors hold that the precept of the circumcision was commanded by Moses as a “type” or “figure” for Jesus’ healing on the Sabbath.<sup>23</sup> But the johannine presentation of Jesus’ action goes further. Circumcision on the Sabbath was only an exception. Jesus does not perform his action as an exception, it is rather a manifestation of his constancy.<sup>24</sup> Neither is the Sabbath an exception for him, unlike for the Jews. It is part of his usual work. Thus to consider circumcision on the Sabbath as merely a “type” would be to reduce the wider johannine perspective. According to John it is not only the precept of circumcision, but the whole law which was given in preparation for the coming of Jesus. Moreover, according to John, the practice of circumcision goes beyond Moses to the fathers (7,22).

**4. 7, 49-51** *(The Pharisees answered) “But these people who do not know the law are cursed.” Nicodemus, who had come to Jesus earlier and who was one of them, said to them, “Does our law judge any man before it hears him and knows what he does?”*

These verses form part of the pericope 7,37-52. The context is still the feast of the Tabernacles. As 7,37 indicates, this happened on the last and great day of the feast. At the beginning of this pericope Jesus had called upon all those who were thirsty to come and drink. Many begin to acclaim Jesus as a prophet (v.40) and a controversy begins among the people whether Jesus could be the

<sup>23</sup> PANCARO, *The Law*, 164.

<sup>24</sup> BULTMANN, *The Gospel*, 246-247.

Messiah. Jesus' speech makes such an impression upon even the temple police that they return empty-handed. This provokes the Pharisees to question the temple police if they were also misled. None of the rulers and the Pharisees "who are well versed in the law" believed in Jesus. In addition, they believed that those who did not know the law were cursed. The comparison in this verse (v.49) is between those who are educated in the law and those who are ignorant of the law. The Pharisees were those who were educated in the law. Those who were educated in the law were contrasted with the common people who were ignorant of the law. We can see that this distinction existed even in the prophet Jeremiah's time (Jer 5,4ff). Jeremiah rebukes the educated in the law who were supposed to know the way of the law. He curses these educated for having broken off the yoke of the Lord and for having committed crimes.

It was not new that those who do not observe the law were considered cursed (Deut 27,26; 28,15; Ps 119,21). The Pharisees at 7,49 seem to do the same. According to their argument it is the simple and ignorant people who do not know anything of the law that are being misled by Jesus; people who know the law, the rulers or the Pharisees, do not believe in Jesus. According to the Pharisees, this would amount to saying that Jesus and the Torah are opposed to each other. The adherents of the law will not follow Jesus. The rulers and the Pharisees were considered by every one as strict adherents of the law. The

Pharisees claim that none of them follow Jesus (v.48). In fact, Nicodemus, one of the Pharisees, was at least an admirer of Jesus. He recognised that Jesus was a teacher come from God (3,2), whereas many of the Pharisees would deny that Jesus came from God. The reality seems to be upside down as John presents it here. What is apparent is actually contrary to the reality. This is the johannine irony.<sup>25</sup> The Pharisees transgress the law by being prejudiced against Jesus. The apparent adherents of the law are in reality the opponents of the law. This fact is pointed out by Nicodemus. The simple and the uneducated who follow Jesus stand as the true adherents of the law. As we have already seen in our thesis the law leads to Jesus. The true followers of the law come to Jesus. In other words, although the simple people were not educated in the law, yet they do what the law wants them to do, to come to Jesus. The opponents of Jesus are, in fact, also the opponents of the law.

Nicodemus tries in vain to make his colleagues see the truth when he points to the fairness of the law. The law does not judge a man before giving him a chance to express his case (Deut 1,17; 17,4; 19,15ff). Furthermore, it also analyses his action before judging him (v.51). Nicodemus' statement makes it clear that if one properly adheres to the law, he would not find any fault in Jesus. Nicodemus who did not properly understand the things which Jesus said earlier (3,10), now sees things in a better light than his colleagues. The law cannot go

<sup>25</sup> SCHNACKENBURG, *Das Johannesevangelium* 1, 221.

against Jesus. It is interesting here to note that John indirectly points out that “ignorance” of the law leads to Jesus, and the Pharisees’ self-proclaimed “knowledge of the law” goes against Jesus.<sup>26</sup> The self-confessed followers of the law indeed transgress the law.

This is a common phenomenon we find throughout the Gospel of John in the controversy between Jesus and the Pharisees. The Pharisees, in the name of following the law, always transgress the law. This brings us to the johannine question of the true followers of the law. Who are the true followers of the law? It is not the self-proclaimed adherents to the law but those who follow Jesus who really fulfill the law.

**5. 8,5 (*The Scribes and the Pharisees say unto Jesus*) *Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: what do you say?***

This verse belongs to the pericope 7,53-8,11, the story of the adulterous woman. It is almost unanimous in johannine scholarship that this pericope does not belong to the original johannine corpus,<sup>27</sup> though it is a piece of authentic tradition going back to the beginnings of the Church.<sup>28</sup> The pericope has been ignored by Barrett,<sup>29</sup> Bultmann<sup>30</sup> and Lightfoot<sup>31</sup> in their commentaries. For

<sup>26</sup> PANCARO, *The Law*, 288-289.

<sup>27</sup> Johannes SCHNEIDER, *Das Evangelium nach Johannes* (Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1976), 338.

<sup>28</sup> BROWN, *The Gospel*, I, 335; J.Duncan M.DERRET, “Law in the New Testament: The Story of the Woman Taken in Adultery,” *NTS* 10 (1963-64): 1-26.

<sup>29</sup> C.K.BARRETT, *The Gospel According to John* (London: SPCK, 1955).

<sup>30</sup> BULTMANN, *Das Evangelium des Johannes* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, (1956).

<sup>31</sup> R.H.LIGHTFOOT, *St. John's Gospel, A Commentary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956).

Raymond Brown, "The style is not johannine either in vocabulary or grammar. The story is more lucan than johannine."<sup>32</sup> Schnackenburg is also of the view that this is not an original johannine text. He points to the fact that this passage is not found in the oldest johannine Greek manuscripts.<sup>33</sup> This will raise the question whether the idea of the law here could be taken as truly johannine. But as we have explained at the beginning of our thesis, our method accepts the Fourth Gospel as an integrated entity in its present form. Thus we have to consider this verse as truly johannine, even if it became part of the Fourth Gospel very late.<sup>34</sup> Our analysis of the term *law* in this pericope will also help us determine if and how the term *law* differs in its meaning from other passages of the Fourth Gospel.

The Scribes and the Pharisees want the woman caught in adultery to be stoned according to the prescription in the Mosaic law. The Scribes and the Pharisees apparently refer to Lev 20,10 and Deut 22,23ff where such a punishment is prescribed. The intention of the Pharisees is more to find fault with Jesus than to execute justice as per the law of Moses (v.6). And Jesus is aware of this. The Scribes and the Pharisees make a guinea pig out of the woman caught in adultery with the intention of trapping Jesus. According to them, Jesus could be caught either way; if Jesus is for the rigorous legalistic interpretation of the

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<sup>32</sup> *The Gospel* I, 336.

<sup>33</sup> SCHNACKENBURG, *Das Johannesevangelium* I, 161.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 235: According to Schnackenburg, this pericope did not find its way into the four canonical Gospels until the 3rd century.

Torah just like the Scribes and the Pharisees, then he could be perceived by the people as a merciless teacher. This could also bring him into trouble with the Roman authorities who alone had the power to impose capital punishment. Jesus is placed in a situation like the one in Mark 12,17 where he is tested by the Scribes and the Herodians to take a stand with regard to the paying of tax to Caesar.<sup>35</sup>

If he releases the woman, then he could be accused as a law breaker and even as a sinner who militates against the law of God.<sup>35</sup> This would be in line with the discussion about the law and the Pharisees from our analysis of the last paragraph 7,49-51. There the Pharisees cursed the people who followed Jesus as being ignorant of the law on the presumption that they were the ones who were well-versed in the law. Their kind of knowledge of the law is manifested now in this passage. With their self-proclaimed knowledge of the law, they place at stake the life of a woman, albeit a sinner, with the sole intention of accusing Jesus. The question of Nicodemus at 7,51, whether the law judges any man without hearing him and knowing what the accused has done, is also applicable here. The law itself, if properly understood, condemns no man. It is the people who take the law into their own hands, and by wrongly interpreting it, use it to condemn people. The base motives of the accusers and witnesses, in the

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<sup>35</sup> BROWN, *The Gospel I*, 337; DERRETT, "Law," 11.

<sup>36</sup> DERRETT, *ibid.*, 13.

opinion of Raymond Brown, is not according to the law.<sup>37</sup> The pericope of the woman caught in adultery is a very good example to illustrate this point. And it is well placed here right after the discussion on the law in the preceding verses (7,49-51). Thus we see that although 7,53-8,11 might not have been part of the Fourth Gospel originally, yet it fits well in the present structure.

This passage also helps us understand not only the relationship of Jesus to the Mosaic law, but also the way the Pharisees handle the law as the "custodians" of the law. The Scribes and the Pharisees ask Jesus to clarify his viewpoint towards the law: "Moses in the law has asked us to stone such a sinner. Now what do you say?" (v.5). In other words, the Scribes and the Pharisees challenge Jesus to answer whether he agrees with Moses or not. We may summarise the whole episode into a brief question: Moses or Jesus? Interestingly enough, Jesus does not state his standpoint. He avoids a direct interpretation of the law.<sup>38</sup> He is silent. Through his silence Jesus makes it clear that he is against those who would exploit the Mosaic law in order to vilify a fellow human being. Moreover people who want to impose the rigid law should themselves be blameless.

John never presents Jesus as opposing or disapproving the law. In this passage Jesus makes clear that the whole law should be taken into account in order to

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<sup>37</sup> BROWN, *The Gospel* I, 338.

<sup>38</sup> DERRETT, "Law," 25.

render justice. The provisions of the Torah are valid only when the accuser is also pure. In this sense, it is more than clear that Jesus is not against the law, but he is against those who would wrongly exploit the law. As we have seen in our analysis of the previous passages, the law points to Jesus and it is fulfilled in Jesus. If the law is fulfilled in Jesus, Jesus is the Master of the law. The law may condemn a sinner but Jesus has authority even to by-pass or to reinterpret the law. Though this aspect may be explicit in the Synoptic Gospels (Matt 19,8; Mark 10,5), it is never so in the Fourth Gospel. The silence of Jesus on the question of the Scribes and the Pharisees about his opinion with regard to the Mosaic law in v.5 is presented in a typical johannine style. But Jesus' disapproval of stoning the woman caught in adultery is clear, though not explicit. Here too, Jesus points to the hardness of heart of the Scribes and the Pharisees rather than making a criticism of Moses.

The law by itself cannot be actually accounted for, if there were provisions for very harsh punishment of the guilty. Jesus appeals to the spirit of the law rather than to its letter. Even if the law has provisions to condemn a sinner like this adulterous woman, yet Jesus would not condemn, although he has the authority to do that. No human has the authority to condemn another, because everyone is a sinner before God, even though in a different measure. According to Joachim Jeremias, the woman was already condemned by the court of the

Pharisees and Scribes.<sup>39</sup> It is interesting to note that Jesus never pronounces a word against the Torah itself, yet he saves a sinner being condemned by fellow human beings who themselves stand before God as sinners.<sup>40</sup> The accusers themselves acknowledge this fact (v.9).

This brings us to the question of Jesus and the Torah. Jesus is not against the law of Moses directly or indirectly. Some would find in the verdict of Jesus his opposition to the Torah.<sup>41</sup> Jesus is only against the people who, in the name of the law, condemn fellow human beings. This is a general tradition which we find not only in the Fourth Gospel, but even in the Synoptic Gospels. Jesus is not against the law, on the contrary his coming is the accomplishment of the law (Matt 5,17). But a Christian's righteousness has to go beyond that of the Scribes and the Pharisees (Matt 5,20). The righteousness of the Scribes and the Pharisees and that of Jesus are placed in opposition to each other in the pericope of the woman caught in adultery: the Scribes and the Pharisees want the sinner to be condemned, but Jesus shows her mercy and forgiveness. This is Jesus' way of judging (8,15). Some interpret the writing of Jesus on the ground as a symbol of divine legislation when God Himself wrote with His finger

<sup>39</sup> Joachim JEREMIAS, "Zur Geschichtlichkeit des Verh6rs Jesu vor dem Hohen Rat," *ZNW* 43 (1950-51): 148.

<sup>40</sup> SCHNACKENBURG, *Das Johannesevangelium* I, 234.

<sup>41</sup> Ulrich BECKER, *Jesus und die Ehebrecherin*, Beihefte zur Zeitschrift f6r die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft 28 (Berlin:Verlag Alfred T6pelmann, 1963), 173. For Becker Jesus is clearly against the Torah. According to him, "Dieser Freispruch aber is zugleich eine klare Entscheidung gegen die Thora." Again on page 174, he says, "...auch wenn er sich damit gegen die Thora stellte..."

during the gift of the Commandments on Mount Sinai (Exod 31,18; Deut 9,10).<sup>e</sup>

**6. 8,17: (Jesus answered) It is also written in your law that the testimony of two men is true.**

This verse forms part of the unit 8,12-20, which in turn forms part of the larger unit 8,12-59. This passage seems to be the continuation of the arguments between Jesus and the Jews from the latter part of chapter 7. According to Schnackenburg, this unit fits in very well with the preceding chapter 7 and is out of place for the next mentioned feast in 10,22.<sup>g</sup> Many other authors including Raymond Brown are also of the same opinion.<sup>h</sup> The theme of Jesus as the Light of the world appears in connection with the Feast of the Tabernacles<sup>i</sup> which included also a celebration of the light when the illumination at the temple was said to illuminate the whole of Jerusalem <sup>g</sup>

The feast of the Tabernacles included also a water ceremony along with the celebration of the light. There is an Old Testament reference to this in Zech 14,7-8 where continuous light is promised instead of day and night and living waters flowing from Jerusalem. These are signs preceding the enthronement of YHWH as the king of the whole world (Zech 14,9). Thus Jesus proclaiming

<sup>e</sup> DERRETT, "Law," 18.

<sup>g</sup> SCHNACKENBURG, *Das Johannesevangelium* I, 237.

<sup>h</sup> *The Gospel* 1, 342.

<sup>i</sup> STRACK-BILLERBECK, *Das Evangelium* II, 774-812.

<sup>g</sup> *The Gospel* I, 344.

himself as the source of the living water (7,37) and as the light of the world during the feast of the Tabernacles<sup>47</sup> refers to the fulfillment of this prophecy.

The unit (8,12-59) seems to continue the conflict between Jesus and the Jews which began at 5,19 after the Sabbath healing. But the heated exchanges in chapter 8 indicate that the conflict reaches here the point of climax. For Bultmann, the subunit 8,13-20 forms the real conclusion of the verbal struggle between Jesus and the Jews.<sup>48</sup> The conversation at chapter 8 repeats a lot of themes from the arguments in chapter 5 and chapter 7. Raymond Brown statistically compares the similarity of themes between chapters 7 and 8 in a list.<sup>49</sup> The verbal struggle between Jesus and the Jews, which begins when the Pharisees challenge Jesus' self-revelation of being the light of the world, no longer touches the theme of light, but instead the theme of witnessing and the source of Jesus' coming.

Jesus tells the Pharisees at 8,17 that there is evidence in the law to support his claim. So Jesus quotes from the law to prove his point. The Pharisees do not challenge Jesus on his statement of being the light of the world,<sup>50</sup> though the whole argument in this unit starts with the revelation of Jesus being the light of the world. The theme of light is subsequently lost sight of until it appears again

<sup>47</sup> SCHNACKENBURG, *Das Johannesevangelium* 1, 239-240.

<sup>48</sup> BULTMANN, *The Gospel*, 278.

<sup>49</sup> *The Gospel* 1, 343.

<sup>50</sup> SCHNEIDER, *Das Evangelium*, 174

in chapter 9. The argument between the Pharisees and Jesus from 8,13 onwards revolves around the theme of the validity of the witnessing of Jesus. This is the context where Jesus affirms the validity of his declaration on the basis that he is not alone, and that the Father is there as a witness too. This should be valid according to the law whose custodians the Pharisees had declared themselves to be.

This is one of the passages where Jesus seems to dissociate himself from the law. At 10,34 also Jesus says, "your law," when he uses another quotation from the Old Testament. For Brown, this is a reflection of the dissociation between the Church and the Synagogue,<sup>51</sup> and it has a hostile connotation too.<sup>52</sup> Schnackenburg also holds the same opinion.<sup>53</sup> But considering the way Jesus argues with the Pharisees, exposing their self-contradiction, it could very well mean the way in which the latter interpret the law. As we saw in the passage of the woman caught in adultery,<sup>54</sup> Jesus does not view the law in the same manner as the Pharisees do. The perception of law by Nicodemus, a Pharisee himself, was different from that of his colleagues (7,51).

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<sup>51</sup> *The Gospel I*, 312.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 341.

<sup>53</sup> *Das Johannesevangelium* 1, 246. At the footnote he says: "Die Wendung 'in eurem Gesetz' (vgl. 10,34) verrät den distanzierten Standpunkt der späteren Gemeinde (vgl. 7,19; 15,25)."

<sup>54</sup> We would like to mention again that we regard the story of the adulterous woman as an integral part of the Fourth Gospel.

According to J.-P.Charlier, the expression “your law” does not imply superiority or hostility, but rather the law which the Pharisees accept.<sup>55</sup> The Pharisees are also aware that the law does not mean the same to Jesus as it does to them. That is why they asked Jesus about his view of the law with regard to the judgment of the woman caught in adultery.<sup>56</sup> Thus the expression “your law” here should mean that Jesus is catching the Pharisees by their own standards.

The quotation from the law should be from Deut 17,6; 19,15 where two witnesses are required to verify an accusation for execution or for the establishment of the fact. The second reference from Deuteronomy explicitly states that two witnesses are required to establish a juridical fact. As we have seen so far in our examination of the role of the law with regard to Jesus, the law has a witnessing function to Jesus. Now Jesus affirms this fact. He points to the law which validates his statement of being the light of the world, when the Pharisees challenge him. Jesus is the light of the world even from the viewpoint of the Pharisees' interpretation of the the law. Jesus is not alone, because the Father is always with him (8,16). So Jesus' proclamation is valid even by the standard of the law that two witnesses are required to establish a fact. But the

Pharisees are not able to perceive these two witnesses, because the standard

<sup>55</sup> “L'exégèse johannique d'un précepte légal: Jean viii 17,” *RB* 67 (1960): 503-515.

<sup>56</sup> Jörg AUGENSTEIN, “ ‘Euer Gesetz’ - Ein Pronomen und die johanneische Haltung zum Gesetz,” *ZNW* 88 (1997): 311-313. Augenstein finds that the pronoun “your” actually reveals the proximity of the Fourth Gospel to the Jewish Tradition: “Die Pronomina, durch die ὁ νόμος im Munde Jesu näher qualifiziert wird, zeigen deshalb die Nähe des Johannesevangeliums zur jüdischen Tradition...” (313).

of judgment of Jesus and that of the Pharisees are totally opposite of each other. Because the Pharisees judge according to the flesh (8,15), Jesus and the Pharisees are in diametrically opposite worlds. So there is no chance for the Pharisees to understand Jesus nor his Father (8,19). Neither can they understand whence Jesus comes and where he goes to (8,14). The Pharisees cannot also understand that the law plays a witnessing function to Jesus. Jesus points to the fact that the law affirms his declaration that he is the light of the world. The law is on the side of Jesus. The purpose of the law itself is to prepare for the coming of Jesus. Thus the law cannot contradict Jesus. And Jesus does not contradict the law either, as we have seen in the story of the woman caught in adultery.

The law, taken even from the viewpoint of the Pharisees, cannot contradict Jesus, rather it can only confirm what Jesus says and bear witness to him. Thus we see the johannine view of the law, here in this verse too, falls in line with the same result we have seen in the examination of the other verses, i.e. the johannine concept of the law is positive, and the function of the law is to prepare for the coming of Jesus. And the incarnation is its culmination.

**7. 10,34 *Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law 'I said you are gods'?***

This verse belongs to the division 10,22-39 following the Good Shepherd imagery of Jesus and it is mainly an argument between Jesus and the Jews in the temple at Jerusalem (v.23). Verse 10,34 can be considered as part of the subdivision 10,33-36, which revolves around the theme of the Divine Sonship of Jesus (v.36) and the subsequent protest of the Jews. Raymond Brown finds two main themes running in the major section 10,22-39. The first one 10,24-30 deals with the Messiahship of Jesus and the second one 10,33-38 with the Sonship of Jesus.<sup>57</sup> He lists also a lot of similarities in the arguments between Jesus and the Jews here and also during the other feasts earlier: Sabbath (chapter 5), Passover (chapter 6) and Tabernacles (chapters 7 and 8).<sup>58</sup>

This is another instance where Jesus, who is himself a Jew, talks to the Jews about their law in the second person, "Your law." For Bultmann, the "your" at 10,34 is an addition.<sup>59</sup> We have already discussed this while dealing with 7,19 and 8,17. It does not demonstrate Jesus' opposition to the law as dissociating himself from the law, but rather it is a manner of indicating the way the Jews view the law, or their view of interpretation of the law.

<sup>57</sup> BROWN, *The Gospel I*, 404-405.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> BULTMANN, *The Gospel*, 389.

What is mentioned as a quotation from the law in 10, 34 is actually from the Book of Psalms. The quotation at 10,34 is the first half of the Psalm 82,6. For Bultmann, the reference from the Psalm here is without any regard for the original meaning and context.<sup>60</sup> But our following analysis will demonstrate that John has a definite purpose in quoting this Old Testament reference and that he is aware of the original meaning of the quotation. What follows is an *a minori ad maius* argument. If God calls even human beings gods, then how much more the title Son of God should apply to Jesus whom God has sanctified and sent into the world! However, we should note that the human beings who are called "gods" are qualified. These human beings are those to whom the word of God came. They functioned as emissaries of God because they communicated the Word of God. If those ordinary human beings could be called "gods" because they functioned as vehicles of God, how much more Jesus ought to be called God! Jesus is more than just an ordinary human being, because God sanctified him and sent him into the world (v.36) as the Word Himself. The law, even from the viewpoint of the Jews, testifies to this.

This point is emphasized again when the same quotation is mentioned as coming from the Scripture (v.35). What is the law for the Jews is also being mentioned here as the Scripture. But it should be noted that in the Fourth

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

**Gospel the Scripture is never mentioned as “your Scripture.” For John the Scripture is the Word of God and therefore it is unqualifiable. It is always absolute. As we saw in the first chapter, the value of the law is relative. So it can be qualified. The law can be viewed from different perspectives as “your” (8,37; 10,34; 18,31) law, “our” (7,51) law, or “their” (15,25) law or even without any qualification (19,7), but it is not the same case with the Scripture. It is interesting to note that one and the same reality can be perceived as the law and also as the Scripture.**

**At 12,34 the people say that according to the law the Messiah should remain forever. The people here take the quotation literally, meaning, if Jesus is the Messiah, he should remain physically forever. Jesus remains of course forever, though not in the physical and temporal sense. He is present in the Spirit forever. The Scripture foretells the spiritual presence of the Messiah. People are apparently confused to hear Jesus’ announcement that he should be lifted up. Their confusion comes due to their expectation according to the law and not according to the Scripture, which according to John cannot be broken. Here it becomes obvious that, according to John, the function of the law is relative whereas the Scripture is absolute, because the Scripture is the Word of God.**

Thus we see here that the word of God occupies also an important part in the argument between Jesus and the Jews (vv.35-36) in this passage. If the written Word of God, the Scripture, cannot be broken, then the Word of God made flesh should be regarded still more venerable. We find the verb ἐγένετο connected with the Word of God addressed to the people at v.35. This is the same verb which John uses several times in the Prologue to describe God's creative action through the Logos. The same verb is again used for the Word becoming flesh. It is also used by the LXX for the calling of Hosea (1,1) and Jeremiah (1,2). According to John, the people to whom the word of God came (v.35) would rank in the line of prophets who were entrusted with the responsibility of communicating the word of God to the people. Here the comparison is that Jesus is beyond comparison of all these people. And the argument is from the viewpoint of the Jews.

What we find here is the witnessing of the law to Jesus. The law even from the viewpoint of the Jews should bear witness to Jesus and support his spoken word. This affirms again our finding that the law in the Fourth Gospel is not negative and that John is consistent in his concept of the law. We shall see if the analysis of the rest of the passages again proves this point.

**8. 12,34** *The people answered him, "We have heard from the law that the Christ lives forever."*

This verse belongs to the division 12,20-36 where the main theme revolves around the announcement by Jesus of the arrival of his hour (vv.23,27). The division is quite clear as it starts with a new episode with the coming of the Greeks to Jesus and then concludes with Jesus going into hiding to avoid the Jews.

The mention of the law at 12,34 is again to make a reference to the Old Testament. When Jesus announces that he should be lifted up from the earth, the people express their apparent confusion and misunderstanding,<sup>61</sup> which arises out of their dependence on the law. According to the expectation of the people, the Messiah should remain forever. John does not state what part of the law the people seem to have in mind and there are numerous opinions among the scholars to speculate the quotation.

E.D.Freed's monograph on Old Testament quotations in the Fourth Gospel<sup>62</sup> does not deal with 12,34 for its treatment of Old Testament quotations in the

<sup>61</sup> SCHNACKENBURG, *The Gospel of John* vol.2, transl. C.Hastings and others (New York: Crossroad,1982), 395. Schnackenburg describes the reaction of the crowd as, "uncomprehending and incredulous," with regard to the saying of Jesus.

<sup>62</sup> E.D.FREED, *Old Testament Quotations in the Gospel of John* (Leiden: E.J.Brill, 1965).

Fourth Gospel. In Barrett's opinion one should not try to search for an Old Testament text for this particular verse, but take the whole Old Testament in general.<sup>63</sup> Among the many probable Old Testament texts proposed by several scholars, the one which has come closest for the citation in 12,34 is Ps.89,37.<sup>64</sup> This psalm from the LXX mentions that the seed of David will continue forever and his rule (throne), which is compared to the sun and the moon in the sky, shall remain forever. The crowd speaks also in 7,42 where the Messiah is said to be expected from the seed of David and from the village of Bethlehem. But there the crowd quotes the Scripture, and not the law, and they are right. But here, at 12,34, they quote the law and they are wrong. But what concerns us here is that the people attribute to the law an absolute validity. The one who has the absolute validity is Jesus himself and not the law. The law as we have seen in our first chapter has only relative validity, whereas the Scripture will have absolute validity.

It is interesting to note that Jesus does not directly answer their question about being lifted up and about the Son of Man. But Jesus' answer does clarify the people' position with regard to the law. He tells them indirectly that they are wrong to think, thanks to their view of the law, that the Messiah should remain forever. No, the light does not remain forever on the earth. He should be lifted

<sup>63</sup>BARRETT, *The Gospel According to John*, 356.

<sup>64</sup> W.C. VAN UNNIK, "The Quotation from the Old Testament in John 12,34," *NT 3* (1959): 174-179.

up soon. The people do not have an eternal opportunity, rather a limited opportunity. They should make use of this opportunity and come to the light. The 'little while' which is contained in the answer of Jesus (v.35) contradicts the 'forever' (v.34) of the people. They should orient themselves towards the light, while the light is available, before darkness overtakes. As Bultmann correctly puts it, "... (it) is a warning that soon it will be too late."<sup>65</sup> At present, they seem to be walking in darkness and they are ignorant of their destination (v.35). This is manifested in their misunderstanding of the Messiah. The remedy is possible only when they come to believe in the light, Jesus, who will dispel their darkness of ignorance. The light of true knowledge and orientation can come only from Jesus who surpasses the limitedness and the relativity of the law. Here again, we are given the same johannine perception of the law. It is the law which fulfills the role of bearing witness to Jesus and not vice-versa. Jesus is above the law.

**9. 15,25. *But that the word written in their law may be fulfilled: 'They hated me without cause.'***

We have here once more an instance of the use of the term law for a quotation from the Scripture. What is quoted here is a verse from the Psalm. The sentence, *They hated me without cause*, occurs at Pss 35,19; 69,4. There is another instance also at Ps 119,161, where the psalmist states, "Princes

<sup>65</sup> BULTMANN, *The Gospel*, 356.

persecute me without cause." A similar verse could also be found in Psalm 109,3, where hatred is mentioned with no cause for hostility. However, it is more likely that the evangelist has in mind one of the Psalms we have earlier mentioned, especially the Ps 69 which is also mentioned in the Synoptic Gospels (Matt 27,34).

But what concerns us here is not the discussion of the cited verse, rather the meaning of the term law in this verse. Unlike in 7,19; 8,17; 10,34, where the law was mentioned as "your law", here it is "their law." In all the above three instances of "your law," Jesus addressed the Jews, whereas now Jesus is talking to his disciples. The context of 15,25 is the farewell discourse of Jesus to his disciples. This verse forms part of the section 15,18 - 16,4 of the Farewell Discourse. There are a few authors<sup>68</sup> who find a subdivision from 15,18 to 15,25 within the section 15,18 - 16,4. The verse 15,26 introduces a new theme, the Paraclete. The subdivision 15,18-25 has only one theme: the world's hatred of Jesus which in turn results in the world's hatred of the Father and of his disciples. The hatred of the world for Jesus is the subject of talk in this subdivision. The world hates Jesus and so it will also hate his disciples. The hatred of the world is directed not only toward Jesus, but also toward His Father. And this hatred is without cause.

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<sup>68</sup> Edwyn Clement HOSKYNS, *The Fourth Gospel*, ed.F.N.DAVEY (London: Faber and Faber, 1947), 479. Hoskyns considers this a new section in his commentary.

What is John's idea of the law in 15,25? Of course, John speaks here of the written law, the Scripture, quoting more specifically a verse from the Psalm. The world hates Jesus and this hatred is already foretold in the law of the Jews (their law). Thus the law is fulfilled. That the world would hate Jesus was not something surprising. The law, which has been perceived as "their law" in 15,25, has been fulfilled in the world's hatred of Jesus. The law, even if it is viewed from the perspective of the "world," is fulfilled in Jesus. This confirms once again our view that Jesus and the law are not against each other. The law bears witness to Jesus. This is the consistent johannine view of the law in the Fourth Gospel.

### ***The law and the Scripture***

The examination of 15,25 brings us again to the discussion of the concepts of law and Scripture in the Fourth Gospel. For John, the law does not mean merely the Torah, oral or written, or even the first five books of the Bible. The law comprehends the whole of the Scripture, the books of the Prophets and the Psalms too. As we have already seen at 10,34, and so now here too at 15,25, John has Jesus quote verses from the Psalms which, for Jesus, is also part of the law. Thus the term law is comprehensive for John. Though it may appear

that the johannine expression of the law is synonymous with Scripture, yet John makes a distinction between both these terms. While the term law could be qualified with the possessive pronouns "our" (7,51), "your" (7,19; 8,17; 10,34; 18,31) and "their" (15,25), it is never the case with the term Scripture. According to Pancaro, the term law has a negative connotation in the Fourth Gospel.<sup>67</sup> The term Scripture has a positive aspect in the Fourth Gospel. It is always used in the absolute sense. The Scripture cannot be broken and it should always be fulfilled. It is interesting to note that the same citation could be described as from the law (your law) and also as from the Scripture (10,34f).

It is obvious that what John means by the terms the law and the Scripture is one and the same reality. And yet he makes a distinction between them. The distinction is derived from the way we perceive this reality. It can be perceived as the law or as the Scripture. While the former can be qualified by possession, the latter is not. The Scripture is universal and absolute. Though the term law may not have such a sacred connotation as the Scripture in the Fourth Gospel, yet it cannot be described as negative even if it is viewed from the viewpoint of the world. The law was meant to prepare the people for the coming of the Logos in the Incarnation. The law was written in preparation for the coming of Jesus and, in this sense, the idea of the law is certainly not negative in John's Gospel.

Moses wrote about Jesus in the law (1,45; 5,46). The whole purpose of the law

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<sup>67</sup> PANCARO, *The Law*, 328.

being written was to bear witness to Jesus. Now the verse 15,25 tells the same thing. That Jesus would be hated without any reason has also been foretold in the Scripture. According to John, most of the events in the life of Jesus have already been foretold in the law. John the Baptist as the one preparing the way for the Lord (1,23) was already foretold by Isaiah (40,3f). The cleansing of the Temple by Jesus (2,13-18) was also foretold in the Scripture (Psalm 69,9). Jesus as the Bread from heaven (6,31) was foretold in the law (Exod 16,4). Those who come to Jesus have listened to His Father (6,45) and they have already been foretold as having been taught by God (Isa 54,13; Jer 31,34). Further, Jesus as the source of the living water (7,37f in Isa 55,1), Jesus' entry into Jerusalem and his riding on a young donkey (12,14 in Zech 9,9), the joyful acclamation of the people greeting his entry into Jerusalem (12,13 in Ps 118,25), the unbelief of the Jews in Jesus (12,38-40 in Isa 6,10; 53,1), the betrayal of Jesus by Judas (13,18; 17,12 in Ps 41,9), the throwing of lots for the garments of Jesus (19,24 in Ps 22,18), the thirst of Jesus (19,28 in Pss 22,15; 69,21), the piercing of Jesus' side (19,37 in Zech 12,10) instead of breaking his legs (19,36 in Exod 12,46; Psalm 34,20), Jesus' calling himself as Son of God (10,34, in Psalm 82,6) and his calling God as His Father (20,17 in Psalm 89,26), all these events in the life of Jesus have already been foretold in the Scriptures. The description of Jesus' works as signs is also an allusion to the signs Moses did (Deut 34,10f).

The hatred of the world to Jesus without any motivation was also according to the law. Thus, the verse 15,25 confirms our hitherto examination of the term law in the Fourth Gospel: the law bears witness to Jesus and is not contradictory to Jesus nor to his actions.

**10. 18,31 *Pilate said to them, "Take him and judge him according to your law."***

This verse belongs to the section in the Passion Narrative where Jesus faces Pilate (18,28-19,16). This major section can be further divided into several subunits, one of which is 18,28-32 comprising the verse 18,31. This can very well be considered a subunit, because 18,27 ends with the denial of Peter which concludes with the cock crowing. Peter's denial takes place in the High Priest's palace and thereafter Jesus is led away to Pilate at 18,28. The subunit 18,28-32 portrays Pilate telling the "Jews" to judge Jesus according to their own law. This subunit concludes with the narrator's comment on the inability of the "Jews" to execute judgment on Jesus, reminding the readers that it was the fulfilment of Jesus' own word. What concerns us in this unit is the meaning of the law according to John in 18,31.

Now let us examine 18,31. It is the Roman procurator Pilate who tells the Jews that they should judge Jesus according to their law. For Dodd,<sup>68</sup> this statement of Pilate implies no special significance in the meaning of the law in the Fourth Gospel, except that it concerns the law governing the administration of justice in the Jewish community. In this sense, according to Dodd, it is merely a fraction of what actually John means by the concept of the law in the Fourth Gospel. In other words, for Dodd the meaning of the law in the Fourth Gospel is more comprehensive than what it actually means in 18,31. The meaning of the law in the Fourth Gospel "covers both the narrower and the wider meanings of Torah."<sup>69</sup> Even if it means only the narrower sense and not the broader sense where John would consider even the Psalms as part of the law, yet the examination of the term law here should lead us to understand what John means by the law in the Fourth Gospel in the wider sense as well.

Our examination of the term at 1,17 and other instances has shown that, for John, the law draws its source from God, even if it is through the mediation of Moses. The law, in this sense, is not only the Pentateuch, but also the whole of Scripture. According to Pancaro, the terms the law and the Scripture are interchangeable.<sup>70</sup> For John, who is consistent in his concept of the law

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<sup>68</sup> *Interpretation*, 76-77.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 76.

<sup>70</sup> PANCARO, *The Law*, 327.

throughout the Gospel, the meaning of the term law at 18,31 cannot be less significant than what it is in other instances in the Fourth Gospel. In fact, we understand the special significance of the meaning of the term the law at 18,31 when he explains immediately in the next verse (18,32) that this was in fulfillment of what Jesus spoke about his death. This remark by John, immediately after the mention of the law in 18,31, denotes the unique significance he attaches to this verse. The meaning of the term law in 18,31 is also inextricably attached to the verse 18,32 where John draws the reader's attention to the saying of Jesus himself about his death.

Where is this reference to Jesus' speaking about his death in the Fourth Gospel? At 12,32, Jesus says, "And if I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw all men to myself." And at 12,33 too, there is a comment by the narrator on the saying of Jesus that he said this in order to signify by what death he would die. And at both instances, the phrase used is exactly the same: σημαίνων ποίω θανάτῳ ἤμελλεν ἀποθνήσκειν. This phrase, word for word, is exactly the same at 12,33 and at 18,32. Bultmann,<sup>71</sup> Brown,<sup>72</sup> Schnackenburg,<sup>73</sup> Loisy,<sup>74</sup> Pancaro,<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> *The Gospel of John*, 653.

<sup>72</sup> *The Gospel II*, 850.

<sup>73</sup> *Johannesevangelium III*, 281.

<sup>74</sup> *Le quatrième évangile*, 467: Loisy adds also 3,14 and 8,28.

<sup>75</sup> *The Law*, 326.

Dodd,<sup>76</sup> and Haenchen<sup>77</sup> believe that the narrator's comment found in verse 18,32 refers to Jesus' words on 12,32, although they seem to overlook the striking similarity of the terms between both verses.

It is interesting to note that the comment in 18,32 comes immediately after the "Jews" express their lack of authority to execute Jesus according to their law. I prefer to use the phrase "lack of authority" because that would be more accurate to what John implies by employing the Greek term, οὐκ ἔξεστιν. An article by Ramsey Michaels on 18,31 explains that the usage of the terms ἔξεστιν and οὐκ ἔξεστιν is predominantly to refer to what is either permitted or forbidden for the Jews by the law.<sup>78</sup> What actually John means here is that the "Jews" have not been bestowed with power from Above to crucify Jesus, unlike Pilate. Jesus tells Pilate (19,11) that his authority (ἐξουσία) came from Above.<sup>79</sup> When we examine the response of the Jews at 18,31 in this light, the evangelist wants to make it clear that the death of Jesus by crucifixion at the hands of the Romans was part of God's plan (18,11). What was not God's plan was that Jesus should be executed by the "Jews" according to "their" law.

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<sup>76</sup> *Interpretation*, 427.

<sup>77</sup> *A Commentary on the Gospel of John 2*, transl. Robert Funk (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980), 179. Haenchen believes it is also a play on 3,14, where Jesus spoke of his "being lifted up."

<sup>78</sup> J. Ramsey MICHAELS, "John 18,31 and the trial of Jesus," *NTS* 36 (1990): 474-479. Ramsey further notes that even the usage of these terms in the rest of the New Testament almost always means what God or the law of God either forbids or allows.

<sup>79</sup> Bultmann rightly calls Pilate in this sense "an instrument of God": *The Gospel*, 662.

What is the point which John wants to drive home through the statement of the "Jews?" The answer to this question will lead us to the focal point. As we have always seen, the johannine concept of the law vis-à-vis Jesus is certainly not negative. Jesus is not against the law; neither is the law against Jesus. In such a case, the law cannot condemn Jesus, even if the "Jews" want to exploit the law for their own purpose. The "Jews" have no power over Jesus. The law of Moses simply will not condemn Jesus.<sup>80</sup> This meaning of the law in 18,31 is clear in the reply of the Jews to Pilate.

The law has played no role in the death of Jesus. The law was no villain for Jesus, even if the "Jews" had tried to pit Jesus against the law by saying that he transgressed it. The apparent "guardians of the law," the chief priests and the Pharisees, or rather in johannine term, "the Jews," are the ones who are transgressing the law by seeking to kill Jesus (7,19-20). They have always accused Jesus of breaking the law, especially by not keeping the law of the Sabbath or by calling himself the Son of God.<sup>81</sup> But now, the "Jews" themselves admit that they have no authority to execute judgment on Jesus. This is a "devastating self-condemnation on the part of those who have been trying to kill Jesus all along."<sup>82</sup>

<sup>80</sup> Paul DUKE , *Irony in the Fourth Gospel* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1985), 128.

<sup>81</sup> The "Jews" had leveled such accusations earlier. At 5,18, John had explained that the "Jews" had sought to kill Jesus because he not only broke the Sabbath but also called God His Father, making himself equal to God. And at 10,33 John tells that the "Jews" focused on the charge of blasphemy against Jesus for making himself God.

<sup>82</sup> Ramsey MICHAELS, *ibid.*, 478.

The reply of the "Jews" has led to a wide ranging discussion among scholars whether the Jews really had the power to impose capital punishment. Does their reply that they had no power to put *anyone to death* indicate that they had no power to execute any sort of capital punishment<sup>85</sup> or merely crucifixion?<sup>86</sup> The reply, as it is in 18,32, seems to imply that they have no power at all to put anybody to any sort of death. But the reference of 18,32 to 12,32-33 indicates that John's interest lies in Jesus being "lifted up." And this being lifted up, which is the johannine expression for crucifixion, was possible only at the hands of Pilate and not at the hands of the Jews. That would imply that according to John the Jews were unable to carry out crucifixion<sup>87</sup> which was reserved for the Romans. Whether the Jews were authorised to perform any sort of capital punishment<sup>88</sup> may go well beyond the scope of our discussion. John's focus is that Jesus was beyond the power of the Jews to be executed. It is probable that

<sup>85</sup> A.N.SHERWIN-WHITE, *Roman Society and Roman law in the New Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), 24-47: Sherwin-White is prominent among the scholars who say that the Jews had no power at all to carry out any sort of capital punishment.

<sup>86</sup> Paul WINTER, *On the Trial of Jesus*. *Studia Judaica. Forschungen zur Wissenschaft des Judentums* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1961), 73. Winter holds the view that the Jewish Sanhedrin had the power to execute capital punishment until 70 A.D.

<sup>87</sup> E.STAUFFER, *Jerusalem und Rom* (Bern: Francke, 1957), 123-127. Stauffer says that the Jews had the power even to execute crucifixion. But this is most unlikely and most authors repudiate this view.

<sup>88</sup> It is possible that the Jews had the power to execute capital punishment such as the stoning of Stephen (Acts 7,58) or the story of the adulterous woman (7,53ff) in the Gospel of John itself seem to indicate. Josephus also bears witness (*Antiquities of the Jews* 20: 200) that the Jews stoned James to death.

the Jews executed people on religious violations by such as stoning etc.<sup>87</sup> But they could not exercise this power on Jesus. The johannine implication here is that Jesus was not a religious violator. So they bring against Jesus a political charge which brings Pilate into the picture and thus the act of being lifted up. The question of Pilate to Jesus whether he was the king of the Jews (18,33) would be a pointer to this. Raymond Brown detects in John's passion narrative a genuine political accusation against Jesus by the "Jews" which is absent in the Synoptic version.<sup>88</sup> According to John, the "Jews" themselves were convinced that their religious accusation against Jesus would be a futile attempt. Thus, the "Jews" were accusing Jesus contrary to their own conscience. They make a pawn out of Pilate for their evil design and Pilate, finding no way out from the mess he has got himself in, yields to the "Jews" by handing Jesus over to them for crucifixion. Thus the johannine portrayal of Jesus' trial before Pilate indicates that both parties (the "Jews" as well as Pilate) were well aware that Jesus was innocent. And he is being led away in order to be "lifted up." The "Jews" themselves were unable to accuse Jesus as violator of the law.

John makes it clear that the "Jews" have no power over Jesus, even if they use the pretext that Jesus transgressed the law. John implicitly makes the "Jews"

<sup>87</sup> In Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Sanhedrin 43a in I.EPSTEIN, *The Babylonian Talmud Sede Nezikin* (London: The Soncino Press, 1935), 43a says that Yeshu (Jesus) was going forth to be stoned and then it adds that he was hanged (meaning crucifixion). This would be an indication that the Jews indeed tried to execute him according to their "own" law but were unsuccessful.

<sup>88</sup> *The Gospel* II, 849.

admit that Jesus did not do anything against the law and, as a matter of fact, Jesus was not judged according to the Jewish law. This brings us once again to the johannine concept of the law which has a witnessing value to Jesus. It cannot go against Jesus. The concept of the law in the Fourth Gospel is certainly not negative. It bears witness to Jesus. Because of this witnessing dimension of the law to Jesus, the law has a prophetic function.

**11. 19,7 *The Jews answered him, "We have law and by the law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God."***

As we have already seen at the outset of our examination of the verse 18,31, *Jesus before Pilate* forms a major section from 18,28-19,16. This can more properly be called, *Pilate and the "Jews" before Jesus*.<sup>80</sup> This section could be divided into several subunits for exegetical purposes. One such subunit can be from 19,4-7,<sup>80</sup> which follows the soldiers' crowning of Jesus with thorns after the scourging. This subunit portrays Pilate before the Jewish crowd. Immediately after the scourging and crowning of Jesus with thorns, Pilate comes out and declares the innocence of Jesus before the crowd.

<sup>80</sup> Actually this is the proper johannine theological presentation. Josef BLANK also would consider it proper to name it so in his article, "Die Verhandlung vor Pilatus, Joh 18,28-19,16 im Lichte johanneischer Theologie," *EZ* 3 (1959-60): 60-81.

<sup>80</sup> Several other authors too consider this as a small unit, including SCHNACKENBURG, *Johannesevangelium* III, 293; Wayne MEEKS, *The Prophet-King: Moses Tradition in the Johannine Christology* (Leiden: E.J.Brill, 1967), 69; BLANK, *ibid.*, 60.

The examination of 18,31 demonstrated that the "Jews" were unable to execute Jesus according to "their" law. We saw also that the johannine presentation revealed that the "Jews" were themselves convinced that they were leveling charges against an innocent man. And Pilate was very well aware of this. When he asked the "Jews" to judge Jesus according to their law (18,31), they said they were not authorised to do so. What they refused to do at 18,31, they now seem ready to do at 19,7. That is, they pass their judgment on Jesus according to "their" law. They claim to have a law and according to the law Jesus ought to be executed. Do they not contradict their earlier statement at 18,31?

Our analysis of 18,31 revealed that the accusation of the "Jews" against Jesus was not so much religious as political. Being well aware of this plot of the "Jews," Pilate was questioning Jesus whether he was the King of the Jews, with his intention of releasing him. The "Jews" seem to understand Pilate's intention and apprehend that their plan may not succeed. So now they bring in the religious accusation.<sup>71</sup> They accuse Jesus of making himself Son of God. Here we are reminded of their earlier accusations against Jesus of calling God his

<sup>71</sup> Josef BLINZLER, *Der Prozess Jesu* (Regensburg: Verlag Friedrich Pustet, 1969), 331. According to Blinzler, the "Jews" bring in the religious accusation against Jesus to strengthen their earlier accusation and it does not reflect a change in their stand. It is an invitation of the "Jews" to Pilate to see their accusation against Jesus "with different eyes." Blinzler says, "Zum ersten und einzigen Mal rücken sie hier mit der Gotteslästerungsanklage heraus, die ihrem eigenen Urteilsspruch zugrunde lag. Wollen Sie etwas ihre politisch gefasste Anklage als aussichtslos aufgeben und fortan durch die andere ersetzen? Nein! Das neue Argument sollte nur ihre eigentlich Anklage stützen...Die Juden wollen also den Römer, der Jesus für einen harmlosen Menschen hält, durch den Hinweis darauf, dass Dieser nach ihrem Gesetz den Tod verdiene (Lev 24, 16) dahin bringen, ihre politische Anklage mit anderen Augen anzusehen."

Father (5,18; 10,33), for which they were seeking to kill him. According to the Jewish law, a blasphemer deserved a capital punishment by being stoned (Lev 24,16). The Jews tell Pilate even if he had found Jesus to be innocent on political charge, they would demand capital punishment on Jesus for the religious charge. They try to convince Pilate against releasing Jesus on this score.

We may reconcile the statements of the "Jews" at 18,31 and 19,7, if we understand that the "Jews" do claim that Jesus deserves to die according to the law (19,7), but they have no authority to execute it (18,32). But to find inconsistency in the description of John because of the apparent contradiction between 18,31 and 19,7 would be to lose sight of johannine theology.<sup>82</sup> Trying to reconcile the apparent contradiction between these two verses by appealing to the ignorance of Pilate on the Jewish juridical procedures in the johannine narrative would be to lose sight of the johannine Christology.<sup>83</sup> Of course, the Jewish crowd was "queer and superlatively unreasonable,"<sup>84</sup> besides being perverse to account for making such contradictory demands, yet John's

<sup>82</sup> Paul WINTER finds John's account "incompatible" with that of Markan Passion Narrative and calls the johannine description as "inconsistent" in his article, "The Trial of Jesus and the Competence of the Sanhedrin," *NTS* 10 (1961): 494-499. Winter's description of the johannine narrative loses sight of the johannine theology and Christology which is consistent not only through the Passion Narrative but also all through the Gospel, as our analysis reveals. His conclusion that the johannine passion narrative "abounds in improbabilities and contradictions" does not hold water.

<sup>83</sup> Winter, *On the Trial*, 76.

<sup>84</sup> Winter, "The Trial" *NTS* 10 (1961): 494-499.

narrative has a definite purpose in describing those events that way.

Certainly, there is a deeper meaning in the claim of the "Jews." We see the johannine irony in the demand of the Jews at 19,7. The Jews have **their** law, but Jesus does not die according to "their" law, but rather according to **the** law. The law witnesses not only to the coming of Jesus, but also to his life events and particularly to his death on the cross, which is indeed the exaltation of Jesus.<sup>65</sup> John has already pointed out that Jesus accepts death on the cross in obedience to his Father's will and out of freedom (10,18). No one, including the Jews, has the power even by means of their law, to execute Jesus. The law bears witness to Jesus' exaltation.

