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**WHEN “FAREWELL” IS NOT “GOODBYE”:
A RHETORICAL READING
OF THE
FAREWELL DISCOURSE--JOHN 13-17**

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by

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ABSTRACT

The Farewell Discourse is a unique and climactic portion of John's Gospel which serves as a hinge on which the entire Gospel narrative pivots from Jesus' public ministry to his Passion. Shallow readings of this Discourse often pass over or ignore significant aspects of the text, especially the instruction and preparation Jesus was giving by word and action to make ready his disciples to continue his mission to the world after his departure. Other readings (notably form-critical) see the text as disarranged and therefore not a coherent whole.

A thorough analysis employing the elements of Greco-Roman rhetoric has shown that there is a rhetorical dimension to the Discourse which makes sense of the text as a coherent whole. The Farewell Discourse was found to follow a rhetorical arrangement which gives a literary explanation to some assumed form-critical problems such as the ending at 14:31. Not only does this rhetorical structure give appropriate closure and transition with movement from one topic to another, it does so with a chiasmic arrangement of the major topics.

This thesis demonstrates that assumed disarrangements, repetitions and amplifications that have appeared problematic to other approaches do not detract from, but actually enhance the ability of the text to move and persuade. Rhetorical analysis is thus capable of giving insights into the text that otherwise might be overlooked or ignored. Throughout the Discourse, Jesus' *ethos* (character) as the divine one who "knows" stands out boldly and his persuasive appeal (*logos*) to the *pathos* (emotional response) of the disciples is strong, both as he seeks to move them beyond their present sorrow and distress and as he prepares them to face the future realistically and with confidence. The fourth evangelist thus presents Jesus operating rhetorically (in act as well as speech) and strategically uses Jesus' interaction with his disciples to seek a rhetorical outcome with his readers.

This rhetorical approach provides a bridge between literary approaches on the one hand (which can proceed at the expense of taking into account the historical context) and historical critical approaches on the other (which can proceed at the expense of hearing the text speak as text). A rhetorical reading accounts for both literary and historical dimensions of the text. This thesis demonstrates that it is an effective interpretive methodology which elucidates dimensions of the text not adequately accounted for by other approaches.

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my wife and daughter who patiently endured the many hours spent away from them in the course of this degree program, to my parish of Ascension whose support and encouragement have been so willingly given, and to two of my sainted teachers in the faith, the Rev. Dr. Harold Buls and the Rev. Dr. Robert Preus whose words and example started me down this path.

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INTRODUCTION

Prolegomena

Chapters 13-17 of St. John's Gospel, often referred to as the "Farewell Discourse", form a unique and climactic portion of the Gospel. Its content as a lengthy discourse of Jesus on the night in which he was betrayed, prior to his arrest in the garden (18:1-3), is found only in John. The fact that John possesses a uniqueness among the Gospels has been long established and the Farewell Discourse reflects this distinctive character in its length, use of symbols, and its content which finds no real parallel in the Synoptics.

Its climactic nature is derived from both its place in the Gospel and its subject matter. The "Book of Signs", as John 1-12 is often called, reaches its denouement with the end of Jesus' public ministry. He gives his last public discourse, ending on a note of eschatological warning (12:46-48). Later (18:1ff), the threats, plotting, and murderous intents of those who oppose him come to fruition with his arrest, trial, suffering, and death.

But standing on the threshold between the close of his public ministry and his ensuing passion is the Farewell Discourse. As Paul Minear declares, "There is little doubt that John intended these five chapters (13-17) to form a unit and to serve as a major pivot in his narrative. They mark the point of transition from Jesus' ministry to his Passion."¹ Here is the link which effectively connects all that has gone before (chapters 1-12) to the very purpose for which Jesus declares he came into the world from the Father (3:13-18; 6:38-40; 8:28-29; 10:11, 17-18; 12:27, 31-33). This purpose is the focal point of a plot which rapidly unfolds from chapter 18 on. The Farewell Discourse, then, is the hinge upon which the entire narrative turns. Within this discourse we hear Jesus speaking of his "going back to God", his betrayal, his going where they (the disciples) cannot come, the world's hatred of him, its hatred of them, and its desire to kill them. Thus, Jesus' imminent departure creates an exigency to which the entire discourse speaks.