Our examination of the term law in the Fourth Gospel has repeatedly revealed to us that the law is not against Jesus. On the contrary, the law testifies to Jesus. Now it does the same with regard to Jesus' death on the cross. Jesus' lifting up on the cross is according to the will of the Father, and thus according to the law. The "Jews" unwittingly tell a truth, and of course, which they themselves do not understand. John uses his irony here in the same manner as he did to illustrate the prophecy of the High Priest at 11,50. The High Priest Caiaphas had declared

<sup>65</sup> Wilhelm THÜSING, *Die Erhöhung und Verherrlichung Jesus im Johannesevangelium* (Münster: Aschendorfsche Verlag-Buchhandlung, 1960), 33. Thüsing perceives the johannine irony in two ways: "Es ist also zweierlei ausgedrückt: der verherrlichte Jesus ist durch die gewaltsame Tötung am Kreuz auf seinen Herrscherthron gekommen, und zweitens: dieser Thron ist immer noch das Kreuz, insofern Jesus in der Weise herrscht, dass er die Menschen zuerst an sein Kreuz zieht, bzw. dass er die Seinen an ihn als den Gegreuzigten glauben lässt."

that one man (Jesus) should die for the sake of the nation. And John added a comment in the next verse (v.51) that the high priest said this “not of himself,” but it was a prophecy because he was the high priest that year. Similarly, here too, the “Jews” say this not of themselves. The “Jews” express a divine truth which is, of course, beyond the realm of their understanding. .

The construction of the verse 19,7 confirms our observation. The “Jews” declare, *Ἡμεῖς νόμον ἔχομεν καὶ κατὰ τὸν νόμον ὀφείλει ἀποθανεῖν*. The highlighted terms (law, the law) do not mean one and the same reality. We have already observed a similar johannine usage in our examination of the verses in the Prologue. John makes a distinction in the meaning of the terms by his usage of the articles. The first term, **law** without article, indicates the law of the “Jews,”: the law which they claim to have. The second one, **the law** (with article), indicates the law wherein the will of God is manifested. The second law is the law according to which Jesus willingly accepts death on the cross and which testifies to his exaltation. This is the term which would be synonymous to the johannine term, “Scripture.” We may very well note that the “Jews” do not claim

that Jesus should die according to “their” law.<sup>66</sup> They do not even say that they have a law and according to “that” law Jesus should die. They just claim that they have law (without the article = *ἡμεῖς νόμον*). But Jesus has to die according to the law. Thus John makes the distinction that Jesus’ exaltation was according to the law, but not according to the law of the “Jews.”

The law was given by God through Moses in order to bear witness to the coming of Jesus, the Son of God. If the law foretold the coming of the Logos in the flesh, it foretold also the exaltation of the Son of God on the cross by being “lifted up.” Moses had written about this too (Num 21,7-8). What Moses wrote in the law was about Jesus and his rising from the dead (20,9). The witnessing value of the law to Jesus, its prophetic function is once again illustrated by John in 19,7.

The johannine irony of 19,7 does not end there. The “Jews” never say that Jesus blasphemed. The punishment for the blasphemer, prescribed in the law

<sup>66</sup>Simon LÉGASSE, *Le Procès de Jésus*. Lectio Divina 156 (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1994), 66. Légasse is right in saying that the law and its precepts did not play any role in the accusations of the “Jews” against Jesus. But he views it from another perspective, that is, from the passive viewpoint that Jesus was not a violator. But as we perceive, the johannine narrative provides us with an active viewpoint of Jesus vis-à-vis the law. Rather than saying that Jesus did not violate the law to be accused, it should rather be said that Jesus fulfills the law or to put it still more correctly, the law is fulfilled in Jesus. It was precisely for this purpose that the law came into existence. With regard to 19,7 Légasse explains that it is not an exception for his view. According to his exegesis of 19,7, Jesus was accused not because of his attitude to the law, but because of the fact that he made himself Son of God. Our examination shows that the accusation of the “Jews” against Jesus that he made himself Son of God is indeed related to the law, the law against blasphemy. Légasse does not notice the johannine irony here. As we have observed, and as it has also been noticed by several others, the meaning of the johannine Passion Narrative, which is full of irony, cannot be fully understood unless we decipher these ironies.

(Lev 24,16), does not apply to Jesus, when it is viewed even from the perspective of the "Jews." The "Jews" claim that Jesus should die according to the law, not because he blasphemed, but because Jesus made himself Son of God. In the johannine irony, they state once again the truth. The Sonship of Jesus is testified in the Scripture as much as the exaltation of Jesus by being "lifted up." All these things had been foretold in the law. And Jesus dies according to the law (κατὰ τὸν νόμον). Pancaro does notice a peculiarity in the johannine use of the phrase κατὰ τὸν νόμον, but does not decipher its meaning and the johannine irony.<sup>97</sup> He does not also distinguish the role of the law from that of the "Jews."

The johannine use of the term "Jews," whenever it is placed in opposition to Jesus, functions as a symbol for whatever is against the truth or for whatever is evil.<sup>98</sup> Here we have to be very careful to differentiate between the symbol and

<sup>97</sup> PANCARO, *The Law*, 510 states: "In the eyes of the Jews the law demands the death of Jesus because he is opposed to the law; in the eyes of the evangelist the law demands the death of Jesus because it was given by God through Moses precisely in order to find its fulfillment in the death of Jesus. The death of Jesus comes about as a result of the Father's will, not because he is proven guilty - the law is impotent to condemn Jesus." Pancaro is right when he affirms that the law is fulfilled in Jesus. But he is wrong when he places the law in opposition to Jesus. The law was not meant to oppose Jesus. John always presents the law to be on the side of Jesus. We have seen that the johannine presentation of the concept of law was to bear witness to Jesus. The law is fulfilled in Jesus. That is where the law draws its very identity. But in another place, Pancaro does note (526) that the law in John is "basically" positive, but that seems to be his observation when he compares the view of the law in John with that of Paul. There is some ambivalence in Pancaro (which he explicitly notes in 523) with regard to the relationship of the law to Jesus. However, his general view that the Jews could not succeed in using the law to accuse Jesus would confirm our view of the concept of the law in John.

<sup>98</sup> S.G.F. BRANDON, *The Trial of Jesus of Nazareth* (London: B.T.Batsford, 1968), 134. Brandon states, "The trial and Crucifixion, in fact, constitute the culminating act in the dualistic drama with which John's Gospel is really concerned...In this signal struggle, the Jews are portrayed as the enemies of Jesus and children of the devil."

the social reality. The johannine symbol cannot be identified with the racial or the social reality of the Jews as a whole. The fact remains that Jesus himself was a Jew. And according to John, "Salvation comes from the Jews (4.22)." Thus it would be a fallacy to identify the johannine symbol with the traditional Judaism.<sup>89</sup> By now, we know that the law is positive with regard to Jesus whereas the Jews are not. It is obvious for the readers of the Fourth Gospel that John does make a distinction between the johannine symbol of the "Jews" and the Jews in general. This clear distinction should be carefully kept, as John himself does in the Fourth Gospel. The verse 19,7 plays an important role in this respect to understand John's distinction not only between "law" (of the "Jews") and *the* law (where God's will is revealed) but also between Jews in general and "the Jews." The johannine theology and Christology will not be properly understood when this important distinction is not perceived and comprehended in the Fourth Gospel.

The verse 19,7 illustrates also how "the Jews" play a game of defeating themselves. It is not the Son of God whom they crucify. They crucify rather their "own king." Here we come again to the johannine irony. The irony in the Passion Narrative, especially in the verses 18,31 and 19,7, lies in the world of "real" and

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<sup>89</sup> Pancaro states that Jesus was against the Torah, in the meaning and value given to it by traditional Judaism (*The Law*, 505). According to John, the true traditional Judaism (1,45; 5,46) will recognise its fulfillment in Jesus. Besides, the Jews who are against Jesus cannot be identified with the traditional Judaism.

the “unreal.” For John, in these verses of the Passion Narrative, one has to go beyond the mere appearance to perceive the true reality. It is to see with the eyes of faith. However, this is not a denial of the material world by John. Jesus multiplied the loaves because he was concerned for the physical existence of the people (6,1-15). But to consider the physical dimension as everything is to deny the real existence. In the eyes of the “Jews”, who belong only to the world of the apparent reality, Jesus is crucified. But according to the true reality of things, Jesus is exalted. The crucifixion is, for John and believers like him, at the same time exaltation. The kingdom of Jesus is not of this world. Jesus is King in the true sense of the word. The kingdom of Jesus “is not of this world” (18,36). This is one of the main themes John wants to portray in his Passion Narrative. Jesus as true King is perhaps the most predominant theme John has in mind in the Passion Narrative.<sup>100</sup> Jesus is indeed King not as the “Jews” want, a political monarch, but a King in the most real sense. Political leadership was not Jesus’ slightest intention. He had declined it when such an opportunity came to him without even asking for it (6,15).

The johannine irony is that, in the rejection of Jesus, the “Jews” reject God as their King. For the people of Israel, God was their true king (1 Sam 8,6ff; 2 Sam

<sup>100</sup> I. DE LA POTTERIE, “Jésus Roi et juge d’après Jean 19,13,” *Bib* 41 (1960): 217-247. De la Potterie notes: “Il faut se rappeler comment tout le récit johannique de la passion, de 18,33 à 19,22, est dominé par le thème de Jésus-βασιλεύς. Le terme βασιλεύς revient jusqu’à douze fois.”

7,11ff). The people of Israel had never in fact acknowledged anyone other than Yahweh as their King, even in the face of foreign rule (Isa 26,13). One who does not belong to the people of Israel can never be acknowledged as a true representative of God and the Messiah was expected in the line of David. The very act of the people demanding for a human king to rule over them is a rebellion against God and it is rejection of God as their King.

The kings were actually considered to be mere representatives of Yahweh to govern His people (1 Sam 9,16). The kings were anointed for this purpose (1Sam 10,1). Therefore, the kings themselves were never absolute rulers over the people. They were just representing the authority of Yahweh as King over the people of God. It is Yahweh who anoints and authorises kings to rule over His people and it is He who rejects them. The "Jews," in their rejection of Jesus and acclaiming Caesar as king, ironically, have also rejected God as their King. This is an act of rebellion against God. By deliberately rejecting God as their King, the "Jews" have lost their identity as the people of God.<sup>101</sup> Raymond Brown sees in this act of the rejection of Jesus that the "Jews" have judged themselves and have renounced their covenant with God.<sup>102</sup>

<sup>101</sup> Meeks, *The Prophet-King*, 76. Meeks notes, "The high priests' denial expresses *in nuce* the tragic irony of the entire trial: in rejecting Jesus as 'King of the Jews' for political expediency, 'the Jews' reject the eschatological king towards whom their highest hopes were directed. Rejecting the 'King of the Jews,' 'the Jews' cease to be Israel, 'the special people of God...' Meeks' observation confirms our analysis, although he does not see the dimension of blasphemy on the part of the "Jews" which is also an important part of the johannine irony here.

<sup>102</sup> *The Gospel II*, 895.

By rejecting God as their King and accepting the Roman Caesar as their king, it is the "Jews" themselves who have committed blasphemy. The johannine irony comes here once again to the fore. It is not Jesus who has committed the sin of blasphemy by calling himself Son of God. Instead, it is the "Jews" who have committed blasphemy by rejecting God as their King and thereby losing their very right of being the children of God. Consequently those who are acting against the law are the "Jews" themselves and not Jesus.

The "Jews" get Jesus crucified in the name of the law, by means of Pilate, a pagan, whose house they refuse to enter (18,28), in order that they may eat the Passover Lamb. Ironically, it is the same Pilate whom they manipulate to complete their act of rebellion against God.

John's use of irony can be discovered in the role of Pilate too. Pilate, who had a little while ago declared himself to be powerful enough before Jesus to release him or to crucify Jesus, becomes powerless a few moments later in the face of the "Jews." When Pilate indeed exercised his power in writing the notice on the cross of Jesus, it became the moment of humiliation for the "Jews," who had crucified "their own king." Pilate proclaimed this fact to the whole world by writing it in three languages. The "Jews" have, in fact, crucified "their own king," not the

Son of God. That the "Jews" themselves are aware of this fact becomes clear in the johannine Passion Narrative when they demand Pilate to rewrite the trilingual notice. It was an effort by the "Jews" to justify their action by transferring the blame on Jesus. But Pilate now has the last word. He asserts his authority and refuses to acquiesce to the demand of the "Jews." Pilate, who had earlier proclaimed Jesus as man (19,6) and as king of the "Jews" (19,14), now proclaims to everyone that Jesus, the Nazarene (19,19), the man crucified on the cross, is indeed, "the king of the "Jews." It was also witnessed by many of the Jews (19,20). Thus, John brings home the irony that the moment of exaltation for Jesus, the Son of God, becomes, at the same time, a moment of humiliation for the "Jews." Their disgrace is proclaimed universally by Pilate, who is a pagan.

The johannine irony illustrated here is that shame and disgrace belong to the "Jews" and not to Jesus. The external despicable appearance of Jesus hanging on the cross is the portrayal of what the "Jews" have done to their values of covenant relationship with God. By all counts, the "Jews" have gone against God and His law, by seeking to kill Jesus (7,19) and now getting him crucified through one (Pilate) who does not even belong to the community governed by the law of God. Their act of rebellion is proclaimed universally in three languages for the whole world to see. The "Jews," once and for all, lost their

identity of the people of God by rejecting Jesus. Jesus has been rejected by his own people (1,11). Though the "Jews" have lost their status as the people of God by crucifying the Son of God, a new people is being drawn to by Jesus. This is the fulfillment of Jesus' words that when he is "lifted up," he would draw all people to himself.

## **CONCLUSION**

The examination of all the occurrences of the term law in the Fourth Gospel thus reveals to us that the concept of law in John is not negative. The law has the prophetic function of witnessing to Jesus. The law points towards Jesus before his coming. And it testifies to all his words and works after his coming. One who truly follows the law will naturally come to Jesus. And precisely for this purpose, Moses wrote the law.

All twelve verses we have examined so far, are consistent in this view. None of the verses contradict with another. Certainly, for John, the term law would comprise not merely the Torah or the first five books of the Pentateuch, but much more: the whole of the Scripture which, for him, is absolute and unqualifiable. The law can be qualified as "our law," "your law," and "their law" but never so with the Scripture. For John, the Scripture is absolute and comprises a larger dimension. The Scripture cannot be broken (10,35). The

Scripture will be always fulfilled. All Jesus' works and words have been foretold in the Scripture. Believing in the Scripture leads to belief in Jesus (5,47).

The law has a witnessing function to Jesus. It was given by God (1,17) through Moses (7,19) who wrote it in order to bear witness to Jesus (5,46). We have seen in our analysis of 15,25 that the law bears witness to Jesus' words and works, including his "being lifted up" on the Cross, which is his real throne according to John's theology.<sup>103</sup> The law plays the role of preparing for the coming of the Logos in the Incarnation, which we have seen in detail in our exegesis of 1,17. In this way John would distinguish the role of the law **before** the coming of Jesus and **after** the coming of Jesus. We have discussed this earlier in our examination of 1,17. The law, as a norm, had a function only until the coming of Jesus in the flesh.<sup>104</sup> But after the coming of Jesus, the law is no more the norm. The only norm is Jesus Himself. It is Jesus and his actions which are all foretold in the Scripture.

If the "Jews" accused Jesus on the basis of "their" law, it was not the true law. John makes it clear throughout the Gospel. The "Jews" are the ones who do not keep the law. They are accused of transgressing the law not only by Jesus himself (7,19), but even by one of their own colleagues, Nicodemus (7,51).

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<sup>103</sup> THUSING, *Die Erhöhung*, 33.

<sup>104</sup> PANCARO, *The Law*, 525, seems to detect this distinction, but does not find its relation to the Scripture after the coming of Jesus.

Rather than saying that Jesus keeps the law, it is proper to say that the law is fulfilled in Jesus. In the same manner, it would not also be proper to say that Jesus fulfills the demands of the law.<sup>105</sup> The law cannot make demands on Jesus since it is subservient to Jesus. Jesus is above the law.

Before concluding our section on the law, we shall once more synthesize the johannine concept of the law. The law in the Fourth Gospel is never negative when it is the law. The law, which is claimed by the "Jews," is not the true law. That is "law" of the Jews, which John uses without the article in 19,7. He clearly distinguishes between the law and "law" which "the Jews" claim as their own. Pancaro notices the distinction<sup>106</sup> between the two uses of the law in 19,7, but attributes it to John's use of the term twice in the same sentence. But John uses the term, law, also twice in the same sentence in 7,19, where the article is used for both the instances. There, the use of the term in both instances at 7,19 implies the true law, which is far from the "Jews," it is found there with articles. The law, which was given by God (1,17), cannot go against Jesus. It can only bear witness to Jesus. This is abundantly clear in the Fourth Gospel. Pancaro is ambivalent with regard to John's stand on the law. He says that John is "basically" positive<sup>107</sup> but at the same time he does find some johannine hostility

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<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, 509.

<sup>106</sup> PANCARO, *The Law*, 517.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, 528.

towards the law.<sup>108</sup>

John's use of the term law in the Fourth Gospel is very comprehensive.<sup>109</sup> It includes not only the Five Books of the Pentateuch but all other books of the Old Testament including the Prophets and the Psalms as well.<sup>110</sup> Though we may discover different aspects of the use of the term in the Fourth Gospel, whether it has the sense of criminal code<sup>111</sup> or legal principle,<sup>112</sup> yet for John it has only one function, which is to lead one to Jesus. If one accepts this function of the law, then naturally he will come to Jesus (5,47).<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, 518.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, 615.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*; DODD, *Interpretation*, 76.

<sup>111</sup> GUTBROD, *TWNT IV*, ed. KITTEL, 22; Dodd, *ibid.*

<sup>112</sup> PANCARO, *The Law*, 515.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **SYMBOLS OF THE LAW IN THE FOURTH GOSPEL**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

Our examination of the concept of the law in the Fourth Gospel in the first two chapters has amply demonstrated to us that John certainly has a positive view with regard to the law. Our exegesis of all the explicit occurrences of the term law in the Fourth Gospel proves beyond doubt that for John the law is a reality which bears witness to Jesus. The law does not oppose Jesus nor does Jesus oppose the law. Jesus and the law are not contradictory to each other. The law leads to Jesus and finds its fulfillment in his revelation.

The law, given by God through Moses, does not go against Jesus, the Son of God. When Jesus is accused of violating the law, it was not the law, but the misinterpretation of the law. For example, in the question of Sabbath violation in chapter 5, Jesus is not confronted with the law, rather with a misinterpreted law. From the johannine world view, we may very well describe it as a "pseudo-law." If the explicit occurrences of the term law in the Fourth Gospel prove beyond doubt that John is quite positive with regard to the law, there are also implicit attributes and symbols which John uses in the Fourth Gospel to represent the

reality of the law. Such symbols are bread, water, light, way, life, etc. John possibly has also used other symbols (for example, gate) for the important reality of the law in the Gospel, which, in the whole of the New Testament, is acclaimed as unrivaled for its sublime command of myth and symbol.<sup>1</sup> However, we will have to restrict ourselves to a few, for it will suffice here for our purpose to show that John has accorded a place of prominence to the theme of the law in his Gospel.

In this chapter we will examine four symbols which are present in the Gospel of John: *bread, water, light, and way*. Our study will try to discover whether John, in his employment of these terms in the Fourth Gospel, has an indirect meaning or reference to the concept of the law. We would like to emphasize that our efforts in this direction will be a sincere attempt to discover if there is the concept of the law behind these symbols in the Fourth Gospel when they point to Jesus. If John has accorded a place of prominence to the theme of the law in his Gospel, of which we are convinced of in our thesis so far, then it should be no surprise that John used these symbols in the Gospel as an indirect reference to the law.

Now let us consider these four symbols one by one.

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<sup>1</sup> Brian J. CAPPER, "With the Oldest Monks..." Light from the Essene History in the Career of the Beloved Disciple," *JTS* 49 (1998): 1.

### **A. BREAD vs.The BREAD OF LIFE (6,1-71)**

In chapter 6, which has been described “as a kind of summary of the Gospel of John and its riddles,”<sup>2</sup> Jesus reveals himself as the Bread of Life to the multitude after the sign of the multiplication of the loaves. The substantial part of chapter 6 is a discourse on the Bread of Life (6,26-71), for which the sign of the multiplication of the loaves (6,1-15) serves as the preliminary step. Jesus’ walking on water (6,16-21) seems to be the interlude between the sign (the multiplication) and the discourse. John contrasts the bread which Jesus uses for the multiplication of the loaves with the bread of life (6,26-71). In this sense, practically the whole of chapter 6 pertains to our study.

#### ***Division of Chapter 6***

Chapter 6 can be divided into the following parts:

- 1-15 Sign of the Bread of Life: multiplication of the loaves
- 16-21 Crossing of the sea by Jesus and his disciples
- 22-25 Crossing of the sea by the crowd
- 26-71 Discourse on the Bread of Life

<sup>2</sup> J.BEUTLER, “The Structure of John 6,” in *Critical Readings of John 6*, ed. R.A. CULPEPPER, (Leiden: E.J.Brill, 1997): 115-127.

The discourse 6,26-71 can further be divided into several smaller parts:

- 26-30 Discussion about the sign
- 31-34 Discussion about the Bread from Heaven
- 35-40 Jesus' revelation as the Bread of Life.
- 41-43 Murmuring of the Jews.
- 44-46 God as the teacher
- 47-51b Manna in contrast to the Bread of Life (Living Bread)
- 51c-59 Discourse on the flesh and blood of the Son of Man.
- 60-66 The disbelief of some of the disciples
- 67-71 Jesus and the twelve: the proclamation of Peter

The whole chapter can be divided into two major parts. If the first part (6,1-15), the sign, deals with nourishment at the mundane level, the latter part, the discourse (6,26-71), belongs to nourishment at the real level, the level of life, in which Jesus reveals himself as the Bread of Life. This latter part (6,26-71) has been further divided into two, three or even four<sup>3</sup> smaller units according to authors. It contains Jesus' Bread of Life discourse as well as his Eucharistic discourse. In 6,35 Jesus speaks of himself as the Bread of Life, in whom one should believe. And in 6,51, Jesus speaks of himself as the Living Bread, describing it as his flesh, which one should eat.

<sup>3</sup> Most authors divide 6,26-58 into three or four main sections: For example, Brown, *The Gospel* 1, 294, divides 6,26-58 into four sections: 6,25-34; 6,35-50; 6,51-58; Peder BORGEN, *Bread from Heaven* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1965), 59-98, divides 6,31-58 into four sections, 6,31-33; 6,34-40; 6,41-48; 6,49-58 on the basis of his midrashic homiletic pattern; Martino CONTI, *Il discorso del Pane di Vita nella Tradizione sapienziale* (Levanto: Pontificium Athenaeum Antonianum, 1987), 13, divides 6,26-71 into three sections: 6,26-34; 6,35-58 and 6,59-71; LEENHARDT, "La structure du chapitre 6 de l'Évangile de Jean" *RHPR* 39 (1959): 1-13, also divides this into three sections: 6,26-35; 6,36-47; 6,48-71.

Many authors consider 6,35-58<sup>4</sup> as the Bread of Life discourse proper and the preceding 6,26-34 as the introduction or the setting<sup>5</sup> for the discourse. The section of the miraculous multiplication of the loaves concludes at 6,15 with Jesus' evading the attempt of the crowd to make him king by force.

The section 6,16-21 describes the disciples crossing the sea by boat to Capernaum and Jesus' walking on the sea. The next section 6,22-25 narrates the crowd looking for Jesus the next day and finally finding him on the other side of the sea. The crowd was still in the same place, where the multiplication took place, with the wrong presumption that Jesus also was there. Now having been awakened up to the fact that Jesus had already left, the crowd runs in search of him in all excitement. Finding Jesus on the other side of the lake, they manifest their curiosity with the question, "Rabbi, when did you get here?" (6,25). With the answer of Jesus, begins Jesus' discourse on the Bread of Life.

<sup>4</sup> J.BEUTLER, "The Structure of John 6," 122; H.ODEBERG, *The Fourth Gospel*, (Amsterdam: B.R.Grüner, 1974), 235; BROWN, *The Gospel* 1, 268.

<sup>5</sup> BROWN, *The Gospel* 1, 260; X.LÉON-DUFOUR, "Le mystère du pain de vie" *RSR* 48 (1958): 481-523; DODD, *Interpretation*, 335. For Dodd, this would be a subsection but as part of the main discourse. F.J. LEENHARDT (see note 3) considers this as a separate unit.

## **1. Manna vs. Bread of Life**

There is a contrast between manna and Jesus as the Bread from Heaven in 6,31. The crowd, which had witnessed the sign of the multiplication of the loaves, still holds on to the misguided concept that the manna of the Old Testament is the sign and it (manna) was the bread from heaven, given by Moses. If the crowd had properly understood the multiplication of the loaves as one of the signs (6,26), then they would have perceived Jesus as the true Bread from Heaven. Rather, the multiplication of the loaves for them was an event of filling the belly (6,26) and not a sign. John places manna in contrast to the Bread of Life (Jesus Himself).

## **2. The sign of the multiplication of the loaves**

In the light of this scenario, our examination of chapter 6 will endeavor to show if John did indeed have the idea of law in the background when he narrates Jesus' multiplication of the loaves and his discourse on the Bread of Life. What concerns our study is the whole of chapter 6, where we will focus on the relevant passages which deal with bread, manna and the Bread of Life. The ordinary bread which Jesus uses for multiplication does not stand for mere bread alone. This bread is a sign pointing to the reality that follows: the Bread of Life.

Bread as metaphor for the Torah was quite common among the Jewish literate circles. Indeed, the Torah as the nourishment for man was considered more than a metaphor.<sup>9</sup> The fact that manna in chapter 6 stands figuratively for the law would be pointed out in our study here. If bread in the Old Testament stood also for the law wherein, the Israelites searched for the words of life, now Jesus invites them to come to a higher level, to Jesus Himself, where they would find the Words of Eternal Life.

### **3. The meaning of the Bread of Life**

The opinion of the scholars is divided with regard to the meaning of the Bread of Life as "teaching"/revelation or as the Eucharist. However, the majority of the scholars would agree that Jesus as the Bread of Life is both: Jesus is the revealer and he himself also is the Eucharistic meal. But what concerns us here is not the whole content of the discourse, but the johannine presentation where Jesus is contrasted to manna, which stands here as a metaphor for the law. The debate with regard to the identification of the sections - which ones present Jesus as the Eucharistic meal and which ones as the Revelation - is beyond our concern, although the johannine Christology would combine both in the person of Jesus.

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<sup>9</sup> J.L. MCKENZIE, "The Word of God" *TS* 21 (1960): 183-206.

Several scholars find the presence of the law behind the term “manna” in chapter 6. And for many of them manna there stands for the Torah and the Bread of Life represents Jesus’ teaching or Jesus himself.<sup>7</sup> Pancaro has tried to make a study on the transferring of the symbols of the law to Jesus, but hesitates to make a definite conclusion.<sup>8</sup> In spite of his lack of conviction, he has made some constructive contributions to the study of these symbols pointing to law in the Fourth Gospel.

#### **4. Teaching: the theme of whole chapter 6**

For Pancaro the key word to detect the presence of the law in chapter 6 is “teaching.”<sup>9</sup> “The Bread of Life” means the teaching of Jesus or Jesus himself. He takes 6,59 as the clue. Jesus is said to be **teaching** in the synagogue at Capernaum. It is an indication that the whole discourse on the Bread of Life by Jesus was a teaching. He uses the Old Testament quotation, “They shall all be taught by God” at 6,45, to strengthen his argument. For Pancaro, the term “Bread of Life” at chapter 6 is identical to the teaching by Jesus.

<sup>7</sup> BARRETT, *The Gospel According to John* (London: SPCK, 1955), 240f; DODD, *Interpretation*, 336f; ODEBERG, *The Fourth Gospel*, 255f; F.M.SIDEBOTTOM, *The Christ of the Fourth Gospel in the Light of First Century Thought* (London: SPCK, 1961), 130; PANCARO, *The Law*, 454; STRACK-BILLERBECK II, 483f.

<sup>8</sup> PANCARO, *The Law*, 452f.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 454.

Pancaro is right, but only partially. It is not only the discourse on the Bread of Life which is Jesus' teaching, but, as we discover, the whole of chapter 6 is a teaching by Jesus, including the sign of the multiplication of loaves. The whole of chapter 6 is a one large unit for John. Chapter 6 begins with the phrase *μετὰ ταῦτα* just as chapter 7 begins with another *μετὰ ταῦτα*. This indicates that the whole chapter 6 is one unit for John, which has for its theme the teaching of Jesus. The parallel of the multiplication of the loaves in the Gospel of Mark, in this case, is more explicit. Mark states at the beginning of the miracle that "Jesus began to teach them many things" (6,34). Some observe that the multiplication of loaves in the Fourth Gospel "assumes an amazingly Marcan pattern."<sup>10</sup> Raymond Brown observes in John 6 a theme similar to that of Matthew's Sermon on the Mount.<sup>11</sup>

### **5. The Torah vs. the Teaching of Jesus**

The fact that John presents the whole chapter 6 as Jesus' teaching, including the sign of the feeding of the five thousand, strengthens our observation that John has indeed another "teaching" in the background, i.e. the Torah.

<sup>10</sup> Mary SHORTER, "The Position of Chapter VI in the Fourth Gospel," *ExpTim* 84 (1972-1973): 181-183.

<sup>11</sup> *The Gospel* I, 232.

That the whole discourse of Jesus, or rather the whole chapter 6, is a teaching by Jesus is made clear when he points to the disciples that the words he had spoken to them are spirit and life (6,63). Peter would also tell Jesus, "You have the words of eternal life" (6,68). What Jesus had done in chapter 6 was to nourish the people with his words, the words of eternal life. And for many of them, the words of Jesus were too hard a thing to digest (6,60). The crowd is so fixed on the material nourishment that the words of Jesus, which impart spirit and life, become indigestible to them. The event of the multiplication of the loaves is a sign, which leads to the reality of the teaching by Jesus.

### **6. Jesus, the Teacher and Prophet**

Schnackenburg<sup>12</sup> finds the prophetic dimension of Jesus at v.3 when John describes him going up the mountain. He notes that John wants to present Jesus as the New Moses. He finds the same idea at v.14 when people openly proclaim Jesus as truly the prophet who is to come into the world. This, according to him, is the echo of Deut 18,15. Jesus is the new prophet, the new teacher, who imparts the words of spirit and life. John makes an explicit contrast between Jesus, as the Bread of Life and Moses, as the bread giver at 6,32 -35. There Jesus says that it was not Moses who gave the bread from heaven, but it was the Father who gives the true bread from heaven (v.32). An implicit

<sup>12</sup> *Das Johannesevangelium* II, 77.

reference to Moses is found again at v.46, where Jesus declares that no one has seen the Father. This verse naturally reminds us of 1,18 in the Prologue, where John makes a similar statement that no one has seen the Father except the one who is in the bosom of the Father. It forms part of the teaching of chapter 6 where the Jews are instructed into the true state of things which are unfolded to them by Jesus.

Jesus is the True Prophet because he is from God. Only Jesus has seen the Father (6,46). The crowd will recognise Jesus 'truly as the prophet' (6,14), but with a false expectation. To recognise Jesus as prophet is not a wrong perception. It is just an initial step (4,19) in the process of full revelation, where the true disciple would be granted the total revelation of Jesus as the Messiah, the Christ, the Son of the Living God (4,26; 6,69) and as the Son of Man (9,37).

### **7. The crowd's refusal to accept the teaching of Jesus**

The crowd, in chapter 6, declines to accept the teaching of Jesus (6,60-61). Consequently, they forego the opportunity of receiving the full revelation by Jesus. Jesus will attempt to reorient them to the true state of reality and history. It is accepted only by those who have been taught by God and those "who listen to the Father and learn from him" (6,45). Those who listen to God and learn from

Him come to Jesus (v.46). This is the teaching of Jesus, which John places in contrast to the teaching the "Jews" claim to have had. According to the teaching of the "Jews," it was Moses who gave them bread from heaven. Here, the teaching of the "Jews" represents the law in contrast to the teaching of Jesus (Bread of Life).

The teaching of Jesus in chapter 6 concerns heavenly things. Jesus' discourse in 6,26-71 speaks about eschatological realities and it cannot be understood merely from the earthly perspective. The crowd perceives Jesus as a prophet from the earthly standpoint. Jesus is indeed a prophet and king, but from a heavenly dimension (18,36). The crowd looks only for earthly bread whereas Jesus offers them the Bread of Life. In order to understand the words of Jesus, one has to view things from the sphere of God, which John often refers to as "from above" (3,12; 8,23). However, this does not reduce the importance of physical nourishment since Jesus is presented also as the giver of bread. What Jesus tells the crowd is not to always remain on the earthly level, but from the earthly level to go higher for the heavenly level, the true level (6,33). The multiplication of the loaves in this regard functions as a sign pointing to the heavenly level where one is able to perceive Jesus, not just as the giver of earthly bread but also as the Bread of Life. But the crowd refuses to go beyond the earthly level. So they refuse the teaching of Jesus.

### **8. The Old Testament quotation at 6,45**

This scheme of John at chapter 6 becomes clear when we examine the quotation from the Old Testament at v.45. The quotation, "They shall all be taught by God," is traced back to Isa 54,13 by many scholars.<sup>13</sup> But a similar verse could also be found in Jeremiah 31,33f. The text from prophet Jeremiah fits in the johannine context better. The Jeremiah text speaks of the New Covenant to be made by God, in which there will be no need for anyone to teach his neighbor or brother, because God Himself will be their teacher.

John too deals with the new teaching by Jesus. The old teaching, which the Jews claim to have, is not the true teaching. In Jeremiah 31,33, the prophet speaks of the New Covenant the Lord will make with His people. In the New Covenant God's law will be placed within the people themselves and it will be written in their hearts. Precisely because of this, there will be no need for the people to be taught by any human teacher, since God will be their own and only teacher.

<sup>13</sup> SCHNACKENBURG, *Johannesevangelium* 1,77; P.BORGEN, *Bread from Heaven* (Leiden; Brill, 1965), 150; M.J.J. MENKEN, "The Old Testament Quotation in John 6:45: Source and Redaction," *ETL* 64 (1988): 164-172.

We know that in the Old Covenant made with the people at Sinai, the law was written on stone tablets. And Moses, as the mediator of that old covenant, was always looked upon by the people as prophet and teacher. In the New Covenant, there will be no need of such a human teacher. The Old Testament quotation at 6,45 has to be understood in this context. All those who listen to the Father and learn from Him are those who belong to the New Covenant, which is now being enacted by God through the words of Jesus. God is implanting His law in the hearts of the New Covenant people through the teaching of Jesus. It was during the time of the Old Covenant that the people ate manna and died (v.49). People of the New Covenant eat the Living Bread and live forever.

### **9. Was manna Bread from Heaven?**

According to John, manna is not Bread from Heaven even in the Old Testament. What is written down as "Bread from Heaven" in the Old Testament (Wisd 16,20ff; Neh 9,14ff; Pss 78,24; 105,40) does not point to manna but to Jesus. This correction is made quite clear in 6,31-32. What was given through Moses was only manna, not the Bread from Heaven. It is wrong to identify manna with

the Bread from heaven.<sup>14</sup> The mention of the ones who ate manna and died (6,49) means not just the physical death of the ancestors of the "Jews" but also their eschatological death.<sup>15</sup> The reason for this was that the Jews, though not all of them, did not believe in God. They murmured against God. Murmuring is an act of disbelief, which is evident in 6,41.43 and 61. John reminds the readers of the murmuring of the ancestors of the Jews against God (Exod 16,7ff). As it has already been noticed by some, "Exodus imagery runs all through chapter 6."<sup>16</sup> And the Exodus story illustrates that murmuring was an act of disbelief and rebellion against God.

<sup>14</sup> It is almost common among the johannine authors and commentators to interpret manna as Bread from Heaven and also to consider the OT instances of the Bread from Heaven to refer to manna. For instance, Peder BORGEN, in a recent article, "John 6: Tradition, Interpretation and Composition," in *Critical Readings of John 6*, ed. R.A. CULPEPPER (Leiden: E.J.Brill, 1997): 97-102, refers to manna as Bread from Heaven. Borgen finds manna miracle "puzzling" (102); PANCARO also equates manna with the Bread from Heaven: *The Law*, 456. 468.

<sup>15</sup> PANCARO, *The Law*, 467. 469 notes that John means to say that the ancestors died "physically" and those who eat the Bread of Life (Jesus) will live "spiritually." This conclusion is too far-fetched. One cannot draw such a conclusion from the text. In no way does the text (vv.49,50) distinguish between physical and spiritual death. The whole point of discussion, according to John, in chapter 6, is eschatological life: "to live forever" (v.51) makes explicit what the theme of discussion here is. The same theme can also be concluded from v.40, where Jesus explicitly states that one who believes in the Son will be raised up on the last day. The repeated appearances of the term "Son of Man" (vv.27.53.62) should also make clear that what John discusses here is the theme of eschatological life. John makes the whole discussion, even at the outset of the discussion (6,27) amply clear: "Do not work for the food which perishes but for the food that endures for *eternal life* which the Son of Man will give you. For on him the Father, God, has set his seal." This verse explains the whole theme of chapter 6 clearly.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., 459.

## **10. Manna as a symbol of the law**

We know that John presents law in the Fourth Gospel as bearing witness to the coming of Jesus. But the "Jews" who refuse to accept Jesus accuse him of violating the "law," the "law of the Jews". The "law of the Jews" is what we term as the pseudo-law. Manna, as symbol, represents both these realities. Manna represents the law which bears witness to Jesus and also the "law of the Jews." We may distinguish it by manna in contrast to "manna." Jesus is the Bread of Life (or the Bread from Heaven or the Living Bread) in contrast to "manna" which the ancestors of the "Jews" ate. Manna was neither Bread from Heaven (6,32-33) nor a sign (6,30-31). It was manna and nothing more than that. It was not able to sustain life (6,49). So to regard manna as the Bread from Heaven is wrong. To consider manna as a sign is also wrong. The "Jews" had been maintaining such an idea of regarding manna as the Bread from Heaven and as sign. Jesus corrects this wrong perception.

The real sign is what Jesus did, the multiplication of the bread. That was the sign pointing to Jesus himself, the heavenly giver of the bread. Jesus makes this clear at 6,26. The crowd failed to take the multiplication of the loaves as a sign performed by Jesus. If they had understood the multiplication of the loaves from the heavenly perspective, then it would not have been beyond their grasp to

understand it as a sign done by Jesus. They take Jesus merely as a magic baker who can provide food freely whenever they wanted. Their need was to fill their bellies and not to come to belief in Jesus. They remain very much on the earthly level and fail to grasp Jesus' teaching from the 'heavenly' level.

### **11. The ancestors who "died"**

The ancestors, who ate manna and died, are qualified by John. It is not all the ancestors, but the ancestors of those who now do not believe in Jesus and therefore those who rebelled against God. The possessive adjectives "our" (6,31) and "your" (6,49) make this point clear. It is similar to the johannine expression of "our law" and "your" law. The ancestors, who were disbelieving and rebelling against God, died not only physically but also eschatologically.

This johannine concept, though explicit in 5,24; 8,51; 11,25, is just implicit here. Pancaro is correct in stating that John does not mean in 6,49 that the "Fathers" were a "massa perditionis."<sup>17</sup> John does not mean that all the "Fathers" died, but only those who disbelieved and rebelled against God. Surprisingly, Pancaro overlooks the function of the possessive adjectives attached to the word *πατέρες* in vv. 31 and 49. It is not all those who ate manna, who died. Of those who ate manna, the ones who died were the ones who "murmured" against God. There

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 467.

were also others who ate manna, but they do not belong to the ancestors of the "Jews" who now again murmur against God. Here John implicitly portrays two kinds of people who ate manna: those who murmured, whom, in johannine terms, we may qualify as the "Jews," and those who believed in God, who may be qualified as the Israelites (1,47). It is not the physical death which Jesus refers to when he says at 6,49, "Your fathers ate manna in the desert and they died." Jesus and his listeners were well aware that not only those who ate "manna" physically died but also others. The point Jesus makes is that the "Jews" who ate the "manna" died also eschatologically, whereas those who eat the Bread of Life will overcome the eschatological death. This is part of the teaching in chapter 6.

The manna texts in chapter 6 do indeed point to the law, although the term law itself never appears there. We have already shown that the law has the function of bearing witness to Jesus. We have to maintain here, once again, the distinction between the law and the "law of the Jews." According to our observation, manna in chapter 6 represents the Torah in the same manner as

some Old Testament texts equate the Torah with food.<sup>16</sup> All these Old Testament texts relate food (and in some cases drink too) with the law of the Lord or the Word of God. The texts in the Old Testament provide an inspiring parallel to the Bread of Life discourse of Jesus in chapter 6. There is also an interesting contrast between John 6,35 and Sir 24,20. At 6,35, Jesus promises complete freedom from hunger and thirst, while the Sirach text promises of unending hunger and thirst for the one who eats of wisdom. Although both these texts seem to contradict each other at the first sight, they are same in meaning: the Sirach text speaks of the unending spiritual thirst for wisdom, while Jesus speaks of one's lack of interest in material values ( symbolised in bread, water, etc.) since he has tasted the revelation of Jesus. If manna stands here as symbol of the law, the Bread of Life symbolises Jesus as the source of Life. Jesus is the source of Life for all those who believe in him. The believers receive

the nourishment through the words of Jesus by coming to him. All those who<sup>16</sup> Sirach 15, 1-3 speaks of the man, practised in the law, coming to the personified wisdom, who, among other things, "nourishes him with the bread of understanding and gives him the water of learning to drink." Sirach 24,20 says about the law (v.22b): "He who eats of me will hunger still, he who drinks of me will thirst for more." These texts provide an interesting parallel to John 6,35 where Jesus, as the Bread of Life, satisfies the hunger and thirst of those who come to him. Deut 8,1-4 recalls the manna story of Exod 16 to illustrate and exhort to observe the commandments of the Lord. God deliberately made the people undergo hunger in order to make them understand that man does not live by bread alone, but rather by every word that comes from the mouth of God. The text also makes the point that it is God who provides the nourishment for his people. In chapter 16 of the Book of Wisdom, there are two verses which also provide some interesting parallel to John 6: v.16 speaks of God nourishing his people with the food of angels and furnishing them with bread from heaven; v.26 states that it is not various kinds of fruits that nourish man, but it is God's word that preserves those who believe in Him. In Prov 9,5, the personified Wisdom invites the simple people to eat of her food and drink of her wine. Ps 19,11 and Ps 119,103 describe the law (ordinances/promises) of the Lord sweeter than honey. All these texts we have shown above, connect the law with food.

have been taught by God come to him (6,45) and proclaim him as the one from whom the words of eternal life spring forth and as the Holy One of God (6,69). Thus, the whole of chapter 6 contains this teaching, through which one comes to know who really Jesus is and what his words are.

## **12. Recognising Jesus' true origin**

The ones who confine themselves to a merely narrow view of Jesus as an earthly king or the prophet (6,14 -15) or even just as the son of Joseph (6,42), will not be able to recognise Jesus as the Messiah, the one who has the words of eternal life. From this point of view, the figure of Philip at 6,5 is significant. Our examination of John 1,45 in the previous chapter showed that Philip proclaimed Jesus to Nathanael merely as the one about whom Moses in the law and the prophets wrote, and as the son of Joseph. Jesus is aware that Philip should come to the true recognition of him. Jesus utilises this opportunity of feeding the crowd also to instruct Philip. John explicitly states that Jesus asked Philip in order to test him (6,6). Thus, we see chapter 6 unfolding as Jesus' teaching from the very start. If the premultiplication conversation with Philip was to instruct him, then the sign of multiplication and the following discourse were events to teach the disciples (6,60f) as well as the crowd. Although Jesus tries his best to make them understand the true reality of things, many of them do not understand. The crowd and many of his disciples, except the twelve, neither understand Jesus

nor his words because they have not learned from God (6,45).

It is Jesus, the source of life, who can provide life on the earthly level as the provider of the bread (6,1-15), as much as on the heavenly level as the Bread of Life itself (6,26-71). Both these levels are present in chapter 6. The crossing over to the other side of the sea, which is also an integral part of the narrative in chapter 6,<sup>19</sup> should be regarded as a symbolic presentation by John for the crossing over from one level to the other.

### 13. Taught by God

Just as in the Old Testament tradition, where the Torah as the word of God or as wisdom<sup>20</sup> was represented as the nourishment of man, so the same thought current runs under the teaching of Jesus in chapter 6. But in order to understand this teaching of Jesus, one has to place himself on a higher level where one is taught by God. Only then will he be able to understand the signs done by Jesus as his works leading to belief in Jesus, and to acclaim Jesus as the Son of God.

This truth is illustrated by the role of Peter, who proclaims Jesus as "the Holy

One of God." Peter is an example of one who has been taught by God. John<sup>19</sup> J.PAINTER, "Tradition and Interpretation in John 6," *NTS* 35 (1989): 430-431. Painter considers the narrative of the sea crossing as an extension of the story of the miraculous feeding. Peder BORGEN recognises the central function of the event of the sea crossing in his article, "John 6: Tradition, Interpretation and Composition," in *Critical Readings of John 6*, ed. R.A. CULPEPPER (Leiden: E.J.Brill, 1997): 97.

<sup>20</sup>SIDEBOTTOM, *The Christ of the Fourth Gospel*, 34. According to this author, wisdom for the rabbis was none other than the Torah.

leaves implicit what Matthew makes explicit in Peter's proclamation of Jesus as the Messiah. There Jesus reveals to Peter the source of the latter's knowledge: "It was not flesh and blood which revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven" (Matt 16,17). To recognise Jesus as the Holy One of God (John 6,69) or as the Christ (Mark 8,29), the Son of the Living God (Matt 17,13), a mere human knowledge would be insufficient. One has to be taught by God (6,45). This teaching is placed in contrast to the "teaching" of the Jews which they claim to possess. According to their "teaching," they regarded manna as a sign and as bread from heaven provided by Moses. To be exact, the law did not teach them such things, but it was the way they wanted to interpret the law. John intends this "interpreting" of the law in his expression, "the law of the Jews." Another such example could be cited from 12,34 where the Jews wrongly learn from the law that Christ remains forever. John thereby demonstrates that their view of the law was wrong. It was not that the law by itself was wrong. It was the way the "Jews" understood the law which was wrong. The "Jews" misread and misinterpret the law.

#### 14. Eucharistic discourse in chapter 6

If there is the implicit undercurrent of the law in chapter 6, there is also the undercurrent of the Eucharist in chapter 6.<sup>21</sup> Volumes have been written on the theme of Eucharist in chapter 6. There have been diverse opinions among the scholars with regard to which part of the chapter belongs to the theme of Revelation and which part to the theme of the Eucharist. What concerns us is not the identification of the sections one from the other but the purpose of John in placing these two themes next to each other. The appearance of the term "flesh" at 6,59 would, for some, mark the beginning of the discourse on Jesus' self-giving in the Eucharist. But there are also allusions to the Eucharist during the sign of the multiplication of the loaves. John notes at 6,11 that Jesus had taken the loaves and given thanks (εὐχαριστήσας). The use of the term would give us the impression that John alludes to the Eucharist. The next verse (v.12) would further strengthen this view, when Jesus tells his disciples to gather up the fragments, that nothing should be lost. Raymond Brown finds a connection to the Eucharistic bread mentioned in the *Didache* through the word "fragment." He further notes that *synagein* in v.12, evokes the term *synaxis* which belongs to the same root and was used for the christian Eucharistic gathering.<sup>22</sup> John

<sup>21</sup> G.BORNKAMM, "Die eucharistische Rede im Johannesevangelium," *ZNW* 47 (1956): 161-169; J.M.PERRY, "The Evolution of the Johannine Eucharist," *NTS* 39 (1993): 22-35.

<sup>22</sup> *The Gospel* I, 234.

repeats the term Eucharist at v.23. The repetition of the term as an adverbial qualification just for a geographical identification of the place, will naturally point to the significance John attaches to the term Eucharist in chapter 6. This would indicate the Eucharistic current, just as the law current, runs all over chapter 6, not merely where the term "flesh" appears.

We find that both these themes are related to each other. According to John, Jesus is the source of Life, which is symbolised by the Bread of Life, whether through his words or in the form of his flesh which he gives to his believers as food. The former implies the law, whereas the latter means the Eucharist. Both are related to each other since they represent the giving of the self of Jesus as the source of life. Both are Jesus himself: one, in the form of his words and the other, in the form of his person. It is the person of Jesus who is described by John as the Life-giving Word in the Prologue.

## **B. JESUS, THE LIVING WATER (4,10-15)**

The next symbol we will deal with is water which stands in contrast to the Living Water which Jesus provides. Our examination of the Old Testament texts have demonstrated that several of them, which compare the law or Wisdom (or the word of God) to bread or food, connect it also with water.<sup>23</sup> Bread and water are indispensable for the existence of living creatures. These two basic elements are not merely the source of nourishment, but they are the constant requirement for life.<sup>24</sup> If bread and water are so indispensable for man's physical existence, the law is in a similar manner for man's spiritual existence. In the light of this background, we can reasonably say that the law was metaphorically considered as bread or water or both. Obviously, this underlines the utmost importance the law occupied in the life of the people.

We should also not lose sight of the fact that both - bread and water- are related to each other as a common nourishment to man's physical existence. It is not

<sup>23</sup> Sirach 15,1-3 states practice in the law leads one to Wisdom. Then it compares the law (v.3) to "bread of understanding" and "water of learning". Sirach chapter 24 which contains the praises of the personified Wisdom states that those who eat of it will hunger for more and those who drink of it will thirst for more (v.20). The second text explicitly states that this is all true of the "book of the Most High's covenant, the law which Moses commanded us (v.22).

<sup>24</sup> BULTMANN, *The Gospel of John*, 185: "...water (and bread) originally refers to something which living creatures constantly require. Yet each time man feels this need, it only points him to the fact that he wants to *live*. When he hungers and thirsts, then fundamentally he does not desire this or that thing, but he wants to *live*. The real object is not water and bread, but something which will give him life and will rescue him from death, something which might therefore be called real water, real bread."

mere physical existence which is important for man, but much more: man's non-physical existence.<sup>25</sup> The Scripture insists on the importance of the latter because it belongs to the sphere above the temporal, the eternal. Jesus as the Bread from Heaven or as the Living Water belongs to this sphere. The former is from below and the latter is from above. The latter is, according to John, more important than the first, and that is what Jesus belongs to also.

Now let us examine the meaning of the Living Water which Jesus provides in contrast to the Torah. Just as the manna was used as a symbol of the law in contrast to Jesus as the Living Bread, so too the imagery of the water representing the law would be in contrast to the Living Water which represents Jesus. This has already been noted by johannine scholars.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> I prefer to use the term "non-physical" instead of, for example, "spiritual" because the latter term may indicate a conventional concept of a meaning opposed to secular which would limit its meaning here. What I mean by *non-physical* is a broader concept which would also include "spiritual."

<sup>26</sup> DODD, *Interpretation*, 312. He states: "In rabbinic tradition water was a frequent symbol of the Torah, as cleansing, as satisfying thirst, and as promoting life. It appears that the evangelist has taken up this symbol and turned it to depreciation of the ordinances of Judaism as commonly accepted in his time. The Torah is indeed water, but it is water belonging to the lower order of existence: it is not water of eternal life." Dodd is right in discovering the symbolic parallelism between the Torah and the Water which Jesus gives. But it is a little too much to say that John utilises this symbol for "depreciation of the ordinances of Judaism." In fact, as our study repeatedly discovers, John does not depreciate whatever good that is found in Judaism. John is only against the misuse and misinterpretation of the God-given commandments. Indeed the gift of God of 4,10 refers to the Torah which is, however, only a pointer to the revelation of Jesus.

## 1. Water Symbolism in the Fourth Gospel

Water as a symbol in the Fourth Gospel occurs on a few occasions.<sup>27</sup> In the rabbinic tradition, water was a frequent symbol of the Torah<sup>28</sup> and we can find many examples in the extra-biblical literatures where water symbolises revelation, wisdom or life itself.<sup>29</sup> The words of the Torah were likened to water.<sup>30</sup> Although these examples are only a few to demonstrate that water as a symbol for revelation is found not only in the Bible but also in other religious traditions. Water as symbol for revelation or life itself in other religious tradition may naturally bring us to the question of their relationship with the Living Water in the Fourth Gospel. Whether the Fourth Gospel shows the influence of Gnostic

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<sup>27</sup> DODD, *ibid.*, 311f: "In the story of Cana (where Jesus changed it into wine) stands for the lower order of life which Christ changes into the wine of life eternal. In iii.5 it is associated with πνεύμα as the source of the higher life." To these we can still add the occurrence of water in the Fourth Gospel, besides 7,38-39; 19,34 in the Passion Narrative.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>29</sup> Water plays an important role in the *Odes of Solomon*. In VI,8--11: "For there went forth a stream and became a river great and broad...swept away everything...carried away the temple...All the thirsty upon earth were given to drink." And again in XI, 7: "I drank and was inebriated with living water that does not die." See J.H.CHARLESWORTH, *The Odes of Solomon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973), 30. Water of life engendering life is found also in the *Mandaen Literature* (*M Li* 62,8; 63,1 *Qolastha xxxiii*). Interestingly, there is also contrast between the living water and water (sometimes mentioned as 'chaotic water'). It is well-known that water is a symbol for the Torah in the *Qumran Literature*: CD 3,16; 6,4-11. See Geza VERMES, *The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English* (New York: Allen Lane, Penguin Press, 1997), 129.131-132. The well as symbol for the Torah is found in *Qumran* CD 6,4. The well as symbol for the Torah is also found in the rabbinic literature; *Cant. R.* 1,7.

<sup>30</sup> STRACK - BILLERBECK II, 435.

dualism<sup>31</sup> or vice versa<sup>32</sup> would be not only beyond our aim and method, but also unnecessary.<sup>33</sup> But we have also seen that the symbolic use of water in the Old Testament texts for the law<sup>34</sup> or the word of God compared to ordinary water has also great significance for the revelation of God in the Old Testament.<sup>35</sup>

That the occurrences of the Living Water in 4,10-15 and 7,37-38 do indeed point to the revelation which Jesus gives in contrast to the old revelation, the Torah, has been pointed out by several scholars.<sup>36</sup> This is in spite of the fact that there is a parenthetical statement attached to 7,39 which explicitly states that the expression at 7,38 points to the Holy Spirit. The connection between the revelation which Jesus gives and the Spirit shall be discussed before the conclusion of our exegesis on the Living Water. The only difference between these two passages is that John, in the former, makes a contrast with the ordinary water of Jacob's well, and in the latter, there is no such explicit contrast. As our study in this chapter concerns symbols for the law, we will analyse in detail the passage 4,10-15, and this analysis will lead us also into a discussion of 7,38-39, which also deals with the concept of law implicitly.

<sup>31</sup> BULTMANN, *The Gospel*, 182.

<sup>32</sup> DODD, *Interpretation*, 312, note 2. With regard to the water symbolism in Gnostic and Mandaen texts, Dodd notes, "...but these passages are probably post-johannine, and indeed, ...some of them at least evidently depend in the last instance on our present passage."

<sup>33</sup> PANCARO, *The Law*, 477.

<sup>34</sup> BROWN, *The Gospel*, 328.

<sup>35</sup> ODEBERG, *The Fourth Gospel*, 167.

<sup>36</sup> BARRETT, *The Gospel* 235; BROWN, *The Gospel* 1, 179.328; DODD, *Interpretation*, 312; PANCARO, *The Law*, 484.

## 2. An artistic masterpiece

The passage 4,10 -15 forms a subunit of the larger unit 4,4-42 which is the encounter of Jesus with the Samaritan woman. Some would also include the first three verses into the larger unit.<sup>37</sup> The story of Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman has been called by many an artistic masterpiece<sup>38</sup> which has been very carefully<sup>39</sup> and successfully<sup>40</sup> constructed. The focal point of the conversation between Jesus and the Samaritan woman is the Living Water. If the woman is on the side of the water of Jacob's well, Jesus is the source of the Living Water which he offers to her. Johannine irony is detectable at the very outset of the story. Jesus who is the source of the Living Water asks the Samaritan woman for a drink (4,7). And another johannine characteristic, misunderstanding, runs repeatedly (4,11.15.33) through the episode.

The first instance of the Living Water appears in v.10 as Jesus tells the woman, *"If you knew the gift of God and who it is that saying to you, 'Give me to drink', you would have asked him and he would have given you Living Water."*

<sup>37</sup> SCHNACKENBURG, *Johannesevangelium* 1, 455 treats this as a compository unit: "eine kompositorische Einheit." BARRETT, *The Gospel*, 228 too, treats 4,1-42 in his commentary as one unit. The first three verses of Chapter 4 have a transitory function, rather than an introductory role to the story which follows. BROWN, *The Gospel* I, 164 calls 4,1-3, "A Transitional Passage." Brown considers only 4,4-42 as a unit.

<sup>38</sup> SCHNACKENBURG, *ibid.*, 456.

<sup>39</sup> BROWN, *ibid.*, 181.

<sup>40</sup> SCHNACKENBURG, *ibid.* 456. Schnackenburg describes the composition, "einen klaren und wohlgeordneten Aufbau."; Barrett, *ibid.*, 232, notes, "...the story is neatly contrived dramatically."

The woman misunderstands the term ὕδωρ ζῶν. Since the term means both “Living Water” and “flowing water,” the johannine misunderstanding here is based on the play of words. It is just in the similar manner as in 3,3f where Nicodemus misunderstands the term ἀνωθεν. John demonstrates that the woman has not grasped the meaning of Jesus’ expression. While Jesus says ὕδωρ ζῶν the woman repeats it as τὸ ὕδωρ τὸ ζῶν. Her misquotation implies that both are on different levels of understanding. She begins to understand what Jesus means by Living Water only in a gradual process. In order to come to the level where she can understand the meaning of Living Water, she requires the knowledge of two things as per Jesus’ statement at 4,10.

### 3. Requirement to possess the Living Water

The two things presupposed by Jesus’ for the recognition of the Living Water are: the knowledge of the gift of God and that of the person of Jesus. Do these two things mean the same reality? In other words, does John mean to say that the person of Jesus is identified with the gift of God?<sup>41</sup> A majority of the authors<sup>42</sup> feel the gift of God is not Jesus himself, but something which Jesus gives. The

same verse also explains what Jesus gives: the Living Water. In Judaism, two of

<sup>41</sup> Hugo ODEBERG, *The Fourth Gospel* (Amsterdam: B.R.Grüner, 1974), 152. Odeberg, drawing connections between the passages 3,16 and 3,27-36 and 4,10 considers that Jesus himself is the gift. He further notes that the Living Water is also gift given by Jesus and thus both mean the same identity, that is, Jesus himself.

<sup>42</sup> BROWN, *The Gospel* 1, 170; BARRETT, *The Gospel*, 233; SCHNACKENBURG, *Johannesevangelium* I, 462.

the expressions used by Jesus, "the gift of God," and "living water," were used to describe the Torah.<sup>43</sup> According to Barrett, the gift of God par excellence in Judaism is the Torah.<sup>44</sup> Odeberg<sup>45</sup> holds the same view. If the Samaritans also had the same understanding of the Torah as the gift of God, then this would mean to say that if the woman knew the Torah she would have asked Jesus to give the Living Water. The gift of God and the Living Water are placed in parallel.

The knowledge of the gift of God would bring the woman to the Living Water which Jesus gives. Raymond Brown finds here a replacement theme. According to him, Jesus is presenting himself and his teaching as the replacement for the Torah.<sup>46</sup> We have seen in our analysis of 1,17 that John implies that the law was given by God through Moses. The gift of God in 4,10, in such a case, echoes what John had earlier said in 1,17.<sup>47</sup> Somewhat differently, Pancaro suggests that the gift of God refers to the Holy Spirit rather than to the law,<sup>48</sup> in his argument against Odeberg but then he admits that the gift of the Holy Spirit is related to the law. Pancaro further admits that δωρεὰ τοῦ θεοῦ is a term

<sup>43</sup> BROWN, *ibid.*, 176; SCHNACKENBURG, *ibid.*, 462.

<sup>44</sup> *The Gospel*, 233; *The Fourth Gospel*, 150.

<sup>45</sup> ODEBERG, *ibid.* 189. According to Odeberg, the Samaritans were more strict in their observance of the law.

<sup>46</sup> BROWN, *ibid.*

<sup>47</sup> DODD, *Interpretation*, 312-313.

<sup>48</sup> PANCARO, *The Law*, 473.

developed to designate the giving of the Torah.<sup>9</sup> Our examination indicates that John very well points to the gift of the law by God in 4,10 when he mentions δωρεάν τοῦ θεοῦ.

It is interesting to note that Jesus tells the woman just immediately after she had addressed him as a Jew (4,9) that she has not yet recognised who it is that is talking to her. Her recognition of Jesus merely as a Jew was inadequate to know the identity of Jesus. As we have come across earlier in other instances, to recognise Jesus merely from his social or family background (6,42; 7,27) is not the real recognition of Jesus. It is a superficial knowledge and Jesus describes it as judgment according to appearance, which is not the correct judgment (7,24). Real recognition is to know that Jesus comes from God and that he is the Christ (4,26.42) which she is given to know as the conversation develops.

If the woman had possessed the knowledge of these two things, that is, the knowledge of the gift of God and that of the person of Jesus, then the initiative would have come from herself. She would have by herself asked Jesus to give her the living water. But she did not. On the contrary, it was Jesus who made the first move. The conclusion of the story shows that the woman indeed came to

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 474. Pancaro says, "...one cannot exclude that Jn is comparing the gift of the Father in Jesus with the gift of the law." He connects with the term Living Water to support it: "The possibility receives weighty support from the background which most likely accounts for the 'living water' metaphor used by Jn." Our analysis of 1,17 has proven that for John the law is God's gift.

the possession of the knowledge of these two things. She came to know that Jesus is the Messiah (v.26). The leaving of the jar (v.28) is presented symbolically by John to convey the message that the woman who came to fetch the ordinary water, now instead, possesses the Living Water. Perhaps John's symbolism points to the fulfillment of her request (v.15). She does not need the jar anymore for the type of Living Water that Jesus has interested her in.<sup>30</sup>

The encounter of Jesus with the Samaritan woman and the ensuing dialogue was a process in which Jesus revealed himself as the Messiah who gives the Living Water. This process was a gradual one. The woman who recognised Jesus at first only as a Jew, a foreigner (v.9), begins to address him as Κύριε with respect<sup>31</sup> (vv.11.15.19), and then begins to recognise in Jesus a prophet (v.19). A similar process of this gradual revelation is also found in the healing of the man born blind. He initially recognised Jesus as a prophet (9,17), and then Jesus revealed himself to him as the Son of Man (9,37). The blind man also would address Jesus as Κύριε (9,36). To recognise Jesus as the Messiah or Son of God is the fullness of revelation which Jesus provides. The fact that the woman had now come to the possession of the knowledge of the gift of God and the person of Jesus is a clear indication that the woman is also in possession of the Living Water.

<sup>30</sup> BROWN, *The Gospel* 1, 173.

<sup>31</sup> BROWN, *ibid*, 170; SCHNACKENBURG, *Johannesevangelium* 1, 464.

#### **4. Living Water and the Spirit**

The Living Water, which Jesus provides, has led to a lot of discussion among johannine scholars. For some, it is the revelation which Jesus gives. For others, it means the Spirit which Jesus gives to his believers. Our examination of 4,10 showed that the term gift of God points to the law. The law is related to the Spirit in the sense that the former leads to the latter. In this sense, the statement of Jesus at 4,10 becomes clear. The knowledge of the gift of God, which represents the law, as we have seen above, leads to the Living Water which Jesus gives. The law and the Spirit are related to each other. The prophet Ezekiel announces that God will put His Spirit and the people will be able to recognise the commandments of the Lord (36,27). The term, gift of God, was used in the Early Christian communities for the Holy Spirit (Acts 2,38; 8,20; 10,45; 11,17; Heb 6,4). This could be attributed to the fact that for the Christians the Torah did not occupy the central place as it did in Judaism. It was Christ who was the center of life for the Christians and the presence of Christ was felt vividly among them through the Spirit, which was gift of the Risen Christ. The revelation and the Spirit are given by Jesus. He is the source and the giver of

both these gifts. The key to the understanding of the relationship between both these identities is the johannine Christology. For John, the revelation which Jesus brings need not be understood altogether apart from the Spirit which he gives through his glorification. Both are unified in his person. The mention of the Holy Spirit (4,23-24), in the dialogue of Jesus with the Samaritan woman, has relevance and meaning in this perspective. To wage a scholarly argument on this score, whether John intends Jesus' revelation or His Spirit by the term Living Water would be an unnecessary distraction. There is no need to make a choice between these two interpretations of the Living Water since both meanings are intended.<sup>2</sup> Further in johannine thought, we see it is the Spirit which interprets Jesus' revelation (14,26; 16,13).

##### **5. John 7,38 -39**

In 7,38-39, there is another mention of the Living Water in the Fourth Gospel. In 7,39, we are explicitly told that Jesus meant the Spirit by the term Living Water. Since the revelation of Jesus and the Spirit are intimately related as we have seen above in our above analysis, the parenthetical statement in 7,39 poses us no difficulty. In spite of the parenthetical explanation that the Living Water stands for the Spirit, many authors have pointed out that the Living Water at 7,38 points

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<sup>2</sup> F.J.McCOOL, "Living Water in John" in *The Bible in Current Catholic Thought* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1962): 226-233; BROWN, *The Gospel*, 179; PANCARO, *The Law*, 479.

to the revelation which Jesus brings.<sup>53</sup> Since Jesus is the source of the two realities, the revelation and the Spirit, there can be no difficulty in understanding the relationship between the two. The difficulty would arise only when one tries to understand both of them as incompatible realities.

That the Living Water coming from Jesus at 7,38 too is in contrast to the law becomes intelligible when we notice that the theme of law runs through from 7,14 till the conclusion of chapter 7. The term law itself is explicitly mentioned at 7,19.49-51. Jesus speaks of the source of his teaching at 7,16f. Further, immediately before Jesus' invitation to come and drink (7,37-38), he tells the Jews that they will seek him but will not find him. "Searching and Finding" is one of the familiar Old Testament themes which has been transferred to the personified Wisdom in the sapiential literature.<sup>54</sup> And Wisdom for the rabbis was none other than the Torah.<sup>55</sup> If Jesus' revelation and the Spirit are both related to each other, as we have seen in the analysis of 4,10-15, we can understand the meaning of the parenthetical statement at 7,39. It speaks of the Spirit as the gift of the glorified Risen Jesus. The Spirit no way goes contrary to the revelation but is related to the earthly Jesus, enlightening his words. Jesus' invitation to come and drink of the the Living Water in 7,38 is presented in the context of his

<sup>53</sup> BROWN, *The Gospel* 1, 328; PANCARO, *The Law*, 481.

<sup>54</sup> BROWN, *ibid.*, 318.

<sup>55</sup> SIDEBOTTOM, *The Christ of the Fourth Gospel*, 34.

teaching (7,16f). The brothers of Jesus challenge him to reveal himself in Jerusalem (7,5). Ironically, that is what Jesus does in the midst of the great feast (7,14) and at its climax (7,37). The repeated occurrences of the term law from 7,19 onwards should also be understood in this context of Jesus' teaching and his revelation. Jesus' offer of the Living Water at 7,38-39 is thus placed in contrast to the Torah, though however, not in contradiction.

There has been a lot of discussion about the scripture passage which has been quoted at 7,38. There is as yet no unanimity. Most of the passages, which have been explored as the possible ones, have reference to the law or to personified Wisdom<sup>29</sup>

## **6. Living Water in parallel with the Bread of Life**

The parallel between the Bread of Life (chapter 6) and the Living Water (chapter 4) is striking. If manna represents the law in chapter 6, it is the water in Jacob's well which represents it in chapter 4. If the Jews are in dialogue with Jesus

<sup>29</sup> At Ps 40,8, the Psalmist says, "Your law is in my belly." The invitation of Jesus who stands and cries out (7,37) can be compared to that of the personified Wisdom which is mentioned to cry aloud in Prov 1,20; 8,2-3. In Prov 9,3ff the personified Wisdom invites the simple to come and eat of her food and drink of the wine she has mixed. A similar invitation is also found in Sir 51,23. At Isa 55,1, God invites people to come to Wisdom; "All who are thirsty, come to the water." Prophet Jeremiah (2,13) decries the people for having forsaken God in a similar way as Jesus reproaches the Jews: "They have forsaken me, the fountain of Living Waters, and have hewed themselves cisterns, the broken cisterns which can hold no water." Zech 14,8, mentions "Living waters shall go out from Jerusalem." Isa 12,3, "With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation" is another text where water and wells are mentioned together.

during the discourse on the Bread of Life, it is the Samaritan woman in the discourse on the Living Water. Both desire positively for the offer of Jesus and request it, of course, with the characteristic johannine misunderstanding (4,15; 6,34). Both of them come to the recognition that Jesus is a prophet (4,19; 6,14). However, the dialogue with the Samaritan woman is on a positive note unlike the one with the Jews. The dialogue with the Jews on the Bread of Life takes on a hostile note with the disappointed Jews murmuring (6,41.61) against Jesus.

On the contrary, the Samaritan woman is quite receptive, even when she poses a curious question to Jesus about his superiority to her venerated ancestor Jacob (4,12). The story in chapter 4 does not show any negative attitude towards the ancestors of the Jews (6,49). While the story of the Samaritan has a happy conclusion with many more of her citizens becoming believers in Jesus, it is the contrary in chapter 6: many of the disciples desert Jesus, except the twelve. The parallel is an indication that John has the same function for both the symbols in the Fourth Gospel. Both symbols represent the same reality, the law, which had a fundamental function for the Jews as well as the Samaritans. In fact, the Samaritans were more strict in their observance of the Torah, which for them meant only the first Five Books of Moses, the Pentateuch.

Another significant difference between both stories is found in the major symbols themselves. Jesus identifies himself as the Bread of Life (6,35.48.51), whereas there is no such self-identification of Jesus with the Living Water. It is the same in chapter 4 and also at 7,38. Jesus does not say that he is the Living Water. He just gives the Living Water (4,14). If the Living Water is the revelation and the Spirit whose source is Jesus Himself, there is already an implicit identification since the revelation of Jesus is inseparable from the person of Jesus.<sup>57</sup> A similar idea was already found in our analysis of 1,17, where grace and truth came through Jesus Christ<sup>58</sup> while they (grace and truth) are at the same time the revelation of Jesus himself. This reveals that John has a very consistent and logical pattern in the presentation of his ideas, which he can often adorn with the tools of irony, misunderstanding, etc.

The figure of the Samaritan woman itself seems to play a symbolic role in the whole story.<sup>59</sup> Since the Samaritans were very strict with regard to their observance of the law, Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman and the

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<sup>57</sup> PANCARO, *The Law*, 478.

<sup>58</sup> DODD, *Interpretation*, 312-313, too finds a connection between the water-symbolism of chapter 4 with 1,17. He writes: "...it is not difficult to see how the evangelist could find in water-symbolism an effective illustration of the idea which he expressed succinctly in the Prologue: 'The Torah was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.' By the symbol of water this discourse is linked with the foregoing."

<sup>59</sup> BARRETT, *The Gospel*, 229. According to Barrett, "It is probably correct to say that the woman is a traditional figure, but is treated by John symbolically-better perhaps, representatively."

following reaction and reception of Jesus' revelation by her is an illustration of the openness of the true adherents of the law. The Samaritan woman represents not only the Samaritan community but all those who are open to Jesus' revelation.<sup>60</sup> Samaritan woman's openness to Jesus' revelation is particularly striking and remarkable in the face of the seemingly embarrassing statement to the Samaritans that the "Salvation come from the Jews" (4,22).

The Samaritans, who traced their ancestral origin to Jacob,<sup>61</sup> can be taken to be very well represented by the Samaritan woman who shows devotion and pride to her ancestors and Jacob (4,12,20). The woman shows knowledge of the traditions and the teaching of the Samaritans which are distinct from that of the Jews. Disregarding her private life, she shows signs of yearning for the true knowledge of God, which she, as any other Samaritan with a religious background, would do (4,25). Her expression of this knowledge, "I know that the Messiah comes," reveals a kind of certainty and hope, which is indeed rewarded. She combines this personal knowledge ("I know") with the hope of salvation for the whole of the Samaritans ("He will tell us all things"). In this

<sup>60</sup> William R.G. LOADER, *Jesus' Attitude towards the Law* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1997), 458. According to him, "In having Jesus add that salvation is of the Jews (4,22), the author makes it very clear that he intends his portrait of Jesus to be seen as fulfilling and transcending Jewish tradition. He will go on to spell this out in terms of messianic expectation and show that through Christ this salvation becomes available for all the world (4,42)."

<sup>61</sup> The Northern Kingdom was called Israel (1 Kings 12) until the inhabitants were taken into exile by the conquering Assyrians in 721 B.C. Jacob's name was changed to Israel (Gen 31,29) after his encounter with God. Samaria was originally the name of the capital city (1 Kings 16,24) which later came to be the name also for the whole country and has also been so used in the Old Testament (Ezek 16,46).

sense, the Samaritan woman certainly represents the whole of the Samaritan nation with their awareness of the religious traditions and worship tracing their origin to their forefather Jacob. The traditions, going back to Jacob, were fundamental not only for their religious life but also for their social and economic life which is represented by the cattle which also drank from the well of Jacob.<sup>82</sup> But all these values take a radical change when they encounter Jesus who tells them the meaning of "all things."

The positive response of the Samaritans to Jesus is strikingly in contrast to that of the "Jews" who most of the time have negative disposition towards Jesus. If the "Jews" play mostly a negative role in the Fourth Gospel, Israel is always a positive concept for John. Israel was the former name for the northern kingdom before the Exile and it was also the name which was given to Jacob after his encounter with God. However, it would be far fetched to state that the Fourth Gospel was written partly to win Samaritan converts.<sup>83</sup> There is no trace of the presence of a negative spirit in the story of the Samaritan woman. In short, we can say without exaggeration that the story has a "happy ending." It was the will of the Father (4,4) and to finish it happily was also the food for Jesus (4,34).

<sup>82</sup> Jacob's well, in this sense too, has been taken to be a symbol of the law. PANCARO, *The Law*, 484; DODD, *Interpretation*, 312. The symbolism of Jacob's well, for Dodd, seems to be represented in its content: the ordinary water in contrast to the Living Water. The former represents the material or temporal order, while the latter, the eternal one: "This water belongs the material order of creation and to the animal life of man" (312, note 1).

<sup>83</sup> E.D.FREED, "Did John write his Gospel partly to win Samaritan Converts?" *NT* 12 (1970): 241-256.

### C. JESUS, THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD (8,12; 9,5).

Light, as a symbol for the law, in contrast to the revelation of Jesus or to Jesus himself in the Fourth Gospel, has already been pointed out by some authors.<sup>64</sup> The symbol of light, unlike the symbols of bread and water, which we have studied immediately above, does not belong to the realm of physical nourishment to man. Yet equally important and indispensable is light for the existence of life, human and non-human.<sup>65</sup> Moreover, it does not refer to any material object.<sup>66</sup> Our study of bread (manna) and water as symbols for the law show sufficient evidence that John employs the biblical symbols, which are often

<sup>64</sup> BROWN, *The Gospel* 1, 344; Brown finds a similarity between the metaphors of bread and water and now here in the metaphor of light. Brown writes: "Previously we have heard Jesus speak of water that is life-giving and of bread that is life-giving; now he speaks of life-giving light. Since the first two metaphors referred basically to his revelation, we may well suspect that that is what is meant here too."; DODD, *Interpretation*, 84f, expresses certainty that light is a symbol of the Torah: "We can hardly doubt that the evangelist is implicitly comparing the real light of the world with the Torah, which claims also to be a light for the world." William R.G. LOADER, *Jesus' Attitude towards the Law* (Mohr Siebeck: Tübingen, 1997), 447.460. Loader states, "In this new level of reality symbols once applied to Torah (word, light, life, water) have been transferred exclusively to Christ; they are denied to Torah." Loader is correct in saying that these symbols stand for Christ in the Fourth Gospel. But they are not denied to the Torah by John. If the Torah was the bread (manna) or water, Jesus is by far and immeasurably superior in the sense Jesus belongs to the reality from "above," while the Torah, for which these symbols stand, are from "below." In this sense, these symbols are merely signs pointing to the higher order of revelation brought by Jesus: "the Living Bread," "the Living Water," etc. Loader admits that John is positive with regard to the law (449); ODEBERG, *The Fourth Gospel*, 286, finds Jesus' self-identification with the Light is parallel with his self-identification with the Celestial Bread.

<sup>65</sup> Manfred LURKER, *Wörterbuch Biblische Bilder und Symbole* (München: Kösel Verlag, 1978), 195: The description of being born is itself expressed in terms of light. Birth implies seeing the light of the world.

<sup>66</sup> BULTMANN, *The Gospel*, 185. According to him, "The description of the revelation as 'water' differs from its description as 'light', in that 'light' originally refers not to an object or thing, but to the illuminated state of existence, whereas water (and bread) originally refers to something which living creatures constantly require."

associated with the law, with a new meaning for Jesus. The difference between these symbols and Jesus himself is that Jesus is far superior to the reality which these symbols signify. John is not negative at all, neither to these symbols nor to the reality to which they point - the law. If these belong to the earthly realm, Jesus belongs to the heavenly realm (8,23). However, in no way are they incompatible with each other, since the former points to the latter. The symbol of light in the Bible reaches its deepest level in John.<sup>67</sup>

The term light occurs altogether 23 times in the Fourth Gospel while in the Synoptic Gospels, it occurs only 15 times. In the Prologue alone, the term occurs 6 times, in vv. 4.5.7.8 (twice) and 9. Besides the Prologue, it is found in 3,19 -21; 5,35; 8,12; 9,5; 11,9 -10; 12,35 -36.46. The term occurs only in the Book of Signs.

### **1. Light and the Light of the World**

The term light in the Fourth Gospel, more often than not, is associated with the world. Jesus declares that he is not merely the light, but **the Light of the World** (8,12; 9,5). He would also say that he came as light into the world (12,46). The contrast is thus one between the Torah, which was compared to light, and Jesus, who is now the light of the world. If the distinction, in our study

<sup>67</sup> L BURKARD, "Licht," in *Bibel-Lexikon* ed. Herbert HAAG (Köln: Benziger Verlag, 1968): 1050.

immediately above, were between the bread (manna) and the Bread from Heaven and also between the water and the Living Water, now it is between the light and the Light of the World. Not only the Bread of Life and the Living Water have their counterparts, but also the Light of the World.<sup>85</sup> With Dodd, we can very well say that the contrast between the light representing the Torah, and Jesus as the Light of the World, is present in the Fourth Gospel beyond doubt.

## **2. The uniqueness of the Johannine usage: *The Light of the World***

As already mentioned above, the distinction between the expressions light and the Light of the World should be maintained in order to study the contrast John makes between these realities. John's employment of the expression **Light of the World** is unique. We find instances in the Old Testament where the Torah or the wisdom it provides is compared to light, but nowhere do we find the description that the Torah is the Light of the World. The only instance where the Torah is mentioned in the Old Testament with light and the world is in Wisdom 18,4. There it is mentioned, "*For those deserved to be deprived of light and imprisoned by darkness, who had kept your sons confined, through whom the*

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<sup>85</sup> PANCARO, *The Law*, 485 finds it uncertain that the symbol of light for the law is employed in the Fourth Gospel. For him, "The probability is very slight. The uncertainty stems from the fact that, whereas the "living water" and the "bread of life" in the Fourth Gospel have counterparts (v.g., the (water of the) well of Jacob and the manna) in which one many find a symbolic reference to the law, "light" has no such counterpart."

*imperishable light of the law was to be given to the world.*"<sup>28</sup> This is the Old Testament text which comes closest to the johannine expression of the Light of the World. The law is described here as the imperishable light given to the world. Yet the law is not described as the "Light of the World." When authors compare the johannine expression Light of the World to that of the Torah in the Old Testament, this distinction between the light and the Light of the World, has not been sufficiently maintained.

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<sup>28</sup> We may also refer some other OT texts which speak of light in connection with the themes of law, commandment, world or creation. Besides Gen 1,3, which speaks of light as the first creation of God, there are a few other texts which may enlighten the meaning of the term "Light of the world" in the Fourth Gospel. Ps 19,9 says, "The commandment of the Lord enlightens the eye." Ps 27,1 describes God as Light: "The Lord is my Light and my Salvation." Ps 36,10 distinguishes between two kinds of light. It states that the visibility of light for humans is possible because God Himself is Light: "In your Light we see the light." Ps 43,3, "Send your Light and your truth that they may lead me." Ps. 119, the whole of which is a praise of the heavenly law, describes God's word (which is a term synonymous for the law) as a lamp for the feet and Light for the way (v.105). The same Psalm notes, "The revelation of your words sheds light" (v.130). Wisd 7,26 describes personified Wisdom as the reflection of eternal Light: "She is the reflection of eternal light, the spotless mirror of the power of God." Wisd 18,1 mentions, "Your holy ones had a very great light." The Book of Isaiah has some interesting parallels to the johannine expression, "Light of the World." Isa 2,5 calls, "O house of Jacob, let us walk in the light of the Lord." Isa 42,6 quotes Yahweh saying, "I have formed you and set you as a covenant for the people, a light for the nations." A similar expression is found in Isa 49,6: "I will make you a light to the nations, that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth." In Isa 51,4 Yahweh declares, "The law shall go forth from my presence and my judgment as the light of the peoples." The occurrences of the term law in Isa. 60 proclaims the universality of salvation through the symbolism of light. The chapter begins with the call of awakening: "Rise up in splendor! Your light has come" (v.1); "Nations shall walk by your light and kings in your shining radiance" (v.3); "The Lord will be your light forever" (vv.19.20). The same context of joy and hope associated with light is also found in Bar 5,9: "God is leading Israel with joy by the light of His glory."

The term Light of the World in the Rabbinic circles was understood as the self-predication for God.<sup>70</sup> Yet there is a clear distinction between the rabbinic circles and the johannine usage. The dualistic opposition between light and darkness, representing good and evil respectively, is not visible in the rabbinic literature. Neither is there the implicit contrast between the light and the Light of the World. The dualistic opposition which is found in the Qumran literature is clearly distinct from the one in the Fourth Gospel.<sup>71</sup> Nor the expression, the Light of the World, is found in the Gnostic or the Mandaic literature.<sup>72</sup>

### 3. Jesus' revelation is universal

What does John mean by presenting Jesus as the Light of the World? If the law or its wisdom is compared to light, Jesus is by far superior. He is the Light of the

<sup>70</sup> STRACK-BILLERBECK, *Das Evangelium* 1, 237; 2, 357. 521f; Odeberg, *The Fourth Gospel*, 286, notes: "The self-predication, 'I am the Light of the World' could, from a Rabbinic standpoint, be uttered only by the Holy One Himself or possibly by the Tora." ; Sverre AALEN, *Die Begriffe 'Licht' und 'Finsternis' im Alten Testament, im Spätjudentum und im Rabbinismus* (Oslo: Duet Norske Videnskaps-Akademie, 1951), 282ff.

<sup>71</sup> Qumran Essenes were called Sons of light since they were illumined with the wisdom of light (1 QS 2,3). And the expression 'light of life' was identified with the Qumran interpretation of the law (1 QS 3,7). There is mention of the opposition between the prince of light and the angel of darkness (1QS 3.20-21). Pardon of sins was required in order to see the light of life (1QS 3,6-7). See G. VERMES, *The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls*, 99.101. Such close similarity to the johannine concept of light found in the Qumran literature has already been noted by authors e.g. BROWN, *The Gospel* 1, 340; 516. Yet the dualism found in the Qumran literature and the dualism in the Fourth Gospel are quite distinct from each other. Although Qumran texts have similarity to the johannine dualism such as light-darkness and truth- falsehood, yet other johannine dualistic expressions such as life and death (5,24; 11,25), earthly and heavenly (3,12.31) and from above and from below (3,13.31; 8,23) are conspicuously absent in Qumran.

<sup>72</sup> SCHNACKENBURG, *Johannesevangelium* 1, 240; ODEBERG, *The Fourth Gospel*, 287f.

World. The law was compared to light in a restricted sense, inasmuch as it was confined to the Jews. Now Jesus, as the Light of the World, is not merely for the Jews, but for the whole world.<sup>73</sup> The revelation which Jesus brings is universal: it is for the whole world. The whole purpose of Jesus' coming into this world was to bring God's salvation to the whole world. God's salvation, which was thought to be oriented only to the adherers of the law, becomes now open not only to the Jews but also to the Greeks and others (12,20). The coming of the Greeks to Jesus is an illustration of the fact that when his hour of glory comes, he will draw all humans, Jews as well as Greeks, to himself (12,32). Jesus, as the Light of the World, is opposed to the prince of this world (12,31). Jesus' hour of glorification spells also the dethroning of the prince of this world.

#### **4. Jesus as the Light of the World is the temporal manifestation of God's salvation**

Jesus, as the Light of the World in the Fourth Gospel, has a temporal connotation. And it is not a mere coincidence that the term is found only in the Book of Signs, which deals with Jesus' encounter with the world. Jesus as the Light of this world connotes his physical and temporal presence in the world. Jesus makes this clear when he says, "Just a little while is the Light with you. Walk as long as the Light is with you, lest the darkness should overtake you.

<sup>73</sup> SCHNACKENBURG, *ibid.*, 240: "Der jüdische Horizont ist überschritten."

And one who walks in the darkness does not know where he is going" (12,35). The temporal physical presence of Jesus is, at the same time, a warning that calls for decision. This decision is that of a choice; a choice which one has to make between the Light of the World and the prince of darkness. The choice for the Light of the World will make believers children of the Light (12,36). Failure to make a decision for the Light of this World at the proper time is to run the risk of being overtaken by darkness (12,35).

### **5. Believing is Belonging**

The verb used by John for *being overtaken* , καταλάβη, (12,35) is the same which is used in 1,5 to indicate that the darkness did not overcome the light: ἡ σκοτία αὐτὸ οὐ κατέλαβεν. By nature, darkness has no power over the Light. This fact is expressed by John in 1,5: "The Light shines in the darkness and the darkness did not overcome it." Believing in Jesus means belonging to the Light (12,36), the Light of the World, and consequently sharing the nature of Jesus and becoming children of the Light. All those who believe in the name of Jesus get the power to become children of God (1,12). It was the same concept which was found in the Prologue. Believing in Jesus means sharing the nature of Jesus which is the direct result of belonging to him.

## 6. Light is Life

The concept of Light for John is the temporal manifestation of the Divine Life (1,4). For John, Life means the salvation which has been revealed and mediated through Christ.<sup>74</sup> Jesus is the source of this Life which is opposed to death, which John expresses through the symbolism of darkness in the Gospel. Jesus is Life (5,26; 11,25) and his absence means absence of Life. When Jesus is not there, for John, it is the indication of darkness (6,17; 20,1)

Since light and darkness are incompatible with each other and diametrically opposed, those who are good and true come to the Light and those who do evil hate the Light (3,20-21). This choice for good or evil is itself the judgment one makes for himself (3,19). The choice for evil, which is symbolised by darkness, is something which one makes against the nature ordained by God, for by nature every human has the accessibility to the Light. Humans are already in possession of light, which, for John, is the description of life (1,4).<sup>75</sup> Every human, coming into the world, is also enlightened by the true light (1,9).<sup>76</sup> If every human by nature belongs to the Light, then one's decision against the

<sup>74</sup> SCHNACKENBURG, *Johannesevangelium* 2, 113.

<sup>75</sup> BULTMANN, *The Gospel*, 42f. Bultmann correctly understands the identification of the light with the life as that of the eschatological life.

<sup>76</sup> T.F.GLASSON, "John 1,9 and a Rabbinic Tradition," *ZNW* 49 (1958): 288-290. GLASSON gives an interesting exegesis for 1,9. According to him, John replaces the rabbinic tradition where it was said that it was the Torah which was enlightening every man coming into the world. For John, it is now the Son of Man, the Logos, who enlightens every man coming into the world.

Light is, in fact, a decision against one's own very nature. This interprets also the statement of the Prologue that He came unto his own, and His own did not accept him (1,11). Those who make such a decision against their own God-given nature shut themselves off from the Power Source, and disconnect themselves from the power to become the children of God. And this is the judgment. If humans preferred darkness to light even after the coming of the Source of the Light into the world, it was because their deeds were evil (3,19-20). Thus, the concept of the Light in the Gospel of John is connected with several other concepts such as world, life, judgment etc.

### **7. The Light of the World and the Son of Man**

If the expression the Light of the World points to the temporal presence of Jesus in the World, the expression Son of Man indicates his eschatological presence. We have already seen above that humans' decision in favor of Light or darkness amounts to the judgment of themselves. The expression Son of Man is an eschatological term connected with judgment.<sup>77</sup> In all the 13 instances<sup>78</sup> where the term Son of Man occurs in the Fourth Gospel, it is connected with a heavenly vision or the eschatological judgment and all of them are interwoven

<sup>77</sup> SCHNACKENBURG, *Johannesevangelium* 1, 413.

<sup>78</sup> Son of Man in the Fourth Gospel is found in 1,51; 3,13.14; 5,27; 6;27.53.62; 8,28; 9,35; 12,23.34; 13,31.

by a united thought-pattern.<sup>79</sup>

Jesus explains the function of the Son of Man as one who is in possession of the Father's power to exercise judgment (5,27). Because he is the Son of Man, he is also the eschatological judge (5,28). Jesus as the Light of the World offers humans the opportunity to make a choice in favor of the Light. Their choice is also their own judgment either for the resurrection of life or for the resurrection of condemnation (5,28). The judgment of the Son of Man means also the driving out and the condemnation of the ruler of this world (12,31; 14,30; 16,11).

The connection between the Son of Man and the Light of this world becomes evident when Jesus implicitly identifies both these terms together at 12,34. The crowd asks Jesus concerning the identity of the Son of Man: "Who is this Son of Man?" Jesus' answer does not contain anything about the Son of Man but rather about the Light: "The Light will be with you only a little longer. Walk while you have the Light, so that darkness may not overtake you" (12,35). John's description of the departure of Jesus and his hiding (12,36) is a symbolic illustration of the fulfillment of Jesus' warning. His absence portrays the onset of the darkness. Jesus' explanation to the crowd about the Light in answer to the identity of the Son of Man is a clear indication that both these terms mean the

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<sup>79</sup> Ibid., 414.

same thing.

The healing of the blind man in chapter 9, which begins with the theme of Jesus being the Light of the World (9,5), concludes with the worshipping of the Son of Man by the healed one (9,38). The Light of the World refers to Jesus' presence in the world in the flesh, while the term Son of Man refers to his eschatological coming as judge.<sup>80</sup> Jesus does not judge (8,15; 12,47) but the judgment is the execution of the power vested on him by the Father (8,16; 12,48). The judgment is indeed not a judgment imposed by God, but rather one's own choice. Jesus as the Light of the World is an invitation, not a judgment. Judgment is the consequence of the acceptance or the rejection of this call to follow the light. The refusal to follow the light, i.e. one's willingness to remain in darkness, is itself judgment.

### **8. Light of the World means invitation, not judgment**

For the Israelites, the law formed the standard of judgment. On the basis of the

law and its interpretation was one judged. And it could not be a mere

<sup>80</sup> BROWN, *The Gospel* 1, 479. Brown detects the connection between Jesus being the Light of the World and the Son of Man in chapter 9 in commenting on the verses 12,35-36. But he does not develop on this connection when he comments on 12,35-36. On Jesus' not answering the crowd's questions directly, he says, "By introducing the theme of light and darkness, Jesus directs his discussion with the crowd from the intellectual realm to the moral realm." As we have seen above, the connection between Jesus being the Light of the World and the Son of Man is a theological and christological presentation by John including the one in 12,34-36. But as Brown himself elsewhere says (*The Gospel* II, 628), "Yet we must not create a dichotomy between the revelatory and the moral aspect of Jesus..."

coincidence that the proclamation of Jesus as the Light of the World follows immediately after the story of the adulterous woman in the Fourth Gospel. According to the Pharisees' interpretation of the law, the woman was fatally guilty. Yet, Jesus does not impose judgment on the woman in spite of his being the Light of the World.

### **9. John 8,12 ; 9,5: illustration of Jesus' being the Light of the World**

Jesus' declaration of himself in 8,12 as the Light of the world, viewed from this perspective, is not really a judgment but is, rather, an invitation for salvation. One who declines this invitation imposes judgment on himself. Interestingly enough, Jesus' proclamation of himself as the Light of the World is not the subject of controversy for the Pharisees. They do not question his being the Light of the World, but rather his act of bearing witness for himself. And after the subsequent heated exchanges which follow in the rest of chapter 8, Jesus proclaims himself again as the Light of the World in 9,5. The second proclamation is followed by the healing of the blind man who will bear witness to Jesus in spite of the violent opposition by the Pharisees. The whole story of the healing of the blind man, according to John, is the illustration of Jesus' proclamation in 8,12 and 9,5. In response to the Pharisees' objection of Jesus' bearing witness on his own behalf, Jesus had claimed that he is justified in

bearing witness on his own behalf, because he knew his source and his destination (8,14)<sup>81</sup> and it is also valid as per the law (8,17). Moreover the Father also bears witness to Jesus. Jesus had earlier claimed that the works he does bear witness to him and this witnessing is greater than that of John the Baptist (5,36). Now Jesus proves this in action by healing the blind man who also will heroically bear witness to Jesus. The healing of the blind man is actually the dramatization of 8,12.<sup>82</sup>

Although the term light is not picked up after 8,12 until 9,5, the whole episode in chapters 8 and 9 between is indeed an explanation and illustration of Jesus being the Light of the World. The themes of bearing witness and Jesus being the judge,<sup>83</sup> which immediately follow 8,12, explain the theme of Jesus being the Light of the World. And these themes of bearing witness and judging are connected to the law.<sup>84</sup> These functions of the law are fulfilled in Jesus par excellence because Jesus and his works bear witness to his Father who entrusted to him the function of judging. The person of Jesus in the flesh is the Light of the World who, in turn, will be the eschatological judge as the Son of Man. Thus, with conviction, we can attest the presence of the concept of law

<sup>81</sup> DODD, *Interpretation*, 56: "Jesus' awareness of his source and goal is an explanation of his proclamation that he is the Light of the World. "

<sup>82</sup> BROWN, *The Gospel* 1, 343.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>84</sup> The theme of judging was the subject of the story of the woman caught in adultery (7,53-8,11). And for bearing witness, Jesus had quoted the law for the validity of his witnessing (8,17).

behind the johannine proclamation of Jesus as the Light of the World. Whereas the law was confined to the Jewish milieu, now Jesus as the Light of the World makes his salvation universal for the whole world.

#### **10. Jesus' Function of being the Light of the World passed on to the disciples**

At this juncture, the question arises as to what happens to the situation after the temporal presence of Jesus, as the Light of the World, the manifestation of the Logos in the flesh. The function of the Logos in the flesh will be prolonged by the disciples who continue the mission of Jesus who entrusts them with the full authority by imparting his Spirit (20,21ff). The mission of Jesus from the Father is further continued by the disciples after the glorification of Jesus who breathes the Holy Spirit into them. Thus the disciples continue the function of being the Light of the World (Matt 5,14ff) inasmuch as they reflect Jesus.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> BROWN, *The Gospel* 1, 340.

**D. JESUS, THE WAY (14,1-6)**

The next symbol we examine for the law in the Fourth Gospel is the **Way**. Unlike the former three symbols of Bread, Water and Light, which we have examined immediately above, the term Way is not so frequent in the Fourth Gospel. It is found only four times; once in 1,23 and the rest in 14,4-6. The first instance is part of the response of John the Baptist, declaring his identity and function to the envoys of the Pharisees. John the Baptist's function was "to prepare the way of the Lord."<sup>88</sup> The other three instances are contained in the unit 14,1-6 which we will examine now for the symbol of the law. Although the term way is found only in verses 14,4-6, we will also include verses 1-3 of chapter 14, since they form a unity with verses 4-6, which will become clear in the course of our examination.

Jesus declaring himself as the Way, the Truth and the Life occurs at the early part of the Farewell Discourses. The Farewell discourses, which prepare the disciples for the moment of the departure of Jesus, begin immediately after the departure of Judas at 13,30. Jesus from now on will speak only to his faithful

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<sup>88</sup> The voice crying out in the desert to prepare the way of the Lord is the LXX quotation of Isa 40,3. The quotation is also found in the Synoptic Gospels: Matt 11,10; Mark 1,3; Luke 1,76. Brown suggests that this quotation from Isaiah found its way not only into the Synoptic Gospels but also into the Qumran community of Essenes and the Early Christian community which resembled the former. The johannine concept of Christ as the absolute way is thus the climax of this roundabout process. cf. BROWN, *The Gospel II*, 629.

followers. The last time he spoke to the crowd was at 12,36, inviting them to believe in the light and become children of the light. Although Jesus' explicit mention of himself as the Way is found only in 14,4ff in the course of his exclusive address to the disciples, the concept of the Way, i. e. Jesus as the only Mediator to his Father, is spread all throughout the Gospel. What is implicit in the rest of the Gospel comes to explicit mention in 14, 1-6. One has access to the Father only through Jesus. The Fourth Gospel makes this abundantly clear from the beginning itself when it states that no one has ever seen God (6,46) and that it is the only begotten Son who has revealed him (1,18). The same idea is expressed when we are told that no one has ascended to heaven except the one who came from him who is in heaven, the Son of Man (3,13), and that no one else, except Jesus, has the words of eternal life. (6,68). Jesus speaks what he has seen with the Father (8,38). Jesus is the door by which one has to enter in order to be saved (10,8). These are a few examples from the Fourth Gospel which demonstrate that the one and the only mediation to God is through Christ. The Christology of the Fourth Gospel makes abundantly clear this absolute and unique mediation through Christ. The concept that Jesus is the only Way or Mediator to God is found all throughout the Fourth Gospel, although the term itself is found less often.

## 1. Way as symbol in the Old Testament

The Way as a symbol for the law in the Fourth Gospel has already been noticed by authors.<sup>77</sup> Some see in the symbol of Way in the Fourth Gospel the johannine understanding of Jesus as the personified divine Wisdom.<sup>78</sup> We have studied in the earlier examination of the symbols of the law that personified Wisdom does in fact have a relationship with the idea of the law in the Old Testament, since for the Israelites wisdom was nowhere else to be found other than in the law. The term way has been a figure of speech in the Old Testament for observing the law and the Commandments which God had prescribed for His people.<sup>79</sup> Psalm 119, the whole of which is a hymn in praise of the law, speaks of the way of truth (v.30), the way of the Commandments (v.32) and the way of God's laws

<sup>77</sup> M. SCOTT, *Sophia and the Johannine Jesus*, JSNTS 71 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992), 126-128); Loader, *Jesus' Attitude*, 478.

<sup>78</sup> BROWN, *The Gospel II*, 630.

<sup>79</sup> 5,32-33. Chapter 5 of Deuteronomy, which describes the giving of the Decalogue by God to his people, concludes with a strong exhortation to observe the Commandments in these words: "Be careful therefore, to do as the Lord, your God, has commanded you, not turning aside to the right or to the left, but following exactly the way prescribed for you by the Lord, your God, that you may live and prosper, and may have long life in the land which you are to occupy." Already here we have the concept that the Way of the Lord (the law) leads to life.

(v.33).<sup>80</sup> Thus we notice that the term way for the law is a familiar symbol in the Old Testament.