As we shall see, this is unquestionably a farewell speech in which Jesus gives

¹ Paul Minear, "To Ask and to Receive", 229.



consolation and encouragement to his disciples in view of his impending death. However, there appears to be another dimension to the import of Jesus' words which has not, as yet, been fully explored. This involves the use of symbols in words and actions to move the disciples to a particular course of action following Jesus' departure. In other words, the purpose of the discourse in John 13-17 goes beyond a farewell sprinkled with words of consolation and encouragement. While it includes these aspects, it is designed to prepare and move the disciples in their calling, their vocation, their mission which will follow Jesus' departure back to the Father. "Farewell" is only one motif, and may not be the most important, in this discourse.²

Diachronic/Synchronic : A Paradigm Shift

As one surveys recent works dealing with New Testament biblical studies, it becomes clear that a shift has been taking place in the selection of interpretative models. The shift seems to be away from an exclusive use of diachronic historical-critical methodology to the more frequent employment of synchronic methods.³ This is a response, at least in part, to the desire to understand what meaning the text had for its first hearers. As Terence Keegan reminds us, "the biblical authors did not write for critics; they wrote for their readers. The nature of their writing was such that it could be read and understood by readers without the aid of critics or exegetes."⁴

Concerning diachronic historical-critical methods Keegan says, "they can indeed uncover a great deal about the genetic sequence preceding a text, but they do not yield a great deal of insight about the text itself. The various synchronic approaches . . . are primarily concerned with enabling the text itself to yield the depth and richness of its

² Following traditional convention, the designation "Farewell Discourse" will identify John 13-17 in this paper, but caution must be used so that this term does not impress too narrow a scope on the discourse's purpose.

³ While the terms diachronic and synchronic ("through time" and "with time") refer in linguistics to the evolution of a language and to the static side of a language, respectively, in interpretive methodologies they describe dealing with the historical progression of a text (what lies behind the text, its prehistory), on the one hand, and dealing with the text in its final form, on the other. See Richard Soulen, *Handbook of Biblical Criticism*, 47; Terence Keegan, *Interpreting The Bible*, 24-32; Fernando Segovia, *The Farewell Of The Word*, 39; and Mark Stibbe, *John As Storyteller*, 1, 5-6.

⁴ T. Keegan, *Interpreting The Bible*, 10.

meaning.”⁵ But even the genetic ancestry of a text can prove elusive. Speaking of the level of theological reflection in the Gospel of John as compared to the Synoptics, John Painter states, “it has reached a stage where the sources can no longer be detected with any certainty.”⁶

On account of conclusions such as these, some scholars have begun to shift their interpretative paradigms towards those dealing synchronically with the text. Fiorenza declares, “all scholarly attempts to arrive at a definite one-to-one interpretation of certain passages [of Revelation] or of the whole book seem to have failed. This failure suggests that the historical-critical paradigm of research has to be complemented by a different approach that can do justice to the multivalent character of the language and imagery in Rev.”⁷

Concerning the redactional approach as the preeminent methodology employed on the Farewell Discourse, Fernando Segovia states, “Given this approach’s failure to deal with the present shape and arrangement of the farewell discourse from a literary rather than a historical perspective, it is now justifiably seen as much too narrow and restrictive in vision and scope, as overly concerned with the excavative dimensions of the text while unconcerned with its present literary structure and development . . . there exists, therefore, an unquestionable need for a radical change in basic orientation, for a view of the present speech as an artistic and strategic whole.”⁸

In his *John As Storyteller*, Mark Stibbe adds his voice to those calling for the use of methods of interpretation which deal with the completed text as it lies before us: “traditional methods of interpretation were more concerned with what lay behind NT narratives than with their form and their literary, artistic features . . . none of them sought to answer the question, ‘What artistry is there in these NT stories?’.”⁹ Citing the narrative criticism of Rhoads and Michie (*Mark as Story*, 1982), Stibbe approvingly notes that they “focus on the final form of the text as narrative rather than on its hypothesized prehistory.”¹⁰ Working in a more synchronic manner with the text in its final form will

⁵ Ibid., 30.

⁶ J. Painter, *Reading John’s Gospel Today*, 7.