If the ordinary way stands as a symbol for the law in the Old Testament, Jesus is not merely the way in the Fourth Gospel, rather he is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. We have seen in our earlier analysis that John uses the ordinary symbols found in the Old Testament with a difference in the Fourth Gospel. If the symbol of bread became the Bread of Life, water, the Living Water and light, the Light of the World, now way becomes the Way, the Truth and the Life. Life is associated with all of these symbols.<sup>81</sup> Although the symbol of way is found in

<sup>80</sup> Besides, we may note also other instances where the term way stands for observing the law, the Commandments, statutes or ordinances prescribed by God. The term way is sometimes explicitly stated along with the mention of the law or the Commandments, etc. as synonym or just merely as Way of God or Way of the Lord to mean the law or the Commandments. For the former, we find the following examples: 2 Sam 22,22-23 (which is repeated verbatim in Ps 18,22-23): David sings as part of his victory song, "I kept the ways of the Lord and was not disloyal to my God. All His Commandments are before my eyes and I never abandoned His statutes."; in 1 Kgs 11,33, God tells about the failure of Solomon: "He has turned away from my ways and not done what is pleasing to me according to my statutes and decrees."; in Ps 17,5, "My steps follow the way of your commands."; in Ps 119,15, "I will meditate on your precepts and consider your ways"; in Isa 58,2 the prophet, speaking the word of God, says, "They seek me day after day and desire to know my ways, like a nation that has done what is just and not abandoned the law of their God."; in Bar 4,12-13 Jerusalem bewails: "For the sins of my children, I am left desolate, because they turned from the law of God and did not acknowledge his statutes. In the ways of God's Commandments they did not walk, nor did they tread the disciplined paths of justice." For the latter example we find the following: 2 Sam 22,31 (which is also quoted verbatim in Ps 18,31): "God's way is perfect; His word is fire-tested."; in Judith 5,18: "when they deviated from the way God prescribed for them, they were ground down steadily. The Book of Job has several instances where the term stands absolutely for observing God's Commandments: 17,9; 21,14; 23,11; 24,13; 34,27; 38,19. In Ps 86,11, God's way and His truth are together mentioned. In Ps 95,10 God says about the sinners, "They do not know my ways." Ps 103,7 mentions, "He (God) has made known His ways to Moses."; Sir 2,15: "Those who fear the Lord do not disobey His words, those who love him keep his ways." Isa 2,3: "That He (God) may instruct us in his ways and that we may walk in his paths." Isa 63,17: "Why do you let us wander, O Lord, from your ways?"

<sup>81</sup> PANCARO, *The Law*, 452.

extra-biblical literature, our examination of the term way in the Fourth Gospel reveals a closer affinity to the one found in the Old Testament than to those in the extra-biblical sources.<sup>82</sup>

## 2. Way is focal point in John 14,1-6

The relationship among these three nouns - the Way, the Truth and the Life - in 14,6 has been a problem in the research circles.<sup>83</sup> As Raymond Brown correctly observes,<sup>84</sup> the focus in the unit 14,1-6 is on the term "way." Further, since Jesus' departure is near, the topic of discussion in this unit is about the place where he is going to. It is clear that the term way is the focal point here. Even if

the other two concepts, the Truth and the Life, are not further taken into

<sup>82</sup> There are several who try to trace the origin of the symbolism of the way in the Fourth Gospel to non-biblical sources. Besides BULTMANN, *The Gospel*, 600ff, who tries to find the sources of the symbolism of the way in the Mandaic Literature, SCHNACKENBURG, *Johannesevangelium* 3, 74 quotes also sources from the gnostic texts for a possible source of the johannine symbolism way. DODD, *Interpretation*, 51 also finds parallels to the symbolism of way in Hermetic Literature. As we have already seen, there are ample references in the Old Testament for the symbolism of way which stand as synonym for the law, Commandments, etc. The internal explicit evidence in the Fourth Gospel points to references to none other than from the Old Testament, for example, 12,38.41. An elaborate discussion on the source of the symbolism of way in the Fourth Gospel will go beyond the method and aim of our thesis. However, we can agree with BROWN *The Gospel II*, 630, for his conclusion for the background of the symbolism of the way in the Fourth Gospel: "...the material drawn from Jewish sources has been greatly transformed in the light of johannine Christology, but we do insist that the Jewish sources offer ample raw material so that it is not really necessary to wander beyond farther afield in the search for background."

<sup>83</sup> BROWN, *The Gospel II*, 620.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., 621: According to BROWN, "That the 'way' is the dominating phrase in 6 is suggested by the fact that Jesus is reaffirming his statement about the way in 4, in response to Thomas' question about the way in 5. Moreover, the second line of 6 leaves aside the truth and the life and concentrates on Jesus as the way: 'No one comes to the Father except *through me*....' And Brown further explains quoting F. Blass and A. Debrunner, "If the three phrases, 'the way,' 'the truth,' and 'the life' are joined by 'and,' the *kai* between the first and the second may be epexegetical or explanatory (= that is to say)."

discussion, they still have equal importance inasmuch as they point to Christ. The johannine Christology is the connecting point of these three realities. All these three realities have equal importance, as the construction of the sentence itself reveals. They are all joined by the coordinating conjunction *καὶ*.

### **3. Jesus is not only the Way; he is also the Goal**

We have to go beyond the norm of understanding the way as the means to reach the goal. Jesus is not merely way or the means to reach the goal of truth and the life, rather he himself is the Way, the Truth and the Life. The johannine Christology goes beyond the normal perception of the understanding between the concepts of the Means and the End, because both are united into one reality in the person of Christ.<sup>65</sup> We have observed such instances even earlier. For example, while being the Bread of Life himself, he could also give it to the believer. The Giver and the gift are united in the person of Jesus, just as the Means and the End. Jesus is not merely the Way to the Truth and the Life, he is the Way, the Truth and the Life.

At 14,6, Jesus explains the manner of his being the Way: "No one comes to the Father except through me." As we have seen above, Jesus is not pointing to his being the Means, but rather to the fact that he is the Means and the End, i.e. the

<sup>65</sup> BULTMANN, *The Gospel* 1, 605.

Way and the Goal. There is the unity of the Way and the Goal because Jesus and the Father are One (10,30). Just as the Father lives in Jesus, so also Jesus lives in the Father (10,38; 14,10.11.20; 17,21). Jesus knows the Father just as the Father knows Jesus (10,15). For this reason, knowing Jesus is also to know the Father (8,19). Seeing Jesus is also to see the Father (12,45; 14,9). Believing in Jesus is also to believe in the Father (12,44). Whoever serves Jesus will be honored by the Father (12,26). Whoever loves Jesus, will also be loved by the Father (14,21.23). Hating Jesus is also to hate the Father (15,23). These are a few examples which show the unity of the Father with Jesus. Jesus had been instructing his disciples all during their time with him about this complete unity of himself with the Father. The disciples have not understood this fully.<sup>85</sup> But henceforth their understanding will come to the full grasp of this knowledge (14,7).

#### **4. The absence of Jesus: a moment of crisis for the disciples**

However, before they come to this full understanding of Jesus and his unity with the Father, they will undergo a period of crisis and trouble which is the result of Jesus' departure. Their faith in Jesus will attain maturity only after this crisis. And Jesus tells them and strengthens them before the onset of such things (16,4). When the moment of crisis comes, the disciples' hearts will be troubled

<sup>85</sup> BROWN, *The Gospel* II, 631.

(14,1.27) and they will be frightened, and their faith will be tested, they will be scattered (16,32), they will abandon Jesus and even deny him (13,38). It will be also the time they will weep and lament and be sorrowful (16,20). When their faith will undergo such testing, they will think not only of their relationship to Jesus, but also of the relationship of Jesus to his Father. It will be their time of tribulation in the world (16,33). With this coming reality in mind, Jesus tells them repeatedly and emphatically of his unity with the Father all through the Farewell Discourses.

### **5. Belief in God is Belief In Jesus!**

Jesus tells the disciples that if they believed in God, then it naturally follows that they believe in Jesus too. One is not possible without the other. The disciples cannot claim to profess faith in God, when they abandon their faith in Jesus at this moment of their great crisis. To give up faith in Jesus means also to give up faith in the Father of Jesus. Or vice versa.<sup>87</sup> According to johannine Theology and Christology, it is not possible to believe in God without believing in Jesus. No one comes to the Father except through Jesus (14,6).

This reiterates again the truth that Jesus is the only and the absolute Way. The same truth is also implicitly mentioned in 14,1: πιστεύετε εἰς τὸν θεόν καὶ εἰς

<sup>87</sup> BULTMANN, *The Gospel* , 600.

ἐμε πιστεύετε. This poetic and chiasmic construction highlights the proximity of the terms εἰς τὸν θεόν and εἰς ἐμὲ. The expression does not mean to say that belief in God and belief in Jesus are two distinct beliefs but rather that both are one and the same. The sentence does not consist of two imperative coordinate clauses but rather two coordinate indicative clauses, joined through the conjunction καὶ. However, the first indicative clause could be understood as an implicit interrogative: "Do you believe in God? Then you believe also in me!" While the first indicative clause serves the function of an interrogative, the second is an emphatic affirmation.<sup>28</sup> The johannine meaning would tell us that both clauses could be equally interchangeably interpreted. Because faith in God and faith in Jesus are one and the same since one faith cannot exist without the other.

## 6. Exclusivism in Johannine Theology?

Though it may raise a question of exclusivism in Johannine Theology, yet a true examination of it will prove just the contrary. If belief in God implies belief in Jesus, then it includes all those who profess faith in God. The johannine Christology calls for the recognition of Christ in everything in the world and every

<sup>28</sup> Ibid. BULTMANN correctly observes the meaning of 14,1. But he opts to take the relationship between these two clauses as one of subordination rather than coordination. He sees also the possibility of considering the two clauses of 14,1b as indicatives. But then, he would take its meaning as "indirect exhortation." Our analysis above shows that the meaning of 14,1b is emphatic affirmation, rather than indirect exhortation.

time in the world. Because Christ, the Logos, the Eternal Word of God is present everywhere, in everything and in all times throughout the world. "All things were made through him and there was nothing which was not made without him" (1,3). "He was in the world and the world was created through him" (1,10). Abraham saw his day and rejoiced at it (8,56); the prophet Isaiah saw his glory too (12,41). And before Abraham was Jesus is (8,58). The disciples now see the Word of God in flesh. But the Word of God is present in the world all the time - past, present and future - and only those who believe in God can see him. The Word of God is visible for those who see with the eyes of faith,<sup>89</sup> and through the Word of God, God Himself, even if they do not explicitly profess their belief in Jesus. The fact that they profess their faith in God is itself an affirmation of their faith in Jesus, even if they are not aware of it. One who believes in God believes also in Jesus (14,1) and one who believes in Jesus possesses also the true belief in God (12,44). The work of God is nothing other than believing in Jesus whom He has sent (6,29). The Father himself loves the ones who love and believe in Jesus (16,27).

This johannine Christology will bring us to the question of the people who profess their belief in God, but not in Jesus Christ. If the very act of belief in God includes in every case belief in Jesus too, they indirectly possess faith in Jesus

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<sup>89</sup> SCHNACKENBURG, *Johannesevangelium* 2, 78.

Christ. By proclaiming faith in God, they proclaim faith in Jesus too. For John, Jesus is not just the Prophet awaited by Israel, the Messiah, the Son of God, etc. but Jesus himself is God. This he proclaims already at the opening verse of the Gospel . The Word has been existing from the beginning with God and the Word Himself was God (1,1). If they claim to have faith in God and deny Jesus, their faith cannot be true. The "Jews," the opponents of Jesus, did the same. They claimed to have faith in God, but denied Jesus Christ, his Mediation and his Sonship. This was not mere ignorance, but a stubbornness to remain in ignorance, in other words, arrogance. To deny the Mediation of Jesus for salvation would be false faith and hypocrisy. Because Jesus is the only Way. And no one can come to the Father except through Jesus.

### **7. The Law itself is symbol**

Abiding by the way of the Lord, that is, leading a life according to the law, with its commandments, statutes and ordinances prescribed by God meant prosperity, success and life, and neglecting them amounted to fatal failure. That the law and the commandments reveal the way of God and one should lead a life according to the law and its commandments was fundamental to the people of Israel. This idea was only a beginning or a foreshadow in the people's relationship with God. Jesus is the fulfillment of this relationship with God. Thus the law and the

**commandments were a preparation for the coming of Jesus. The function of the law in the Old Testament, viewed from this perspective, is itself a symbol. Now Jesus is the only and absolute Way, sent by God, not to replace this function of the law, but to let it be perfected in the coming of Jesus. This relationship, which was initiated by the law, comes to its fulfillment in the Incarnation of the Son of God. It is no more the impersonal law with its commandments which reveal the Word of God, it is now the person of Jesus himself. The person of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, does not play merely the mediatory role to the Truth and the Life, but he himself is the Truth and the Life. The function of the law in this sense was one of mediation since it was a means revealing to man the will of God in order to lead him to the Truth and the Life. With the coming of Jesus, humans are provided with the absolute Mediation to God where Jesus as the Way to God is also the Truth and the Life. Thus the function of the law was that of preparation for the coming of Jesus Christ.**

## **Conclusion**

We have seen that these four symbols - bread, water, light and the way - which have been traditional symbols of the law in the Old Testament, have been used with distinction by John in the Fourth Gospel for Jesus. These ordinary symbols become transformed in the Fourth Gospel to point to Jesus in whom their functions become a reality. If these symbols pointed to the mediation played by the Torah as a way to God, they now point to Jesus in a far more accomplished way. It is in this sense that the law itself was a symbol inasmuch as it functioned as a pointer to Jesus.

If these realities, bread, water, light, way, etc. are so important or rather indispensable for life, Jesus is much more. Life without Jesus would be a contradiction. Life without Jesus is an impossibility. Because Life is Jesus himself. Life, according to John, is not only eschatological life, but also ordinary physical earthly life. He points to this fact implicitly when Jesus feeds the crowd with the ordinary bread (6,1-15). Jesus gives his flesh as bread for the life of the world (6,51). But one should not get stuck at this physical life, but rather look beyond and work for the higher life. John underlines this fact when he narrates in the Prologue, reminiscent of the first creation in Genesis, that everything

came into existence through Jesus, the Logos, and there was nothing which came into existence without him (1,3). For he was life (1,4) and through him the world was created. The world exists through him, although it has not recognised him (1,10). One who believes in Jesus becomes a sharer in the life of Jesus.

These symbols, which John utilises, and also other ones besides these four, such as good wine, the gate, etc. point to Jesus as the source of life, and the only way to life.

### **Conclusion of Part One**

We have until now examined the concept of law as it is present in the whole of the Fourth Gospel. We started with 1,17, which, like the rest of the Prologue, gave us the setting tone to explore the meaning of the concept of law in the Fourth Gospel. The examination of the term law at 1,17 led us to discover that John has a positive view with regard to the concept of law. The law was given through Moses in order to witness to the coming of the Logos in the flesh. The law, in spite of its prophetic role of witnessing to Jesus, is viewed by John to have a relative function in comparison to the Scripture, which is absolute and always unqualifiable, even if both point the same reality.

Our findings from the analysis of 1,17 in the First Chapter echoed harmoniously in the Second Chapter, where we dealt with the explicit occurrences of the term law in the Fourth Gospel. The analysis of all the occurrences of the word law confirmed our findings of the First Chapter that the law points to Jesus.

In our Third Chapter, we studied the different symbols (bread, water, light and way). These symbols, which denoted the law in the Jewish world, point to Christ in the Fourth Gospel in a supreme tone and meaning. This is not an invention of

John's imagination, but this is the way these symbols were meant to be interpreted in the Scripture. To understand the mention of manna in Scripture as Bread from Heaven was wrong. It is Jesus, who has been foretold in the Scripture as the **Bread from Heaven**. In the same way, it is not just the water which points to Christ, it is the **Living Water**. Jesus is not just the light, but the **Light of the World**. Neither is Jesus to be understood merely as a way, rather he is **The Way, The Truth and The Life**. If these symbols point to realities indispensable for human life, Jesus is much more. Life, ordinary life and eternal life, would be impossible without Jesus. Everything in the world draws its life from Jesus, the Logos, through whom everything was created (1,3). Because Jesus himself is Life (1,4; 11,25). The light of life comes from Jesus (8,12). Everyone should possess Life by believing in Jesus (20,31). It is the very purpose, for which John writes this Gospel.

With these findings, we conclude the First Part of our Thesis and we will now begin to deal with the Second Part of our Thesis: the concept of Love in the Fourth Gospel.

**PART TWO**

**LOVE IN THE FOURTH GOSPEL**

## **PART TWO**

### **LOVE IN THE FOURTH GOSPEL**

Having examined the reality of the law in the Fourth Gospel during the First Part of our thesis, let us now turn to the concept of love in the Fourth Gospel which is the Second Part of our thesis. The First Part has demonstrated to us that John has the concept of the law as an important element of his Christology. He conveys the idea that what the law promised in the Old Testament has been fulfilled in a far more accomplished manner in the person of Jesus. The law points to Jesus (1,45) and the reality of law itself has been fulfilled in Jesus. The law, as the gift of God (1,17), had its function to bear witness to Jesus for his coming in the flesh. In this sense, the law points to Jesus and bears witness to Jesus before his Incarnation. As such, the reality of the law itself plays the role of a symbol since it points to the coming of the Word-Incarnate in the flesh. With the coming of Jesus, the symbol gives way to the reality, the person of Jesus. Since the witnessing role of the law finds its completion in the person of Jesus, one should now turn to Jesus.

Jesus fulfills all the expectations of the people of Israel as foretold in the law. Jesus is the New Prophet (6,14; 7,40.52; 9,17), the New Temple (2,21), the One about whom Moses in the Law and the prophets wrote (1,45), the One sent by God (3,2.17.34; 4,34; 5,23.24.37; 6,29.39.44.57; 7,16.18.28.29.33; 8,16.26.28.29; 9,4;

11,42; 14,24; 15,21; 17,3.18.21.23.25; 20,21), the Messiah (1,41; 4,26.29; 7,26.41; 9,22), the Holy One of God (6,69), the Son of God (1,14.34; 3,16-18; 35-36; 5,19-26; 6.40; 8,35-36; 10,36-38; 11,4.27; 14,13; 17,1; 19,7) and God Himself (1,1; 20,28). John expresses this high Christology in the Fourth Gospel also through the use of the absolute I AM which was the name of YHWH Himself in his glorious transcendence and holiness in the Old Testament (Exod 3,14). It is the same YHWH who now reveals Himself in Jesus (6,20; 8,24.28.58; 13,19; 18,5.6.8). The function of law in the Fourth Gospel is to bear witness to this revelation of God in Jesus. The law was given by God to prepare the people for the coming fullness of this relationship in the Incarnation of Jesus. If the law was a gift of God to prepare the people for the fullness of this relationship in the coming of Jesus, love is the gift of Jesus as the fruit of this relationship. Jesus gave this gift to his disciples before his going to the Father. If the law was an external reality comprising numerous commandments and statutes, love becomes an internal reality resulting from the presence of Jesus' word in his followers. It is this concept of love that we are going to examine in detail in this Second Part of our thesis.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **LOVE IN THE FOURTH GOSPEL**

#### **JOHN 13,34 AND 15,12 AS WINDOW TO THE CONCEPT OF LOVE IN THE FOURTH GOSPEL**

Just as we took John 1,17 as an example to explore the reality of the law in the Fourth Gospel, we will take John 13,34 and 15,12.17 as specimen verses to explore the concept of love in the Fourth Gospel. Both the verses speak of the giving of the commandment of love to the disciples by Jesus. The only difference between the two is, while 13,34 calls the commandment of love a new commandment, there is no such qualification attached to the commandment of love in 15,12. It is obvious that while the first refers to the giving of the commandment of love to the disciples for the first time, the second one is an emphasis on the earlier giving of the commandment. The commandment of love is not anymore new since it has already been given as at 13,34 and now the disciples are merely reminded of it once again at 15,12 (and also at 15,17) in order to stress the importance of the commandment of love.

Before we launch into the examination of the concept of love in the Fourth Gospel, the terminology of love itself requires a close scrutiny. Unlike the term *law* which

has only the word *nomos* as its Greek counterpart in the Fourth Gospel, the English term *love* has two Greek counterparts, namely, *agapan* and *philein*. It is for this reason we need to examine the meaning of both these terms, and the difference between them, if any,<sup>1</sup> before we study the concept of love in the Fourth Gospel.

## A. THE TERMINOLOGY OF LOVE IN THE FOURTH GOSPEL

### 1. The occurrences of the term love in the Fourth Gospel

Of these two terms -*agapan* and *philein* - standing for the meaning of love in the Fourth Gospel, the terms belonging to the family of the word *agapan* are found the most often. The terms belonging to this group are found altogether 43 times: 36 times in verbal form and 7 times in noun form. The terms belonging to the family of *philein* are found only 13 times and only in verbal form. The noun form<sup>2</sup> belonging

<sup>1</sup> Opinions are divergent among authors with regard to the distinction in meaning between these terms. Of those who would not find any distinction in meaning between these two terms, we may mention J.H. BERNARD, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to John* (New York: C.Scribner, 1929), 702 ff; C.K.BARRETT, *The Gospel*, 584; R.BULTMANN, *The Gospel*, 253, note 2. 711, note.5; R.Brown, *The Gospel* I, 498; R.Schnackenburg, *Johannesevangelium*, 432f; Jörg AUGENSTEIN, *Das Liebesgebot im Johannesevangelium und in den Johanneischen Briefen* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1993), 38, note 87, as a few among others. Among those who find distinction in meaning, notable authors are R.C. TRENCH, *Synonyms of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans, 1948); C.SPICQ, *Agape* III,111-357; V.WARNACH, *Agape. Die Liebe als Grundmotiv der neutestamentlichen Theologie* (Düsseldorf: Patmos Verlag, 1951) 162; B.F. WESTCOTT, *The Gospel According to John* (London: Murray, 1887), 303; T.EVANS, "The Verb *Agapan* in the Fourth Gospel," in *Studies in the Fourth Gospel*, ed. F.L.CROSS (London: Mowbray, 1957): 64-71.

<sup>2</sup> The noun form of *philein* (*philia*) is found only once in the New Testament in James 4,4. There James admonishes his hearers that the friendship of the world is enmity with God.

to this group would indicate friendship rather than love. However, another related noun belonging to this group, *philos*, meaning friend, occurs 6 times. We can observe from these occurrences of the terms for love in the Fourth Gospel that John prefers to use the term *love* in the active form rather than in the static or the passive form.<sup>3</sup> In comparison to the Synoptic Gospels or even to the rest of the New Testament, John employs the term love more frequently.<sup>4</sup>

## **2. *Agapan* and *philein* : different in connotation?**

### **a. *Agapan* and *philein* in John 21,15-17**

Is there really a difference in meaning between these two expressions *agapan* and *philein*? For any discovery in the distinction between these terms, the best example we may find is the unit 21,15-17 where Jesus asks Peter thrice whether the latter loves him. The first two times, Jesus asks him, ἀγαπᾷς με, but the third time φιλεῖς με. But each time Peter answers, φιλω̄ σε. But it was the third time when asked by Jesus that Peter was distressed. What was the cause of Peter's distress? Was it because he was asked for the third time or because of the change of

<sup>3</sup> BROWN, *The Gospel I*, 497. Brown also notes that "John's concept of love seems to give more stress to the active element."

<sup>4</sup> In the Synoptic Gospels words belonging to the group *agapan* occur 28 times (26 times in verb form and twice in noun form). The words belonging to the group *philein* occurs 8 times. The Fourth Gospel uses the term *philein* 13 times whereas it is not at all found in the three johannine Epistles. The Gospel uses the noun form of the term *agapan* sparingly. It is not the case with the Epistles where the noun form is found 31 times and the verb form 21 times. Thus there is a notable distinction in the usage of the terms for love in the Fourth Gospel and the johannine Epistles.

expression? The construction of the sentence inclines us to think that it could be both. John mentions ἐλυπήθη ὁ Πέτρος ὅτι εἶπεν αὐτῷ τὸ τρίτον, φιλεῖς με. We know that Jesus had not asked three times φιλεῖς με but only once, i.e. the third time. Of course, Jesus had asked him three times, though the third time using the different expression, *philein*. Peter was distressed because Jesus asked him a third time and using the expression which Peter himself used in affirming his love for Jesus. John lays emphasis on the **third** time by using the article before *third time* (τὸ τρίτον). The article is not found at v.16 before the *second time* (δεύτερον). This has prompted some scholars<sup>5</sup> to comment that the cause of the distress was not due to the change of the term but because he was asked for the “third time.” But it is also likely that the distress of Peter was caused not because of the “third time” but to the change of the term for love. Some scholars<sup>6</sup> discover a trace of humility in the answer of Peter that he does not claim to have attained the higher form of love, i.e. *agape*. It is natural for everyone to connect Jesus’ threefold question of love with Peter’s threefold denial. There is hardly any commentator who does not refer the event of 21,15-17 to the threefold denial of Peter in the Passion Narrative and many of them also find there a portrayal of Jesus’ forgiving<sup>7</sup> and Peter’s rehabilitation.<sup>8</sup> The reaffirmation of Peter’s love for Jesus is portrayed

<sup>5</sup> P.GAECHTER, “Weide meine Lämmer,” ZKT 69 (1947): 328-344.

<sup>6</sup> WESTCOTT, *ibid.*, who holds *agape* is the higher form of love, states that Peter does not venture to claim that he has attained the higher form of love; That is the reason he keeps on answering all three times in terms of *philein*. The distress is caused when Jesus resorts to ask him finally whether Peter has even such a human form of love. EVANS, *ibid.*, holds a similar view.

<sup>7</sup> SCHNACKENBURG, *Johannesevangelium* 3, 435;

<sup>8</sup> BROWN, *The Gospel* II, 1111.

as a prelude to this. It is not because Jesus wanted to make sure that Peter loved him; Jesus knew anything and everything (v.17). John wants to give expression to the fact that it is love which brings responsibility. It is Peter's love for Jesus which makes the former continue the work of Jesus which is symbolically expressed through the "feeding and tending of the lambs and the sheep."

#### **b. Pairs of terms in 21,15-17**

That there is a distinction in meaning of *agapan* and *philein* can also be deduced from other pair of terms John employs in the unit 21,15-17. There are pairs of terms: 1. τὰ ἀρνία: lambs (v.15) and τὰ πρόβατά: the sheep (vv.16.17). 2. Βόσκει: feed (vv.15.17) and Ποίμηνε: tend and protect (v.16). 3. οἶδας: know (vv.15.16.17) and γινώσκεις: know and discern (v.17). These three pairs indicate a similar reality or function, yet they do not have the identical meanings. The same could be attributed to the meaning of *agapan* and *philein*. John expresses a similar reality or function through different terms to denote the all-comprehensiveness of the idea. For instance, when Peter tells Jesus σὺ οἶδας he means to say that Jesus knows that he is loved by Peter. But at 21,17, when Peter adds σὺ γινώσκεις, he means to say that Jesus not only merely knows but he can also discern and judge the love of Peter. The latter has a meaning of not only merely knowing but also discerning and

judging.<sup>9</sup> It is also the same term when Peter tells Jesus at 6,69 on behalf of the twelve, "We have come to believe and *know* that you are the Holy One of God." This sense of knowing includes also an aspect of certainty and conviction. This dimension of knowledge is what is emphasized in the latter. Similarly, with the other terms too. John mentions two kinds of flock: the lambs and the sheep. He mentions also two manners of caring for the flock: feeding and protecting.<sup>10</sup> In the same manner, John uses also two terms for loving: *agapan* and *philein*. As there is distinction in the other pairs of terms, so also there is an implied distinction in the pair of terms for love. If these two terms manifest two dimensions of love, then John's purpose in using these terms in 21,15-17 is to convey that Peter's love for Jesus is total, comprising these two dimensions of love. What are the two different dimensions of love these two terms indicate?

Rather than getting into a discussion of which term manifests the superior form of love, we may well ask which has been the favorite term for John in the Fourth Gospel. Undoubtedly, it has been the term *agapan*, which he has employed with much more frequency than *philein*. John uses the term *agapan* more often than *philein* since its dimension of meaning corresponds to the theological and christological import which John wants to convey. It is true that John's use of both

<sup>9</sup> Harold K. MOULTON, *The Analytical Greek Lexicon Revised* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1977) 79-80.

<sup>10</sup> SCHNACKENBURG, *Johannesevangelium* 3, 433. Quoting Philo, Schnackenburg finds a distinction between these two terms.

the terms may give one the impression that both the terms are interchangeable and that is the reason many scholars hold that there is no difference between these terms. But as we observe from the unit 21,15-17, John does use these terms with a distinction of meaning in mind. Even if John uses both these terms for love interchangeably, yet it is *agapan* which he uses with much more frequency. It strengthens the view that there is a distinction in meaning between these terms.

### 3. Use of *philein* in the Fourth Gospel

Out of the thirteen times John uses *philein* in the Fourth Gospel, five occurrences are found in the unit 21,15-17. And two other times in the description of Jesus' love for Lazarus in 11,3.36. Once for the Father's love for Jesus (5,20), once for the Father's love for the disciples (16,27) and once for the disciples' love for Jesus (16,27). Jesus' love for a special disciple is also mentioned once with *philein* (20,2). Finally *philein* is employed twice in the Fourth Gospel for non-personal love: at 12,25 for stating that one who loves his life loses it and at 15,19 for the hypothetical love of the world for the disciples. In all these occurrences, it can be observed that there is a sense of spontaneous and natural attachment indicated, whether it is between persons or between things." This seems to be the distinct

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" TRENCH, *ibid.*, refers to *philein* as a stronger and more intimate love whereas *agape* indicates a sense of reverence and reason. The distinction which Trench makes, though similar, is not exactly what we find. While the meaning of *agape* would include a dimension of reason, it can also be described as strong and intimate love .

characteristic of the concept of love indicated by *philein* in comparison to that of *agape* in the Fourth Gospel.

#### 4. The use of *agapan* in the Fourth Gospel

The concept of love indicated by *agape* comprises a sense of commitment resulting out of conscious decision. The term *agape* too occurs mostly in interpersonal relationship whether between God and Jesus (3,35; 10,17; 14,31 15,9; 17,23. 24.26), between God and the disciple (14,21.23), between Jesus and the disciples (13,1.23.34; 14,15.21.23.28; 15,9.10.12.13; 19,26; 21,7.15-17.20) or between disciples themselves (13,34.35; 15,12.17). *Agape* is also used for God's love for the world (3,16), for evil people's preference for darkness (3,19), for the rulers' (of the Jews) preference for human praise (τὴν δόξαν τῶν ἀνθρώπων) to God's glory (τὴν δόξαν τοῦ θεοῦ) (12,43) and for the lack of God's love in such people (5,42). As we have already observed, John uses the terms related to *agape* more often than the ones related to *philein*. John finds that it is *agape* which is more suitable to convey his theological ideas. Yet the purpose of John's using the same ideas, though less often, with *philein* would indicate that the other dimension of the concept of love is not excluded from his theological presentation. In a similar manner, he utilises both the terms in 21,15-17 to mean that Peter loves Jesus totally - with a commitment resulting from a deep reflection and decision and also

because he is naturally and spontaneously attached to him.

### **5. *Agapan* and *philein* are distinct, but not mutually exclusive**

The distinction in their meanings can also be observed from the fact that *agapan* has a noun to indicate the concept whereas *philein* does not have a noun to express the concept of love. *Philein* in noun form can mean either friend or friendship. *Agape* may remind us also etymologically of *agathos*, which means *good*. However, both the terms *agapan* and *philein* mean love and they are not mutually exclusive even if they have different emphases. Jesus' commandment of love to his disciples is always expressed through *agapan*, and yet the disciples who fulfill the commands of Jesus are called by him, "Friends" (15,14ff). Although the concept of love by *agapan* may have a comprehensive dimension since it involves a matured and reflected-upon decision, whereas the concept of love by *philein* may connote a simple dimension with a sense of personal attachment, yet it cannot be said that one is superior to the other.<sup>12</sup> This fact is clearly brought out in 21,15-17.

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<sup>12</sup> EVANS, *ibid.*, in his analysis of 21,15-17 states that *agape* implies a certain superiority. He attributes Peter's refusal to use *agapan* to the latter's humility. Similarly, SPICQ regards *agape* as a superior form of love to *philein* (*Agape* III, 219-230).

## **6. John 21,15-17 a parallel of 13,36-38**

One more examination on the unit 21,15-17 will help us before we wind up our study of the terms *philein* and *agape*. This unit seems to be a parallel of 13,36-38. At 13,36 Jesus says to Peter, "Where I am going you cannot follow me now; but you shall follow me later." And at 21,19 after Peter's declaration of love to Jesus, Jesus tells him, "Follow me." This is the time about which Jesus had referred to in 13,36 as "later."

At 13,37 Peter vows that he will lay down his life for Jesus. Jesus expresses surprise at the declaration of Peter and predicts that the latter will deny Jesus in a matter of a few hours: "Will you lay down your life for me? In all truth I tell you, before the cock crows, you will have disowned me three times" (13,38). At 21,18, it is Jesus who foretells Peter about the latter's laying down of his life. If the laying down of one's life is the sign of the greatest love (15,13), then Peter's declaration at 13,37 is without substance as Jesus' reply at 13,38 indicates, because he does not as yet possess a matured and fully committed love for Jesus. This is possible only after the Resurrection of Jesus. Jesus' giving of the New Commandment has to be understood against this background. The disciples need to possess the true love in order to follow Jesus. That is why Peter's true declaration of love is possible only in 21,17 after the Resurrection of Jesus.

At 13,37, Peter singles himself out as the one who loves Jesus most by his individual declaration of willingness to lay down his life for Jesus. Jesus' question to Peter at 21,15, whether he loves Jesus "more than these" is to be taken as an indirect reference to this unitary declaration of love by Peter: whether Peter still holds that he loves Jesus more than the other disciples do. It is interesting to note that Peter's singling out himself in his love and loyalty to Jesus is more explicit in the Synoptic Gospels. Matthew and Mark report him saying, "Even if all others are offended (because of you) I shall not be offended" (Matt 26,33; Mark 14,29)." "Lord, I am ready to go with thee both to prison and death" (Luke 22,33). The transformed Peter does not have the old boastfulness anymore. Without exalting himself above his fellow disciples and without any reference to the phrase, "more than the others," in Jesus' question (21,15), he just says, "You know that I love you." He is aware that Jesus knew him better than he knew himself.

Similarly, at 13,37, Peter seemed to claim that his self-knowledge was better than the knowledge of Jesus about Peter : "Why can I not follow you now? I will lay down my life for you." But at 21,17 Peter acknowledges that Jesus' knowledge about Peter is better than his knowledge about himself. Jesus' all-surpassing knowledge includes Peter's love for Jesus too: "You know everything, You know that I love you" (21,17). Peter's reply is an implicit reference to Jesus' prediction of

his three-fold denial at 13,38. Jesus' three-fold question and entrusting Peter with his flock at 21,15-17 is a symbolic parallel of 13,36-38.

Peter's continuous reply to Jesus all three times (21,15-17) with *philein*, seen against this background would mean that he simply loves Jesus, he is attached to him as a friend and does not boastfully claim to have the fully committed love for Jesus. It is Jesus who approves his love in both dimensions of *agape* (21,15.16) and *philein* (21,17), now that Peter has the matured and committed form of love, by calling him, "Follow me" (21,19).

Having examined the terminology of love in the Fourth Gospel, let us now turn to the two verses 13,34 and 15,12, which, taken together, function as a window to the concept of love in the Fourth Gospel.

**B. John 13,34: *A New Commandment I give to you, that you love one another: as I have loved you so you too love another!***

ἐντολὴν καινὴν δίδωμι ὑμῖν, ἵνα ἀγαπᾶτε ἀλλήλους, καθὼς ἠγάπησα ὑμᾶς ἵνα καὶ ὑμεῖς ἀγαπᾶτε ἀλλήλους.

John 13,34, which speaks of Jesus' New Commandment of love, belongs to the earliest section of the Farewell Discourse in the Fourth Gospel. The Farewell

Discourse, spreading from 13,31 to 17,26, could be divided into several units. The first section (13,31-38)<sup>13</sup> of the first unit (13,31-14,31)<sup>14</sup> contains 13,34, which together with 13,35, forms a subsection on Jesus' giving of the New Commandment. The Farewell Discourse, which begins right after the departure of Judas (13,30), has first the theme of Glorification at 13,31-32, then the reminder of Jesus to his disciples about his departure at 13,33. Next to the theme of Glorification, the theme of love is the first one to appear in the Farewell Discourse. The hour of Glorification (12,23), which is the hour for Jesus to depart from this world (13,1), is, of course, connected to the theme of love. What Jesus did until his departure has been summed up at 13,1 as "love to the end," thus, portraying the unity between the theme of Glorification and the whole of Jesus' ministry, i.e. loving his own in the world.

### 1. The uniqueness of 13,34

If John 13,34 and 15.12.17 have a unity among themselves in stating the love commandment of Jesus, yet the distinction of 13,34 can be noticed at the very first

<sup>13</sup> It is nearly unanimously accepted in johannine circles that vv.31-38 form a section. Some call this section, " a self-contained unit," for example, BROWN, *The Gospel* II,608; or a "conclusion to 13,1-30," for example, Y.SIMOENS, *La gloire d'aimer; Structures stylistiques et interprétatives dans le Discours de la Cène (Jn 13-17)*. AB 70 (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1981), 100-104.

<sup>14</sup> There is almost a consensus among johannine scholars to consider this as the first unit of the Farewell Discourse in the Fourth Gospel. Cf. F.SEGOVIA, *The Farewell of the Word* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), 62; J.BEUTLER, *Habt Kein Angst; Die erste johanneische Abschiedsrede* (Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1984), 8-11; D.B.WOLL, "The Departure of the Way; the First Discourse in the Gospel of John," *JBL* 99 (1980): 225-239; J.BECKER, "Die Abschiedsreden Jesu im Johannesevangelium," *ZNW* 61 (1970): 215-246.

sight. Besides stating the commandment twice, it describes the commandment as **new**. And when it repeats the love commandment, it adds *καὶ ὑμεῖς* between *ἵνα* and *ἀγαπᾶτε*. Furthermore, it states the act of Jesus' giving the New Commandment by the mention of *δίδωμι*.

## **2. ἀγαπᾶτε ἀλλήλους**

The verse 13,34 has twice the mention of *you love one another*. The first mention is *ἵνα ἀγαπᾶτε ἀλλήλους* and the second one *ἵνα καὶ ὑμεῖς ἀγαπᾶτε ἀλλήλους*. The expression, *ἀγαπᾶτε ἀλλήλους*, is found in the whole of the New Testament only in the Fourth Gospel, namely, in 13,34, 15,12 and 15,17. Even the expression, *ἀγαπᾶτε*, in the sense of a command in the Gospels, occurs, besides these verses, only in Matt 5,44 and Luke 6,27.35.<sup>15</sup> All these instances in Matthew and Luke are found exclusively to express the command, "Love your enemies."

While the three johannine verses, 13,34; 15,12 and 15,17, have a unity among themselves in stating the love commandment of Jesus, they have their own peculiarities too, since each verse reveals a different dimension of this love commandment. The clause, *ἵνα ἀγαπᾶτε ἀλλήλους*, is found verbatim in all these

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<sup>15</sup> Besides these, we find *ἀγαπᾶτε* in imperative mood in exhortations to Christians to love their fellow believers (1 Pet 2,17) or their wives (Eph 5,25; Col 3,19). It is also used once in 1 John 2,15 to discourage believers from loving the world. *ἀγαπᾶτε* in indicative mood is found in Luke 11,43 and 1 Pet 1,8.

three verses. Their unity and distinctions will be dealt with in the course of our analysis. The poem-like repetition of this clause in all these verses underlines the significance of the commandment of love.

### **3. The “newness” of Jesus’ commandment**

If the statement of the commandment itself has its novelty in the world of Scripture, it has its special relevance and application for the followers of Christ. The newness of the commandment is explained when it is repeated at 13,34b. The newness lies in the fact that the disciples are called upon to love **as Jesus loved**. The Incarnation of the Logos has been a unique event in the history of mankind and it is the same Logos which now calls upon its followers to live like him by loving like him. It is this uniqueness which marks the newness of this love commandment.

The repetition of the conjunction *ἵνα* in 13,34 demonstrates this fact: the first conjunction *ἵνα* points to the New Commandment<sup>28</sup> and the second one is an emphatic reference to the manner in which Jesus loved his disciples. In other words, what Jesus did was something new, never done before. It is a new beginning, not only in the sense that Jesus gave his life for his loved ones, but also in the way he lived. Jesus’ example of love gives a new meaning to the very concept of love. The concept of love itself undergoes a radical transformation and

<sup>28</sup> BULTMANN, *The Gospel*, 525.

revolution in Jesus' Incarnation and Glorification. It is this fact which John brings to light when he states ἐντολήν καινήν. For John, who conveys the message of the whole Gospel from the focal point of Christology, the newness of Jesus' commandment cannot come from any other source than Jesus himself.<sup>17</sup>

#### 4. ὑμῖν ὑμᾶς καὶ ὑμεῖς of 13,34

The καὶ in the second phrase of 13,34 is an emphatic reference to ὑμεῖς to mean that the disciples should follow the example given by Jesus. That is the reason many translate the second clause, *As I have loved you, so you too love one another*.<sup>18</sup> It is interesting to note that in 13,34 the personal pronoun in the second person (plural) appears thrice. On the contrary, the pronoun in the first person (singular) "I" does not appear at all, even where it could have been placed twice as the subjects of δίδωμι and ἠγάπησα. Jesus, who is the Incarnation of YHWH, the eternal I AM, now totally gives himself to the disciples in a selfless form by

<sup>17</sup> SEGOVIA, *Farewell of the Word*, 76. Segovia finds the newness of Jesus' commandment in the context of his farewell and the mention of the word ἐντολή. If we compare the johannine presentation of the commandment with that of Moses in Deut, we discover that these elements have a precedence there too. There, Moses presents commandments in the context of his farewell. However, speculations have been many with regard to the identity of the newness of Jesus' love commandment. In a similar vein, MEEKS, *The Prophet-King*, *ibid.*, 290, says, "Now it can be seen that these prophetic words actually take on the same function in John as the Mosaic Torah, and thus effectively supplant it. It is also in this context that Jesus' 'new commandment' (13,34) belongs." But according to our finding of the concept of the law in the Fourth Gospel, Jesus in no way supplants the Mosaic Torah, but rather the Torah finds its fulfillment in Jesus, whose Incarnation is a unique and unprecedented event in history. Thus we can find that the answer to the newness of Jesus' love commandment lies in Jesus himself.

<sup>18</sup> Some authors add an auxiliary "must" or "should" in order to stress the obligation. BROWN, *The Gospel II*, 605; SCHNACKENBURG, *Johannesevangelium*, 54.

means of what he gives: **Love**. This is the fact that John symbolically conveys by the absence of the personal pronoun, **I**, for Jesus in 13,34. What John brings to expression here once again is what he has always been illustrating in the Fourth Gospel: the giving of God's own self in the person of Jesus Christ as the culmination of a loving relationship. This loving relationship between God and humans is based on a self-giving and selfless love on the part of God, manifested in the Incarnation and Glorification of His Son. True selfless love is marked by the absence of the self (**I**). By this symbolic structural presentation in 13,34, the true mark of a genuine love is exemplified by John. The meaning of love draws its definition from Jesus. The all powerful **I AM** gives Himself to his "own" (1,11; 10,14) in an act of selfless love. This selfless love, which has been demonstrated by Jesus has to be lived out by the followers of Jesus also.

The three grammatical cases - to you (dative; ὑμῖν), you (accusative; ὑμᾶς) and you (nominative: ὑμεῖς) - used with the second person plural pronoun indicate the relationship of Jesus with his disciples. Jesus presents himself in the form of the New Commandment of love to the disciples (ὑμῖν), whom (ὑμᾶς) he had loved with a selfless love in order that they (ὑμεῖς) may **re-present** Jesus to the world (13,35).

The personal pronoun in the nominative case (ὕμεις) is also an indirect reference to the exclusion of Judas from the circle of disciples. Judas is excluded from the New Commandment of love, although he was included in the service of Jesus, symbolised in the act of foot washing. Jesus' love, thus, comprises also love for enemies as demonstrated by his service to Judas, the betrayer, the worst form of enemy. We will see Judas' role again when we discuss the New Commandment of Jesus.

### **5. δίδωμι**

John 13,34 presents the act of Jesus' giving of the New Commandment explicitly by stating δίδωμι. This verb, denoting Jesus' action of giving, would naturally remind us of our analysis of 1,17. There it was mentioned that the law **was given** (ἐδόθη) by God. Now the same expression is used for Jesus' giving of the New Commandment. John 1,17 showed that the law was an external reality, whereas, grace and truth standing for the person of Jesus, was an internal reality possessed by the believers. John repeats the same truth here. Jesus, who was presented as grace and truth to the believers in 1,17, now gives himself to his disciples (believers) in the form of the New Commandment which is expressed by the term ἐντολή. This commandment is nothing other than Jesus presenting himself

through his own word.

The term δίδωμι does not stand here to denote the external dimension of the commandment, if any, but to remind the disciples that the commandment, though new, is yet the continuation and the fulfillment of the loving relationship which was once initiated by God through the external reality of the law. The New Commandment of Jesus does not replace the law, nor does it destroy it (Matt 5,17). The law finds its fulfillment in the New Commandment of love which is the self-gift of Jesus.

We know John presented the realities of the law, Grace and Truth at 1,17 without the mention of the Source: "The law was given through Moses; Grace and Truth (be)came through Jesus Christ." The Source was left to be understood. His similar presentation of the giving of the New Commandment without the explicit mention of the Source at 13,34 is a pointer that John places this verse in parallel to 1,17. It is now again God, who is the Source of the New Commandment through Jesus Christ at 13,34, exactly as in 1,17.

The fact that Jesus' New Commandment of love has its source in God has been demonstrated by the use of the word ἐντολή. It is found in the Fourth Gospel

exclusively with regard to Jesus' mission from the Father (12,50).<sup>19</sup> The expression, ἐντολή, denotes that the Father is the Source of Jesus' actions (12,49). It is interesting to note that the expression at 12,49 (ἐντολήν δέδωκεν) for Jesus' receiving the commandment from the Father resembles that of 13,34. What Jesus gives to the disciples is exactly the entity that he receives from the Father.

## 6. Key word καθὼς

A similar function to that of ἐντολή is performed by the term καθὼς in 13,34. As ἐντολή expresses Jesus' mission from the Father, so too καθὼς in the Fourth Gospel often shows the fulfillment of the Father's will through Jesus (5,30; 6,57; 8,28; 10,15; 12,50; 15,9.10; 17,2.18.23; 20,21) or in the Scripture (1,23; 3,14; 6,31; 7,38; 12,14). This term,<sup>20</sup> a conjunction, is found altogether 31 times in the Fourth Gospel, and it is one of the key words to understand the concept of love in 13,34. It has been observed that what this conjunction is concerned with is always a twofold relationship.<sup>21</sup> The johannine themes it deals with are: the Father's/Jesus'

<sup>19</sup> SEGOVIA, *The Farewell of the Word*, 76, notes clearly the function of the term ἐντολή in this sense.

<sup>20</sup> An article by Olivier de DINECHIN, "καθὼς: La similitude dans L'évangile selon saint Jean," *RSR* 58 (1970): 195-236, studies in detail the function of this conjunction in the Fourth Gospel.

<sup>21</sup> O.de DINECHIN, *ibid.*, 196. Denechin observes that the conjunction deals with two relations. He says, "L'observation qui sert de point de départ à l'ensemble de l'étude est que la relation-καθὼς est une *relation entre deux relations*...la conjonction καθὼς rapproche non pas deux substantifs, mais deux propositions."

mission, accomplishment of the Scripture, parable and mutual love.<sup>22</sup> This conjunction plays a significant role in the johannine expression, not just to express the relationship between two propositions, but to express the basic proposition of the johannine Christology, i.e. Jesus occupies the central point in the triangular relationship: the Father - Jesus - the disciples. What Jesus passes on to the disciples is that which he receives from the Father and in exactly the same manner as he receives it. **As** he receives from the Father, **so** Jesus gives it to the disciples, including the New Commandment of love.<sup>23</sup>

What the conjunction καθὼς shows is not merely the unity of two propositions but the inseparable union between the Father, Jesus and the disciples. And this is the reality which is evident in the grammatical construction of the sentence 13,34.<sup>24</sup> The conjunction connects the love of Jesus with that of the disciples to specify that the love which the disciples should possess is the same love which Jesus possesses from the Father and with which Jesus loved his disciples. The Father's love flows into the disciples through Jesus. And the disciples should let it flow into the world as a means of witnessing to Jesus.

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> The function of καθὼς could be not only comparative but also causal as Bultmann, *Das Evangelium*, 291, points out from the examples of 13,15.34; 15,9.12 and especially, 17,11.21.

<sup>24</sup> H.E.DANA and J.R.MANTEY, *A Grammar of the New Testament Greek* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1955), 275. The function of καθὼς is explained as, "A comparative clause introduces an analogous thought for the purpose of elucidating or emphasizing the thought expressed in the principal clause."

It is not merely a command to the disciples just to love one another, but rather to love **as Jesus had loved** them. This love brings among them the presence of **Jesus himself**. The Incarnation of the Logos is thus re-enacted in the fulfillment of the New Commandment. When 13,34 speaks of the concept of love in the Fourth Gospel, it is indeed the concept of Jesus' love or still better formulated, the self-gift of Jesus.

#### **7. Jesus' love: love *εις τέλος***

How did Jesus love? At 13,1 we are told that Jesus loved his own in the world with a **love to the end**: *εις τέλος*. This expression can have a double meaning: 1). Fulfillment, indicating a sense of completion. This means to say that Jesus completed his act of loving his own in the world. Jesus' loving his own in the world with a love to the end was neither half done nor undone. It was completed. 2). Perfection. Jesus' love was a perfect one. Both meanings are appropriate for the expression of Jesus' love.

#### ***Love εις τέλος is Jesus' fulfillment of the Father's work***

John mentions at 13,1 that the time has now come for Jesus to pass from this world to his Father. Jesus goes to the Father since he has completed his work on earth, which his Father had given him to do. The same expression is also found in

the perfect tense at 19,30 (Τετέλεσται), where Jesus is said to give up his spirit. The hour of Glorification for Jesus is also the hour of fulfillment, of having completed his Father's work on earth. Jesus' dying on the cross as well as his foot-washing in chapter 13 are signified by John as Jesus' act of love. The foot-washing is the anticipation of the cross.<sup>28</sup>

*εἰς τέλος In Deut 31,24*

Interestingly, the same expression εἰς τέλος is also found in Deut 31,24 LXX for describing the completion of Moses' work of writing the law: Ἦνίκα δὲ συνετέλεσεν Μωυσῆς γράφων πάντας τὸς λόγους τῷ νόμου τούτου εἰς βιβλίον ἕως εἰς τέλος "When Moses had finished his writing of all the words of the law in the book..." John implicitly relates the work which Jesus had done on earth to that of Moses. Deut 31 also describes the handing over of the scroll of the law by Moses to the Levites before his death. Moses tells the leaders and the officers of the people of Israel that he is giving the law as a witness so that the people may not become corrupt after his passing away (Deut 31,24). But in John 13 what Jesus gives the disciples is not something external, written in the form of a scroll of the law, but Jesus' gift of his own self in the form of the New Commandment of love. If Moses leaves the scroll of the law as the fruit of his lifetime work among the people, which

<sup>28</sup> Ernst HAENCHEN, *A Commentary on the Gospel of John 2* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), 106.

should also serve as his testament, now what Jesus leaves is his own love. What is described by John 13,1 is the summing up of all the work done by Jesus in his earthly existence.<sup>26</sup> The twofold meaning of fulfillment at 13,1 means Jesus loved his own in the world to the very end of his work and to the very end of his life.<sup>27</sup>

***Jesus' love εἰς τέλος: a perfect love***

The phrase εἰς τέλος means also that Jesus' love for his own was a perfect love. Jesus' love was a perfect one because greater love than this was in no way possible (15,13). Jesus' love is love in perfection, because it is the source<sup>28</sup> and summit of any concept of love. The love of Jesus for his disciples is the same love with which the Father loved Jesus (3,35; 10,17; 15,9; 17,23.24.26). And it was the same love of God which caused Jesus to come into the world (3,16). That the love of Jesus for the disciples is the same as the Father's love for Jesus is indicated by the καθὼς of 15,9: καθὼς ἠγάπησέν με ὁ πατήρ, καὶ γὰρ ὑμᾶς ἠγάπησα. And the Father's love for Jesus is eternal, even before the foundation of the world (17,24).

<sup>26</sup> BULTMANN, *The Gospel*, 488 notes the meaning of *agapan* in 13,1 exactly as the description of Jesus' work by John. He also compares it with the narratives of Jesus' work in chapters 3-12 which are portrayed by John as "battle with the world." John's summing up of all Jesus' work as "loving his own in the world" is at the same time also a battle with the world.

<sup>27</sup> BROWN, *The Gospel* II,550.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 612.

***Jesus' love εἰς τέλος: a love to the end***

The Greek *εἰς τέλος* meaning *to the very end* implies also Jesus' loving to the very end. It is the summit of the concept of love. There can be no better definition of the concept of love, than the one which is given by Jesus. Jesus' act of love is demonstrated in his service to his disciples during the Last Supper. The foot-washing, which is the action of a slave to his master<sup>29</sup>, is a symbolic act, done by Jesus manifesting his love in service to his own in the world.<sup>30</sup> Bultmann correctly finds its connection to 13,34 and 15,12.<sup>31</sup> This explains the meaning of Jesus' command: "As I have loved you" (13,34; 15,12). Only the one who is loved will be able to love others.<sup>32</sup> Jesus' act of loving his disciples, stooping down to the lowest form of service, illustrates that Jesus is the source<sup>33</sup> and also the model (13,14), which is binding on the disciples to do the same.<sup>34</sup> If Jesus' action of foot-washing is an expression of his love for his own, then this is a love which goes to the extremity of the concept of love: it is a love which gives its life for the loved ones

<sup>29</sup> DODD, *Interpretation*, 401; BULTMANN, *The Gospel*, 468. Bultmann describes Jesus' humility in washing the disciples' feet as "God in the form of a slave"; STRACK-BILLERBECK, *Das Evangelium* I, 427; II, 557, says that washing the feet of the guest was assigned to the servants, if there were any.

<sup>30</sup> BULTMANN, *ibid.*, 474f.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 475. According to Bultmann, "...the foot washing is intended as a symbolic act, representative of loving service in general. Thus we have here an anticipation of the exposition (in 13,34; 15,12) of the command of love as the last testament of the departing Revealer; in the same way the whole section 13.1-20 acts as a prelude to the discourses that follow."

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>33</sup> BROWN, *The Gospel* II, 612.

<sup>34</sup> BULTMANN, *ibid.*

(15,13); a love which stoops down to the lowliest of levels in service; a love which spreads from the lowest to the greatest range. Its concept is immeasurable in depths and heights. Jesus' love consisted not only in words but also in action. He practiced what he preached. Thus Jesus is the source and summit of any concept of love.

***Jesus' love is unconditional***

Jesus does not demand an action in return,<sup>35</sup> but rather that the disciples love one another as he has loved them. The love of Jesus is the model and standard for the disciples' love for one another.<sup>36</sup> This is the self-emptying and unmotivated love of God (3,16) revealed in Jesus, the love which distinguishes itself from even the noblest form of human love.<sup>37</sup>

***God's covenant love is personalised in Jesus***

God's covenant relationship, experienced by the people of God in the Old Testament, is realized in the person of Jesus. God was faithful to His covenant in spite of the violation of it by His people. This love, which is described in the Old Testament as steadfast love, is now revealed in Jesus' love. His love is directed

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> R.F. COLLINS, "A New Commandment I Give to You, That You Love One Another (John 13,34)" in *These Things Have Been Written: Studies in the Fourth Gospel*, ed. R.F. COLLINS (Louvain: Peeters Press, 1990): 246.

<sup>37</sup> BROWN, *The Gospel II*, 614.

even towards those who have abandoned him and betrayed him. Jesus washes their feet too, even though he is aware of this. God's faithful love, described in the Old Testament (Deut 7,7-11), continues in Jesus in a personal manner.

### **8. The love among the disciples: a call to be different**

Jesus' love has to live in the disciples through his New Commandment. Jesus' New Commandment at 13,34 is a reminder to the disciples to love in the same manner as Jesus loved. Jesus' command to the disciples is a challenge<sup>38</sup> in a world which has a different set of values from what Jesus demonstrated. The world does not value the master who serves his disciples. It is the other way round. The concept of love in the world is a love-in-response. Unmotivated love is something strange to the values of the world. The call of Jesus to the disciples with his New Commandment is a call to be different. It is a call to create a new world, a world with a different set of values than the ones which are normally accepted. In this sense, too, the Commandment of Jesus is brand new.

#### ***The apparent absurdity***

Perceived from the viewpoint of the world, this kind of love will look absurd.<sup>39</sup> Peter is not able to understand the meaning of Jesus' action at present (13,7), because

<sup>38</sup> BROWN, *The Gospel* II, 614.

<sup>39</sup> BULTMANN, *ibid.*, 466.

he is still rooted in the values of the world. Jesus' warning to Peter that the latter runs the risk of losing solidarity with Jesus if he insists on refusing to have his feet washed, is indeed a call of Jesus to Peter to turn the values of the world upside down. It is for this reason that Peter does not understand the meaning of Jesus' love in action. His inability to comprehend becomes clear in his startling question: "Lord, is it you who are going to wash my feet?" It would not have been a puzzle for Peter if he had to wash the feet of his Master; on the contrary, it is the Lord and Master himself (13,13.14) who now washes the feet of his disciples. This is for Peter a matter beyond human comprehension.<sup>40</sup> However, that is the concept of Jesus' love and that is the same love which he commands the disciples to do as well (13,14). And this concept of love is "a mystery for the world's sight and judgment."<sup>41</sup> And the example of love in service demonstrated by Jesus' foot-washing, which totally reverses the values of the world, is beautifully portrayed by John in Peter's resistance. "And how much this goes against the instinct of the natural man is shown by his repeated and increasingly vehement resistance (v.8)."<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> BULTMANN, *ibid.*, 467: Bultmann compares Peter's protest to that of the Jews in earlier narratives where Jesus responded to them saying that they were judging according to the flesh (8,15) and according to appearances (7,24). Although Jesus' announcement to his disciples about his departure (13,33) makes a comparison to that of the Jews, yet the Jews and the disciples are standing on different levels.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 466.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 468.

***Jesus' New Commandment gives only a lesser burden to the disciples***

Only by possessing such love as demonstrated by Jesus, can the disciples be effective witnesses in the world for the presence of Jesus (13,35). The love of Jesus is thus affective and effective.<sup>4</sup> By fulfilling Jesus' commandment of love in the same manner as he did, the disciples are rewarded with happiness (13,17). For that, the disciples should grasp the unique meaning of Jesus' action. Beginning with a question, "Do you understand?", Jesus explains this in 13,13-17. It is the Lord and Master Jesus who has washed the feet of his disciples. If the Master himself has washed the feet of the disciples, then how much more the disciples, who are only of equal rank among themselves, should give themselves in service! In comparison to the Master's humbling himself as a slave to wash the feet of the disciples, the humbling of the disciples to one another will be a lighter burden. If the Lord and Master has carried a heavier burden, it should be easy for the disciples to carry a less heavy burden. What Jesus entrusts his disciples with is certainly an easier assignment than he himself had in carrying out his Father's will. This seems to echo the Matthean saying of Jesus, "Take my yoke upon you and learn from me; for I am meek and humble of heart" (11,19-30). This is another mark of true self-sacrificing love, whereby one leaves the better things for others.

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<sup>4</sup> BROWN, *ibid.*, 612.

## **9. Possession of Jesus' love is a Proclamation of Discipleship**

When the disciples of Jesus possess such love, then they also proclaim at the same time to every one in the world that they are the disciples of Jesus (13,35). Loving one another as Jesus loved is indeed bearing witness to him. By possessing such love, they are bearing witness to Jesus in a world filled with diametrically opposed values. John's idea that the message of Jesus was in opposition to the "world" becomes clear here once again.

Jesus' hour of glory was at the same time his hour of victory over the ruler of the world who is sentenced (16,11) and cast out (12,31) because the coming of Jesus into the world was also to judge the world (9,39). And the judgment of Jesus is just (5,30). The prince of this world has nothing in common with Jesus (14,30), since he and Jesus are diametrically opposed to each other. Jesus is King of a different world (18,36-37). But Jesus has conquered this world (16,33) and has dethroned its ruler. Since the disciples stand in solidarity with Jesus (13,8; 15,5), they also stand in opposition to this world. The disciples will weep and lament but the world will rejoice (16,20). Jesus is not of the world (8,23) and neither are the disciples (17,14.16). Because of this direct opposition between Jesus and the world, the disciples of Jesus too become the objects of hatred for the world (15,18). The calling of the disciples by Jesus is also the cause why the world hates the disciples

(15,19). The disciples are his own and so there is an inseparable bond of unity between Jesus and the disciples. They are his own, since they belong to him by his calling so they naturally find themselves on the side of Jesus in his battle against the world. The disciples continue this battle against the world with the mission entrusted to them by Jesus. And this mission is nothing other than loving one another as Jesus did.

#### **10. Jesus and disciples are not against the world**

Though the world hates Jesus and his disciples, Jesus and his disciples do not hate the world. It is just the contrary. Jesus and his disciples love the world and therefore there is always the hope that the world will come to belief in Jesus. The world is not excluded in the commandment to love another. The world always has the possibility of being included within the circle of love.<sup>4</sup> The world came into existence through the Word of God, the Logos (1,10). Yet, the world continues to live in ignorance (1,10). That is all the more reason why the disciples have to continue the work of Jesus on earth by loving one another as Jesus loved. Indeed the very reason for the Incarnation of the Logos was the self-sacrificing love of God (3,16), that the world be saved through Jesus (3,17; 12,47). And Jesus indeed is the Savior of the World (4,42). Jesus' coming into the world is described by John as the true light coming into the world (1,9). Jesus' earthly existence is symbolically

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<sup>4</sup> BULTMANN, *ibid.*, 528.

described as the Light of the World (8,12; 9,5). Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world (1,29). Jesus as the Bread from heaven provides life to the world (6,33.51).

When the world makes a fundamental and final decision against God, it judges itself against God. Looking from this point of view, the presence of Jesus in the world also effects a judgment (9,39) on those who are against God because their deeds are evil (3,19). Their deeds are evil, because they make a fundamental decision against God. While the physically blind could recognize Jesus and make a decision for him (9,38), the physically well-sighted refused to recognize God (17,25) in spite of Jesus speaking openly to the world (18,20). Now when Jesus is returning to the Father (16,28), he entrusts the same mission to his disciples that he had from the Father (17,18; 20,21). That is why the commandment to the disciples to love another as Jesus loved is a great challenge to the world with its own characteristics and values which are totally and diametrically opposed to those of Jesus. The disciples can live up to this strong challenge only by Jesus' command of loving one another as Jesus loved and which, in turn, is the love of the Father (17,23).

### **11. Love: Jesus' Present to make himself present**

Jesus gives the command of love to his disciples in the context of his departure. The departure of Judas signals the immediate arrival (13,32) of Jesus' hour of Glorification. As we have already seen,<sup>6</sup> the theme of the hour of Glorification is also connected to the theme of love for Jesus' own (13,1). While the departure of Jesus from his own is immediate, the latter cannot follow Jesus now. They have to remain in the world. Jesus had already told the Jews that it was impossible for them to follow Jesus where he goes (7,34; 8,21) and now Jesus tells the same to his own (13,33).

The departure of Jesus will leave a painful vacuum among the disciples which may cause them to trouble (14,1) and tribulation (16,33). The disciples will weep, lament and be sorrowful (16,20). So they will look for Jesus (13,33). In this situation of Jesus' absence, the disciples can feel the presence of Jesus by the commandment of love. And that is why Jesus is giving them this commandment. Since Jesus and the world are opposed to each other, now the threat from the world to the disciples, in the absence of Jesus, will be even greater. By exercising this commandment of loving one another as Jesus had loved, the disciples effect the presence of Jesus among them. We may fittingly term Jesus' commandment of love to the disciples

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid.,231

as a present (gift)<sup>6</sup> of the parting Jesus to make himself present to the disciples. The giving of the love Command is therefore fittingly placed by John between 13,33,<sup>7</sup> where Jesus announces his departure to the disciples, and 13,36, where the response of Peter to Jesus' announcement is narrated in the form of a question: "Lord, where are you going?" The disciples have not yet grasped the fact that Jesus is returning to the Father from whom he came (16,28). In this context Jesus is giving his disciples the New Commandment of love that they may feel the presence of Jesus with them.

## **12. The New Commandment is exclusively for those who belong to Jesus**

The giving of the New Commandment of love by Jesus takes place in the absence of Judas who leaves at 13,30 and will reappear at 18,2ff with armed men to arrest Jesus. The commandment to love one another is only for those who belong to Jesus and Judas is now excluded from them. Satan had taken possession of Judas (13,27) and he was already defiled (13,10). Judas has lost his status and has now become the son of perdition (17,12). He has lost his union with Jesus, has been disconnected from the circle of Jesus' own and now he is like a branch separated from the vine, withered and fit only to be burned (15,6). The

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<sup>6</sup> BULTMANN, *ibid.*, 528.

<sup>7</sup> F.SEGOVIA, *Love Relationships in the Johannine Tradition: Agape/ Agapan in 1 John and the Fourth Gospel* (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1982), 122. Segovia, agreeing with J.BECKER, "Die Abschiedsreden Jesus im Johannesevangelium," *ZNW* 61 (1970)215-246, feels that the two verses, John 13,34-35, do not fit into the present position.

commandment of love is exclusively for those who belong to Jesus. That is why Jesus gives the New Commandment of love after the departure of Judas.

Having examined the different dimensions of the concept of love in 13,34, let us now turn to 15,12.

**C. John 15,12: This is my commandment: Love one another as I have loved you.**

αὕτη ἐστὶν ἡ ἐντολὴ ἡ ἐμή, ἵνα ἀγαπᾶτε ἀλλήλους καθὼς ἠγάπησα ὑμᾶς.

John 15,12 belongs to the unit 15,1-17,<sup>28</sup> which is the imagery of vine and branches, beginning the second unit of the Farewell Discourse. Some<sup>29</sup> consider this section as the second major unit of the Farewell Discourse. Some others<sup>30</sup> extend the second unit of the Farewell Discourse from 15,1 right up to 16,4.

Two divisions<sup>31</sup> are visible within the unit 15,1-17. The first division forms the first eight verses (vv.1-8), and the rest, second division (vv.9-17). The first division

<sup>28</sup> That 15,1-17 forms a unity has been accepted without any dispute in the johannine circles. We may cite, BROWN, *The Gospel II*, 658; BULTMANN, *The Gospel*, 523; BARRETT, *The Gospel*, 470 as a few among the many.

<sup>29</sup> SEGOVIA, *Farewell of the Word*, 125, for example.

<sup>30</sup> SCHNACKENBURG, *The Gospel 3*, 91; J.WELLHAUSEN, *Das Evangelium Johannis* (Berlin: G.Reimer, 1908), 68.

<sup>31</sup> These two divisions within 15,1-17 have been accepted by several scholars. M.-J.LAGRANGE, *Évangile selon Saint Jean* (Paris: Gabalda, 1927), 400-405; BULTMANN, *The Gospel*, 529.

deals in a predominant manner with the theme of abiding in Jesus, the vine, while the second one deals with the theme of abiding in Jesus' love. However, our preoccupation will be with the meaning of the concept of love in 15,12 and not an elaborate discussion of the imagery itself. We will also deal with 15,17, where Jesus once again commands the disciples to love one another. The section, 15,1-17, is a commentary on 13,34f.<sup>2</sup> This section, which repeats the commandment of love twice (15,12.17), indeed explains the commandment of love.

### **1. Special characteristics of 15,12.**

We have already mentioned at the outset of our analysis of 13,34 that ἵνα ἀγαπάτε ἀλλήλους has been repeated in a poetic manner in 13,34; 15,12 and 15,17. Besides, John 15,12 has the clause καθὼς ἠγάπησα ὑμᾶς as in 13,34 which is not the case in 15,17. In the light of this background, the peculiar characteristic of 15,17 becomes evident, that is, in stating the love commandment as αὕτη ἐστὶν ἡ ἐντολὴ ἡ ἐμῆ.

Whereas 13,34 did not have any personal pronouns for Jesus, 15,12 has the possessive pronoun ἐμῆ with an article. It has the function of an adjective for the word ἡ ἐντολὴ. Thus the commandment here is qualified by Jesus as his own. It

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<sup>2</sup> BULTMANN, *ibid.*, 529.

is his commandment which Jesus gives to the disciples. Our analysis of 13,34 showed the mention of the commandment there denoted the Father's commandment. But the formulation at 15,12 makes it obvious that Jesus' indicates the commandment as his own. We know, however, the johannine Christology does not distinguish between what belongs to the Father and what belongs to Jesus (17,8.10). In such a case, why should it be mentioned explicitly that it is Jesus' commandment? The point here is to show that the Father's commandment has been internalised by Jesus. The commandment of the Father at 13,34 has been internalised to such an extent that it has now become the commandment of Jesus. This is a model for the disciples to follow. It is this fact which has been illustrated through the imagery of the vine and the branches. The disciples may grasp and understand the Father's unity with Jesus so that they may become partakers of this relationship. Thus, this relationship becomes a triangular one, between the Father, Jesus and themselves. The disciples become friends of Jesus when this triangular relationship becomes a concrete reality.

Jesus' imagery of the vine and the branches is a beautiful illustration for the explanation of the commandment of love. Jesus declares at 13,35 that if the disciples possess love<sup>23</sup> then everyone will come to know that they are the disciples

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<sup>23</sup> This is one of the few occasions where we find the term ἀγάπη (love) in noun form. Of the seven occurrences of this term in noun form, this is the first time it appears in the Book of Glory; the occurrences are: four times in chapter 15 (vv.9.10 (twice).13), once in 17,26 and once in 5,42.

of Jesus. The section 15,1-17 explains what this true discipleship means: remaining in union with Jesus like that of vine and the branches. Discipleship or friendship with Jesus comes into reality when the disciples accept Jesus, remain in him and belong to him. Since belonging to Jesus means believing in him, we come to the theme of faith. The johannine concept of love is inseparable from faith.

## **2. Faith is a presupposition for the johannine concept of love**

If the commandment of love is given by Jesus only to those who belong to him, then it is not possible to belong to Jesus without believing in him. As we have seen in our examination of the term Light of the World, believing in Jesus means also belonging to him. Judas does not belong to Jesus because he does not believe in him. Truly belonging to Jesus means to lead a life totally pure and incorrupt (13,9). Belonging to Jesus implies being purified by the words of Jesus (15,3). Belonging to Jesus means being with him (1,39) and this being with Jesus continues even after his physical departure. Abiding in Jesus (15,4.6.7) means the disciples continue to be united to Jesus through the effectiveness of his word (15,7). This effectiveness of Jesus' word in the disciples is not possible without the disciples completely believing in Jesus. The disciples not only realise the presence of Jesus among themselves by the commandment of love, but they also proclaim the presence of Jesus to others. Faith is the foundation for the commandment of love.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> BULTMANN, *ibid.*, 529.

The authenticity of the faith is proved only when it leads to the commandment of Jesus.

### **3. Love is attachment to Jesus, not his replacement**

The Commandment of love is given by Jesus to the disciples not as a replacement<sup>55</sup> but as a means of continuous attachment to him, even in the face of Jesus' physical absence. It is in this sense that the new commandment of love should be understood. It does not take the place of Jesus; it does not substitute him but rather makes him present. To understand the New Commandment as a replacement would be to imply that Jesus and the New Commandment are two separate entities. It is the gift of Jesus himself which the New Commandment of Love denotes. Despite their physical separation from Jesus, they remain united to him.<sup>56</sup>

### **4. Love is Life**

Remaining in the love of Jesus by keeping his commandments is very essential for the disciples for their own existence. Remaining in the love of Jesus is the lifeline for them. When the disciples disconnect themselves from the love of Jesus, they

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<sup>55</sup> It is not unfamiliar to come across the description of Jesus' New Commandment as "replacement." For example, SEGOVIA, *The Farewell of the Word*, 76. To **replace** would convey the absence of Jesus, meaning the New Commandment takes the place of Jesus in his absence. It is not what John conveys. The New Commandment brings the presence of Jesus among the disciples.

<sup>56</sup> BULTMANN, *ibid.*, 526.

will be good-for-nothing, only to wither and be thrown away (15,6). It is not merely vital to remain in the love of Jesus to bear fruit in abundance, but also essential for their survival in a hostile world which was against Jesus, and now will turn its hostility against the disciples (15,18-20).

The commandment of the Father for Jesus was eternal life (12,50); so likewise, now the commandment of Jesus is life for the disciples. Jesus lives and so the disciples who remain in him also live (14,19). It is for this purpose Jesus gives his own life for his friends (15,13) as a supreme act of love. And greater love than this is not possible. By keeping the commandment of love, the disciples have access to the source of life in Jesus who is life himself as the Father is (5,,26; 10,10-11; 11,25-26.; 17,2). In a nutshell, the concept of love in John is nothing else than Jesus himself and the New Commandment is to live like Jesus did. Jesus is the personification of love. Through love, the disciple also receives life from Jesus. Thus we may fittingly say, love, according to John, is life itself because Jesus is life (1,4; 11,25). And this is the message of the Fourth Gospel (20,31).

#### **5. Possession of Jesus' love is the mark of true discipleship**

This discipleship is possible only if the disciple remains united to Jesus like the branches to the vine. There is no alternative to this. Jesus is the life-giving source

and when one does not remain united to Jesus, there can be no life in him. It is indispensable that the disciple remains united to Jesus to receive life and also to produce fruit (15,2). Producing much fruit means glorifying the Father. The means to produce fruit is to abide in Jesus. Jesus' words purify the disciples and then they are able to produce much fruit (15,8). Producing fruit is a johannine term which has similarity to laying down one's life. Just as a single grain gives rise to many more by falling into the ground, so also the one who remains in Jesus (12,24). And laying down one's life, as Jesus did, is the best expression of loving one's friends (15,13) did. One who is not ready for such a supreme act of love in self-sacrifice, on the pretext of saving one's own life, indeed forfeits life (12,25).

#### **6. Jesus and his disciples are true friends**

The relationship between Jesus and his disciples is not one of superior and inferior but of friends (15,13-15). True friends share everything and so it is with Jesus and his friends. Jesus has made known everything to his disciples which he had heard from the Father (15,15). Though Jesus is the Lord and Master, who on his own chose his disciples (15,16), yet their relationship is one of friends and of true solidarity with each other.

**D. John 15,17: This I command you: Love one another.**

**ταῦτα ἐντέλλομαι ὑμῖν, ἵνα ἀγαπᾶτε ἀλλήλους.**

**1. Special characteristics of 15,17**

Our examination of the concept of love in John has so far revealed the most important aspects of it in our analyses of 13,34 and 15,12. Yet we would not like to by pass 15,17 which also mentions the commandment of love. The two distinct characteristics of this verse are: 1. It uses the term commandment in the verb form (ἐντέλλομαι) unlike the former two instances where the noun form was found. 2. The clause, "As I have loved you" is omitted here.

**2. ἐντέλλομαι**

We may remember that the concept of love in the Fourth Gospel finds its expression more frequently in the verbal form (36 verbs in contrast to 7 nouns). Love in the Fourth Gospel reveals dynamism. It demonstrates itself in action. The disciples have to be agents of this dynamism. They have been sufficiently groomed in this regard by the words of Jesus and now is the time for them to put this into action. The theme of putting their love into practice was already mentioned in

13,35. Now it is repeated once again. The verb form of the commandment expresses the urgency of the action. It is like saying, "Come on, now is the time. Get on with love." The verbal form expresses also the fact that the moving force for the disciples is the love of Jesus.

### **3. Jesus' love internalised by the disciples**

It may appear strange that the clause, "As I have loved you" has been left out in 15,17. We have seen that the reason for the mentioning of the possessive pronoun in 15,12 is to indicate the internalisation of the Father's commandment by Jesus. The Father's commandment has now become Jesus' own commandment. It is the same case here with regard to the concept of love for the disciples. The love of Jesus has been internalised by the disciples so that the very word **Love** should bring the presence of Jesus to them. There is no need to mention anymore that they should love like Jesus, because the very word **love** will evoke the name of Jesus in the hearts of the disciples. Love means, for the disciples, the love of Jesus, or rather Jesus himself.

These dimensions were already found in our study of the concept of love in the earlier verses, but 15,17 brings them into focus. The urgency of the action of love will draw its significance in the ensuing context of the disciples' encounter with the

world. John 15,18 opens with the theme of the world's hatred. In such a world, it is love, the love of Jesus, which will keep the disciples moving just as the Father's love kept Jesus moving. For this, the disciples should remain connected to Jesus by keeping his commandments.

#### **4. Keeping Jesus' Commandments is a sign of true discipleship**

If loving one another as Jesus loved is the mark of the discipleship of Jesus (13,35), then this means also keeping the commandments of Jesus as friends (15,14). Keeping the commandments of Jesus and loving one another are interchangeable. The commandment of Jesus is nothing other than the disciples loving one another (13,34; 15,12.17). But keeping the commandment of Jesus is also simultaneously an expression of the disciples' love for Jesus (14,15). While the idea of commandment may express a sense of obligation, the commandment of Jesus is indeed an expression of the love which exists between him and his own.

#### **5. Keeping Jesus' Commandments and the gift of the Holy Spirit**

It is by keeping the commandments of Jesus, or in other words, by expressing their love for Jesus that the disciples receive the Holy Spirit (14,16). Keeping the commandments is not only the sign of the disciples' love for Jesus, it is also a

natural prerequisite for receiving the Holy Spirit. At 14,15 Jesus says, "If you love me, keep my commandments." And then immediately he says: "And I will request the Father and he will give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever; the Spirit of Truth, which the world cannot receive" (14,15-16). The commandment of Jesus is related to the gift of love (13,34) and the gift of the Holy Spirit. Both are gifts of the glorified Jesus and they are related to each other.

Jesus gives the disciples the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, because of the bond of love which exists between him and his disciples. The Holy Spirit and Jesus' gift of love are parallel concepts in Johannine Christology. Both are Jesus' gifts and both represent Jesus in the ones who belong to him during the time of Jesus' temporal absence. Jesus is the connecting point between these two, because it is by keeping his commandments that the disciples are able to possess both.

### **EXCURSUS ONE: RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE SPIRIT AND THE COMMANDMENTS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT**

The prophet Ezekiel, who can indeed be called the prophet of the Spirit for his repeated mentions in his prophecies about the life-giving Spirit (1,20-21; 2,2; 3,12.14.24; 8,3; 10,17; 11,1.5.19.24; 13,3; 18,31; 36,26.27; 37,1.6.8-9.14; 39,29; 43,5) points to the function of the Spirit: "I will put my spirit within you and make

you live by my laws and observe my commandments and bring them to fulfillment” (Ezek 36,27). According to the prophet Ezekiel the gift of the Spirit enables people to obey the commandments. The same relationship between the Spirit and the law is found in the words of prophet Jeremiah. There God promises a New Covenant with His people in which His law will be implanted in their hearts (Jer 31,31.33), unlike the old covenant which was broken by the ancestors (Jer 31,32). The Spirit enables the people to observe God's commandments. The same thought echoes elsewhere in the New Testament, where the followers of Christ themselves are described as, “You are a letter from Christ, entrusted to our care written not with ink but with the Spirit of the Living God; not on stone tablets but on the tablets of human hearts” (2 Cor 3,2-3).

The same relationship between the commandments and the Spirit is found also in the Fourth Gospel (14,15). The gift of the Spirit enables the disciples to keep the commandments fully, and vice versa, the disciples, by keeping the commandments of Jesus, are able to receive the Spirit from the Father through the prayer of Jesus. Keeping the commandments of Jesus is thus the expression of the disciples' love for Jesus and also at the same time the sign of the possession of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit cannot find his way into the hearts of the disciples unless the disciples have love for Jesus. However, keeping the commandments of Jesus and loving Jesus are not conditions binding on each other, but rather result from one

another. It is the spontaneous relationship between them.

## **EXCURSUS TWO: RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE COMMANDMENT (ἐντολή) AND THE LAW (νόμος)**

At this stage it would be appropriate for us to consider the relationship between the concepts of commandment and law. Jesus gives his disciples a **New Commandment**. It is never explicitly stated as a New law, though elsewhere in the New Testament we find the implicit illustration of Jesus providing or promulgating a new law in the symbolic figure of a New Moses.<sup>57</sup> The will of God, once expressed in the law, is now communicated to and realised by Jesus.<sup>58</sup> No one else can be the authority of the law, except Jesus himself. According to John, the Torah, as the word of God, was pointing to the Logos-Incarnate. Now the Logos-Incarnate, as the Eternal Word of God, reveals the will of God in the person of Jesus Christ.

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<sup>57</sup> The term new law should be understood only in a relative sense. We know that the reality of the law was only relative with regard to the revelation of Jesus. This fact is made clear not only in the Fourth Gospel but also in the Synoptic Gospels. The law, as a witness to the incarnation of Jesus, still has its relative value. As the Gospels themselves bear witness, "The law is not destroyed" (Matt 5,17; Luke 16,17). Jesus demonstrates the true meaning of the law. Matt 5,1-7.29 presents Jesus promulgating a law from the Mountain. But, still, according to Matthew, it is not the abolition of the law, on the contrary, the teaching of Jesus is the true fulfillment of the law. The righteousness which Jesus teaches exceeds that of the Scribes and the Pharisees (5,20). What Jesus provides is not a new law, rather the proper meaning and interpretation of the law. Since the law's function was to bear witness to Jesus' coming similar to that of John the Baptist (Luke 16,16), the coming of Jesus is its fulfillment. Jesus provides the true definition of the law. Or even, as Paul would explain it, in two different kinds of the law: The law of the Spirit and Life in Jesus Christ is opposed to the law of sin and death (Rom 8,1f).

<sup>58</sup> PANCARO, *The Law*, 450.

In spite of the fact that Jesus is the fulfillment of the law or rather the law is fulfilled in him, why does Jesus say that he gives a New Commandment and not a New Law? The answer lies in the meaning of the commandment and the law.

The concept of the commandment denotes the fact that God issues commands to his chosen people, Israel, in the form of law.<sup>59</sup> In other words, the law contained the commandments of God. Practically, we may term the law as a collection of God's commandments. The term commandment expresses the fact that the life-giving will of the personal God lays claim to the whole of man's being, a claim which man has only to affirm with inward love and reverence and outward conformity to God's precepts.<sup>60</sup> What the Old Testament describes as the Ten Commandments (Exod 34,28; Deut 4,13; 10,4) or the Ten Words is actually the law.<sup>61</sup> At a later stage the law was said to consist of 613 commandments. The entity of the law was nothing other than the content of the command of God. The Torah manifested to the people what God wanted them to do. The divine command itself is associated almost exclusively with the Torah as a whole or with its individual precepts.<sup>62</sup> The commandments were not perceived as legal precepts or as a "code of law," rather they were the manifestation of God's salvific will against the background of

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<sup>59</sup> M.J.O'CONNELL, "The Concept of Commandment in the Old Testament," *Theological Studies* 21 (1960): 352.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 364.

<sup>61</sup> H.CAZELLES, "Dekalog," in *Bibel-Lexikon*, ed. Herbert HAAG (Köln: Benziger, 1968): 320.

<sup>62</sup> PANCARO, *The Law*, 432.

Covenant and Election.<sup>85</sup> Through the commandments God told his chosen people what they were supposed to do. They ought to fulfill the commandments not merely because they were divine obligations, but more so because on the fulfillment of God's commandments depended their success or failure, life or death. Herein is the divine will of God manifested. God issued the commandments not because He wanted to demonstrate his authority and power over the people He had chosen, but because God wanted the people to be saved. The legal prescriptions in the form of the law were a later development.

### **1. Commandment, an expression of God's loving concern and man's response**

Thus between the two terms, commandment and law, the former takes the priority. The commandments to love God and the neighbor could be described as summing up the whole law and also of the prophets (Matt 22,40). The term commandment, since it involved God's saving concern for man, was also an expression of His fatherly love. While both these terms, commandment and law, can be used in an equivalent way, the Fourth Gospel prefers the term commandment when it comes in the context of Jesus' relation to the Father or the disciples. Léon-Dufour explains the distinction of usage between law (*νόμος*) and commandment (*ἐντολή*) in the Fourth Gospel:

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<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

Dans le IV<sup>e</sup> évangile, Jésus maintiendra - autrement - la distinction en réservant le mot "Loi" à la Loi Moïse et en préférant le mot "commandement (entolé) pour dire sa propre relation de fidélité au Père et celle de ses disciple à lui-même.<sup>64</sup>

Thus the term itself in the Old Testament, when it stands for the caring and concerning will of God for His people, is related to the concept of love.<sup>65</sup> The concept of commandment in the Old Testament, thus, is an expression of twofold love: love of God in His commandments for the people and the people's love for God in obeying His commandments. This sense of the commandment is visible in the concept of the commandment in the Fourth Gospel. The Old Testament offers a remarkable background for the johannine expression of commandment.<sup>66</sup>

We have already pointed out at the beginning of the examination of the concept of love, that John uses expressions found in the LXX translation of Deuteronomy, which is the farewell speech of Moses to his people. The whole book of Deuteronomy is filled with the term commandment. As some authors have already pointed out, commandment is the term which expresses the whole spirit of Deuteronomy.<sup>67</sup> The term commandment is used in the Fourth Gospel almost always in the sense of God, Jesus or his disciples communicating the Word of God

<sup>64</sup> Xavier LÉON-DUFOUR, *Lecture de l'évangile selon Jean*, vol. 1, (Paris:Éditions du Seuil, 1988), 130-131.

<sup>65</sup> O'CONNELL, *ibid.*, 364.

<sup>66</sup> O'CONNELL, *ibid.*; BROWN, *The Gospel I*, 505; PANCARO, *The Law*, 433.

<sup>67</sup> PANCARO, *ibid.*

to others. The term commandment is used in the whole New Testament in the profane sense only thrice including that of John 11,57.<sup>8</sup> In the secular sense, the term commandment implies an immediate urgency and binding obligation on the part of the receiver from the authority. While there is a sense of urgent obligation in the secular sense of the term with the implication of "must" or "should," there is a sense of voluntary obligation in the use of the term commandment in the religious sense in the Old Testament as well as the New Testament. This concept of commandment is what we find in the Old Testament with regard to the commandments of God revealed to the people in the form of the law and in the commandment given by Jesus to his disciples in the Fourth Gospel. We never find a tone of inevitable obligation in the giving of the commandment by Jesus to his disciples.

## **2. Love is the New Commandment written on the hearts of the disciples**

We have seen that the concept of the term law with its legalistic and juridical dimensions was a later development. The term commandment was the original term which expressed the Covenant relationship of God with His people. Keeping the Commandments of God, which were called the Decalogue or the Ten Words, communicated to the people through Moses, written on two stone tablets (Exod 20,1-17; 34,28; Deut 4,13; 5,22; 10,4), was a sign of people's faithful obedience to

<sup>8</sup> The other two instances are: Acts 17,15 and Colossians 4,10.

that Covenant relationship. Keeping the commandments was a sign of keeping their responding love for Yahweh who chose the people out of his unconditional and generous love, not because of their numerical strength nor any merit of their own. God chose them because He loved them. The people's keeping the commandments of God was their act of love in response (Deut 7,7-11).

### **3. The law of the New Covenant is an internal reality**

The people repeatedly failed in living up to this responding love. Now God makes a New Covenant with His people not written on stone tablets but written on their hearts. This is the New Covenant foretold by the prophets (Jer 31,31-34). Interiorisation is the mark of this New Covenant unlike the old one which was merely externalised in the stone tablets and which the people failed to keep (Jer 31,32). The law will no more be an external reality, but it will be an internal one (Jer 31,33). Since the law is no more an external reality, there will also be no more need for the people to depend on external help such as teachers and exponents of the law, to teach them how to know the Lord. God would place the law of the New Covenant in their hearts directly and they will know the Lord by themselves without any external help.

This interiorisation is possible because God will place his Spirit within his people. The law of the New Covenant is nothing other than the Spirit of God Himself. The prophets describe symbolically the effect of the transformation which will take place when God places His Spirit within His people: their hearts of stones turn into hearts of flesh (Jer 24,7; Ezek 11,19; 36,26f). All these prophecies come to fulfillment in the New Commandment of love given by Jesus. The New Commandment of Jesus is not a replacement of the law of the Old Covenant. The law of the Old Covenant was given to the people in preparation for the New Commandment of love given by Jesus.

#### **4. The New Commandment is only one**

The New Commandment given does not consist of innumerable divisions or explanations but simply one: to love one another just as Jesus had loved. In other words, the New Covenant between God and his people, which is figuratively expressed through the twelve disciples who represent the twelve tribes of the New Israel, is established through Jesus. The New People of Israel respond to the unconditional and generous love manifested by God now through His own Son by keeping His New Commandment of love. This New Commandment of love is nothing at all other than living like Jesus lived: rendering service to one another

even to the lowest form - the symbol of foot-washing - and finally giving one's own life for the other. This is the concept of love in John.

### **Conclusion**

The commandment of love in the Fourth Gospel is Jesus' call to the disciples, that is, all those who believe in him and belong to him, to live like Jesus did. If God's love was the cause and purpose of Jesus' coming into the world (3,16), it was also his work in the world (13,1). The origin of Jesus' coming into the world in flesh (1,14), his word and work in the world and his glorification and return to the Father are all summed in one word: **love**. This is the command he received from the Father. Jesus' word is according to the commandment of the Father (12,49-50). Jesus' keeping the commandments of his Father is a manifestation of his love for the Father (14,31; 15,10). The Father's love for Jesus (3,35; 5,20) goes beyond the boundaries of time, before the foundation of the world (17,24). By fulfilling Jesus' commandment to love one another (13,34; 15,12), the believers come into this circle of love between the Father and the Son and possess the same love (17,26). If Jesus' keeping the commandments of the Father was a manifestation of his love for the Father, the believer's keeping the commandments of Jesus is an expression of their love for Jesus (14,15.21; 15,10). The Father loves the believers because of their love for Jesus (16,27). Jesus' incarnation and his mission were to reveal to

humans that God is love. This unconditional, spontaneous and generous love of God is revealed in the word, work and the life of the Only-begotten Son. The revelation of Jesus is that God is love.

Jesus' work of love, which is what he has been doing throughout his life comes to concrete and summarised expression in his foot-washing on the eve of his glorification. The act of foot-washing is the gist and summary of the work Jesus has been doing in the world. Jesus' bringing to expression of his whole mission in the world through foot-washing is also an act of teaching for his disciples what he has been doing throughout his life. And if the disciples truly belong to Jesus, then they should also act according to the example shown by the Master. The believer's love expressed in service even in the most humble form of service to one another is not only an expression of their belonging to Jesus but it is also a manifestation to the world that they belong to Jesus. This element of witnessing is an integral part of the concept of love in the Fourth Gospel. If the disciple should be ready to serve his fellow human even in the most humble form of service comparable to that of a slave, just as Jesus did. The definition of love according to Jesus does not end there. The disciples must be ready even to give their lives for their friends, their fellow believers (15,12f). That is what Jesus did and so anyone believing in Jesus and belonging to him should do the same, or rather according to the johannine expression, we can properly say, would do the same.

Jesus does not demand love or love in return. What the disciple is required to do is less than what his Master Jesus did. If the Master was ready to wash the feet of the servants, it should not be so difficult for the servants to wash one another's feet. This is the concept of love which Jesus preaches and practices. This concept is prevalent throughout the Fourth Gospel and the verses 13,34 and 15,12.17 illustrate this truth beautifully. That is why we can fittingly call these verses a window to the reality of love in the Fourth Gospel.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### LOVE IN THE REST OF THE FOURTH GOSPEL

#### INTRODUCTION

Having analysed the verses 13,34 and 15,12 as a starting point to the concept of the Love in the Fourth Gospel, we will now turn our attention to all the occurrences of the term **Love** in the Fourth Gospel. Just as we did for our examination of the term **law**, we will take only the instances where the term is explicitly mentioned. By the term *love*, we would understand without any distinction, what the two Greek terms, *agapan* and *philein*, convey. Although we have noted the distinction in the shades of meaning between these terms, yet we will not busy ourselves with it, unless the analysis of the term at a given instance warrants it. As we have already noted at the beginning of the previous chapter, the terms *agapan* and *philein* do not exclude each other to convey the meaning of love, although their emphases may differ.

## **The Term LOVE in the Rest of the Fourth Gospel**

We have categorised the appearances of the term *love* in the Fourth Gospel into nine varieties.

- A. God's Love for Humans:** 3,16; 14,21; 14,23; 16,27; 17,23.26
- B. Humans' Love for God:** 5,42
- C. God's Love for Jesus:** 3,35; 5,20; 10,17; 15,9; 17,23.24; 17,26
- D. Jesus' love for God:** 14,31; 15,10
- E. Human's Love for Jesus:** 8,42; 14.15.21.23.24.28; 15,9.10; 16,27; 21,15-17
- F. Jesus' Love for Humans:** 11,3.5.36; 13,1.23.34; 14,21; 15,12-13; 19,26; 20,2; 21,7.20
- G. Humans' Love for One Another:** 13,34-35; 15,12.17
- H. Humans' Love for Temporal Things:** 3,19; 12,25.43
- I. World's Love for Its Own:** 15,19

### **A. GOD'S LOVE FOR HUMANS**

1. 3,16 *God loved the world so much that He gave His Only Begotten Son that all who believe in him may not perish but may have eternal life.*

Our section under the title *God's Love for Humans* is a broad category which includes God's Love for all human beings without any distinction, even the

disciples. In fact, it is the disciples who occupy a predominant place in this category as the objects of God's love, with the only exception of 3,16. There, God's love for all human beings is expressed under the term *world* including the disciples. We will maintain such a meaning of the term "humans" for our study of the concept of love for the whole of this chapter.

John 3,16, which has been described as containing the whole christian message of salvation for all times,<sup>1</sup> has the first appearance of the term *agapan* in the Fourth Gospel. The context of this verse is the conversation of Jesus with Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. During the conversation Jesus speaks of the Son of Man being lifted up (3,14). This introduces in the theme of the saving function of Jesus' being lifted up using a comparison to the historical event of Moses' lifting up the serpent in the wilderness (Num 21,7-9). Moses' action saved the people from their fatal destruction which was a result of their disbelief in God. If the people who saw the bronze serpent were saved, now all those who believe in Jesus, the Son of Man, will be saved. This was the purpose of Jesus' coming into the world in the flesh: salvation from destruction. The bronze serpent gave the people physical life. But now the Son of Man gives them eternal life. God loves the world so much that he wants to save it from destruction. The love of God saves the world. And this saving act is brought into effect by the Incarnation of His Only-begotten Son. God loves,

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<sup>1</sup> SCHNACKENBURG, *Johannesevangelium* 1, 423.

so humans live. This is the message of Incarnation, the Only-begotten Son of God coming in flesh.

In our examination of 13,34 and 15,12 as a window to the concept of love in the Fourth Gospel, we discovered that love for John means the example of Jesus: serving to the extreme and offering one's own life without expecting anything in return.<sup>2</sup> In other words, giving oneself in service and giving one's own life for the sake of love. Unmotivated giving, even to the gift of oneself, is the mark of love in the Fourth Gospel. This mark is evident in God's love for humans in 3,16. John underlines the fact that God's love for humans is a **gift** by employing the term ἔδωκεν. The all-giving and self-sacrificing love taught and lived by Jesus becomes transparent in God's love for humans in 3,16. It is this love of God which Jesus brings into actualisation through his words, works and life (12,49-50; 13,1).

The immensity of God's love is emphasized in John by his use of the term οὕτως γὰρ at the beginning of the sentence in 3,16. God's love does not have any reservation or limitation. Although God has only one Son, yet he does not spare him for Himself. He was ready to sacrifice his Only-begotten Son. Although it is only normal for almost every exegete to detect a comparison here with the readiness of Abraham to sacrifice his only son (Gen 22,2), yet God's love for the

<sup>2</sup> BULTMANN, *The Gospel*, 474f.

world goes beyond that of Abraham: Abraham was spared from the act of sacrificing his son, whom he loved (Gen 22,12), whereas for God, it was not the case. God's love for the world is greater than that of Abraham because He *actually* gave His Only-begotten Son.<sup>3</sup> The term "gave" in 3,16 is an emphatic expression<sup>4</sup> and it points to Jesus' crucifixion.<sup>5</sup>

The same self-emptying love is manifested by Jesus' love for his own. God's love does not attach any condition either. He gives His Son just because He loves the world. He gives His son to humans without expecting anything in return and even without their asking for it. The initiative in this love relationship between God and humans comes from God Himself. God makes the first move. That is the way God's love relationship with humans works. This same perspective was also visible in Jesus' foot-washing of his disciples. He does it as an act of love for them, even when they would ignorantly refuse it (13,8).

If God's saving act through Moses in the Old Testament (Num 21,7ff) is now compared to His saving act in Jesus, God's saving action in John 3,16 is a step still further than the Exodus event: God's commandment to Moses to make a bronze serpent was only in response to the request of the people and the prayer of Moses (Num 21,7). But now, God's gift of His Only-begotten Son is out of God's own

<sup>3</sup> BROWN, *The Gospel* 1, 134.

<sup>4</sup> THÜSING, *Erhöhung*, 53.

<sup>5</sup> SCHNACKENBURG, *Johannesevangelium* 1, 424; PANCARO, *The Law*, 324.

initiative. God wants to save the people not because they requested but because God loves them. This is God's act of service to humans which again becomes transparent in Jesus' foot-washing of his disciples.

God's love does not know any condemnation. God wants only to save (3,17). The concept of God's love in 3,16 is again something different from that of the Exodus event: the serpents, which killed the people, were understood as a sign of God's punishment for people's sin. There are no external agents of punishment after the event of the Incarnation. If there is any punishment for anyone, it is not from God, rather it is the result of human action (3,19). Thus according to 3,16, God is nothing other than love. God saves His people because He loves His people. The responding love of the people lies in the simple fact of accepting this God's unreserved and unconditional love, i.e. belonging to Jesus. In this sense, the Incarnation of Jesus is the declaration of God's love for humans, and humans' proclamation of their love for God is belief in Jesus.

**2. 14,21 *He who has my commandments and keeps them is the one who loves me; and he who loves me will be loved by my Father and I will love him and will manifest myself to him.***

This verse, 14,21, contains the triangular love relationship between the Father, Son

and the believers. Since our analysis of this verse belongs the section of God's love for humans, we will restrict ourselves to an examination of the Father's love for Jesus' disciples who keep his commandments. This verse belongs to the first unit of the Farewell Discourse (13,31-14,31), where Jesus speaks to his disciples about the keeping of his commandments, the gift of the Holy Spirit and repeatedly about his union with the Father. Jesus' discourse to his disciples about his going to the Father (14,1-6) and his union with the Father (14,6-14) brings in the theme of keeping the commandments of Jesus in 14,15. The connection between the disciples' love for Jesus and the keeping of Jesus' commandments (or words) is again highlighted from 14,21-24.

One who keeps the commandments of Jesus loves Jesus. Keeping the commandments of Jesus and loving him mean one and the same thing. If love for Jesus motivates the believer to keep the commandments, then the substance of the commandments of Jesus is only love.<sup>6</sup> The one who loves Jesus is loved by God. The one who loves Jesus also becomes the object of the Father's love. God's love is manifested in Jesus, the Only-begotten Son, who is one with the Father. The unity between the Father and the Son has been brought into focus throughout the Farewell Discourse. One who loves Jesus loves also the Father and thus enters into the triangular circle of love between the Father, the Son and the

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<sup>6</sup> BROWN, *The Gospel* 1, 646.

believer.

God loves the one who loves Jesus, because it is for this purpose, as we have seen above, that God sent his Son into the world. The one who is loved by God is already saved, because he believes in His Son. Keeping the commandments of Jesus is a sign of faith in Jesus. This verse shows that God's love comes to fulfillment in the disciple of Jesus.

**3. 14,23 Jesus answered and said to him, "One who loves me will keep my word and my Father will love him and we will come to him and make our abode with him."**

This verse has the same idea as the verse 14,21, which has been separated from this one by the question of Judas, not Iscariot, at 14,22. Jesus repeats what he said in 14,21. The connection between keeping the commandments of Jesus and loving him is put in the inverse order of 14,21. If one who keeps the commandments of Jesus is the one who loves Jesus, then the other way round is also true. One who loves Jesus, keeps also his commandments. At 14,15 Jesus says to his disciples, "If you love me, keep my commandments." The same idea is found here at 14,23, but the term "word" replaces commandments. There is no theological distinction between these terms - word and commandments - whether

in singular or plural.<sup>7</sup> We have already observed in our examination of the concept of the commandment, that the commandments of God have been also called "words" (Exod 20,1; Deut 4,13).