⁷ E. Fiorenza, *The Book of Revelation*, 21.

⁸ F. Segovia, *The Farewell Of The Word*, 48.

⁹ M. Stibbe, *John As Storyteller*, 5.

be the approach followed in the rhetorical method I utilize.

Hypothesis

What is undertaken here is an analysis of the Farewell Discourse (John 13-17) utilizing rhetorical methodology to study the author's presentation of the symbolic words and actions of Jesus. That symbols are indeed employed with these words and actions in the Gospel of John is borne out by C.K. Barrett who links symbol in the Gospel's *speech* with "parable", and symbol in *actions* with "signs" (or actions) of Jesus.¹¹ In the present study, the unity and coherence of the text in its final form will be demonstrated and the meaning and purpose of the discourse and how it accomplishes that purpose will be elucidated.

John 13-17 is a unique and climactic portion of the Gospel in which the evangelist depicts Jesus employing various symbols in his actions and words to prepare and encourage his disciples for their ministry which will follow his ascension. It will be demonstrated that this narrative is a coherent, unified whole and possesses its own symbolic universe. With the majority of symbols, Jesus himself is shown defining and modeling for the disciples what they themselves will become for their community and for those not yet part of their community (John 17:20). He, after all, is "the good shepherd" (John 10) and instructs his disciples for *their* imminent shepherding, making use of rhetorical language with symbols to teach, persuade, and motivate them. If indeed the exigency which calls forth the evangelist's rhetorical use of symbols remains essentially the same in this world until Jesus' parousia, the significance of this language will remain applicable to every generation that awaits the Lord's appearing.

The Farewell Discourse is more than merely a speech of consolation. Jesus himself is portrayed as the one who defines and models what the disciples are to be in their own quickly-approaching ministry to the community of believers in Jesus and to the world. The goal of this research will be to test this hypothesis by analyzing the rhetorical dimensions of this portion of the Gospel. Such a rhetorical reading will better help us understand how it was most likely perceived by its original audience.

¹⁰ Ibid., 6.

¹¹ C.K. Barrett, "Symbolism", 76.

CHAPTER ONE

THE FAREWELL DISCOURSE: A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This review of the literature on the Farewell Discourse will be divided into two main sections. The first will review scholarly articles and monographs on the subject. The second will give an overview of the positions taken in scholarly commentaries on the Gospel.

This review will demonstrate that many of the readings of the Farewell Discourse are quite shallow, that most do not pay attention to the rhetorical dimension of this text which is monologue/dialogue in character (and therefore lends itself well to a rhetorical analysis), and that the history of traditions approaches tend to see in the Farewell Discourse a text that lacks cohesiveness because of disarrangements and repetitions. A lack of development of certain key themes, generalizations that may not be textual, and failure to deal with the literary structure and intended sense of the text will be noted throughout this review.

Works on the Farewell Discourse which are devotional in nature were also examined. While these works do fill a particular niche with their approach to the text, they are of limited usefulness in testing my hypothesis. These devotional treatments are characterized by generalizations, the passing over of whole portions of text, the lack of exegetical precision, and the failure to develop key motifs in the text. All of this combines to provide too shallow and too eclectic a reading for my purposes. These devotional sources will be noted in a separate section at the end of the bibliography.

Scholarly Articles and Monographs

The articles and monographs in the following discussion will be grouped according to methodological approach, not by year of publication. It will be noted that a number of these originate in South Africa. Stephen Moore observes that South Africa has been a “significant center of activity” for Gospel study using nonbiblical literary theory and criticism.¹ Since the 1970’s, notes Moore, discourse analysis (text linguistics) has had a

formative impact on scholarship there.

In the following categories, the various studies have been arranged according to their general approach to the text. Some overlap between these categories is unavoidable. As again noted by Moore: with the proliferation of new literary methods in biblical criticism, “the literature defies systematization.”² The following divisions will serve adequately to categorize the selected articles and monographs dealing with the Farewell Discourse.