Just as we saw in our examination of the term 14,21, here too Jesus says the Father loves the one who loves Jesus. Keeping the commandments is a manifestation of love for Jesus, and so the one who loves Jesus is *ipso facto* also loved by God. Judas' question expresses a misunderstanding of the disciple with regard to the manifestation of Jesus.<sup>8</sup> The disciple's problem is similar to that of the one which the brothers of Jesus' had at 7,4.<sup>9</sup> The brothers of Jesus had suggested to Jesus that he should display his miracles to the world. What Jesus means by his manifestation (14,21) is the inner manifestation of his revelation to those who believe in him while Judas seems to think of a sensational external manifestation, for example, the multiplication of the loaves in chapter 6.

The internal manifestation is a revelation appropriated only by those who belong to him. Those who belong to Jesus manifest this belonging by keeping his commandments (14,21.23). Jesus makes this point clear by repeating what he said in 14,21. Although the response of Jesus to Judas' question does not apparently

<sup>7</sup> BROWN, *The Gospel II*, 641.

<sup>8</sup> SCHNACKENBURG, *Johannesevangelium* 3, 92.

<sup>9</sup> BROWN, *The Gospel II*, 647.

bring in anything new,<sup>10</sup> yet Jesus explains what is meant by the manifestation (14,21). The answer of Jesus at 14,23, in spite of its quasi indifference to the question of Judas, obviously clears the latter's doubt. The manifestation of Jesus is the indwelling of the Father and Jesus in the one who is loved by God. The fruit of Jesus' revelation is the communication of the love of God to the believer. What Jesus communicates is God's word (14,24). If the Incarnation (3,16) was an act of the Father's love for the world, the post-resurrectional indwelling is a special act of love for the Christian.<sup>11</sup> The Father's unconditional and self-sacrificing love for the world becomes fruitful and is actualised when one responds to this love by accepting Jesus' word. When one accepts Jesus' word, which is indeed the Father's (14,24) and which is manifested in accepting Jesus' commandments, then one enters into the circle of love which exists between the Father and the Son.

**4. 16,27 *The Father Himself loves you, because you have loved me and have believed that I came forth from God.***

This verse emphasizes once more the love of the Father for the one who loves Jesus. While the two preceding verses explained the keeping of the commandments of Jesus as an expression of the love of the believer for Jesus, here it is only a question of the love of the disciple for Jesus. While before the

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<sup>10</sup> SCHNACKENBURG, *ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> BROWN, *ibid.*, 648.

Father's love for the disciple of Jesus was expressed through the term *agapan*, here at 16,27, the Father's love for the one who loves Jesus is expressed through the term *philein*. Some hold this expression of the Father's love by *philein* is a deliberate choice by John<sup>12</sup> to express the friendship dimension of love which the disciples now possess not only with Jesus, but also because of him with the Father.

That the Father Himself loves the disciples is an expression of the fact that God's purpose in sending His Son into the world has come to fulfillment. Jesus brings the Father's love to the world that those who believe in Jesus may be united with the Father. The Father of Jesus becomes also the Father of those who belong to Jesus (20,17). The union of Jesus with the Father comes to full realisation the believers who not only belong to Jesus but also belong to God. There will be no need for Jesus to recommend his believers to the Father (16,26) since the believers themselves belong to the inner relationship between the Father and the Son. The Father, on His own,<sup>13</sup> loves the disciples and will know their need. However, this does not mean that the disciples interrupt their relationship with

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<sup>12</sup> SCHNACKENBURG, *Johannesevangelium* 3, 184. Schnackenburg has no doubt about the deliberate choice of the term by John. According to him, "Das hier verwendete Verbum für "lieben." nämlich φιλεῖν, ist sicher mit voller Absicht gewählt... Jetzt offenbart Jesus den Jüngern tröstlich das Freundschaftsverhältnis, das ihnen der Vater um seinerwillen gewährt."

<sup>13</sup> J.H.BERNARD, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to John*, vol.2 (New York: C. Scribner, 1929), 520. Bernard uses this expression, "on his own," to express the pronoun αὐτὸς in 16,27.

Jesus, on the contrary their relationship with the Father is the result of their consistent union with Jesus. Their union is not a union only with the Father, nor only with the Son, it is the relationship of the disciples with the Father and the Son. Their continuous indwelling with the Father and Jesus (14,23). The Father loves the disciples as He loves Jesus (17,23.26).

This unity of the believers with the Father has been effected by their belief in Jesus (16,27). Thus the unity between faith and love once again comes into focus. Jesus explains why God loves the disciples: because they love Jesus and have believed that he came from God. The disciples themselves affirm it at 16,30, as Peter did on behalf of the twelve at 6,69. It is faith in Jesus which causes the disciples to be loved by God. Faith in Jesus and loving him are inseparable from each other. One presupposes the other.<sup>14</sup>

Although there may not be any substantial difference in the concept of love connoted by the terms *agapan* and *philein*, yet there is a difference in emphasis between both the terms as we have already discovered at the beginning of the previous chapter. While *philein* would place emphasis on the dimension of spontaneity of the concept of love, the term *agapan* indicates the dimension of a well-reflected decision and irrevocable commitment. John, by the use of the term

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<sup>14</sup> BROWN, *ibid.*, 724.

*philein* here, underlines the fact that God's love for human beings is not only a well-decided commitment but also an expression of spontaneous friendship with humans, his own creation. According to John the true concept of love is total: it includes not only an irrevocable commitment on the one hand, but also the dimension of spontaneity, on the other. This totality of love is indeed the johannine concept of love.

5. 17,23 *I in them and you in me that they may be made perfect in one; that the world may know you have sent me and you have loved them as you have loved me.*

This verse, which is part of Jesus' prayer to the Father, brings in another dimension of God's love for the disciples. God's love for the believers of Jesus is not only for their possession but also for their proclamation of that love to the world. God's love is universal for the whole world (3,16) and so the believers who belong to Jesus should bear witness to this love of God. God's love was the cause of Jesus' coming into the world. God sent His Son (3,17) to save the world. This saving mission of God's love in Jesus is continued by the disciples who witness to this love. That the coming of Jesus was to bring humans into God's love is underlined at 17,23, a repetition of what was told in 3,16-17. The two subordinate clauses *you have sent me* and *you have loved them as you have loved me* are not

stating two facts but only one fact: that God sent Jesus into the world to make humans realise that God loves them as He loves His own Son. This fact is expressed by John when he indicates the unity between the Father, Son and the believers through the word τετελειωμένοι. When believers belong to the circle of the love between the Father and the Son, then the mission of Jesus has come to accomplishment. Then the unity is perfect (17,23).

The mission of the disciples is to make this circle larger, to include everyone in the world. That is the purpose of their witnessing. As long as this witnessing mission of the disciples continues there is always a ray of hope that universal salvation will become realised. That is exactly the purpose of Jesus' command to love one another as he had loved. By the witnessing of the disciples to God's love through Jesus, by loving one another as Jesus had loved, the disciples make room for this circle of love to become larger. The chance given to the world through the ministry of Jesus is repeated through the ministry of the disciples.<sup>15</sup> God's unconditional, spontaneous and self-sacrificing love should be practiced among the believers to spread the message of God's love still further in the world. God's love is given to the disciples of Jesus not just to be retained among themselves but with the aim of sharing it further with everyone, with everyone *in the world*. John's employment of the term "world" demonstrates that God's love, which is possessed by the disciples

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<sup>15</sup> BROWN, *The Gospel II*, 771.

through Jesus, is meant for everyone,<sup>16</sup> and not in a limited sectarian sense.<sup>17</sup> No one in the world is excluded from this love. God's love for humans at 17,23 is shown to be a universal love which allows no one to be lost (17,12). We meet here once again the universalism of the johannine concept of love.

**6. 17,26 *I have declared your Name to them and I will declare it; that the love with which you have loved me may be in them and I in them.***

This verse too, just like the one we have immediately above examined, belongs to the prayer of Jesus at chapter 17. Actually v.26 concludes the prayer of Jesus. The theme of Jesus' prayer for the knowledge of the Father and His love continues also in this verse. The world has not yet come to knowledge of the Father nor the mission of Jesus (17,25). But the ones who belong to Jesus have come to the knowledge of the Father and His sending of the Son as the manifestation of His love for the world. This is also the eternal life (17,3). The disciples of Jesus, the believers, possess this knowledge already in contrast to the world which does not as yet. The disciples, since they are with Jesus, know Jesus and also the Father (14,7). The Father's Name has been made known to the disciples by Jesus (17,26).

<sup>16</sup> BERNARD, *An Exegetical Commentary II*, 579.

<sup>17</sup> BROWN, *ibid.*, understands, in contrast to Bernard, above, that Jesus means to say that the world will know that God loved Christians. But as we have discovered in our analysis of 14,1 all those who believe in God, believe in Christ too, explicitly or implicitly. It is this circle which should become bigger by the witnessing of the disciples to God's love.

Name stands for the identity of the person. Naming a person implies the authority of the namer over the one who is named (Gen 17,5; 32,29). There is a sense of intimate belonging union between the person who names and the one who is named. Jesus' declaring the name to the disciples manifests the passing on of this intimate belonging and unity between the Father and the Son to the disciples. The unity which existed between the Father and the Son, the love which existed from before the foundation of the world (17,24), now begins to exist between Jesus and the disciples and also between the Father and the disciples through their love of Jesus and faith in him.

Yahweh declaring his own name is also an event of revelation in the Old Testament (Exod 3,14). God revealed His own Name to Moses before sending him on a mission to save the people of Israel. Now it is Jesus who reveals God's name to the disciples before entrusting them with his own mission and sending into the world to bear witness for the love of God (17,23). The declaring of the name of God by Jesus to his disciples is possible because God has handed over everything into his hands (3,35). God's love for humans is brought by Jesus. This mediation of God's love for humans is made possible by the coming of the Son into the world. He is the only one who can mediate this love, because he exists in constant love with the Father (1,18). This mediation of love to humans is not possible through

any other mediation, because no one has even seen God (1,18). The only way to the Father's love for humans is through Jesus Christ. He is the only way (14,6).

## **B. HUMANS' LOVE FOR GOD**

**1. 5,42 *But I have known you that you have no love of God in you.***

This verse belongs to the section of Jesus' discourse to the Jews who had accused Jesus of violating the sabbath rule by healing a man on the sabbath. Jesus defends himself for healing a man on the sabbath because he is doing just what his Father is doing (5,17.19). What Jesus does is just what he sees the Father doing. What the Father is doing is giving life (5,21). What Jesus does is exactly what the Father does (5,19). The Son does not do anything on his own (5,19). The Father and the Son not only give life even to the dead (5,21), but they are life in themselves (5,26). The whole section of Jesus' discourse, defending himself for healing on the sabbath, is dominated by the themes of life (5,21.24.26.29.40), judgment (5,22.24.27.29.30) and witnessing (5,32-34.36.39). The love of God at 5,42 should be understood in this context.

The "Jews" reject God and reject Jesus because they do not have the word of God in them (5,38), although they search the Scriptures with the purpose of obtaining life. They are searching for life elsewhere while the Life itself stands in front of

them and speaks to them (5,26.40). The Scripture cannot provide life independent of Jesus, because it talks only of Jesus (5,47). Both 5,38 and 5,42 are parallel.<sup>18</sup> What Jesus accuses the "Jews" of is that they do not have love for God and so the word of God can have no effect in them. That is the reason they do not seek the glory of the only God (5,44). Without love for God, they cannot understand the word of God. It is because their hearts are not attuned to God.

The expression love of God at 5,42 means humans' love for God and not God's love for humans. On the analogy of 5,38, an argument for reading the love of God at 5,42 as God's love for humans<sup>19</sup> may be made, but the context does not allow it.<sup>20</sup> Even if it could be taken to mean that God's love is not found in the hearts of the "Jews," in the sense of God's love for humans, yet it will come back again to their own responsibility. The "Jews" have shut themselves to God and Jesus so much that they are unable to recognise the one who comes on behalf of God.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> BULTMANN, *The Gospel*, 269.

<sup>19</sup> BROWN, *The Gospel I*, 226. Brown shows the alternatives of reading 5,42 as God's love for humans as well as humans' love for God. According to the first alternative, on the basis of 5,38 it may be interpreted that "God's love like God's word must permeate one if he is to recognize and accept Jesus. Yet, a case may also be made for the latter meaning on the analogy of 3,19, i.e. man's failure to love God is part of his preferring the darkness. Some would suggest that the evangelist left the phrase ambiguous to cover both meanings."

<sup>20</sup> BULTMANN, *ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 270.

The johannine concept of love at 5,42 combines in it also the concept of the law. The love of God was the essence of the law.<sup>22</sup> The suggestion that the Commandment of the Mosaic law to love God with all one's heart, soul and strength (Deut 6,4) is in the background of the term love of God in John 5,42 is here most likely the fact.<sup>23</sup> The expression *the only God* at 5,44, strengthens this point. If to love God was the foremost of all the commandments and the source of life (Deut 6,2), then it is the same fact Jesus is stating to the "Jews" here. The "Jews" transgress the first and foremost commandment to love God and therefore all the Scriptures too. This point is emphasized explicitly from 5,45-47. The "Jews" are not only against Jesus, but they are also against Moses in whom they proclaim to have put their trust (5,45ff; 9,28f). Their appeal to Moses is clearly a veil to hide their hypocrisy.

The "Jews" have neither the love of God nor love for one another. As we have seen, the johannine concept of love is to serve the other which is a sign of humility. The "Jews" certainly do not possess this love since they seek human glory for themselves (5,44). John makes clear that the "Jews" and Jesus are placed at opposite poles by saying that for Jesus human glory does not have any value

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<sup>22</sup> BROWN, *ibid.*

<sup>23</sup> LACOMARA, Aelred, "Deuteronomy and the Farewell Discourse (John 13:31 - 16,33)." *CBQ* 36 (1974): 232-239.

(5,41). To possess such values as seeking human glory is for John, in fact, to refuse honor to the only God (5,44). The "Jews" want the honor for themselves instead of giving honor to the only God which is the first and foremost of all the commandments. By doing this they do not love God (5,42), nor do they love their fellow human beings because they refuse to serve them which is the mark of johannine love. Moses commanded his people to love God above all things so that they may have life (Deut 6,5). The "Jews" are doing just the opposite of what they profess. It is for this hypocrisy Jesus tells them that Moses will become their accuser before the Father (5,45). By refusing to love the only God and their fellow human beings and thus neglecting the commandments of God which are now realised in the person of Jesus, the "Jews" forfeit life (5,26.40). If love produces life, the "Jews" forgo it by refusing to love. John 5,42 shows the johannine concept of love in which we see the inseparable unity of humans' love of God with love for the neighbor.

## **C. GOD'S LOVE FOR JESUS**

### **1. 3,35 *The Father loves the Son and has given everything into his hand.***

The verse 3,35 states explicitly the love God has for the Son. This verse belongs to the unit 3,31-36. The discussion, whether this unit should be regarded as a continuation of 3,27 which introduces the speech of John the Baptist, will not be our concern. While 3,30 has the mark of John the Baptist's witnessing statement of Jesus, the verses beginning from 3,31 do not seem to have such features to be assigned to John the Baptist. Rather the verses from 3,31 seem to come from the mouth of Jesus declaring his coming from the Father. Our aim is to explore the depth of the meaning of God's love for the Son as part of our analysis of the concept of love in John's Gospel. Since this is our aim, the problem concerning the status of this verse (3,35) as part of the unit 3,31-36 is beyond our realm. What concerns us in this section is the study of the johannine concept of the Father's love for the Son at 3,35, and not the discussion whether it is stated by John the Baptist or by Jesus himself.

Jesus reflects the unconditional, unreserved and self-emptying love of God. If such love of God for humans was the cause of Jesus' coming into the world, it is the same love which God has for the Only-begotten Son. God's love for Jesus was so

unreserved that He "gave *everything* into the hand of the Son." We have highlighted the term "everything" to underline the johannine concept of the Father's love for the Son. The Father did not reserve or retain anything for Himself. Since the Father's love for the Son is so free and unrestricted, He gave everything into the hand of the Son.

Since whatever the Father has is now in the possession of the Son, the Son has the authority and the power of the Father. What Jesus speaks are the words of the Father and what Jesus has is the Spirit of the Father (3,34). The Father gave the Son His Spirit in an unlimited measure (3,34). The love between the Father and the Son is total and unlimited. The Father and the Son share in totality what they have: all that the Son has is from the Father (17,5) and all that the Father has belongs to the Son (17,10). The sharing between them is absolutely total. There is no distinction between the Father and the Son on the level of *Having*. The love is total.

***2. 5,20 The Father loves the Son and shows him all things He Himself does; and he will show him even greater things than these, works that will astonish you.***

This is another direct and explicit statement of the Father's love for the Son. This verse belongs to the section of Jesus' defense speech, when the Jews accused him of healing a lame man on the sabbath, which occupies the whole of chapter 5.

Jesus' defense speech begins at 5,19 and goes right to the end of the chapter at v.47.

Jesus' statement of the Father's love for him is right at the beginning of his defense speech. Jesus speaks of the Father's love for him as evidence of God's support for his action. The healing of the lame man, according to Jesus, is actually not his work, but the Father's own work. "The Son can do nothing of his own self, but what he sees the Father doing; whatever the Father does, the Son also does" (5,19). Jesus healed on the Sabbath because the Father works on the Sabbath (5,17). Jesus knows that the Father works on the Sabbath, and so he performed the work of healing on the sabbath. Jesus depends on the Father for his action.

If the "Jews" accuse Jesus of violating the sabbath rule, they are indeed accusing the Father of working on the sabbath. This is the point of Jesus' argument. There is absolute unity between the Father and the Son not only in the level of *Having* as we have seen in our analysis of the Father's love for the Son immediately above, there is also absolute unity in the level of *Doing*. This absolute unity between the Father and the Son in the level of *Having* and *Doing* is easily explained by the expression that God loves the Son (3,35; 5,20).

The love of God for the Son at 3,35 is expressed by the Greek verb agapan, ὁ πατήρ ἀγαπᾷ τὸν υἱόν, whereas at 5,20 it is expressed by the term philein, ὁ πατήρ φιλεῖ τὸν υἱόν. John uses both terms to demonstrate that the love between the Father and the Son is total, viewed from both its dimensions. The love of the Father for the Son is a well-thought-out decision and commitment on the part of the Father, while being at the same time spontaneous.

If the "Jews" are offended by the fact that Jesus called God his Father, then they should know that Jesus and the Father are one. The fact that the Jews do not know, or still better formulated in johannine terms, that they do not want to know that such union exists between the Father and the Son, is because actually they do not honor the Father. If the Jews indeed did honor the Father, then they would honor the Son too. That the "Jews" are refusing to honor the Son is a sign that they do not in fact honor the Father (5,23). Their accusation against Jesus that he made himself equal to God is a hypocrisy and it is the "Jews" who dishonor God by dishonoring Jesus. By trying to offend Jesus, they are indeed offending God and become the objects of the wrath of God (3,36).

John's expressions of God's love for Jesus in 3,35 and 5,20 complement each other. That this love between the Father and the Son is perfect and total, viewed

from any perspective, is conveyed by his use of the terms *agapan* and *philein*. If the Father's love for the Son at 3,35 was illustrated in terms of common possession, at 5,20 it is conveyed in terms of common action. The love of the Father for the Son is so absolutely total that not only what belongs to the Son belongs to the Father (3,35; 17,7) and vice versa (17,10), but also what the Father does, the Son does likewise (5,19).

**3. 10,17 *Therefore the Father loves me because I lay down my life that I may take it again.***

The verse 10,17 belongs to the section where Jesus speaks of his relationship with his own. Jesus' relationship with his own is so intimate that he compares it to that of a shepherd and his sheep. The sheep belong to the shepherd. The sheep recognise the shepherd's voice; he calls each by name and the sheep follow the shepherd (10,3-4). And Jesus, as a good shepherd, gives his life for the sheep (10,11). No man can force Jesus to lay down his life; he does it on his own, because he has the power to do it since it is the commandment of the Father (10,18). The commandment of the Father for Jesus is not just to lay down his life but to take it again (10,17-18).

God loves Jesus because Jesus fulfills the commandment of the Father to lay down his life and to take it again (10,17). The commandment of the Father is actually life, eternal life (12,50). The johannine concept of love is itself life and the Father's love for the Son means also life. Jesus' laying down of his life is only to take it up again (10,17-18). Jesus' act of giving his life and taking up again is to provide life for his sheep, to save them from perishing (10,28). God loves Jesus because Jesus fulfills the Father's commandment of laying down his life and take it again (10,18). The purpose of Jesus' laying down his life and taking it up again is to save his sheep and to provide them with life and life in abundance (10,10). The Cross for Jesus is not the end but it is actually the Exaltation.<sup>24</sup> The sheep belong to Jesus because the Father has handed them over to Jesus (10,29). The sheep are the property of the Father and, as we have seen above at the analysis of 3,35, what belongs to the Father belongs to the Son too. No villain can snatch them either out of the Father's hand (10,29) or out of Jesus' hand (10,28). The love between the Father and the Son is so absolute that there is no distinction between them on the level of possession or propriety. The Father and Jesus are one (10,30).

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<sup>24</sup> BULTMANN, *The Gospel*, 385.

The love between God and Jesus is so perfect and absolute that there is no distinction between them on the level of *knowing* (10,15). As much as the Father knows the Son, the Son knows the Father too. And Jesus' laying down of his life and taking it again is related to this mutual knowledge of the Father and the Son. The Father's love for Jesus is communicated further to the sheep. Thus the unity of knowledge between the Father and the Son is also imparted to those who belong to Jesus (10,14). To know the Father and the Son is eternal life (17,3).

God's purpose in sending His Son into the world was to manifest God's love for the world. The Father's love is thus passed on to the believers, the sheep of Jesus' flock. John's use of *διὰ τοῦτό* points to the fact that the Father's love is manifested to the world by Jesus. The Father's love for Jesus from before the foundation of the world is implied here once again.

**4. 15,9 *As the Father has loved me , so have I loved you; remain in my love.***

Jesus tells his disciples that he loves his disciples as the Father has loved him. Jesus communicates the same love of the Father to the disciples. The Father's love for Jesus has been total. The Father shares everything with Jesus by giving it into his hands (3,35) and also shows Jesus everything that he does (5,20). There

is unity between the Father and the Son in possession and action. Now the same love is passed on to the disciples by Jesus.

Jesus was loved by the Father from before the foundation of the world (17,24). When the Father's love for Jesus is passed on to the disciples, they become perfectly one (17,24). This was the purpose of Jesus' coming into the world. The Father's love is perfected as Jesus shares it with the disciples. Exactly for this Jesus came into the world (13,1), and for this God sent His Son Jesus Christ into the world (3,16). Jesus does not retain the Father's love for himself. He shares it with the disciples that they may bear much fruit. This is the glorification of the Father (15,8).

The Father's love is communicated to the disciples by Jesus not only in the same manner but also in the same capacity. The Father's love for Jesus is total and so also is the love of Jesus for the disciples. All that the Father has told Jesus is communicated by Jesus to the disciples (15,15). When the Father's love for Jesus remains in the disciples, it indicates the presence of Jesus in the disciples (17,26). This presence of Jesus in the disciples is made possible by the bond of unity which exists between Jesus and the disciples by means of their faith in him. This relationship is explained by Jesus by means of the imagery of the vine and the

branches at 15,1-6. Love is the consequence of faith.<sup>25</sup>

**5. 17,23 *I in them and you in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and the world may know that you have sent me, and have loved them as you have loved me.***

The Father's love for Jesus appears repeatedly in the concluding verses of Jesus' prayer from 17,23. This verse speaks of the Father's love for Jesus as well as for the disciples. The love of the Father for Jesus and the love of the Father for the disciples are one and the same. Jesus unites the disciples to the Father's love and the disciples become equal partakers of the Father's love on a par with Jesus. Jesus and the disciples become equal partners of the Father's love. Jesus has already called the disciples his friends (15,14-15). The relationship which exists between the Father and the Son is now communicated by Jesus to his disciples. The Father loves the disciples as He loves Jesus.

Jesus' prayer is that the Father's love, which now exists in the disciples in the same manner as it exists in him, should also be witnessed to the world. This is the fulfillment of Jesus' mission: bringing the Father's love to humans. When humans are united to Jesus, then the Father's love naturally flows into them. When the Father's love exists in the believers in the same manner as it exists in Jesus

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<sup>25</sup> BULTMANN, *ibid.*, 274.

himself, the Father is glorified.

***6. 17,24 Father, I will that they too whom you have given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory which you have given me; for you have loved me before the foundation of the world.***

The Father loves Jesus from before the foundation of the world. The Father's love for Jesus has been an eternal love. The Father's sharing of glory with Jesus is an expression of the Father's love for Jesus. Glory is an attribute which belongs to God. God's sharing of glory with Jesus is an indication of the nature and the intensity of the love of the Father for Jesus. The intimacy and the intensity of the love of the Father for Jesus is so great that the Father shares His glory with Jesus. The love of Jesus for his disciples also has the intensity and intimacy of the Father's love for Jesus, so Jesus prays for the union of the disciples with him. This is a reflection of the Father's being with Jesus, even before the foundation of the world. The sharing of the Father's glory with Jesus is reflected in the disciples by their beholding of Jesus' glory. Indeed the disciples beheld the glory of Jesus as that of the Only-begotten Son of the Father (1,14). To share the Father's love with the ones who believe in Jesus was the sole purpose of the Incarnation of Jesus. What Jesus reveals to the world, and in a unique way to those who belong to him by believing in him, is the love of the Father in the same intimacy and intensity.

Even our expression, "intimacy and intensity," for the Father's love for Jesus is inadequate due to linguistic limitation because the Father's love for Jesus is boundless and timeless. This is indeed what John communicates by describing the Father's love for Jesus as being from "before the foundation of the world."

**7. 17,26** *I have declared your name to them and I will declare it so that the love with which you have loved me may be in them and I in them.*

Jesus has come in the name of the Father (5,43), works in the name of the Father (10,27) and reveals the Father's name to those who believe in him (17,26). As we all know, name stands for identity. Name is a term which stands for the concept of the individual person. Declaring the Father's name to the disciples underlines the fact that Jesus has now established the personal relationship between the disciples and the Father that has always existed between him and the Father. This relationship is not an abstract concept or a dogma. It is the person of God Himself. God's personal love is communicated to the disciples by Jesus in the same manner, capacity and intensity as it exists between the Father and Jesus. The love with which the Father loved Jesus is now present in the disciples. The love which the Father has for Jesus, the Only-begotten Son, is not different from the love which the Father now has for the disciples.

The Father's love for Jesus is so selfless that believing in Jesus' name is also believing in God's name (1,12; 3,18). God had given His Name to Jesus and Jesus revealed the Father's Name to the ones who had been given to him by the Father (17,11). The term indicates the personal loving relationship existing between the Father and the Son. This love of the Father for Jesus has been communicated to the disciples by Jesus. Jesus' revelation is nothing other than the communication of this love of the Father to his disciples.

#### **D. JESUS' LOVE FOR THE FATHER**

1. 14,31 *But the world must recognise that I love the Father and that I act just as the Father commanded. Come now, let us go.*

If it was God's love which caused the Incarnation of the Logos, it is now the same love which causes Jesus to fulfill his mission. John 14,31, which is the very last verse of the first unit of the Farewell Discourse, exhibits a tone of urgency in Jesus' call to the disciples, "Come let us go." One may wonder whether the reason for this urgency is the approach of the prince of the world as Jesus says, "I shall not talk to you much longer, because the prince of this world is approaching" (14,30). The prince of this world is not a threat to Jesus nor to his disciples. The prince of this world, who has already been condemned (16,11), has no power over Jesus (14,30) and he has nothing to do with Jesus. The reason for the urgency is explained by

**Jesus at 14,31: "The world must recognise that I love the Father and I act just as the Father commanded." It is the urgent call of the moment for Jesus and for the disciples. That is why he urges his disciples, "Come now, let us go."**

**The reason for this urgency is explained in a twofold manner in 14,31: 1. The world must recognise that Jesus loves the Father. 2. Jesus acts as the Father commanded. However, these things are not different from each other. The commandment itself is a term which expresses the covenant love of God for his people and the people's response to this love. After Jesus closes his public ministry at 12,36, it is explained at 12,49-50 that what Jesus had done up to now was nothing of his own accord, but only what the Father had commanded him to do. What Jesus had done throughout his public ministry is further explained at 13,1 as "loving his own in the world with a love to the end." All that Jesus had said and done during his public ministry was according to the commandment of the Father and this was nothing other than loving his own in the world, and now Jesus' laying down of his life is also the Father's commandment (10,18). Jesus' laying down of his life is in order to take it up again and he is doing it out of his own free will (10,17), because he has the power to do it (10,18). As the act of Jesus' laying down his life is a manifestation of his love for the Father, which is expressed in his keeping the commandments of the Father (14,31; 15,10), so also the Father loves Jesus because of the laying down of his life (10,17).**

The existence of this intimate and mutual love of the Father and Jesus should also be manifested to the world. The element of witnessing is an integral part of the concept of love in John as the examination of the verses 13,34 and 15,12 have revealed in our previous chapter. What Jesus had commanded his disciples to do - not merely to love one another (13,34), but also to proclaim this to everyone (13,35),- he is going to do by example. The fact of his laying down of life as an act of his love for the Father needs to be proclaimed to the whole world. Jesus' exaltation on the cross is not only an expression of his love for the Father, it is, at the same time, a proclamation of Jesus' love for the Father. And this is the dimension of Jesus' love which is brought to expression in 14,31.

**2. 15,10 *If you keep my commandments you will remain in my love, as I have kept my Father's commandments and remain in his love.***

This verse forms part of the vine imagery in chapter 15,1-17. The first eight verses speak of the need for the disciples to remain in Jesus. The remaining verses speak of remaining in the love of Jesus. The latter part is the explanation of the first part. The way to remain in Jesus is to remain in the love of Jesus and to remain in the love of Jesus is to keep his commandment. And to keep the commandments means to love as Jesus loved. We see here the circle of love which exists between

Jesus and the disciples. This circle of love is a replica of the circle of love between Jesus and the Father. That is why Jesus gives his own example for the disciples to imitate.

Jesus remains in the love of the Father because he keeps His commandments. Keeping the commandments of the Father is an expression of Jesus' love for the Father. Jesus uses the term *to keep* (τετήρηκα) in the perfect tense when he points to his model of keeping the Father's commandments. Jesus' keeping the commandments of his Father is an act fulfilled but the disciples' keeping the commandments of Jesus is an act yet to be realised. The disciples' act of keeping the commandments will come to perfection only if they follow the example of Jesus. Jesus had said in 14,31 that the world should know that Jesus loved the Father. Now at 15,10 Jesus says the disciples should keep Jesus' love for the Father as their model. Both verses complement each other: Jesus gives the disciples a role of participation in his witnessing to the Father's love for the world. In other words, the disciples become Jesus' agents to proclaim his love for the Father to the world. This is what Jesus did in his exaltation on the cross, i.e., he witnessed to the Father's love and now the disciples should continue this witnessing of Jesus. This ministry of witnessing to Jesus' love for the Father is perpetuated by the disciples not by their immediately climbing on the cross to be crucified but by loving one another (13,34f). We see here another illustration of the

johannine concept of love.

## **E. HUMANS' LOVE FOR JESUS**

**1. 8,42 *Jesus answered, If God were your Father, you would love me, since I proceed from God and have come from him.***

This verse belongs to the long section of the Jews' dispute with Jesus which commences after Jesus' proclamation of himself as the light of the world. The long speech of Jesus, beginning at 8,14, is interrupted by very brief questions from the Jews at 8,19.25.33.39. The venue of the verbal struggle is the temple in Jerusalem (8,20). The only theme of this long argument is the origin of Jesus and that of the "Jews." Jesus comes from God whereas the "Jews" come from the devil (8,41), although the "Jews" claim to originate from Abraham.

The verse 8,42 conveys the idea that reconciliation between the "Jews" and Jesus is next to impossible since both of them have different origins. If the "Jews" have their origin in God, as Jesus does, then they would love Jesus. The origin, as we are given to understand in 8,14-59, has nothing to do with biological origin. Jesus acknowledges the biological origin of the "Jews" that they are the descendants of Abraham (8,37.56). The biological origin is not the subject of discussion here. Rather, the term origin here points to the source, from which one draws his standard of values. We may well term it "non-physical" or, to put it in the johannine

language, *the real* origin. This origin, the real one, is chosen by one's own free will: God or devil.<sup>26</sup> If God were their Father, to whom they ought to owe their origin, then they would prove it by accepting Jesus.<sup>27</sup> By choosing their origin, God or devil, they automatically choose also their destination. Being biological descendants of Abraham does not entitle one to become the child of God. God can make children of Abraham even out of stones (Matt 3,9; Rom 2,28f).

Their works reveal the origin they have chosen (8,40f). If the "Jews" had God as their origin, then they would love Jesus and not seek to kill him. The decision for Jesus should actually spring from their radical existence. No one can come to Jesus unless it is given to him by the Father (6,65). Whoever comes to Jesus is not rejected by him (6,37), because they are radically united with him. If the "Jews" had drawn their origin from God, then they would have solidarity with Jesus. This is not possible since they are radically opposed to Jesus, and so this opposition will not allow any reconciliation between Jesus and the "Jews." Johannine irony comes into play when the "Jews" accuse Jesus of what they themselves really are: possessed by the devil (8.48.52).

Humans' decision to love Jesus is a decision which concerns man at his fundamental and innermost being. It is a decision, which brings humans into true

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<sup>26</sup> BULTMANN, *The Gospel*, 316.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 317.

solidarity and fellowship with Jesus, tracing their common origin to God as their Father. This is a reality beyond the comprehension of the "Jews." They are not able to understand (8,43), because they stand directly on the opposite pole, the devil.

The verse, 8,42, reveals to us the johannine concept that God is the source and origin of love which Jesus brings. When one does not have unity of origin with Jesus, that is, have God as Father just like Jesus, then one cannot love Jesus. Because, love has its origin in God. Our analysis of the verses 13,34 and 15,12 along with 15,17 revealed that love in the Fourth Gospel is the gift of Jesus himself. The gift of love in the Fourth Gospel means the gift of Jesus. Those who believe in Jesus get the power to become the children of God (1,12). It is faith, revealed in action, which determines one's true origin. Faith in Jesus makes the believer a son of God like Jesus himself. This was the origin which was explained in 1,13 as "not born of human source, nor human desire, nor of human will but from God Himself."

## **2. 14,15 *If you love me, keep my commandments.***

Loving Jesus and keeping his commandments are interchangeable. If keeping the commandments of Jesus is a sign of the disciples' love for him (14,15), the reverse of this statement is also true, i.e., if the disciples love Jesus, it naturally follows that they keep his commandments (14,21; 15,10). The term commandment itself is

related to the concept of love not only in the Fourth Gospel but already in God's covenant relationship with His people which was founded on God's unconditional love for the people. It is this covenant relationship which is now renewed in a manner once and for all in Jesus. This new covenant relationship established by God through Jesus will be forever continued through the gift of the Spirit. Keeping the commandments establishes the disciples firmly in this covenant relationship with God. That is why Jesus keeps on speaking about his relationship with the Father throughout the Farewell Discourses, especially in chapter 14. After talking about the disciples' love for Jesus and keeping his commandments at 14,15, Jesus speaks about the Paraclete, the Spirit of truth at 14,16. Keeping the commandments is a reminder to the disciples to remain in this relationship of love between God, Jesus and the Spirit. The disciples' love for Jesus is the key to their union in this new and eternal relationship inaugurated by Jesus. Keeping the commandments is a sign of the love of the disciples for Jesus and by doing it, the disciples follow the example of Jesus, who kept the commandments of the Father.

**3. 14,21 *One who has my commandments and keeps them is the one who loves me and whoever loves me will be loved by my Father and I shall love him and reveal myself to him.***

The disciple's love for Jesus is mentioned twice in this verse in a unique manner.

The one who loves Jesus, shows that love by keeping his commandments. The one who loves Jesus is also loved by the Father. Since the love which Jesus brings is from the Father, the one who accepts this love is also loved by the Father. It is the johannine concept of love where the bond of love unites the disciples with the Father through Jesus.

John 14,21 repeats 14,15. The connection between the commandments and love is again emphasized here. However, there is a distinction at 14,21. Jesus now talks of "having and keeping" the commandments, while only the aspect of keeping the commandments had been mentioned earlier. This is the only instance (14,21) where mention is made of the one who keeps (τηρῶν) the commandment. What is the distinction between *having* and *keeping* ?

Only one who **has** the commandment, can **keep** the commandment. One cannot have the commandment unless he has received it. Only those who belong to Jesus can receive his commandments because Jesus gives the commandments only to those who belong to him. Those who belong to Jesus are those who believe in him. Those who do not believe in him do not receive the commandment, for example Judas, the betrayer. The disciple cannot possess the gift of love from Jesus unless he has faith in him. The relationship between faith and love comes into focus in this aspect of *having* the commandment in 14,21.

There is also an emphasis on the dynamism of *keeping* in 14,21. It is not enough just to **have** the commandment. The disciple of Jesus should also **keep** it. Here we have to go beyond the similarities between the concepts of having and keeping. These are two different perspectives in 14,21. The johannine meaning of “keeping” is dynamic. It is to put into action the possession of the commandment. The disciple, who possesses the gift of commandment of love from Jesus, should also put it into action.

The dimension of putting love into action in 14,21 should be understood in the light of the distinction in meaning between “possessing” and “practising.” Practising is a step<sup>28</sup> beyond possessing. The act of putting love into action demonstrates progress from possessing. While “having” indicates a static sense, “keeping” conveys a dynamic sense.

The term “keeping” has also a sense of preserving and protecting. Jesus’ prayer to the Father speaks of the protection of the Father and Jesus for the disciples in 17,11.12.15. In the light of this usage, it may also mean that the disciples, while they possess the gift of love, should also preserve it. They “keep” the commandment lest they should lose it. They have received the commandments

<sup>28</sup> J.H. BERNARD, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary* II, 548, indicates a similar distinction between the terms of “having” and “keeping.” But BROWN, *The Gospel* II, 640 feels there is no distinction between both terms.

from Jesus, and now they should also safeguard them. This is possible only when they observe the commandment, i.e. by keeping it. They should use it; if not they lose it. They should keep practising the commandments in order not to lose them.

Love is a gift from Jesus not merely to be possessed but to be shared. Refusal to share it defeats the very purpose of possessing it. By sharing the love of Jesus, the disciples bear abundant fruit and their joy becomes full. This is their share in the fulfillment of Jesus' mission. By this, the disciples bear witness to the love of Jesus. The disciples do what Jesus did: bearing witness to the Father's love for the world. The expression of keeping the commandments, thus, implies the proclamation of Jesus' love. This is one more dimension which is brought into focus in 14,21.

**4. 14,23 *Anyone who loves me will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we shall come to him and make a home in him.***

What Jesus had stated at 14,21, he explains now to the disciple Judas, not Iscariot. Jesus inverts what he stated at 14,21 about loving him and keeping the commandment. Jesus had stated there that the one who had the commandments and kept them was the one who loved him. Now Jesus explains this to the disciple who wanted clarification about Jesus' manifestation exclusively to the disciples and not to the world. The term *commandments* does not appear here but instead the

term *word*. Besides here, keeping Jesus' **word** is also mentioned once in the singular at 8,51; twice in the singular and once in the plural in 14,24; and twice in the singular and once in the plural in 15,20. *Word* in the plural in 15,20, introducing the saying of Jesus, "A servant is not greater than his master," is an obvious reference to the same statement of Jesus at 13,16.

If a disciple expresses his love for Jesus by keeping his commandments, the reverse is also true. The johannine terms *commandment*, *commandments*, *word* or *words* may point to the same reality, i.e. the message of love brought by Jesus from God.<sup>28</sup> They reveal God's will through Jesus. The Old Testament people understood the Ten Commandments or Ten Words as the revelation of the will of God. The commandments expressed God's love for his people and the people's response to God in love (Deut 6,4f). But now God reveals the same love in a fulfilled manner through the person of Jesus and through his words. The one who speaks through the voice of Jesus is God Himself (14,24). The disciple needs only to listen to Jesus' voice to recognise God's will. If the people of the Old Testament had accepted the commandments delivered by Moses, who had not even seen God, as revealing God's will, now it is revealed in a supreme manner through

<sup>28</sup> The term *commandment* is expressed in the singular in 13,34 and 15,12. It is found in the plural in 14,15; 14,21 and 15,10. John 15,10 has also the Father's commandments in plural. The Father's commandments (plural) is also found in 12,49. The Father's commandment (singular without the article) is found in 10,18 and 12,49. This shows us that there is no sharp distinction in meaning between these terms. The expression, *to keep the commandments* (plural) with the meaning of the Ten Commandments is found in Matt 19,17 and 1 Cor 7,19. The Ten Commandments were called Ten Words in the Old Testament (Exod 20,1; Deut 5,5.22).

Jesus. One who encounters Jesus, encounters God Himself because Jesus was sent by God. Jesus came into the world because of God's love (3,16). It is for this reason that one who loves Jesus will be loved by God. One who loves Jesus attains the fullness of revelation by him (14,21) and this is the explanation of the indwelling of God and Jesus in the believer. Both the verses 14,21 and 14,23 say the same thing, though in different formulations. It is Jesus' explanation in response to the question asked by the disciple (14,22). This fullness of revelation or the indwelling of God and Jesus is a unique privilege granted to those who belong to Jesus and it is not available to the "world." What we come across again here at 14,23, is the johannine concept of love in its relationship to faith. Love is a privileged gift of the disciple who belongs to Jesus.

**5. 14,24 *One who does not love me does not keep my words. The word which you have heard does not come from me but from the Father who sent me.***

What Jesus had said in the previous verses, he says now, but in a negative formulation. When there is no love for Jesus, there is also no possibility of keeping his word. When there is no love for Jesus, there is no love for the Father either. It is the Father's love which Jesus manifests through his word. Jesus is God's Word personified. One who does not have love for the personified Word of God cannot have love for God Himself. Because it is His own Word that God sent into the

world. God's Word, which the people had experienced in the Old Testament as God's commands, law, precepts and ordinances (Ps 147, 12-20), is now revealed in person: the Word-Incarnate. Now it is not any more these abstract written or oral words which reveal God's will, but God Himself in the person of Jesus.

So one who rejects Jesus, rejects God's personified Word and God Himself. He rejects Jesus because he does not belong to Jesus. If he belongs to Jesus he will show it by his decision for Jesus.

***6. 14,28 You have heard that I told you that I go away and come back to you. If you love me you would rejoice that I go to the Father; for the Father is greater than I.***

This verse is preceded by Jesus' telling the disciples about his gift of peace and about the teaching by the Holy Spirit. The disciples will remember the words of Jesus with the help of the Holy Spirit. The disciples should rejoice because Jesus is going to the Father.

Jesus' advice to his disciples that they should rejoice at his departure from them seems to be a contradiction, because no one would rejoice at the going away of a friend. Jesus, however, underlines the fact that he is not going away *forever*. He will come back again. He is telling them that his going away is not a cause for

sadness among the disciples.

His going away will bring in the union of the disciples with the Father who is still greater than Jesus. And exactly for this purpose, Jesus came into the world. Jesus came into the world in order to return to the Father. That was Jesus' Mission. Jesus' returning means the fulfillment of the Mission. His returning to the Father does not mean that Jesus will be absent from the disciples. He will be present by means of the Holy Spirit which is his gift to the disciples from the Father. The Holy Spirit will make Jesus present among the disciples by recalling all that Jesus said to them while being with them.

This teaching and remembering of the words of Jesus by the Holy Spirit will produce in the disciples a peace which is distinct in kind from that which the world gives. The peace which comes from the world is passing but that which comes from Jesus is lasting. Such a situation can come about only when Jesus goes to the Father. Jesus' return to the Father implies also the union of the disciples with the Father through Jesus. The peace and understanding which the disciples will possess by means of the Spirit will be something very new. It is the new understanding which manifests their new life attained through Jesus. All this is a reality which they will comprehend only at the glorification of Jesus. Though it is beyond their grasp just now, yet what they should do is simply love Jesus. Their

lack of knowledge about their future reality will be compensated by their present commitment of love for Jesus.

Love, as we have already seen, is not possible without faith, and faith implies belonging to Jesus. Jesus is aware that all these things will look like a puzzle for them just now. It is for this reason that he tells them that they should not be worried. Being with Jesus and believing in his word implies peace. This is practically a repetition of what Jesus told them at the beginning of chapter 14: "Let not your hearts be troubled; believe in God and believe also in me" (v.1). The same message is formulated now positively: "If you love me, you will rejoice that I am going to the Father " (v.28). The ones who belong to Jesus should have no cause to worry or be sad at his absence when Jesus goes away; on the contrary, they should only rejoice that Jesus is going to the Father. Their reason for rejoicing should be greater because of the access they will have to the Father through Jesus. All this is possible only when the disciples have love for Jesus.

**7. 15,9-10 *As the Father has loved me so have I loved you. Remain in my love. When you keep my commandments, you will remain in my love as I have kept my Father's commandments and remain in his love.***

These two verses speak of remaining in the love of Jesus. It is once again the relationship between love and keeping the commandments of Jesus.

If **remaining** in the love of Jesus denotes the level of **existence**, the level of being, then **keeping the commandments** of Jesus belongs to the level of **action**, the doing. The latter is an expression or manifestation of the former. The *Doing* reflects the *Being*. And the *Doing* is also important for the *Being*. And this is what Jesus tells the disciples. You have to keep his commandments in order to remain in his love. As we have seen on earlier occasions, keeping the commandments is the consequence of remaining in the love of Jesus. The disciple does not keep the commandments as a condition to remain in the love of Jesus. Keeping the commandments of Jesus is, rather, the fruit of remaining in the love of Jesus. If the disciples remain in the love of Jesus, then they will naturally keep the commandments.

Jesus tells the disciples of his own example. He has kept the Father's commandments and remains in the Father's love. And the Father's love for Jesus has been from before the foundation of the world (17,26). Love precedes keeping the commandments. Love commands not by external force, but by the force of love itself. When love exists, one does it for the sake of love. When love does not exist, one cannot goad into action even by force. Love offers itself into action, into service without even being summoned. Love shows itself by willing service. This was illustrated by Jesus in the example of his foot-washing of the disciples. Jesus

did it as an expression of his love for the disciples.

Love is itself a force, whereas love does not demand anything by force. Keeping the commandments of Jesus is a voluntary action by the one who loves Jesus. It is not a condition for remaining in the love of Jesus. It is the consequence of remaining in the love of Jesus. The disciple *will* keep the commandments of Jesus, if he loves Jesus. It is not that he should keep the commandments of Jesus in order to obtain the love of Jesus. This fact is clearly brought out in the johannine the concept of relationship between love and keeping the commandments.

**8. 16,27 *The Father Himself loves you because you have loved me and believed that I came from the Father.***

This verse is attached to the previous one in which Jesus tells his disciples that they will pray in his name and there will not be any more need for them to depend on the intercession of Jesus. The revelation of Jesus will then have attained perfection. Since Jesus has revealed the Father's love fully, the mission of Jesus has attained its fullness. There will be no more need of mediation. The union between the Father, Jesus and the disciples will now have been fully attained. There will only be the need for the disciples to pray *in the name of Jesus* and no more need for them to depend on the intercession of Jesus. Jesus has effected the

full union of the disciples with the Father. The fact that the disciples love Jesus is sufficient enough to make the Father love the disciples.

When the union between the disciples and Jesus becomes complete there will be no need for Jesus to use veiled language (16,29). He speaks to them in plain language. Jesus talked in veiled language to the disciples that they may reflect and come to realise that he came from God (16,30f). It was an invitation to make a decision. Now they have made the decision to remain in the circle of Jesus and belong to him. Once the decision has been made by one to belong to Jesus, then there is no need any more to talk in veiled language. There will be no need of revelation since everything has now been revealed. Veiled language, like a parable, is a means to reveal the things which were unknown from the beginning (Ps 78,2). Once the revelation has reached its fullness by one's accepting of Jesus as the one sent by the Father, then there will no be need of parables but there will be communication in plain language (16,31).

The acceptance of Jesus as the one sent by God is the manifestation of one's love for Jesus. Again we see that love is connected to faith and faith is nothing other than one's belonging to Jesus by accepting him. This is the one who loves Jesus. One who loves Jesus is also loved by the Father. There is no other way to attain the love of the Father except through Jesus. It is Jesus who accomplishes this

complete union of the one who loves him with the Father. The fullness of the revelation of Jesus is the union of the one who loves him with the Father.

**9. 21,15-17. So when they had dined , Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of Jonas,do you love me more than these?" He said unto him , "Yes Lord,, you know that I love you. He said unto him, "Feed my lambs."He said to him again second time, " Simon, son of Jonas, Do you love me? " "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you". He said to him, "Feed my sheep.. Then he said to him the third time, "Simon, son of Jonas, do you love me?"**

This last section on humans' love for Jesus concerns Peter's love for Jesus. Several of the features of Peter's love for Jesus have already been discussed when we dealt with 21,15-17 as part of the johannine concept of love in chapter four. However, we will try to avoid repetitions here when we discuss Peter's love for Jesus as part of this section, "Humans' love for Jesus." Yet, overlapping of a few instances will be unavoidable.

We may very well note that Peter is the only character in the Fourth Gospel to declare openly his love for Jesus. He tells Jesus not once, but thrice, "I love you," even if it is only in response to the threefold question of Jesus. Before the Resurrection of Jesus, Peter singled himself out in his love for Jesus by declaring that he would follow Jesus and lay down his life for him (13,38). The expression "to follow " is indeed an expression of discipleship, and "laying down of one's life" is

a sign of true love for Jesus. We discovered that Peter's declaration of love for Jesus at 13,38 was without substance. But at 21,15-17 Jesus, who knows everything (21,17), approves Peter's love. Jesus' confirmation of Peter's love by entrusting his lambs and sheep to the latter's care is a noteworthy contrast to the ironic question of Jesus posed to Peter at 13,38: "Are you going to lay down your life for me?" Jesus' prediction of Peter laying down his life stands in contrast also to his foretelling of Peter's denial at 13,38. Jesus' call to Peter, "Follow me," (21,19) is also a clear contrast to what Jesus said in 13,36: "You cannot follow me now." The johannine concept of love is dramatised in beautiful perfection when we compare these two passages.

If Peter's boastful declaration at 13,37 was without substance, his modest responses in 21, 15-17 reveal the depth of his love. What makes Peter possess the gift of love at 21,15-17 is his belonging to the Risen Jesus. The Risen Jesus is the source of the gift of love. Jesus imparts the gift of love as the gift of his Glorification, which is the manifestation of his union with the Father. As we have already formulated, love is Jesus' present (gift) to make himself present among his own. Peter possesses this gift now from the Risen Jesus. This presence of Jesus continues even in spite of his physical absence. It is to emphasize this aspect that the giving of the New Commandment of love has been placed between 13,33 and 13,36. The present position of the giving of the New Commandment by Jesus

brings this meaning abundantly clear, when Jesus says to the disciples that they will look for him and they will not be able to follow him where he is going (13,33). However, after the resurrection of Jesus, Peter is able to follow Jesus.

Why does Jesus ask Peter whether the latter loves him, when Jesus already knows that he is loved by Peter? It is not to get the assurance from Peter in his own words, but to make Peter realise that it is his possession of love for Jesus which validates Peter's discipleship. Peter's love for Jesus empowers him to take charge of the flock of Jesus. The only thing which counts for Jesus is love. If a disciple has love for Jesus, it means the disciple already has faith in Jesus. Love is Jesus' gift to those who belong to him. Those who belong to Jesus, follow him.

Jesus' model of loving to the end is accomplished by Peter who is ready to give his life for Jesus. The johannine definition of love is to live like Jesus: serve to the extreme and be ready to give one's life for the sake of Jesus. This becomes evident in Peter's love for Jesus. He is ready to serve Christ by tending his flock and also by shedding his blood (21,19). Peter's love for Jesus demonstrates all the marks of love shown by Jesus. We can say that johannine concept of love reflects in a perfect manner in Peter after the Resurrection of Jesus.

## **F. JESUS' LOVE FOR HUMANS**

### **1. Jesus' love for Lazarus, Mary and Martha**

11,3; *The sisters sent this message to Jesus: "Lord, the man you love , is ill."*  
 11,5. *Jesus loved Martha, and her sister and Lazarus.*

In this section we will deal with the instances in the Fourth Gospel where Jesus is explicitly mentioned as loving certain persons who are named. Among these persons, who are reported to have been loved by Jesus, are Lazarus and his sisters Mary and Martha. Our aim in this section is to examine the love of Jesus for these persons.

Lazarus, Mary and Martha are members of one family. Although it is narrated that Jesus loved Lazarus (11,3) as friend (11,11), Jesus' love for all the three members of this family was the same (11,5). So Jesus' love for them was a family love. They were not exclusive friends of Jesus. They were also friends of Jesus' disciples. Jesus calls them **our** friend (11,11). That this family was close not only to him but also to his disciples is narrated elsewhere (12,1-8). Jesus' love for Lazarus and his sisters was not a "private affair."

Jesus was aware that Lazarus was his friend through whom the Son of God would be glorified (11,4). The home of Lazarus and his sisters was not merely a place of

refuge and support for Jesus in his ministry two miles away (11,18), but also the place where Jesus revealed himself as Resurrection and Life. Lazarus and his sisters possessed the marks of true discipleship, which is an integral part of the johannine concept of love. They were friends of Jesus, not just in a private sense, but perfectly in the public sense also. They did not hide their closeness to Jesus before public eyes or even before the eyes of the "Jews," a good number of whom were probably their relatives, since we are told that they came to the bereaved sisters in order to personally condole the death of their brother (11,19) and another time out of curiosity (12,9).

The friendship of this family bears all the marks of true friendship: Lazarus and his sisters place themselves fully on the side of Jesus; their friendship with Jesus is without any "politics," which would justify them to maintain their rapport with their "relatives." Their friendship is also devoid of opportunistic diplomacy to excuse their solidarity with Jesus. It would certainly not be an exaggeration to say that Lazarus' solidarity with Jesus had become so intense that he was considered by people a living witness for Jesus. His very existence had become such a threat to the chief priests that they plan to kill Lazarus. So Lazarus and Jesus were friends for life.

Jesus' decision to go to Judea to raise Lazarus to life was an expression of his true love: Jesus was ready to take a risk for the sake of Lazarus (11,9). Jesus did not hesitate to show openly his friendship for Lazarus: he wept (11,45) and his

weeping made the Jews exclaim, "See how he loved him!" (11.36).

Lazarus and his sisters valued their friendship with Jesus above money. Mary spent such a large sum for anointing the feet of Jesus (12,3) that it evoked a hypocritical exclamation from the treasurer and traitor, Judas. It is interesting to note that Mary counts her love for Jesus more than money but Judas, the treacherous treasurer who is called thief (12,6), weighs the worth of her love in terms of money (12,5). The truth is driven home that where love alone counts, money has no worth and where money alone has value, the worth of love is lost sight of. Anointing the feet of Jesus and wiping them with her hair is also an expression of Mary's deep love for Jesus.

With all their affection, they hold Jesus in high respect. Martha and Mary address Jesus as Lord (Martha at 11,3.21.27.39 and Mary at 11,33). Martha informs Mary about Jesus' arrival, "The Master is here," (v.29) without pronouncing the name. Mary throws herself at Jesus' feet (11,32). Their trust in Jesus knew no bounds. They were absolutely sure that if Jesus had been with Lazarus when Lazarus was ill, he would not have died. Jesus meant so much to Lazarus that Jesus was Life for Lazarus. The sisters were aware of this too. That is why they sent the message to Jesus as soon as Lazarus became ill (11,2-4). Both sisters use the same expression: "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died" (11,21.33). Both of them were aware of Jesus' relationship to God and the power

of his prayer. Martha makes one of the most profound johannine christological proclamations in the Fourth Gospel: "I believe you are the Christ, the Son of God, the One who was to come into this world" (11,27).

Jesus' love for Lazarus and his sisters is a perfect illustration of the supreme concept and act of johannine love. The story of Lazarus is another johannine artistic masterpiece, which reveals love in both its dimensions, human as well as divine. We may very fittingly call it the dramatisation of the johannine concept of love, not in the fictional sense but in the actual sense. What we have seen as the basic elements of the johannine concept of love in a theoretical manner has been portrayed in the love relationship between Jesus, Lazarus and his sisters in a masterly manner. We may very well say one cannot ask for a better illustration.

Before we conclude this section on Jesus' love for Lazarus and his sisters, we may point out an important truth of the johannine concept of love, which shines through this love relationship. A true love involves persons totally. True love does not make the dichotomy between "private" and "public," between "ideology" and "principle," between "personal" and "official," etc. That such a dichotomy has no place in a true love relationship is illustrated in this Lazarus story.

Jesus' love for Lazarus' family demonstrates a heroic love in action, a love, which does not yield to external power or pressure, a love whose freedom will not be

compromised for the sake of saving one's skin or to save one's reputation. Love proves itself in action. This element of true love is beautifully portrayed in Jesus' love for Lazarus (his readiness to go to Judea) and in Lazarus' love for Jesus (the presence of Jesus would have prevented Lazarus from death and Lazarus' total solidarity with Jesus).

True friendship manifests itself in a harmony of values. True friends possess the same set of values. This is revealed in the friendship between Jesus and the family of Lazarus. They are friends and share the same world view. Jesus is friend of Lazarus and his sisters but he is also their Lord and Messiah. True friends do not count the cost, let alone money. Love alone counts, outweighing material and temporal calculation. True friends are ready to stand for each other even at the cost of their own lives. This johannine truth is clearly portrayed in the love between Jesus and Lazarus' family.

## 2. The disciple whom Jesus loved

13,23 ***The disciple whom Jesus loved was reclining next to Jesus.***

19,26 ***Seeing his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing near her, Jesus said to his mother, "Woman, this is your son."***

20,2 ***She (Mary of Magdala) saw that the stone had been moved away from the tomb and came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved.***

21,7 ***The disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord."***

21,20 ***Peter turned and saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following them - the one who had leant back close to his chest at the supper and had said to him, "Lord, who is it that will betray you?"***

As part of Jesus' love for humans, we will now deal with the disciple whom Jesus loved, commonly known as the Beloved Disciple. Our aim in this section is not a discussion about the identity<sup>30</sup> of this disciple whom Jesus loved, whoever it may be, but a critical analysis of Jesus' love for this disciple.

As we can note from the above passages, there are five verses in the Fourth Gospel which mention an unnamed disciple as a disciple whom Jesus loved.

<sup>30</sup> There are several opinions with regard to the identity of the disciple whom Jesus loved. Identification of this disciple as one of the twelve, John, the son of Zebedee, goes back to the time of Irenaeus. Another opinion that this disciple was not one of the twelve but an elder named John has been expressed by authors such as Martin HENGEL, *The Johannine Question* (London: SCM Press, 1989), 124. Whatever be the identity of this disciple, we can say from the evidence of the Fourth Gospel (19,26-36) that the disciple whom Jesus loved was not a fictional character. Raymond BROWN, *The Community of the Beloved Disciple* (New York: Paulist Press, 1979), 31f argues that the Beloved Disciple was a historical figure and not a fictional character. The same opinion is maintained by J.H.CHARLESWORTH, *The Beloved Disciple* (Valley Forge: Trinity Press International, 1995), 4.

Except at 20,2, where the term *philein* is used, *agapan* is the term employed in all the other instances. The disciple whom Jesus loved is mentioned only in the Book of Glory, which concerns Jesus' relationship with his own. And this disciple belongs to the inner circle of Jesus.

In all of the above instances we are presented with occasions where the disciple whom Jesus loved is always found with the most important person of that particular scene. He is found with Jesus (13,23), with the mother of Jesus in front of Jesus (19,26), with Jesus and Peter (21,20), and with Peter (20,2; 21,7). Almost all the events described above portray the disciple whom Jesus loved closer to Jesus than all the other disciples. All these scenes, with the exception of 19,26, place this special disciple in the company of Peter and lead to an implicit or explicit comparison between them. This comparison will be dealt with in the course of our analysis.

### ***Peter and the disciple whom Jesus loved***

The disciple whom Jesus loved is first mentioned during the Last Supper (13,23), where he occupies a position very close to Jesus (ἐν τῷ κόλπῳ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ), closer than that of Peter even physically that Peter seeks his mediatory help to get information about the identity of the betrayer. Another example of Peter's

dependence on this disciple whom Jesus loved is portrayed at 21,7, where it is the disciple whom Jesus loved who identifies Jesus and tells Peter, "It is the Lord" (21,7). It was this disciple who recognised Jesus first after the miraculous catch of fish. The disciple whom Jesus loved runs faster than Peter (20,3-4). The function of this description may not be merely to convey the idea that this disciple was more agile than Peter, but rather to express the intensity of the disciple's love for Jesus. Further, the description that Peter followed him (20,6) has more a symbolic value than the mere reporting of an action. That the disciple did not go into the tomb in spite of his having reached it first is an expression of the disciple's voluntary acknowledgement of Peter's priority to witness the Resurrection event. The disciple waits for Peter, largeheartedly allows him to enter the tomb first. The disciple whom Jesus loved appears once more in a laudable light when he it is explicitly stated that he "believed" (20,6).

However, the priority is definitely granted to Peter when Jesus tells him, "Follow me" (21,19). And only after this great call of Peter is the following of the disciple whom Jesus loved mentioned (21,20). And this disciple is identified as the one who wrote this Gospel (21,24). The concluding conversation of Jesus with Peter shows the distinct callings of these two disciples (21,19-23): Peter is called to bear witness to Jesus by offering his life, but with the disciple whom Jesus loved, this is not the case. We are given to understand that this disciple lived till a ripe old age,

giving rise to rumors that he would not die at all (21,23).

The contrast between Peter and the disciple whom Jesus loved is striking. They are both disciples of Jesus, yet they are called to bear witness to Christ in different ways. Even if they differ in temperament, qualities and abilities, what unites them in action and mission is their love for Christ. The presentation of the contrasting characteristics of Peter and the disciple whom Jesus loved is not meant to show one's superiority over the other. There is no real evidence to say that the presentation of the character of this special disciple in the Fourth Gospel is a manifestation of an undercurrent to give more importance to this disciple than Peter.

On the contrary, the overall presentation of the role of Peter in the Fourth Gospel is more positive than in the synoptic Gospels. The Fourth Gospel does not report Jesus' reprimand of Peter with the severe, "Get behind me, Satan!" (Matt 16,23; Mark 8,33) or as a man of little faith (Matt 14,31f). Peter's threefold affirmation of love for Jesus (21,15-17) is a unique johannine presentation. Peter is the only person in the Fourth Gospel who says to Jesus, "I love you," not once, but thrice. His proclamation of Jesus as the source of the Words of eternal life is also unique to the Fourth Gospel (6,68).

However the disciple whom Jesus loved has his own unique and unchallenged marks of true love for Jesus. We discover that the verses which have the expression, "the disciple whom Jesus loved," narrate more of the disciple's love for Jesus than of Jesus' love for this special disciple. His closeness to Jesus during the Last Supper (13,23), his standing at the foot of the Cross with the mother of Jesus (19,26), his enthusiastic running and believing in the Resurrection of Jesus (20,5) and his recognition of Jesus after the miraculous catch (21,7) are all events narrated as initiatives on the part of the disciple rather than on the part of Jesus.

Of course, Jesus' act of entrusting his mother to the care of this disciple (19,26) would indicate Jesus' love for this disciple. We discovered in our analysis of 21,15-17 that Jesus wanted to make Peter aware that it was because of Peter's love for Jesus that he was entrusted with the charge of caring for his sheep. It is the same here too. Jesus is aware that this disciple has a special love for him, a true love which manifests itself even in the most critical time. This was an expression of the disciple's true love, not only for Jesus, but also for his mother. At such a critical moment he shows his love by standing near the mother of Jesus and in front of the Cross. The disciple exhibits the marks of true heroic love which we saw earlier in the love relationship of Jesus and the Lazarus family. The disciple possesses this

heroic love, which is the concept of johannine love manifested in Jesus and now in this disciple also. This disciple not only possesses this highest form of love, but also proclaims it. The element of witnessing of johannine love is here demonstrated.

Jesus' love for this disciple is manifested in his approval of this special love from the disciple whether during the Last Supper or at the foot of the Cross. One can be absolutely certain that Jesus did not discriminate in his love between the disciples. We do not find any evidence in the Fourth Gospel or for that matter anywhere in the New Testament that Jesus loved a certain disciple more and another one less. This disciple, who is described as **the one whom Jesus loved**, takes pride and fulfillment in declaring his love for Jesus in a distinguished manner on many occasions, a few of which he has put down in writing in the form of what we now have as the Fourth Gospel. His act of writing them down in order to bear witness for the love of Jesus is also an expression of his love for Jesus. His love for Jesus makes him so one with Jesus that his own identity does not count for him anymore. The source of his identity is Jesus himself, whose love for him is the only concrete source of his existence. It is the same idea as elsewhere expressed in Paul's words, "It is not I who live; Christ lives in me" (Gal 2,20).

This so-called special love of Jesus for this disciple has now and then been a

subject of speculation. The issue has also been raised in certain quarters that whether Jesus had a homosexual attachment to this disciple. There is no evidence at all of any homosexual relationship in the Fourth Gospel. The Fourth Gospel makes it clear right from the beginning that it is concerned mainly with a level beyond the material, physical, superficial and carnal, although the material and physical level is not neglected. Jesus multiplies bread (6,1-15) and changes water into wine (2,1-11). But one should not get stuck only on the material level. From the material one should go to the higher level. The level of the flesh, which is of no avail (6,63), can be summed up by the term **world** which is under the influence of the prince of the world. The world which is under the power of the prince of the world is to be distinguished from the one which was created by God (1,10). We refer to the former world in our thesis by marking it with quotation marks ("world") just as we do with the term "Jews" (the opponents of Jesus) to distinguish them from the people of the Jews. The believers of Christ become children of God not in a biological or sexual sense (1,13) but in a non-physical sense, which is the **real** sense for John. Jesus makes this clear also in his conversation with Nicodemus who understands in the normal sense (3,3ff). What is born of human is human and what is born of the Spirit is spirit (3,6). "It is the Spirit which gives life; the flesh is of no use" (6,63). To find sexuality or homosexuality in the Fourth Gospel is to misread or to project a reading of the Fourth Gospel.

### **3. Jesus' love for the disciples**

**13, 1** *Before the festival of the Passover, Jesus, knowing that his hour had come to pass from this world to the Father, having loved those who were his own in the world, he loved them to the end.*

**13,34-35** *I give you a New Commandment: Love one another. As I have loved you so must you love one another. It is by your love for one another that everyone will recognise you as my disciples.*

**15,12-13** *This is my commandment: Love one another, as I have loved you. No one can have greater love than to lay down his life for his friends.*

As we can see from the above list, we have already dealt with these verses elaborately in the previous chapter. Yet as the disciples also fall under the group, "Humans," we would like to note the occurrences of Jesus' love for the disciples in this section.

The phrases highlighted will recapture the characteristics of Jesus' love for the disciples. Jesus loved them with a perfect love, totally. John has conveyed this idea with a masterly artistic perfection by saying that Jesus' love for his disciples was a love εἰς τέλος, which, in a dual sense, means a love of perfection and a love which was accomplished. Jesus' love for the disciples comprised the love of a master (13,13) who taught them and the love of a friend who kept nothing secret

from them (15,15). Jesus proved his love for his friends by laying down his life for them (15,13). That the love of Jesus for the disciples was total in its very concept is shown by the use of both the terms *agapan* and *philein*. The same expression is also found in the Father's love for Jesus. Jesus' love for his disciples was a replica or reflection of the Father's love for Jesus. Thus Jesus' love for his disciples was as divine as human.

### **G. HUMANS' LOVE FOR ONE ANOTHER**

**1. 13,34-35** *This is my New Commandment that you love one another. As I have loved you, so must you love one another. It is by your love for one another that everyone will recognise you as my disciples.*

**2. 15,12** *This is my commandment: love one another as I have loved you.*

**3 . 15,17** *This I command you: love one another.*

We can very well observe from the above instances that the verses containing the dimension of human love for one another are given as commands by Jesus. We dealt with all the above verses for our examination of the concept of love in the Fourth Gospel. So we will try to concentrate on the dimensions which we have not yet explored.

Our analysis showed that these verses demonstrate the johannine concept of love

**in totality, in all its dimensions of the Father - Jesus - the disciples relationship. This circle of love relationship does not exclude those who are outside, i.e. the "world" under the power of the ruler of the "world." Although the "world" for now stays outside of this circle of love, it is not meant to be so. The Father's will and that of Jesus is that the world should come within this circle of love. Although the world as yet refuses to come into this circle, the disciples should keep on trying as Jesus did. It is for this reason that they should love one another as Jesus did, so that the "world" is given a chance to accept Jesus and believe. By loving one another, the disciples continue the mission of Jesus. This continuation of the mission of Jesus is performed by the disciples not as the replacement of Jesus but with the presence of Jesus. This presence of Jesus is actualised by loving one another as Jesus did. Thus loving one another as Jesus loved includes a dimension of relationship among the disciples and at the same time a relationship with Jesus. And the relationship with Jesus is, naturally, also a relationship with the Father. Thus we see that the love of the disciples for one another comprises a dimension of community relationship, discipleship and witnessing while keeping them firmly rooted in the circle of love between the Father and Jesus.**

**Loving one another as Jesus did means an unconditional love which goes beyond a love which just reciprocates. It means loving the other as that person is. Jesus' love did not exclude Peter in spite of the fact that he was going to deny him; nor**

disciples like Philip who had yet to recognise the total identity of Jesus. Jesus' love was unconditional and unmerited. This gives, in a nutshell, the characteristics of love which should prevail among the disciples.

Jesus' love did not exclude enemies either. Jesus showed his love even to his betrayer Judas in an indiscriminating manner. Jesus' love for Judas surpassed the definition of love for enemies. Judas is portrayed in the Fourth Gospel in a worse light than the "Jews" who were his proclaimed enemies. Judas, who was one of the disciples and one who ate with Jesus (13,27), is described as a betrayer, a thief (12,4-6), one possessed by Satan (13,27) and himself a devil (6,70). Yet Jesus loves him and washes his feet too. It demands more than a love of enemies to love a traitor. It is this love which Jesus commands to be present among the disciples. To fulfill the love commandment of Jesus is to let Jesus come into the circle of the disciples. By loving one another, the disciples represent the ideal of human love.

## **H. HUMANS' LOVE FOR TEMPORAL THINGS**

**1. 3,19** *And the judgment is this: though the light has come into the world people preferred (ἠγάπησαν) darkness better than the light because their deeds were evil*

We call this section broadly under the title "Humans' love for temporal things"

which deals with humans' love of darkness (3,19), of one's own life (12,25) and of human glory (12,43). Though it can be described as "liking" rather than loving, yet the johannine expression has a deeper connotation than the meaning of liking. It means that one makes a conscious decision for something. So it goes deeper than the sense of "liking." Further, the expressions we find in the Fourth Gospel are the same johannine terms of love: *agapan* and *philein*.

The verse, 3,19, belongs to the conversation of Jesus' with Nicodemus (3,1-31). Nicodemus, who is puzzled by Jesus' statement that one should be born again to see the Kingdom of God (3,3), is given to understand what it means to belong to the Kingdom (3,5ff). Nicodemus has to understand the meaning of such things as: to be born of the Spirit, to be born from above (3,6f) and to believe in the heavenly things (3,12). During the course of the conversation, Jesus speaks about the Son of Man being lifted up and how God's love is manifested through the gift of His only Son (3,14-16). The purpose of the Son's coming into the world is to give life to the believers and not to judge the world.

The verse 3,19 defines judgment. Judgment is not something external, it is internal to man. Man judges himself when he makes a choice for the darkness and not for the light. It is this choice which is termed *love for darkness*. Man, by nature, belongs to the light, because the life man possesses is itself light (1,4) and it came

into existence through the Logos, now made flesh (1,14), and called Jesus Christ. Jesus himself is the Light of the World (8,12; 9,5). If Jesus is the Light of the World, the principle in opposition to Jesus is the darkness. When one chooses to love darkness instead of light, then his act of decision itself is a judgment against him. Because he loves something against his own nature, he cuts himself off the Source of life.

The reason for their loving the darkness is that "their deeds were evil" (3,19). And all those who do evil hate the light (3,20). So there is only one choice humans can make: either love the light and hate the darkness or love the darkness and hate the light. A third choice is not possible.

Loving the light would mean to belong to the light. Belonging to Jesus means believing in him. Those who believe in Jesus have eternal life because precisely for this purpose God sent His Son into the world (3,16). The expression "loving darkness" in opposition to light implies that these people are against Jesus, and therefore they do not believe him. These people do not come to Jesus because they are radically against Jesus. Those who hate the light do not experience freedom in the presence of God. Those who love the light experience freedom of action before God. Those who love darkness, who are afraid that their deeds will be exposed before God (3,21), are not free. Thus we see, the examination of 3,19

reveals the link between faith, love and freedom.

**2. 12,25 *Anyone who loves his life loses it; anyone who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.***

This verse is part of Jesus' reply to Andrew and Philip who brought to him the message of the coming of the Greeks to see Jesus (12,22). The arrival of the Greeks signals to Jesus the arrival of the hour. Jesus announces also the meaning of the hour. The hour is the hour of Glorification of the Son of Man (12,23). It is also the hour of the Glorification of the Father's name (12,28). It is also the hour of sentence being passed on the world and the prince of this world being driven out (12,31). It is the hour of "being lifted up," which for Jesus, is an expression of his offering of life to the Father. It is in this context Jesus talks of one loving his life or hating his life.

The idea expressed here is similar to the one at 3,19 where "loving darkness" and "hating the light" (3,20) was spoken by Jesus. If loving darkness was an expression of one's attachment to evil, here loving one's life is an expression of false attachment. The only true attachment is the attachment to Jesus. Attachment to Jesus means to live like Jesus and to live with Jesus (12,26). Here what is meant by *life* is the physical existence of man. For John, the life, the real life, is life with

**Jesus. There is no life apart from Jesus because Jesus is the the very Source of life. There can be no life outside of Jesus. Jesus was source and support of every living being, because life is in Jesus (1,3-4). If one has real love for life, then he must love Jesus. Loving Jesus is the possession of life. Love is life in the true sense.**

**Loving life and hating Jesus are terms in contradiction. Life without Jesus is no life for John. The whole purpose of his writing the Gospel is that believers may have life through Jesus (20,31). The whole purpose of Jesus coming into this world is an expression of God's love that people may have life (3,16).**

**Jesus explains the purpose of physical existence: life should produce fruit. He compares it to a grain of wheat: "In all truth I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains only a single grain; but if it dies it yields a rich harvest" (12,24). For Jesus his dying is a sowing, because his word will find home in many more humans: "When I am lifted up from the earth, I shall draw all people to myself" (12,31). Jesus lays down his life for his sheep (10,15). So it is an expression of his self-sacrificing love for the sheep. He does it out of his own free will. Nobody has the power to take Jesus' life. Jesus has the power to lay his life down and to take it up again (10,18).**

Jesus does not lose his life by laying down his life as an expression of love for his own. On the contrary, he draws all people to himself. He lays his life down not to finish it off but only to take it up again (10,17). The laying down of life by Jesus is by no means a loss, rather a gain, a gain to draw all men to himself. This is what he instructs his disciples also to do: to gain life, to gain life in more abundance by making themselves ready to give their life for the sake of love. They have only to follow their master's example. That is why Jesus says, "Whoever serves me, must follow me, and my servant will be with me wherever I am" (12,26).

The expressions **loving one's life** and **hating one's life** have to be understood here in a relative sense. Jesus' saying that one who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life is not to be understood as an encouragement for masochism, self-hatred or even for suicide. Jesus was always a lover of life and even saved people from death (11,1-44) or punishment of death (7,53-8,11). Jesus had declared himself the Resurrection and the Life (11,25). The expression "to love one's life is to hate it" implies if one loves his physical life more than he loves Jesus, then he loses his life. In other words, "loving one's life" is placed in direct opposition to one's love for Jesus. To love life and hate Jesus is not possible because Jesus himself is Life. If one thinks he can save his life by giving it more

value than his love for Jesus, then he is under an illusion. By doing that he only forfeits his life. Such a person avoids real life, the life which comes from Jesus. And his physical existence, which he thought he had preserved, loses its meaning. The truth pointed out here is that life has no meaning when Jesus is excluded from one's life. Jesus should be the top priority in life. Life without Jesus is life without meaning, in other words, a life in vain. If the concept of love in the Gospel of John is the gift of Jesus himself, it is the same with the concept of life. Thus 12,25 explains this relationship between the concepts of life and love.

**3. 12,42-43** *And yet there were many who did believe in him (Jesus), even among the leading men, but they did not admit it because of the Pharisees, and for fear of being banned from the synagogue; they preferred human glory to God's glory.*

Love of human glory is what is to be dealt with here as part of our section "Human love for temporal things." After winding up his public ministry (12,36), Jesus withdraws from the open world and his presence now is limited to his own who accepted him. There is a comment by the narrator on the unbelief of the crowd. Quoting the prophet Isaiah, he says that it was because God had blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts (12,37-40). In this context he speaks also of the people who believed in Jesus, not only among the common crowd, but even among the leading men. The leading men did not want to show it openly because

of the fear that they would be evicted from the synagogues and because of the Pharisees. They did not want to come into conflict with the Pharisees and wanted to be always in their good books, in spite of their believing in Jesus. Such a standpoint is what John describes as "to love human glory."

Our examination of the concept of love has shown that one's true love for Jesus is demonstrated in one's courage to stand for Jesus in times of opposition and persecution. Our analysis of the roles of Lazarus and his family and of the disciple whom Jesus loved proved that these people possessed the true love for Jesus, which we described as "heroic love." The concept of love in the Fourth Gospel has an important element, witnessing, which is indeed an integral part of this heroic love. The johannine concept of love consists not only in possessing but also in proclaiming the love for Jesus and the love for one another. It is by proclaiming their love for Christ in action, i.e. loving one another as Jesus loved, that they bear witness to the discipleship (13,35). It is by possessing and proclaiming that love that the disciples can function as neutralising agents against the forces of the "world" which is filled with hatred (15,18).

True love is proved not merely in *having* but also in *showing*. By "showing" is not meant exhibition or advertisement but the value of witnessing to Jesus. It calls upon the disciple to stand for Jesus without counting the cost, come what may. A

clear example of such a witnessing to Jesus is the blind man who was healed. The healed blind man was asked by the "Jews" to give glory to God while they were interrogating him. Ironically, that is what he was doing by witnessing courageously to Jesus unlike the "leading men" at 12,43. The blind man in chapter 9 is a classic example for John of the people who stood for God's glory and not for human glory.

While the blind man possesses true love for Jesus, his parents resemble the "leading men" who lacked the courage of their conviction. They are afraid of the Jews who would throw them out of the synagogue. For this reason they do not want to get involved in the conflict and they wash their hands off their son. They would like to remain inside the synagogue, while their son is thrown out. No sooner is the man evicted from the synagogue than Jesus shows himself to the ex-blind man and reveals that he is the Son of Man (9,35-37). Here we have the two kinds of people: the healed blind man who loves the glory of God and his parents who love human glory.

Many rejected Jesus because they were spiritually blind. With their eyes open, they shut their hearts to Jesus, making themselves truly blind in the johannine sense (12,40). This phenomenon is illustrated in the role of the Pharisees in 9,40-41. The Pharisees are blind with open eyes. They are not physically blind, but really blind. For Jesus, what counts is not mere physical vision, but the **true vision**. If one has

the true vision, one would be able to decipher the work of God through Jesus and take it as a sign. When one has the true vision, he will know the worthlessness of human glory, which is actually a vain glory, and begin to love God's glory. The Pharisees can see with evidence that the man born blind is now perfectly restored to sight. But it is too much for them to admit the fact that it was a work of God (9,3) effected through Jesus. If they admit this truth, then they should become followers of Jesus (9,27), which they would never do. They take false pride in claiming their discipleship to Moses (9,28) which is indeed a pseudo-discipleship.

The people who love human glory are fully aware that if they stand up and speak for the truth they speak for Jesus. This will make them lose their status quo as "leading men." This is what is meant by loving human glory. If one is aware of the truth and yet does not take an open stand for truth, then he is on the wrong side, not the side of Jesus. And not being on the side of Jesus means being on the opposite side from Jesus. That is the side of untruth, the side of the prince of this world.

One has to make a decision either for or against Jesus when one encounters Jesus. The decision for Jesus implies full involvement of oneself. It is an engagement on the side of the truth. This sometimes entails a challenge where one has to say yes for Jesus with full courage like the healed blind man or

preserve the status quo by bottling one's conscience like that of the blind man's parents or even like the "leading men" (12,42). This sort of preserving status quo amounts to a lack of courage and points to the absence of a genuine love for Jesus. This idea is similar to the one expressed in our exegesis of 12,25: to love one's life more than Jesus. One who puts his love of life above his love for Jesus actually loses it. It is the same case here. The one who presumes to preserve the status quo by not coming to Jesus in a courageous manner, in fact loses his status as the child of God, called to see His glory as Isaiah did (12,41). This is really the judgment, not exercised by God but executed by oneself, by one's own decision when he encounters Christ (9,39). One can be always on the side of God by making a decision for Jesus. One needs to possess the true vision in order to make this decision. And this true vision is attained by listening to the words of Jesus which are indeed the Word of God because one who believes Jesus believes God (12,44). Once again the different dimensions of the johannine concept of love are revealed here.

## **I. THE WORLD'S LOVE FOR ITS OWN**

**1. 15,19 *If you belonged to the world, the world would love you as its own.***

The only mention of the world's love in the Fourth Gospel comes after Jesus'

speaking of himself as the true vine. The vine and the branches imagery (15,1-17) was an instruction to the disciples to remain united in him (15,1-8) and in his love (15,9-17). The disciples have to remain united with Jesus through his commandment of love in order to actualise his presence and continue his mission. Remaining in union with Jesus is also vital for the disciples to ward off the hatred which will come from the world. The disciples can overcome the hatred of the world only if they remain in union with Jesus. Love of Jesus and hatred of the world are directly in opposition to each other.

The world loves those who belong to it as its own. The disciples do not belong to the world, so it does not love them; it hates them. It hates them because they belong to Jesus. Jesus has chosen the disciples as his own (15,16.19). In their solidarity with Jesus, they stand now on the opposite side from the world. Since the world finds the disciples to possess the same values which Jesus possesses, it directs its opposition now to those who belong to Jesus. The opposition of the world is not a new experience for Jesus. But it will be something new for the disciples (15,18). It is for this reason they should know that the world had already hated Jesus. The world's hatred is not exclusive to Jesus. The world hates Jesus and all those who belong to Jesus. As much as the world loves its own, it hates Jesus and his own. The "own" of the world are those who do not belong to Jesus.

Although the world hates Jesus and his disciples, they do not hate the world in return. On the contrary, they love the world just like the Father (3,16) and they also want the world to know this love (14,31) in order that the world too may come into this circle of love.

The term world in 15,19 has to be understood not as the world in itself but the world which is under the power of the ruler of the world. The world is the creation of the Logos, who was in the world, yet the world did not recognise him (1,10). The disciples have to make the world recognise this truth. They do this by loving one another as Jesus did. As Jesus' ministry in the world was according to the Father's command (12,49-50), so the disciples' ministry will be according to the command of Jesus. By fulfilling the commandment of Jesus, they continue this mission to the world. For this purpose Jesus sends his disciples as the Father had sent him (20,21).

That Jesus' command to love one another comprises enemies also can be perceived from this perspective. Jesus tells the disciples that the world will hate them and that they should be prepared to expect this hatred from the world. But Jesus does not tell the disciples they should return this hatred. Hatred in response

cannot be love. Even when the world hates the disciples, they ought to bear witness to the love of Jesus. Jesus' commandment to love one another thus includes also the commandment to love the world in the true sense. By loving the world which hates them, the disciples enable the world to free itself from the power of the "ruler of the world." The disciples pass sentence on the world by doing this and the ruler of the world is driven out. This is what Jesus did and the disciples should continue the loving action of Jesus (12,31).

The verse 15,19 shows the johannine concept of love in its dimension of loving enemies. In this sense, johannine concept of love does not exclude enemies. We will deal about this dimension of the johannine concept of love when we compare it with the concept of love in the Synoptic Gospel in Excursus three.

### **Conclusion**

Having examined all the occurrences of the term **love** in the rest of the Gospel, we can now conclude this chapter, synthesizing our findings. All these instances of the term **love** in the rest of the Fourth Gospel reflect exactly what we discovered in our analysis of 13,34 and 15,12.17 in our previous chapter as a window to the concept of love in the Fourth Gospel. Our division of the occurrences of the term into nine categories enabled us to make a detailed study of the concept of love in the Fourth

**Gospel. We started with God's love for humans and then humans' love for God. In the same way, God's love for Jesus and then Jesus' love for God. In a similar manner, humans' love for Jesus and Jesus' love for humans. Keeping in mind the fact that love is always a two-way relationship, we have examined the movement of love from both sides, i.e. God and humans, God and Jesus, Jesus and humans and among humans themselves. As we have already explained at the outset of this chapter, we have a broad understanding of the category "humans" whereby we include also the disciples. Then the rest of the instances of the term love in the Fourth Gospel connoted a meaning of human attachment for such things as physical life, human glory or even for darkness. Finally, the only appearance of the term love for world's love of its own.**

**Jesus' gift of love to humans is the gift of his person himself. And this gift of love expressed in the person of Jesus is the manifestation of God's love for humans (3,16). God's love for humans is unconditional, unmerited, unreserved and selfless. God does not impose any conditions on humans to receive his love, loves them even if they do not have extraordinary qualities or possessions, does not confine his love to a certain space and time and does not even spare his only son. This love is the fulfillment of what was inaugurated by the Old Covenant (Deut 7,7-11). The initiative for this love comes from God Himself. It is not a love - in - response. This love of God already includes the dimension of love of enemies, since it is**

directed to all people, including those who offend him.

This forgiving and steadfast love of God is what Jesus brings into concrete expression in his gift of himself as love to humans. Jesus' love for humans was a perfect love (13,1). Greater love than this can nowhere be seen (15,13). His love was not confined to those who loved him in response (the disciple whom he loved and the family of Lazarus). His love extended also to those who denied him (Peter) and betrayed him (Judas). It is this love which ought to show in the love of the disciples among themselves. Jesus' love for humans is exactly the same as the Father's love for Jesus (15,9; 17,23), which was from before the foundation of the world (17,24). The disciples, as the followers of Jesus, should exercise the love which they possess by keeping his commandments (14,21.23; 15,10). Keeping the commandments is the exercise and expression of the believer's love for Jesus. One who does not love Jesus, does not keep his word (14,24). The believer, who loves Jesus, is also in turn loved by God (14,23; 16,27). This is in fact the mission and prayer of Jesus (17,26).

But one who loves Jesus becomes an object of hatred by the "world" which is filled with evil doers who love darkness (3,19), standing under the influence of the "ruler of the world" (15,19) . As a true disciple of Jesus, the believer is not to hate the world in return, but to witness to the love of Jesus by loving it. By doing this, he

continues the action (14,31) and the mission of Jesus (13,35). But a disciple's true love for Jesus has to be strong enough to overcome the temptation to seek human glory instead of God's glory (12,43). One should love Jesus above everything else, even one's own life (12,25). Because to love Jesus means to love life.

All the occurrences of the term love which we examined in this chapter beautifully echo our findings of the concept of love from our analysis of 13,34; 15,12.17 in the fourth chapter. There we found the gift of the New Commandment of love from Jesus is the gift of his own self. The presence of Jesus is actualised in the midst of the disciples when they keep this commandment of loving one another as he did. The different dimensions of this gift of love as revealed in the rest of the Gospel are what we have dealt with in our fifth chapter.

## CONCLUSION OF PART TWO

We now come to the conclusion of this part dealing with the theme of love in the Fourth Gospel. To explore the reality of love in the Fourth Gospel, we took verses 13,34 and 15,12 as a starting point. Our detailed analysis of those verses as a window to the concept of love in the Fourth Gospel showed that the gift of love from Jesus in the form of a New Commandment to the disciples was indeed the gift of his own self. We found that the expression **Commandment** at 13,34 was related to **Grace and Truth** in 1,17. Both expressions point to Jesus Christ as gift to those who believe in him.

The commandment of Jesus is new, because the disciples are called upon to **love as Jesus loved**. The novelty of Jesus' love is in the manner he lived it. Surely the concept of love was not new, but the meaning Jesus gives to this concept is new in a revolutionary manner. He turns upside down the meaning given to the concept of love. It never existed, nor had even been heard of, that a master washed the feet of his servants or disciples. It was so shockingly new that his disciples vehemently protested against the action of Jesus. It went against their very nature. The servant serving the master is the common phenomenon. But the master serving the

servant is the new meaning given to the concept of love by Jesus. If that was the love which Jesus demonstrated in his life, it did not stop there. He gave his life for his loved ones, his friends. Greater love than this is impossible (15,13). It is this concept and example of Jesus' love which John describes as love εἰς τέλος. Jesus' concept of love includes also love and service to enemies, as we saw in the fact that Jesus did not exclude Judas from the washing of feet. The concept of love preached and practised by Jesus is the greatest, measured in any way: it is the **deepest** love manifested in the lowliest form of service; it is the **widest** love extended to the worst form of enemies; it is the **highest** love in the most supreme act of giving his life for his friends. It is a new definition of love.

This love, though given in the form of a commandment, is indeed a gift. The term commandment itself implies love. The gift of Jesus himself as this gift of love marks the fulfillment of a relationship once inaugurated by the giving of commandments in the form of the law through the mediation of Moses. This aspect is brought to expression by the use of the term δίδωμι. This active present tense has an implied contrast to the past passive of ἐδόθη in 1,17. The gift of the law is a thing of the past, whereas the gift of love in the person of Jesus continues for ever.

This gift of love is a means for the disciples to actualise the presence of Jesus in their midst. Jesus gives the New Commandment of love in the context of his return

to the Father (13,33). By actualising the presence of Jesus among themselves through the keeping of this New Commandment, the disciples are also bearing witness to the love of Jesus to the outside world (13,35) as Jesus himself witnessed to the Father's love (14,31). Keeping Jesus' commandment of love enables the disciples to remain in active union with Jesus and consequently in active union with the Father through Jesus.

Remaining in union with Jesus by keeping his commandments brings the disciples another gift, the gift of the Spirit (14,15). Keeping the commandments is as much related to the gift of love as to the gift of the Spirit. Love and the Spirit are parallel gifts of the Risen Jesus. Jesus gives the Spirit (20,22) from the Father (14,15) to the disciples as a result of their keeping his commandments.

Keeping the commandments is not a condition for the disciples. It is the natural consequence of their belonging to Jesus. Those who belong to Jesus keep also his commandments. Belonging to Jesus and not keeping the commandments are incompatible with each other. Here we see the relationship of love to faith. Love is the consequence of faith in Jesus.

All these characteristics of the johannine concept of love, which we discovered during our analysis of 13,34 and 15,12.17 in our fourth chapter, echoed in our

examination of the term love in the rest of the Fourth Gospel. The concept of love in the Fourth Gospel is well-defined and consistent.

Love is the self-gift of Jesus, the Logos-Incarnate, who came into the world as the manifestation of the Father's love. This self-gift of Jesus as love is presented to the believers who enter into the circle of love between the Father and Jesus by the very fact of their belonging to Jesus. This self-gift of Jesus, possessed by the believers in the form of the New Commandment, ought to be exercised in a dynamic way so that they become living witnesses to Jesus, proclaiming his love, just as Jesus did, to free the whole world from the power of Satan.

### **EXCURSUS THREE: THE JOHANNINE CONCEPT OF LOVE AND THE CONCEPT OF LOVE IN THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS**

Before we get into a detailed discussion of the relationship between the concepts of law and love in the Gospel, which will form the climax and conclusion of our thesis, it seems appropriate to make a comparison between the concepts of love in the Synoptic Gospels and in the Fourth Gospel.

Our study of the concept of love in the Fourth Gospel, however much in detail, will not be complete if it is not compared with the concept of love in the Synoptic

Gospels. We are very familiar with the accusations made against the johannine concept of love even in widely-known scholarly circles.<sup>31</sup> Is the johannine concept of love really sectarian?<sup>32</sup> Does the Fourth Gospel deal only with love among the members of the community excluding love for outsiders, including enemies?<sup>33</sup>

We have already dealt with a part of this problem<sup>34</sup> when we examined the johannine concept of love in our fourth chapter. There we saw that the johannine concept of love indeed included the love of enemies. We will now compare this dimension of the johannine concept of love with the love of enemies found in the Synoptic concept of love.

It is true that there is no explicit command or exhortation that we find in the Fourth

<sup>31</sup> BROWN, *The Gospel II*, 613. Brown finds the Johannine concept of love too narrow to reach others outside the community. His conclusion is, "In this stress John is not far from the thought of Qumran."

<sup>32</sup> Similarly, Ernst KÄSEMANN, *Jesu Letzter Wille nach Johannes* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1980), 124 finds the concept of love in the Fourth Gospel akin to the one found in the Qumran community, excluding love for outsiders; M.LATTKE, *Einheit im Wort. Die spezifische Bedeutung von 'agape,' 'agapan,' und 'filein,' im Johannesevangelium* (München: Kösel, 1975), 210: Lattke follows the thesis of Käsemann to find the johannine concept of love to be limited within the circle of the disciples.

<sup>33</sup> Urban C.VON WAHLDE, *The Johannine Commandments. 1 John and the Struggle for the Johannine Tradition* (New York: Paulist Press, 1990), 242. Von Wahide too holds the view that the johannine concept of love was restricted to the community because of a crisis which arose within the johannine community. This crisis was due to the different interpretations of Jesus' teaching within the community, particularly with regard to the Fourth Gospel, whereby too much emphasis on the spiritualistic dimension caused neglect on the love of neighbor. Thus, the situation required the reversal of the tradition with emphasis on the sectarian love.

<sup>34</sup> Leon MORRIS, "Love in the Fourth Gospel," in *Saved by Hope, Essays in Honor of Richard C. DUDERSLUYS*, ed. James I. COOK (Grand Rapids, Michigan: W.B. Eerdmans, 1978): 27. Morris calls it "a real problem"; John KNOX, *The Ethics of Jesus in the Teaching of the Church* (London: Epworth Press, 1962), 94.

is no explicit command or exhortation that we find in the Fourth Gospel to love the neighbor or the enemy (Matt 5,44; 22,39; Luke 6,27.35; 10,27) as we do in the Synoptic Gospels. Does the johannine concept of love, that is, the command of Jesus to his disciples to love one another as he had loved them stand in contradiction to the love of the enemy or neighbor we find in the Synoptic Gospels? It is an answer to this vexed question <sup>35</sup> which we will search for in this excursus.

The johannine concept of love has often been criticised as sectarian love or limited love.<sup>36</sup> Whether this love includes a love of enemies is for some scholars a question which cannot be answered.<sup>37</sup> Others think the johannine concept of "one another" is not wide<sup>38</sup> enough to include neighbors or enemies, and still others hold that the johannine concept of love does indeed suggest an implicit universalism<sup>39</sup> and of course salvation for non-Christian humanity.<sup>40</sup> In order to understand the johannine and synoptic concepts of love in this regard, we have to clearly define the johannine meanings of the terms **world** and **enemy**.

<sup>35</sup> Johannes NISSEN, "The Distinctive Character of the New Testament Love Command in Relation to Hellenistic Judaism," in *The New Testament and Hellenistic Judaism* ed. Peder BORGES and Soren GIVERSEN (Aarhus: University Press, 1995), 142.

<sup>36</sup> BROWN, *The Gospel* II, 613; J. BECKER, "Feindesliebe - Nächstenliebe - Bruderliebe," *ZEE* 25 (1981): 5-17.

<sup>37</sup> NISSEN, *ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> BROWN, *ibid.*

<sup>39</sup> J. KNOX, *The Ethic of Jesus in the Teaching of the Church: Its Authority and Relevance* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1961), 95f.

<sup>40</sup> Simon LÉGASSE, "Inter-human Love: New Testament Limits and Promise," *TD* 27,1 (Spring 1979): 9-13

## 1. God, the World and the "World"

In our examination of the concept of love in John earlier, we saw that God is not against the world, nor is Jesus. The coming of Jesus into the world was indeed because God loved the world (3,16). In this concept of love, John goes beyond the Old Testament concept of love, where the Covenant was an expression of God's unique love only for the chosen people. According to John, God can never hate the world, because the world is God's own creation through the Word (1,10). Moreover, hatred is a quality which does not belong to the nature of God but to the "world"<sup>41</sup> when it is under the power of the evil one (7,7; 15,18). If the "world" is hating Jesus, it is because it hates the good. Here the "world" is a symbol, unlike the term which stands for God's creation (1,10) and His love for it (3,16). The symbol, "world," stands for the reality which is under the power of the evil one, whom John calls the "ruler of the world" (12,31; 14,30; 16,11). The world does not belong to the "ruler of the world," nor did he create it. But the world stands under his power. The "ruler of the world" and Jesus stand in diametrical opposition to each other (14,30).

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<sup>41</sup> In our thesis we would like to distinguish the world, which is created by God(1,3.10) and loved by God (3,16) from the one which is under the power of the ruler of the "world." We make the distinction by showing the latter one with quotation marks ("world"). In the same way, we make a distinction between the Jews and the "Jews." The latter usage of the term implies those who are under the power of the evil one. The "Jews" who stand under the power of the evil one means all those who, not confined to any particular group of people, work as agents of the devil.

## **2. The “Enemy” in the johannine sense**

This direct opposition between Jesus and the evil one, who holds the world under his sway, should be properly understood, if one is to understand the johannine concept of love. When the “world” is said to oppose Jesus, it is to be understood in this sense. It is not the world, which is created by God, that hates Jesus, rather, it is the evil force which controls it which hates Jesus. The “ruler of the world,” the devil, is a murderer, a liar, a father of lies and there is no truth in him (8,44). He is **the enemy** in the johannine sense. To love “the enemy” in the johannine sense would be a contradiction. The purpose of Jesus’ coming into the world was to liberate the world from the grip of the evil one. Jesus has conquered the world (16,33). In this johannine worldview, “to love the enemy” is impossible.

## **3. The johannine enemy is different from the synoptic enemy**

The johannine enemy is not the enemy in the synoptic sense. When Jesus is asked by a Jew about the identity of the neighbor in the Gospel of Luke (10,29), Jesus points to a Samaritan. The Samaritans were always considered “enemies” by the Jews and vice versa. Thus, according to the Synoptic Gospels, the enemy and the neighbor are terms which are interchangeable. The enemy in the Synoptic

Gospels is almost always a human enemy. Christians are exhorted to be not merely responders to love (Matt 5,43-48; Luke 6,27-35), loving only their relatives and friends (5,47), but also to love strangers and people who dislike and hate them (Matt 5,44; Luke 6,26-29). The call of the Synoptic Gospels to Christians is to possess a love for their fellow humans which is so universal as to include not only their well wishers, but also the people who dislike them and try to harm them. In other words, Christians are called to follow exactly Jesus, who not only taught love of enemies but also practised it (Matt 6, 14; 18,22.35; Luke 17,3; 23,34). There was harmony between what he taught and did.<sup>2</sup> Christians are called to live up to the challenge of preaching and practising what Jesus did. In this challenging call to love all fellow human beings just as Jesus did, there is no contradiction between the Synoptic Gospels and the Fourth Gospel.

Thus the expression "to love the enemy" in the Synoptic Gospels is a call to love all humans just as Jesus did, not only friends but also strangers and opponents. Yet, the johannine world view in which the evil one is the real enemy is also found in the Synoptic Gospels. Those who do not belong to the Kingdom of God are those who are under the power of the evil one. The evil one, the devil, as the real enemy is identified in the Gospel of Matthew too (13,39). The enemy here is not the human enemy, but the invisible one, the devil.

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<sup>2</sup> J.M.GUSTAFSON, *Christ and the Moral Life* (Chicago: University Press, 1968), 150-187.