Discourse Analysis

J.C. De Smidt gives a discourse analysis of John 15:1-8.³ The unity of the disciples and the motifs of loneliness/reassurance are stressed as Jesus’ emphasis here. No mention is made of their future ministry or Jesus’ preparation of them for it. Speaking of the context of John 15 he states, “John 13-14 reflects in broad outline the content of Jesus’ final teachings to his disciples the night before his crucifixion. Jesus endeavors to strengthen the faith of his disciples and to teach them about discipleship, unity and service even during difficult times.”⁴ Again, nothing is said of Jesus being their model and preparing them for ministry. About the closest he comes to it is when he states that through his connection to Jesus, the disciple “lives a godly life, characterized by virtue, good deeds and the preaching of Jesus to unbelievers.”⁵ But this really describes Christians in general and does not identify the special role the smaller group of immediate disciples would have within the community.

D.F. Tolmie also presents a discourse analysis, this one of John 17:1-26. Tolmie’s method for examining the structure of the prayer is the utilization of what he calls subsections, units and colons. Shifts in focus in the text become major lines of demarcation for him. In his analysis, *what* the text says is subordinated to *how* it is structured. Once the semantic architecture has been established, the actual meaning of the text as it exists is not the focus of attention. For example, the statement, “the semantic relationship between colon 10e and 10f is additive different consequential” is a description

¹ S. Moore, *Literary Criticism and the Gospels*, xiv.

² *Ibid.*, x v.

³ J.C. De Smidt, “A Perspective On John 15:1-8”, 255.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 257.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 267.

of John 17:8 which is a clear affirmation of the disciples' faith.⁶ But one would never know that from the "discourse analysis" of the verse.

Tolmie comes close to identifying the forthcoming ministry of the disciples and its source in Jesus when he says: "In colon 28a-b the disciples' task is mentioned. At first glance it may seem as if the semantic relationship between colon 28a and 28b is dyadic comparative, indicating the disciples' task as being analogous to that of Jesus. However, there is more to it . . . the disciples' mission is *rooted* in that of Jesus. Therefore the semantic relationship between colon 28a and 28b should be described as both dyadic comparative and reason-result."⁷ More attention is given to how the individual semantic parts are linked than to what the text actually means. In the end, the technicalities involved in the method greatly overshadow the thrust of the text.

The function of focalization in John 13-17 is analyzed by Tolmie⁸ using the theoretical framework of Rimmon-Kenen, who in turn follows G. Genette in narrative theory. Tolmie's analysis focuses mainly on the effect conveyed to the readers by the narrator. The unique position the eleven disciples will have as successors to Jesus is not discussed. Jesus being their model is not discussed. Jesus' consolation and teaching of the eleven is seen as the occasion to do the same with the readers.

Lombard and Oliver offer an interesting observation on the Farewell Discourse in their work. They point out that there is a clear point of demarcation at the end of chapter 12 with 11:1 to 12:50 forming the *hinge* between the Book of Signs and the Book of Glory. Chapters 13-17, the Farewell Discourse, become the introduction to Jesus' Passion. However, since John 20:1 to 21:22 also comprises a farewell discourse, the departure Jesus refers to in 13-17 is his *ascension*.

John 13-17 consists of two episodes (13:1-20 & 13:21-30) and ten discourses. With the first episode (footwashing), Lombard & Oliver point out the missionary dimension of the disciples' assignment and conduct "whereby they are sent to do as Jesus did and to demonstrate that the nature of Jesus' 'doing' is service by love."⁹ They claim

⁶ D.F. Tolmie, "A Discourse Analysis Of John 17:1-26", 411.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 413.

⁸ D.F. Tolmie, "The Function Of Focalisation In John 13-17", 1991.

⁹ H.A. Lombard and W.H. Oliver, "A Working Supper In Jerusalem: John 13:1-38 Introduces Jesus' Farewell Discourses", 363.

“The *mission-motif* runs like a golden thread throughout the discourses. It has all and everything to do with Jesus’ advent and especially with his departure back to the Father after his mission was perfectly and completely accomplished.”¹⁰ But what about the disciples’ mission that was spoken of with the first episode and Jesus as the role model for it? The authors present a very good treatment of the overall setting and structure of John 13-17, but they appear to miss the actual purpose and function of the Farewell Discourse, namely that the evangelist seeks to present Jesus preparing his disciples for their ministry to their community and to the world in light of his imminent departure and does so rhetorically in Jesus’ words and actions.

Thematic Approaches

B.A. Du Toit takes more of a thematic approach to his literary analysis. Faith is seen as a major, if not the major, theme in the Gospel of John. Du Toit speaks of “degrees” of faith: real Christian faith and inadequate faith.¹¹ In the Farewell Discourse, says Du Toit, Jesus’ dealings with his disciples come to a climax. Indeed, being finally brought to real Christian faith, a higher faith, is the purpose of his discourses. Thus it can be said that when they finally affirm their faith in Jesus as having come from God and being equal to God and therefore being God (16:30), “they have reached the maximum ‘degree’ of faith which was possible, so to speak, before Pentecost.”¹² Du Toit concludes that Jesus wanted the disciples to know who he really is and speaks to that in the Farewell Discourse. But this is quite a generalized statement. There is a profundity to the Discourse which exceeds Du Toit’s conclusion about it. Jesus does not speak only of his own identity, but of that of the disciples’ as well. There is an emphasis on their preparation for the apostolic ministry in John 13-17 which is neglected here.

Bruce Woll focuses his attention on John 13:31-14:31.¹³ He has two presuppositions with which he works: first, that 13:31-14:31 is a distinct literary unit; second, that there is more than one farewell discourse in the Gospel. Woll states that he

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 366.

¹¹ B.A. Du Toit, “The Aspect Of Faith In The Gospel Of John With Special Reference To The Farewell Discourses Of Jesus”, 333.

¹² *Ibid.*, 335.

¹³ B. Woll, “The Departure of ‘The Way’: The first Farewell Discourse in the Gospel of John”, 228.

wants to clarify the important role of the Farewell Discourse in the Gospel. His is also a thematic approach. He says that the theme of discontinuity runs all the way through the first farewell discourse.

For Woll, “succession” is also a major theme and is the unifying feature of the whole first discourse. With this subject of succession, Woll comes very close to a major point made in my hypothesis. He says of the disciples: “They inherit the role occupied by the Son during His stay on earth.”¹⁴ They have an “exalted status”¹⁵ as successor-agents. Woll is actually very close to points that I have made already: (1) he believes the Farewell Discourse serves a distinct purpose in the Gospel; (2) he sees it as a pivotal point in the overall Johannine narrative, a link or hinge between past and future; and (3) he identifies the clear, distinct relationship between Jesus and the disciples he sends out and their identity as successor-agents with a derived authority. However, Woll’s presuppositions that John 13-17 is not a unified literary unit, but is discontinuous, and that there are two originally mutually exclusive traditions of succession in chapter 14 keep him from fully developing the above points in light of the entire discourse.

In his scholarly monograph,¹⁶ C.H. Dodd takes an essentially thematic approach to the Fourth Gospel in the first half of his book and retains that thematic focus in his interpretation of the text. It is clear that Dodd does the same generalizing seen in so many others. For example, in connection with the foot washing in John, Dodd points to the importance of water as a powerful symbol in this Gospel.¹⁷ It is an instrument of regeneration (3:5); a vehicle of eternal life (4:13-14); the means whereby disciples “have part” with their master (13:8); and a sign of final and effective cleansing. Having said this, however, Dodd does not discuss any connection between Jesus’ actions (vv. 5-11), his exhortation to his disciples (vv. 14-15), and their “being sent” (vv. 16, 20).

The same is true of his handling of the work of the Spirit: it is generalized as a promise to all believers down through the ages with no specific focus on the work of the original disciples. The important “branches/fruit” theme in chapter 15 is approached in the same way, passing over v. 16 without comment. The same generalizing is found with his

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 235.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 234.

¹⁶ C.H. Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel* (1978).

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 402. See also Dodd, *Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel*, 62.

understanding of the disciples' responsibility to witness in conjunction with the Spirit (chapters 15-16).

Dodd makes no comment on the basis of Jesus' prayer in chapter 17 concerning Jesus' disciples (original or later ones) being consecrated and sent to be proclaimers of the word through which others come to believe. He does not identify the Farewell Discourse, as I have, as a discourse heavy in mission emphasis.