#### **4. Johannine love command is not parochial, but universal**

According to the Gospel of John, Jesus' commandment to love one another is the command given to those who belong to the Kingdom. The disciples represent the community which belongs to the Kingdom of God. Jesus' command to love one another is not meant to be taken in the restricted sense of applying only to the disciples or even the johannine community. Even in such a sense the disciples or the johannine community represent all those who belong to the side of God. As we have seen in our analysis of 14,1, those who believe in Jesus believe also in God. Belief in God and belief in Jesus are inclusive of each other. It is impossible for one to exist without the other: belief in God and belief in Jesus. According to the johannine worldview, you can either belong to Jesus and God or to the devil, who is the source of all evils. A third way is not possible. The johannine command to love one another (13,34; 15,12.17) should be understood from this johannine perspective.

The opponents of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel are not merely personal or social opponents, they are the children of the devil (8,44). Their enmity against Jesus is not that of Pharisees or the Jewish authorities who are often termed as "Jews" against Jesus, the man from Nazareth, son of Joseph, but against Jesus, the

Christ, the Son of God. Jesus' battle is against the forces of evil, not against a mere social group symbolised by the term, "Jews." The "Jews" stand on the side of the negative concept of the world in John, the "world" which stands under the "ruler of the world." It is not the world which God loves so much (3,16). Indeed the world indicated by the term κόσμος in 1,10 and 3,16 is not merely the inanimate cosmic phenomenon, but the world inhabited by humans. It is in order to save this world that God sent His only Son into the world (3,17).

One can only be either a child of God or a child of the devil. One belongs to God by belonging to Jesus. Belonging to Jesus is not possible without believing in Jesus, who is the only revealer as he is the only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father. One's belonging to the Father or to the devil will be manifested by the work one does. In this sense, persons carry out only the intention of their Father who is the source of their action. The persons function like mere agents.

##### **5. Either children of God or children of the devil**

Children of God and children of the devil are dependent on their respective Fathers not merely for their actions, but also for their beings. Just as Jesus came from the Father and possessed the Father's glory (1,14), and depended on God for his actions (5,19.36; 8,28), so also the sons of the devil depend on their father (8,44).

If the Father's nature was present in Jesus, so also the nature of the devil is present in the children of the devil (8,41).

All those who love Jesus are born of God, since Jesus and those who believe in him have a common source. The children of the devil do not recognise the Father of Jesus and so they do not love Jesus (8,42). It is impossible to love Jesus if one does not have God as his Father. Here we find the johannine dualism. There is the polarisation of the good and the evil. Since their source and nature are diametrically opposed to each other, reconciliation between them is impossible.

If the people who believe in Jesus can be said to follow the light and belong to the truth, the children of the devil belong to darkness and night. The symbol of night and darkness in John represents the evil world belonging to Satan. This johannine world view should be kept in mind to understand the concept of love in John. If Jesus' work is, on the one hand, loving his own in the world to the end; it is, on the other hand, a battle against the world ruled by the forces of evil.<sup>4</sup> This concept is present also in the Synoptic Gospels, but it comes to more vivid and dramatic expression in the Fourth Gospel. The Synoptic expression "to love the enemy" should be understood with this background in mind when it is compared with the love command of the Fourth Gospel. Thus, the johannine command to love one

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<sup>4</sup> BULTMANN, *The Gospel*, 488.

another as Jesus loved includes this love of the enemy of the Synoptic Gospels. The johannine phrase "to love one another" is not addressed to a small group of believers. It encompasses all those who align themselves on the side of God against the johannine enemy, the devil. Thus, the commandment to love one another has a very wide circle. And those who believe in God believe in also Jesus, either explicitly or implicitly. Because, for John, belief in Jesus and belief in God are interchangeable (14,1).

## **CONCLUSION**

# **THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LAW AND LOVE IN THE FOURTH GOSPEL**

## **CONCLUSION**

### **THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LAW AND LOVE IN THE FOURTH GOSPEL**

Having examined the realities of law and love in the Fourth Gospel, we now turn our attention to the relationship between these two concepts. It was already noticeable during our individual treatment of these concepts that they are inevitably related to each other. Our analysis of the concept of law in the Fourth Gospel revealed that it is related to the concept of love in the fact that the law, as the inaugural gift of God, plays a witnessing function to the coming of Jesus, who is the personification of love. In the same manner, our study of the concept of love in the Fourth Gospel demonstrated that it was related to the concept of law because Jesus as the personification of God's love is the perfect realisation of what the Old Testament commandments promised. The commandments of God were manifestations of God's love for His people. The Old Testament Covenant relationship was concretised in the commandments. The commandments themselves were an expression of God's love for His people. The law was nothing other than a collection of these commandments.

This natural relationship between the concepts of law and love has been given beautiful dramatic expression in the Fourth Gospel. These two concepts find their convergence in the person of Jesus, whose incarnation is the culmination

of a loving relationship between God and His people, which was foretold by the law.

## **A. THE CHRISTOLOGICAL ORIENTATION OF LAW AND LOVE**

### **1. Jesus, the true law**

The first part of our thesis demonstrated that the function of the law was to bear witness to Jesus. The Torah, as law, had only an introductory role to play in the relationship of God with His people. The law was pointing to the coming of Jesus in whom it had to find its fulfillment. The relationship of love which began with the gift of the law through Moses reaches its climax in the coming of the Only-begotten Son in the flesh. What the law promised has been fulfilled in the Incarnation of the Logos. It is in this sense we say that Jesus is the true law.

#### **a. Law as the Revelation of the Will of God**

Whatever function the law played in the social and religious life of the people of the Old Testament, there was only one basic meaning of the law: the law

**revealed the will of God for the people.**<sup>1</sup> What the people heard through the contents of the law was the voice of God. The law with its embodiment of commandments was the voice of YHWH (Deut 27,10). The law was a sign of the special privilege of the people of God. It was an expression of the nearness of YHWH to His people (Deut 4,6-8).

The revelation of God's will and His nearness to His people become perfect and tangible in the person of Jesus. For the follower of Jesus, the understanding of the Old Testament law as revelation of God's will is only the beginning of what was going to be fulfilled in Jesus. The Word which was only in the mouth and in the heart of the people during the time of the Old Testament (Deut 30, 14), now makes his dwelling in the believer (John 1,14; 14,23). The true function of the Old Testament law was to prepare the people for this fullness of God's revelation in Jesus. Thus, not only the law, but even Moses himself, play the role of witnessing to the coming of Jesus. Moses thus becomes not only the

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<sup>1</sup> Gerhard VON RAD, *Theologie des alten Testaments*, Band 1 (München: Kaiser Verlag, 1961), 96. Von Rad summarises the function of the law in the life of the people by saying, "Was Israel war und was nicht, das wurde eine Frage der Auslegung des Gesetzes." The identity of the people as the community of Israel depended on the criterion of the law. What it meant indeed was the obedience of Israel to the revelation of God's will which was firmly defined with uncompromising contents with very old roots... "Diese Unterstellung Israels unter eine Willensoffenbarung Jahwes, die fest umgrenzt war und in ihren Inhalten unverrückbar festlag, hat weit zurückliegende Wurzeln."

mediator, but a prophetic precursor.<sup>2</sup> It is from this New Testament viewpoint that one is able to understand the salvific role played by the law in the life of Judaism because the law was considered to contain the main source of divine revelation.<sup>3</sup> The term law, which was only a later development of what was originally considered to be the revelation of God's will enshrined in His commandments, was actually a theological development of the concept.<sup>4</sup> This development altogether altered the original meaning of the commandments: it was not anymore the commandments which were at the service of the people of Israel through the course of their history, but now it was Israel which had to be at the service of the commandments.<sup>5</sup>

Whatever the later evolution of the meanings of the terms law and commandments, their basic meaning was embodied in the fact that they revealed the will of God for the people.<sup>6</sup> Doing the will of God which was

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid., vol 2, 339. To quote von Rad's own words: "Man las nicht mehr allein unter dem allbeherrschenden Aspekt des Gesetzes, sondern unter einem heilgeschichtlichen Aspekt, d.h. man las im Alten Testament eine der Erscheinung Christi vorlaufende Gottesoffenbarung, die voller Hinweis war auf das Kommen des Herrn...Alles im Alten Testament wird nun auf Christus bezogen, selbst Mose - und darin ist die junge Gemeinde besonders revolutionär dem Judentum gegenüber - gilt nicht nur als Vermittler des Gesetzes; auch er hat schon als Prophet den kommenden Herrn geweissagt (Luke 24,27; John 1,45; 5,48; Apog 26,22).

<sup>3</sup> Martin NOTH, *Gesammelte Studien*, (München: Kaiser Verlag, 1069), 53.

<sup>4</sup> G.VON RAD, *Theologie*, vol.1, 98.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid. G.von Rad explains it as, "Damit war die Offenbarung der göttlichen Gebote zu etwas anderem geworden, als sie ehemals war. Sie war nicht mehr der heilsame Ordnungswille des sein Volk durch die Geschichte geleitenden Gottes, sondern sie fing Jetzt an zum 'Gesetz' in dem theologischen Sinne des Wortes zu werden. Ehemals dienten die Gebote dem Volk Israel bei seinem Weg durch die Geschichte...jetzt hatte Israel den Geboten zu dienen."

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.,221. "Der Begriff 'Tora' meint das ganze der heilsamen Willenszuwendungen Jahwes an Israel; man das Wort mit dem ebenso neutralen deutschen Wort 'Willensoffenbarung' wiedergeben.

manifested in the law meant salvation for the people. Disobedience to the will of God meant separation from God who had claimed them as His own through the bond of the Covenant. The law for the people had meaning because they belonged to God who had chosen them to be His own. The law had no meaning and relevance for those who were outside the Covenant.<sup>7</sup> And abiding by the law was not a burden but rather a help for their life.<sup>8</sup>

The law, as a sign of the people's belonging to God, was a pointer to the new community of believers to be chosen as his own by Jesus (13,1; 15,16). It is to this new community of believers that Jesus gives the New Commandment (13,34). Jesus does not call it a new law, but a new commandment.<sup>9</sup> It is noteworthy that the use of the term **commandment** in the Fourth Gospel serves the follower of Christ as a reminder of the original spirit and meaning of the Old Testament Covenant relationship between God and His people. The term **commandment** always brought to mind the Covenant relationship established by

<sup>7</sup> NOTH, *ibid.*, 53. "Für das Alte Testament gehört das Gesetz in den Rahmen des Bundes ist also die Voraussetzung für die Geltung des Gesetzes, und vor erfolgtem Bundesschluss gibt es auch kein Gesetz...und dieser Bund hat in der dadurch begründeten Zusammengehörigkeit von Gott und Volk, die das Volk zum auserwählten Werkzeug Gottes in der Geschichte macht..."

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 55.

<sup>9</sup> Martin HENGEL, "Die Schriftauslegung des 4. Evangeliums auf dem Hintergrund der urchristlichen Exegese," in *'Gesetz' als Thema Biblischer Theologie* ed. Ingo BALDERMANN (Neukirchen - Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1989), 268-269. Hengel draws a comparison between the Old Testament law and the New Commandment of Jesus in John 13,34. According to him, "Als 'Gesetz' d.h. als zahlreichen Geboten bestehende Handlungsanweisung, ist es den Juden gegeben. Jesus selbst konzentriert sein verpflichtende Anweisung an die Jünger auf das 'neue Gebot' der Liebe (13,34), das nicht durch das alttestamentliche Liebesgebot Lev 19,18 sondern durch Gottes Liebe und Christi Hingabe in den Tod begründet wird"; Wayne A.MEEKS, *The Prophet-King, Moses Traditions and the Johannine Christology* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1967), 290.

God with His people by the gift of the Ten Commandments, the Decalogue.<sup>10</sup>

And for John this Old Testament Covenant relationship between God and His people was a type of the fulfillment of the Covenant relationship in Jesus. Jesus is the culmination of this relationship of love which God commenced by the giving of the Commandments in Mount Sinai. Just as the Decalogue was written by God Himself (Deut 5,22), the New Commandment is presented by Jesus himself to his followers to follow his own example, "just as he himself loved."

The starting point of the whole history of law for the people of Israel was the theophany at Sinai where the word of God was revealed to them.<sup>11</sup> Although the term law came to comprise not only the Decalogue but the whole Pentateuch and even the Prophets and other books of the Bible,<sup>12</sup> the history of its origin is rooted in the Decalogue. The Decalogue or The Ten Words was the manifestation of God's will for His people. It was the revelation of God's own word, revealing His will for the life and salvation of His people. John does point to the fact that the word of God was indeed revealed in the law of the Old Testament.<sup>13</sup> The word of God, which was presented only as law to Moses, is now presented in the form of grace and truth which corresponds to God's true

<sup>10</sup> G.VON RAD, *Theologie*, vol.1, 192.

<sup>11</sup> Claus WESTERMANN, *Theologie des Alten Testaments* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1978), 155. Westermann explains, "Das aus der Sinai theophanie 'ergehende' Wort Gottes an sein Volk Israel wurde das Gebot Gottes (Exod 20, der Dekalog) und das Gesetz Gottes (Exod 21-23) und die dann folgenden Gesetzes Korpora."

<sup>12</sup> Otto PROKSCH, *Theologie des Alten Testaments* (Gütersloh: C.Bertelsman, 1950), 678.

<sup>13</sup> HENGEL, *ibid.*, 262: "...dass nach Johannes schon an das alte Israel das Wort Gottes erging, das für ihn mit dem Gesetz identisch ist und in dem Gott selbst zu seinem Volk spricht..."

being (1,17).<sup>14</sup> The personified Word of God is not a replacement of the word of God of the Old Testament, but rather the fulfillment of it.

This function and meaning of law as the vehicle of God's salvific will in the Old Testament reaches its climax in the johannine Christology of the Fourth Gospel. The first part of our thesis has already demonstrated that the theme of law plays an important role in the Fourth Gospel. If the significance of the law in the Old Testament was to reveal the saving will of God to the people through His word, the Fourth Gospel opens itself by presenting Jesus as the Pre-existent Word of God. This johannine presentation of Jesus as the Pre-existent and Incarnate Word in the Prologue has no doubt at least an indirect reference to the revelation of God's will in the Old Testament law, whether it is regarded positively<sup>15</sup> or negatively.<sup>16</sup> What the Old Testament revealed to God's people was precisely this Pre-existent and now Incarnate Logos. And this Logos reveals

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 266. Hengel correctly notes the difference of the Old Testament law, as the word of God and the Word of God Incarnate in Jesus: "...Freilich muss man hier stärker differenzieren....Mose erhielt von dem alttestamentlichen Kyrios und Logos nur das Gesetz, das volle Heil das Gottes wahren Wesen entspricht, wurde erst durch den fleischgewordenen Logos, Jesus Christus, Wirklichkeit."

<sup>15</sup> GUTBROD, "λόγος," *TWNT* IV, ed. KITTEL, 1076.

<sup>16</sup> John ASHTON, "The Transformation of Wisdom. A Study of the Prologue of John's Gospel," *NTS* 32 (1986): 169. According to Ashton, the johannine Logos in the Prologue is an indirect challenge to the idea that the revelation of divine wisdom was exclusive to the law of the Old Testament or Judaism. Finding a parallel between the revelation of Wisdom found in the Book of 1 Enoch 42,1-2 and the Johannine Logos in the Prologue, he says: "Logos is not just a masculine surrogate of the feminine Wisdom but a conscious rival of the law in his claim to be the unique vehicle of revelation and salvation." Our thesis has demonstrated that the concept of law in the Fourth Gospel is in no way a rival to the revelation brought by Jesus. The revelation of Jesus is the fulfillment of the revelation promised by the law. The law of the Old Testament can, in this sense, be in no way a rival of the revelation of Jesus.

himself to his believers. We can very well say that the revelation of the law of the Old Testament was just a partial revelation of what is now fully revealed in Jesus, the Incarnate Logos, who as the Only-begotten Son dwells in the bosom of the Father (1,18).

#### **b. Law as witness to Jesus, the Christ and Son of God**

To place Jesus in parallel to the law would be an inappropriate comparison according to Johannine Christology. The law was only a medium of revelation whereas Jesus is not only the revealer but also the content of revelation. If the function of the law was to reveal God's will to the people, Jesus is himself God's will in person. Jesus as the Pre-existent Logos was not only with God, the Logos himself was God (1,1). That Jesus is the Word of God and God Himself is made clear in the Fourth Gospel from beginning to end (1,1; 20,28).<sup>17</sup> That Jesus is God is affirmed in the Fourth Gospel in the more clearly and deliberately than in the rest of the New Testament.<sup>18</sup> Johannine Christology demonstrates that the old Jewish belief according to which God can never be seen by human eyes, is

<sup>17</sup> R.E.BROWN, "Does the New Testament call Jesus God?" *TS* 26 (1965): 564.

<sup>18</sup> B.A.MASTIN, "A Neglected Feature of the Christology of the Fourth Gospel," *NTS* 22 (1976): 32-50. Mastin points out that John's use of the term  $\theta\epsilon\acute{o}\varsigma$  at 1,1.18; and 20,28 is done with care in order to convey the core message of the Gospel that Jesus is God. Mastin strongly argues, "It is difficult to believe that these theological assertions were placed accidentally where they are. Rather, they are an important feature of the evangelist's Christology. One of his aims is to present Christ as God and what is implicit elsewhere in the Gospel is made explicit in these three verses." (43). He singles out the uniqueness of the Fourth Gospel in the New Testament when he says, "It has been argued that in comparison with other books of the New Testament the Fourth Gospel uses the term  $\theta\epsilon\acute{o}\varsigma$  for Jesus not only with greater frequency but also with considerably more care" (50).

now rendered invalid by the revelation of Jesus,<sup>19</sup> who not only sees the Father, but who is always with the Father. The revelation of Jesus is unique because the event of Incarnation is unique: whereby God Himself assumes human nature in order to reveal Himself. This truth is expressed vividly in 1,14: "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us and we saw his glory, the glory that he has from the Father as the only begotten Son of the Father." John brings home the truth that only God can reveal God when he uses the phrase μονογενῆς θεός.<sup>20</sup> According to Johannine Christology, it is absolutely impossible for any human being not only to see God, but also to reveal God. Thus the function of the Old Testament law must be viewed from this perspective. Not only was Moses unable to see God since he was only a human being (1,18) but he was also unable to reveal God, whatever he wrote. And what he wrote, the Torah, was accepted as revelation only in so far as it pointed to the fullness of revelation in Jesus, who is God Himself as the Only-begotten Son of God.

This Johannine Christology is the pivotal point of the Fourth Gospel and this is the very purpose for which the Gospel itself was written: "These things have been written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing this you may have life through his name" (20,31). The whole content and message of the Fourth Gospel should be understood from this point

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<sup>19</sup> Barnabas LINDARS, *The Gospel of John* (London: Oliphants, 1972), 98.

<sup>20</sup> MASTIN, *ibid.*, 40.

of view. The theology of the Fourth Gospel is in fact its Christology.<sup>21</sup>

Johannine Christology in the Fourth Gospel, we can very well say, is very systematically structured. Its axis rests on the fundamental faith formula that "Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God" (1,49; 4,25; 9,22; 11,27; 20,31). Other titles such as "King of Israel" (1,49; 12,13), "the Savior of the world" (4,42) etc., are only attributes or explanations of the fundamental christological statement that **Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.**<sup>22</sup> However, the title "Son of Man" which is also a christological one<sup>23</sup> parallels the title "Son of God," in the sense that those who recognise Jesus as the Son of God will have the privilege of being granted the self-revelation of Jesus as the heavenly Son of Man (1,51; 3,14; 5,27; 6,27.53.62; 9,36). Those who do not accept Jesus as the Christ are not able to experience Jesus as the Son of Man either. Nathanael and the man born blind (chapter 9) are examples which illustrate this connection between the titles Son of God and Son of Man. Nathanael, who accepts Jesus as the Son of God,

<sup>21</sup> M.J.J.MENKEN, "The Christology of the Fourth Gospel. A Survey of Recent Research," in *From Jesus to John. Essays on Jesus and New Testament Christology in Honor of Marinus DE JONGE*, JSNT Supplement Series 84, ed. Martinus C.de BOER (Sheffield: Sheffield Press, 1993): 292.

<sup>22</sup> Among the innumerable monographs and articles on the theme of the Christology of the Fourth Gospel, there is as yet none which speaks of the core theme of johannine Christology. One of the very recent monographs on johannine Christology, W. LOADER's *Christology of the Fourth Gospel* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1991), summarises the johannine Christology as follows: "The Father sends and authorises the Son, who knows the Father, comes from the Father, makes the Father known, brings light, life and truth, completes Father's work, returns to the Father, exalted, glorified, ascended, sends the Spirit to enable greater understanding, to equip for mission, and to build up the community of faith" (76). We may call this a summary of the themes of the Fourth Gospel rather than the sum of Johannine Christology.

<sup>23</sup> George MLAKUZHYYIL, *The Christocentric Literary Structure of the Fourth Gospel*, AnBib 117, (Rome: Pontifical Institute Press, 1987), 267.

is promised the vision of the Son of Man (1,51). The man born blind was ready to undergo expulsion from the synagogue for confessing Jesus as the Son of God and he is granted the recognition of the Son of Man (9,37). And, he worships the Son of Man (9,38). The title Son of Man has an eschatological and apocalyptic connotation,<sup>24</sup> whereas the title Son of God has a revelatory function. It is the latter, i.e. recognising Jesus as the Son of God, which leads the believer to experience him as the good and just judge (5,27) since he is entrusted with the power of judgment by the Father (5,28ff). To proclaim Jesus as the Son of God requires faith in Jesus. To experience Jesus as Son of Man is the result and reward of this faith in Jesus as the Son of God. In this sense, both the titles Son of God and Son of Man are christological ones.<sup>25</sup>

The Greek term Χριστός for Christ occurs in the Fourth Gospel 17 times, the highest among the four Gospels. It occurs 12 times in Luke, 10 times in Matthew

<sup>24</sup> R.RHEA , *The Johannine Son of Man*. ATANT 76 (Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 1991), 69f. Rhea in his brief study on the Johannine Son of Man rules out the apocalyptic connotation of the meaning of Son of Man. According to him, "Not only is there a marked absence of apocalyptic imagery in the Gospel; the Evangelist's use of the title betrays a theological purpose, which is determined by the unique revelatory status of Jesus." We can agree with Rhea that the title Son of Man has a theological purpose, as we have shown above, but disagree that it does not have an apocalyptic aspect. Apocalyptic imagery is quite self-evident with almost all examples of the use of the term Son of Man in the Fourth Gospel. Our discovery of the connection between the expressions Son of Man and the Light of the World in our third chapter is another evidence that the expression Son of Man has an eschatological connotation. There we saw that the symbolic expression "Light of the World" referred to his temporal presence in the world, whereas the expression "Son of Man" pointed to his eschatological function as judge.

<sup>25</sup> MLAKUZHIYIL, *ibid.*,270. Mlakuzhiyil defines the johannine Son of Man as, "Son of Man stands for Jesus as a human being with a mysterious heavenly origin." When we really discover this relationship between the titles Son of God and Son of Man, we can very well say that John indeed demystifies the eschatological and apocalyptic meanings attached to the term Son of Man ever since the Book of Daniel, by simply conveying the idea that experiencing Jesus as the Son of Man is the fruit of the believer's faith in Jesus as the Son of God.

and 5 times in Mark. It is an indication of the importance John attaches to Christology in the Fourth Gospel. Interestingly enough, the Greek term *Μεσσίας* for Messiah occurs twice in the Fourth Gospel (1,41; 4,25) and nowhere else in the New Testament. In both instances the meaning of the term is explained by the corresponding Greek term *Χριστὸς*. Jesus as the Christ and Son of God is the central point of the Johannine Christology. Jesus, the Christ, was not merely a prophet who was just communicating the word of God, but Jesus was himself the Word of God, because he is the Only-begotten Son of God.

Recognition of Jesus as a prophet is only one of the initial stages for the final recognition of Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God. However, the recognition of Jesus as prophet does not necessarily lead one to the recognition of Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God.<sup>28</sup> Recognition of Jesus as a prophet belongs to the level of reason while the recognition of Jesus as the Son of God belongs to the level of faith. To recognise Jesus as the Son of God, one must be taught by God (6,45), which is a fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecy (Jer 31,33) where God puts His Spirit into the hearts of the believers. John presents different kinds of characters in the Fourth Gospel, some of whom recognise Jesus as a prophet and then come to recognise Jesus as the Christ. The Samaritan woman (4,20)

<sup>28</sup> M.-BOISMARD, *Moïse ou Jésus. Essai de christologie johannique*. BETL 84 (Leuven: University Press, 1988). Boismard gives a detailed exposition on the johannine presentation of Jesus as a prophet like Moses which, according to him, belonged to a stage of the evolution of johannine Christology.

and the man born blind (9,17) belong to this positive category. But there are others, such as the crowd who had eaten the multiplied loaves of bread (6,14) and the crowd at the Jerusalem festival (7,40f), who did not reach the level of this christological recognition: Jesus is the Christ. Johannine Christology goes beyond the level of presenting Jesus as prophet. The prophets of the Old Testament, even a prophet like Moses, were only vehicles of the word of God. They were not themselves called the word of God. God only put His words into the prophet's mouth, telling him what to speak (Deut 18,18f). But Jesus, as the Word of God, is the Revelation and the Revealer himself.

This uniqueness of the revelation in Jesus is consonant with the uniqueness of his being. For the Christology of the Fourth Gospel Jesus is not only the Christ but he is also the Son of God. Jesus' being the Son of God is the essential note of johannine Christology. Jesus is called Son 26 times in the Fourth Gospel, in 9 of these explicitly Son of God. The theme of Sonship is related to the theme of the Fatherhood of God. God is called Father 120 times in the Fourth Gospel. Though johannine Christology maintains the Fatherhood of God for Jesus as well as for his believers (1,12f), there is a uniqueness attached to the Sonship of Jesus. The believers who become God's children by the power granted by the Logos are called τέκνα while Jesus is always called the υἱός. Further, the Fourth Gospel attributes the title "Only-begotten" to Jesus. In this way, it is clear that

although the believers become God's children, yet the Sonship of Jesus is unique. The uniqueness of the Sonship of Jesus is central to johannine Christology. This unique relationship of Jesus to the Father is described in 1,1.18 in a very intimate manner. Although the Father is greater than the Son (14,28), yet the Father and the Son are equal not only in what they do (5,19-20) but also in what they possess (17,10). The Father created everything without exception only through the Son (1,3). Jesus points to this uniqueness of his relationship to the Father when he speaks of "my Father and your Father and my God and your God" (20,17). The Father and the Son have perfect mutual knowledge of each other (10,15). The revelation of Jesus is unique because of his unique relationship of Jesus to the Father. The revelation given in the law of the Old Testament is no match for this johannine Christology. To speak in figurative language, we may say that according to John, the revelation by the law would be candlelight in comparison to the revelation of Jesus, the light of the Sun.

The law in the Old Testament bears witness to this Son of God, Jesus Christ, the Pre-existent Logos. It is about this Pre-existent Logos, who in flesh is called Jesus Christ, that Moses wrote (1,45; 5,46f). The law, by itself, cannot provide life. But, as Scripture, it does provide life because it testifies to Jesus (5,39f). Life consists in knowing God and Jesus whom God has sent (17,3). Jesus is the

only one in whom God is fully revealed because no one else has seen God (1,18; 6,46) and no one enjoys such a close and unique relationship with God as the Only-begotten Son of God, Jesus Christ. Accepting this is the source of life for the believer. If it was the law which revealed God's will to people in the Old Testament in order to lead them to life, now it is Jesus, who himself is life, reveals God's will (1,4; 11,25). It is in this sense that we call Jesus as the true law.

## **2. Jesus, the Personification of Love**

So far we have discussed the fact that Jesus is the true law because he is the one who reveals God's will totally. The law of the Old Testament only bore witness to this fullness of revelation in Jesus. The revelation of the law attains its fullness in the Incarnation of the Logos to which it was witnessing. *If Jesus is the fullness of God's revelation from the functional viewpoint of the law, the content of his revelation is love, which, in the Fourth Gospel, is his own self.* In our section immediately above and in our fourth chapter, we saw that Jesus is the Revealer and the content of revelation.

The objective of the law in the Old Testament, too, was the love of God: "Love the Lord, your God, with your whole heart and soul..." (Deut 6,4-5). The law itself was not love but only a means to the realisation of God's love. And this love

finds its fullest expression in the gift of God's only Son Jesus to the world (3,16).

In Jesus, the means and the goal are united because he is the Revealer and the Revelation itself. The content of his revelation is his person. The person of Jesus and the concept of love in the Fourth Gospel are theologically interchangeable. Love is the content of Jesus' revelation and it is nothing other than his own person. For this reason, it is only proper to call Jesus the personification of love.

We have already seen in our analysis of 1,17 that the expression grace and truth refers to the person of Jesus. Grace in 1,17 means the unconditional love of God, which has been called "steadfast love," "enduring love," etc. Although the term love does not explicitly occur in the Prologue, Jesus as the personification of God's love is present from beginning to end. The very first two verses of the Prologue reveal the dynamic loving relationship existing between the Father and the Logos, the Only-begotten Son. The relationship between the Father and the Son is always conveyed in a dynamic sense, for which John uses nouns in the accusative case. In 1,1, we are told that *ὁ λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν θεόν*; in 1,2: *οὗτος ἦν ἐν ἀρχῇ πρὸς τὸν θεόν*. In fact, both verses speak of the same thing: the relationship of the Logos to God, even though the second verse uses a personal pronoun instead of the noun *ὁ λόγος*. The

repetition is certainly not due to oversight, for John chooses terms with care,<sup>27</sup> but in order to emphasize the loving and dynamic relationship existing between Jesus and the Father. The same phenomenon is found at the end of the Prologue when the Only-begotten Son's closeness to the Father is mentioned (1,18): μονογενῆς θεὸς ὁ ὢν εἰς τὸν κόλπον τοῦ πατρὸς. Here we find the preposition εἰς with the noun being used in the accusative case in order to demonstrate the dynamic relationship existing between the Father and the Son. This is an expression indicating the loving unity existing between the Father and the Son.<sup>28</sup> What the Son reveals is this love of the Father. The phrase ἐκεῖνος ἐξηγήσατο<sup>29</sup> points to the uniqueness and the content of the revelation by the Son. The word ἐκεῖνος is an emphatic demonstrative pronoun pointing to Jesus. It is not anyone else but Jesus, who possesses a perpetual intimacy with the Father, who now reveals the Father. And what he reveals is the love of the Father. What is explicit in 3,16 is already implicit in 1,18.

<sup>27</sup> B.A.MASTIN, "A Neglected Feature of the Christology of the Fourth Gospel," *NTS* 22 (1976): 49f.

<sup>28</sup> Yu IBUKI, *Die Wahrheit im Johannesevangelium*, Bonner Biblische Beiträge 39 (Bonn: Peter Hanstein Verlag, 1972), 205.

<sup>29</sup> The Greek term ἐξηγήσατο has as yet found no consensus among the scholars for its meaning. F.BÜCHSEL, *TWNT* II, ed. KITTEL, 910, prefers the meaning of "revealing" (offenbaren) to "explaining" (erklären). M.-E. BOISMARD, "Dans le sein du Père," *RB* 59 (1952): 23-29 suggests the meaning of "leading to" ("a conduit"). I.DE LA POTTERIE, "C'est lui qui a ouvert la voie. La finale du prologue johannique," *Bib* 69 (1988): 340-370, drawing a parallel between 1,18 and 14,6 comes to the conclusion that the term ἐξηγήσατο means "one who has opened the way to the Father." However, all the other occurrences of the term in the New Testament (Luke 24,35; Acts 10,8; 15,12.14; 21,10) give a meaning of narrating or recounting an event or happening. The same meaning is also evident in ἐξηγήσατο of 1,18. What follows in the rest of the Gospel after 1,18 is a narration of Jesus on what he is with the Father.

The love existing between the Father and the Son is also the model for the relationship between the disciple and Jesus. If the loving relationship between the Father and the Son is described as εἰς τὸν κόλπον τοῦ πατρὸς, the relationship between Jesus and the disciple is described at 13,23 ἐν τῷ κόλπῳ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ. Though similar, yet we note a distinction between the two relationships. Whereas the relationship between the Father and the Son is always dynamic (εἰς) the relationship between Jesus and the disciple, with the preposition ἐν, would seem to be static. However, we prefer to call it *complete* instead of *static*. Because, the disciple's relationship to Jesus and the Father is also dynamic, since it is connected to the love of Jesus. The disciple participates in the dynamic loving relationship between Jesus and the Father because he is joined to the love of Jesus by his faith. It is this dimension of the disciple's love for Jesus which is expressed at 13,23 as ἐν τῷ κόλπῳ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ. The circle of love relationship between the Father, Jesus and the disciple becomes possible because of the revelation of Jesus. And the revelation of Jesus is nothing other than the Father's love (3,16) which is the person of Jesus, the Word which became flesh (1,14). Thus Jesus can most appropriately be called the personification of love.

The content of the revelation of Jesus as love which is his own person was discussed in detail when we analysed the johannine love commandments in

13,34 and 15,12.17. We saw that these three verses of the johannine love commandments showed a progression, culminating at 15,17. The first one 13,34 which was the first instance of the love commandment of Jesus described the commandment as **new**. The conspicuous absence of the article before the New Commandment and the absence of the first person pronouns for Jesus conveyed to us the character of the New Commandment and the nature of the concept of love: the embodiment of Jesus' person in the New Commandment and the self-sacrificing nature of love. While the first person pronouns were notably absent, there was ample presence of second person pronouns: ὑμῖν, ὑμᾶς, and ὑμεῖς. It was demonstrative of the true nature of love: concern for the other, forgetting the self. These features of 13,34 were symbolic of the nature of the concept of love in the Fourth Gospel: the self-gift of Jesus to his loved ones as revelation of God's love. The absence of the article before the New Commandment is also an indication that this Commandment derives its source from the Father (12,50). We discovered in our examination of the concept of love in the fourth chapter that 13,34 was a fitting parallel to 1,17 which mentions the gifts of grace and truth as a description of the person of Jesus.

The appearance of the article for the love commandment at 15,12 (αὕτη ἐστὶν ἡ ἐντολὴ ἣ ἐμὴ) marked its distinction from 13,34. The formulation of the sentence puts the emphasis on the possessive pronoun ἡ ἐμὴ. The commandment at

15,12 is presented as the commandment of Jesus. The possessive adjective and article were absent in 13,34. The New Commandment given to the disciples at 13,34 was from the Father. And this commandment which Jesus had received from the Father becomes his own at 15,12. This emphatic reference to Jesus' possession of the commandments was notably absent at 13,34. At 13,34, Jesus calls it just New Commandment (έντολήν καινήν), not his commandment. But at 15,12, Jesus quite emphatically calls it his commandment (ή έντολή ή έμη). What Jesus gives his loved ones as his commandment is actually the commandment of the Father. Jesus had already explained this at 12,49-50. What Jesus says and speaks is not of his own accord, but the Father's commandment. And the Father's commandments are eternal life.

At 15,17, Jesus says, ταύτα έντέλλομαι ύμιν, ίνα άγαπάτε άλλήλους. Unlike 15,12 where Jesus said that the commandment to love one another belonged to him, here at 15,17, Jesus commands the disciples to get into action. If the point of discussion at 15,12 was about the status of the commandment, now at 15,17 it shifts to Jesus' telling his disciples to translate it into action. It is by their action that they will prove their identity (13,35), maintain their friendship with Jesus (15,14) and remain in his love as he does the Father's commandment and remains in His love (15,10). The circle of love from the Father to the believers becomes complete, thanks to the mediation of Jesus. This is the fruit of Jesus'

revelation: the love which exists between the Father and Jesus now becomes extended to all those who believe in Jesus. And this is why Jesus came into the world as God's gift of love (3,16). The three verses 13,34 and 15,12.17 explain in progressive stages how Jesus brings God's love to the believers, joining them to the chain of love existing between him and the Father.

The expression εἰς τέλος beautifully describes the love of Jesus. The Greek phrase, meaning *to the end* can also mean *to perfection*. The love of Jesus for his own was a perfect love which exhausted the very definition and the concept of love and Jesus showed it until the end of his temporal existence - the existence of the Logos in flesh.

When Jesus says at 13,34 and 15,12 καθὼς ἠγάπησα ὑμᾶς the answer is found at 13,1: εἰς τέλος ἠγάπησεν αὐτούς. When Jesus tells the disciples, "Love one another *as I have loved you*," he tells them that they should love one another εἰς τέλος. Love εἰς τέλος is manifested in humble service to the other, which includes even betrayers (Judas), the worst form of enemies. Love εἰς τέλος does not stop there. The disciples of Jesus should also be ready to sacrifice their lives for the sake of their friends (15,13). Greater love than this can never be found. If there can be no deeper love than the one which was demonstrated by Jesus by washing his disciples' feet, there can be no higher form of love

either than the one shown by Jesus in giving his life for his friends. Viewed from the point of depth or height, Jesus' love is the greatest. The love of Jesus is immeasurable because he is the personification of love.

### **3. Jesus, the meeting point of law and love**

In the above two sections we saw that Jesus was the true law because in him was the fullness of God's revelation present as person, and he was the personification of love because the very event of the Logos coming in flesh was a manifestation of God's love for his people. All that Jesus did during his life time is described in the Fourth Gospel as loving his own in the world (13,1). If Jesus in his person was the revelation of God's will, the content of Jesus' revelation was love. Jesus is God's love in the flesh: the personification of God's love.

It is interesting to note that if all that Jesus did in the world is summed up at 13,1 as loving his own in the world, love *εἰς τέλος*, viewed from another perspective, John sets this lifelong action of Jesus in parallel to that of Moses' writing of the law. In Deut 31,24 LXX, the phrase *εἰς τέλος* is employed to describe Moses' writing all the words of the law in the book: Μωυση̅ς γράφων πάντας τοὺς λόγους τοῦ νόμου τούτου εἰς βιβλίον ἕως εἰς τέλος. Jesus' act of loving his own in the world is presented by John in comparison to that of Moses' writing of the law. Writing the law was Moses' lifelong achievement. However, Jesus did

not write down mere words in the form of an external code of law but he himself was the Word, the Word of God. This Word of God took the form of flesh in manifestation of God's love. Love is the self-gift of Jesus.

## **B. JESUS, THE SOURCE OF LIFE, IS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LAW AND LOVE**

Already at the beginning of the Fourth Gospel we see the meeting point of law and love. If the concepts of law and love are related by their very nature, their connection comes to the fore in the Fourth Gospel in a vivid manner. The relationship between these two fundamental realities - law and love - results and reveals itself in life, of which Jesus is the source. Jesus, as the fullness of the Father's revelation and as the personification of His love, is the culminating point between these two fundamental realities. Life is to be found nowhere else than in Jesus. Jesus in the Fourth Gospel stands for life, because he himself is life (1,4; 11,25). The union between law and love in the Fourth Gospel is realised in Jesus, the source of life. **Life is the common goal to which the two concepts in the Fourth Gospel- law and love - lead.** And, the believer attains this life through his faith in Jesus who is the source of life and life itself. This was precisely the purpose of Incarnation, the reason why the Word was made flesh. "God so loved the world that He gave His Only-begotten Son that all those who believe in him may not perish **but have eternal life** (ἀλλ' ἔχη ζωὴν αἰώνιον)

(3,16). The purpose of God sending His Son into the world was not to judge the world but that the world might **be saved** (3,17). It was also the purpose for which the Gospel was written: that humans may come to the belief in Jesus and **thereby have life in his name** (20,31).

### **1. The purpose of every law is to lead to life**

The purpose of any law is to provide humans an orderly, peaceful and meaningful life. The law, thus, functions as a positive means to the goal of good life. Our study of the concept of the law in the Fourth Gospel has amply demonstrated this idea. John focuses on the true meaning of the law, i.e., the law should lead to life. The Torah, as the written word of God, was believed to provide life (5,39). Now in Jesus, the Word of God appears in flesh and blood, face to face with people who search for life. Refusal to come to Jesus and accept him as the Living Word of God is tantamount to refusal of life (5,40).

That the Torah, as the written word of God, was a pointer to life is never denied by John. That is why, the Fourth Gospel is never negative with regard to the law. Law, as Scripture and the written Word of God, bears witness to the Word of God made flesh in Jesus, in whom is the fullness of life. And Jesus in the Fourth Gospel is always on the side of this true law.

## **2. Every law should resound with the voice of God**

Torah, in the community of Israel, was the voice of God. A true law, in any human community, should reflect the voice of God, the voice which always seeks the good of humans. That is why every law, if it reflects this voice of God, will seek the good of humans. The law, any law, is not an end in itself; it is only a means for life, a life filled with peace which comes from God. The Torah, as the law for the people of Israel, was no exception. The Torah, as law, reflected the voice of God. All four Gospels uphold this truth, but it occupies a place of great significance in the Fourth Gospel.

By now we are well familiar with the fact that the concept of law in the Fourth Gospel is never negative. It has a positive function of bearing witness to the coming of Jesus. A true adherent of the Torah will find his way to Jesus, because that is its very aim. It is about Jesus that Moses wrote in the Law (1,45; 5,46). The examples of Nathanael and the Samaritan woman are illustrations of this fact. Our analysis showed that under the fig tree Nathanael was probably busy with his research on the One about whom Moses wrote in the Law when Philip brings him the precise answer he was looking for. The Samaritans were more strict with regard to adherence to the Law than the Jews were. A whole

**Samaritan community acclaims Jesus as the expected Messiah, the Savior of the world. What the law foretold is now fulfilled in Jesus.**

**The Law finds its fulfillment in Jesus. This is one of the important themes in the Fourth Gospel. It runs through the whole of the Gospel explicitly and implicitly. Jesus' words and deeds are according to the Law. The law had practically foretold everything Jesus had said and done and so it finds its fulfillment in Jesus (1,45; 5,39; 7,22; 12,34; 15,25; 19,7). The functions conveyed by different symbols such as manna (bread), water, light, way, etc., which once stood for the Torah are now fulfilled in a surpassing manner by Jesus. Jesus stands for all that was promised by the law, because only Jesus has the words of eternal life (6,68). Possession of life in Jesus is not an abstract concept in comparison with the precepts of the law, but his very person who is the Incarnation of the Logos, the Word of God. It is this person, Jesus Christ, who is given to the believers in the form of grace and truth (1,17) and as the New Commandment of love (13,34). We see, thus, the convergence of the realities of law and love in the person of Jesus.**

### **3. Law in the Fourth Gospel is relative; love is absolute**

**The value of the law was only relative because it had a preparatory function. The relative value of the law gives way to the Presence of Jesus as "grace and**

truth," that is, love as the absolute value. This theme of love is developed mostly in the second section of the Gospel. But as Moses and his law have only a preparatory function for the coming of Jesus, so also does the first section of the Fourth Gospel. It is not just a coincidence that the very structure of the Gospel points in a symbolic manner to the realities of law and love and their relationship. In this sense, John 1,17, not only opens a window on the meaning of the law in the whole Gospel, but consequently, also opens a window on the reality of love in the Fourth Gospel. The same idea was again conveyed in 13,34 without the mention of the term law, but with the mention of the New Commandment of love.

Yet there is a distinction between these gifts, i.e. law and love. Law was distinct from the giver who is God. In the gift of love, there is the unity of the giver and the gift. Jesus is the giver and, at the same time, the gift. He is the same gift as grace and truth in 1,17 or as the New Commandment at 13,34. Jesus is the giver of grace and truth while at the same time being the Person who embodies grace and truth. Love is the personification of himself when he gives to the believers. It is the giving of the person of Jesus himself out of love to the ones who believe in him. Both the gifts - the gift of law and the gift of love - culminate in the person of Jesus providing life to the believers.

#### **4. Law was parochial; love is universal**

The gift of law was confined to a particular social community, Israel. The gift of love through the person of Jesus is meant for the whole world. Jesus draws all humans to himself. If God loved the chosen people of **Israel** and gave them the Torah as the expression of his love, now God loves the **world** so much that He gives His Only-begotten son (3,16). The law was relative and limited while the gift of love through Jesus is absolute and universal.

#### **5. Love is the summit of Jesus' mission**

Thus we see the culminating point of Jesus' coming into the world and his proclamation of the message of love. It is the cause, purpose and the culminating point of Jesus' mission into the world. If life is attained by believing (20,31), it is manifested in love. This love is the self-gift of Jesus himself, the present and presence of Jesus. Jesus continues to live among the disciples when they fulfill his commandment of love, as he himself fulfilled his Father's commandment. As we have already seen, the terms grace and truth manifest the presence of God Himself in His glory. Jesus perpetuates this presence among the disciples in the world by love. This has become possible for the first time in the history of the world because of the coming of Jesus into the world. It

is in this sense that the commandment of Jesus is new. The commandment of Jesus is new (13,34) not merely because it is different from the old commandments (the law), but because it is altogether a new beginning in the history of the world. It is new because the **disciples ought to love as Jesus himself did**. He defines the concept of love anew when as Master and Lord Jesus stoops down to serve his disciples who are in the ranks of "servants." This has nowhere, nor at any time in the world, been even heard of. That is why Jesus gives himself as the model.

Love and law are related to each other in the Fourth Gospel in the fact that they both draw their source to God. Both are gifts from God as we can understand from the verses 1,17 and 13,34. Law was given through Moses and love, whether in the form of grace and truth or as the New Commandment, was given through Jesus Christ. Law is a gift external to the believers, whereas love is internal. Love is the New Covenant, prophesied by the prophets of old, in which God pours out His own Spirit on His people so that they will observe His commandments without the need to be taught by any human teacher.

## **6. Jesus' love is the source and goal of any concept of love**

The concept of love according to John is the giving of oneself in service to the other, even to the lowest form of service, and then the giving of one's life too as an expression of love for the other. This is the love which Jesus taught and lived. The disciple, the one who is united to Jesus by believing in him and belonging to him, should do the same. This is the way the disciple proclaims his love for Jesus to the whole world (13,35). Witnessing is an integral part of the concept of love in the Fourth Gospel. Through this act of love, the disciple perpetuates the love demonstrated by Jesus. The disciple, by loving one another just as Jesus did, makes the presence of Jesus not only in his own community but also for everyone in the whole world. Such practice of love is also vital for the existence of the disciple himself. Jesus' imagery of the vine and the branches is a beautiful illustration of the commandment of love. The section 15,1-17 is a commentary on 13,34f.<sup>30</sup> It repeats the commandment of love twice (15,12.17) and explains it. Jesus declares at 13,35 that if the disciples possess love<sup>31</sup> then everyone will come to know that they are the disciples of Jesus. The section 15,1-17 explains what this true discipleship means: remaining in union

<sup>30</sup> BULTMANN, *The Gospel*, 529.

<sup>31</sup> This is one of the few occasions where we find the term ἀγάπη (love) in the Fourth Gospel in noun form. Of the seven occurrences of this term in noun form, this is the first time it appears in the Book of Glory; the other occurrences are: four times in chapter 15: vv.9, 10 (twice) and v.13; once in 17,26 and once in 5,42.

and branches. The union with Jesus is the source of life for the disciple. Love produces life.

### **Conclusion**

The concept of love in the Fourth Gospel is a call to the disciples, that is, to all those who believe in him and belong to him, to live like Jesus did. If God's love was the cause and purpose of Jesus' coming into the world (3,16) with the aim of providing life, it was also his work in the world (13,1). God's declaration of love relationship which started with the giving of the law through Moses finds its definitive and final fulfillment in the Incarnation of His only Son, who imparts himself in the gift of love to provide life. We may fittingly say that love is the fulfillment of the law. What was manifested in a seminal form in the reality of the law comes to full blossom in the reality of love. That law is a means to the goal of a meaningful and peaceful human life is clearly illustrated in the relationship between the concepts of law and love in the Fourth Gospel. If law is the means and life is the goal, not only in the Fourth Gospel, but by their very concepts, then this is beautifully portrayed in the Fourth Gospel.

***The true purpose of law is revealed in simplicity***

If the only aim of the law is life, i.e. the well-being of humans, then the law, which echoes the voice of God, showing His ways to humans, should be simple. And this is what the gift of love through the person of Jesus demonstrates. Jesus does not proclaim to his disciples a charter or constitution, consisting of innumerable clauses or commandments under the umbrella of an identity called law. Jesus does not use the term law at all when he gives the New Commandment. What he tells the disciples is just to follow his example. It is the one commandment and the only commandment of Jesus.

For Jesus, love is the only law or commandment, whichever we may call it. Nothing else counts, except love. This is the law of God where only the well-being of humans is taken into consideration, not the fulfillment of word by word regulations or guidelines whether written or oral.

If the well-being of humans is the only value and not a written or oral code of rules, we may wonder if the concept of law itself loses its meaning. There may be more exceptions than rules. For Jesus in the Fourth Gospel, this is true. For him each human is unique and so each person may behave in a different manner according to his mission. For example, Peter was different from the

disciple whom Jesus loved. If each person is unique, then a law cannot be the same for every person. In a sense, there should be different law for each individual. But, what unites these different individuals is their common call in Jesus, a call which does not disregard their different temperaments and qualities. This was clearly shown in the roles of Peter, the disciple whom Jesus loved and also other disciples. The disciples are united in fulfilling the commandment of Jesus but each in his own way.

For his part, the disciple Peter continues the work of Jesus on earth, as does every other disciple, because of his love for Jesus. The possession of real love for Jesus is a necessity to feed the lambs. He not only possessed real love for Jesus but also proclaimed it by offering his life.

For his part, the disciple whom Jesus loved is also an example of a true follower of Jesus. This disciple (whom Jesus loved) proclaims the love of Jesus not by martyrdom but by living probably a ripe old age (21,23) and sharing the message of Jesus. So the disciples proclaim the love of Jesus not in a uniform manner, but in their unique manner. For this disciple the love of Jesus counts above everything else, even his own identity. He draws this from the fact that he is loved by Jesus. He shares this love of Jesus with all humans by writing about the love he has for Jesus, although only a part of what Jesus said and did. The

whole world contain if he he wanted to write everything (21,25). For John too, true love entails not only possession it but also proclamation. And this is beautifully portrayed through the role of the disciple whom Jesus loved. This disciple, not only loved Jesus in an absolute manner, but he proclaims this love to the whole world by writing the Fourth Gospel. It is impossible for any reader of the Fourth Gospel not to be touched by the love of this disciple for Jesus. Nothing else in the world counts for this disciple except this one and only thing: Jesus and his uncompromising love for him. It is most appropriate to call him, "the apostle of love."

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