According to E. Lussier, "Jesus' farewell discourse and prayer (ch. 14-17) is an interpretation of Jesus' completed work on earth and of his relation to both believers and the world after his resurrection and ascension."¹⁸ But is this interpretation a unified, coherent whole? "John has not planned the whole complex as a unity; the contents are loosely strung together with very little progression of thought, however the chapters are arranged."¹⁹ Lussier claims they are based on several eucharistic homilies which John pieced together for inclusion in the gospel. "We need not suppose that they were actually spoken by Jesus in the course of the Last Supper."²⁰ He does say, "It must also be shown how they are to carry on the work of his mission, which has been accomplished in one sense, but still remains to be begun as far as the Gentiles are concerned."²¹ But nothing more is said about this in so far as their role is concerned.

Lussier deals with the Farewell Discourse in a thematic fashion, expounding on themes as they appear in the text. He calls chapter 17 the High Priestly Prayer and observes that just as the high priest on the Day of Atonement prayed for self, priests and levites, and the whole congregation of Israel, so Jesus prays for self, his disciples, and all future believers. "This is the priest-victim's oblation-intercession, on the eve of his sacrifice, asking that his work may continue through those whom the Father had given him."²² Indeed, Jesus' prayer for his disciples has as a purpose, "that they will be fitted for the work to which he is now sending them."²³

Lussier's understanding of the Farewell Discourse as a patchwork of independent

¹⁸ E. Lussier, *Christ's Farewell Discourse*, 2.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 4.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 4.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 9.

²² *Ibid.*, 72.

²³ *Ibid.*, 83

pieces “strung together” without an overall unity is not an uncommon one, especially among form and redaction critical scholars. Seeing the present form of the text as problematic due to “disarrangements” is widely held in varying degrees. It can be as simple as claiming that a particularly vexing verse (14:31) is a later insertion;²⁴ or holding that a certain theme is out of place, having been added later;²⁵ or maintaining that there has been a complete transposition of whole chapters (15-17) which really belong elsewhere and not in their present context.²⁶ The approach followed in my research will be to deal with the text as we have it, in its final form, analyzing its rhetorical dimension.

That the Farewell Discourse has been of interest down through the centuries is demonstrated by C.P. Bammel²⁷ in a study of the discourse in patristic exegesis. It is observed that patristic exegetes rarely dealt with the Farewell Discourse as a literary form. They mainly devoted themselves to a verse-by-verse style of interpreting. This common approach among them is found in their dealing with problems presented by the text: apparent clashes between the Old Testament and New Testament, differences between the Gospels, and differences between John and the Synoptics. Also, they were involved in refuting heretics. As far as the purpose of the Discourse is concerned, Augustine is cited as remarking that Jesus’ purpose in chapter 17 was to teach his disciples and future generations. However, beyond general statements of teaching and consoling, Bammel reports no emphasis among these exegetes on the Farewell Discourse accomplishing a specific purpose of readying the disciples for ministry or of showing Jesus as the example to follow.

E. Wilson has a rather unique approach in that he sees the Gospel of John

²⁴ See P. Corsen, “Die Abschiedsreden Jesu in dem vierten Evangelium”, 125-42, who sees 14:31 as an addition to the text based on Mark 14:42. It was meant to point to the great similarity in content and context between John and the Synoptics.

²⁵ See J. Becker, *Das Evangelium nach Johannes*, 220, who claims that the new commandment to love in 13:34 is out of place in its present context. He says it was added (along with 15:1-17) at a later time and actually changes the thrust of the original discourse.

²⁶ See H. Becker, “Die Reden des Johannesevangelium und der Still der gnostischen Offenbarungsrede.” *Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments*, 68 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1956) who claims on the basis of 14:31 that there was a later transposition of chapters 15-17 from an earlier position (in chapter 13, in or near vv.31-38) to their present location. 18:1, he says, should immediately follow 14:31.

²⁷ C.P. Bammel, “The Farewell Discourse In Patristic Exegesis”, 193-207.

structured around the three-fold office of Christ as Prophet, Priest and King.²⁸ His thinking follows this outline:

1:1-18 Preface

1:19-12:50 Public ministry of Christ--*Prophet*

13-17 Upper Room, discourses & intercessory prayer--*Priest*

18-20 Gethsemane, arrest, trial, crucifixion, resurrection--
King

In John 13-17 Jesus is identified in his priestly office. However, this priestly office is not among the seven topics Wilson addresses as the seven principal doctrines of chapters 13-17. The footwashing in chapter 13 is connected to humility and also to the two-fold washing of priests (Leviticus 8:6), but then he generalizes beyond the apostles to all Christians. He does not mention verses 16 & 20 and the concept of being “sent” in this context.

With regard to the work of the Holy Spirit in 14:26 and 16:13, Wilson does see the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures through these disciples, but makes no comment on their role as being distinct from that of other believers. In other words, he passes from generalized statements about all Christians to this one about those who wrote the New Testament without noting the shift in any way. Any statements about their ministry as special witnesses sent by him are only incidental. Wilson’s overall approach in applying the prophet/priest/king outline to John’s Gospel is forced and does not actually flow from the text. For example, the function of the High Priest in offering up the sacrifice and shedding the blood on the Day of Atonement would really be found most strikingly in chapters 18 and 19 with Jesus offering up himself as the sacrificial “lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world” (John 1:29)--which also places a distinctly priestly reference even earlier in the Gospel. The prophet/priest/king motif is found throughout the Gospel and not in a sequential or linear unfolding.

A very different approach is presented by J.N. Suggit who proceeds to examine the Farewell Discourse through “liturgical spectacles.” In John 13-14, he says, “John is writing for his own community and explaining to them the significance of the life of Jesus for their own life of discipleship.”²⁹ The purpose of the Discourse for the original group

²⁸ T. Ernest Wilson, *The Farewell Ministry Of Christ*, 9-10.

²⁹ J.N. Suggit, “John 13-17 Viewed Through Liturgical Spectacles”, 48.

of disciples in the Upper Room is not addressed. The later religious community, he says, expressed their interests and beliefs in common, ritual actions--worship. John writes in such a way "that those within the community will recognize the meaning and validity of their liturgical acts."³⁰

Suggit claims that the main themes of the Farewell Discourse (unity, love, remaining in Jesus, the coming/going/coming of Jesus, vine and branches, prayer) are direct allusions to Christian worship, particularly the Eucharist. "John is writing a theological commentary not only on the meaning of the incarnation, but also on the meaning of the Eucharist."³¹

He also claims that in chapter 17 Jesus' prayer reminds the disciples of the profession of faith they made at their baptism. Frequent references to "the name" and receiving, knowing, and believing are said to point to this. Thus, an exposition of worship (baptism and the eucharist in particular) is said to be found in John 13-17. Nothing about the original context of Jesus in the upper room with his disciples or what that first level of the text had to say to the later community is discussed. Rather, it is what the later community has to say through the discourse that is primary here for Suggit. His claim that John 13-17 is a liturgical exposition primarily of the eucharist and baptism is strained. God's name is certainly connected to baptism, but baptism need not automatically be assumed just because God's name is invoked. Also, his conclusions about the eucharist are based largely on linguistic similarities between the Farewell Discourse and New Testament eucharistic texts as well as the assumption that John 6 is eucharistic, something which he assumes but does not demonstrate. What he sees as confirming references to eucharistic allusions in chapter 15 are unwarranted assumptions which claim too much.

Frank Stagg asserts that attempts to reorganize an assumed disarranged text in John 13-17 are in fact attempts to superimpose our own notion of "order" on John. He is of the opinion that "one should try to understand the text as it has reached us."³² Stagg recognizes that the text is a "revelatory event" and "heavy with symbolism."³³ However, while he sees footwashing pointing to more than just humility, namely to Christ's role as Servant and to the cross, he doesn't extend this to an application to Jesus' disciples and

³⁰ Ibid., 49.

³¹ Ibid., 54.

³² Frank Stagg, "The Farewell Discourses", 460.

³³ Ibid., 461.

their ministry. He applies it generally to all Christians. The same is done with the promised Paraclete in chapter 14; the vine, branches, fruit in chapter 15; the opposition of the world, the Paraclete and victory in chapters 15-16; and the farewell prayer in chapter 17. No specific reference is made to a special calling of the Twelve or to Jesus preparing them for their upcoming ministry with his departure being imminent.

J.A. Du Rand explores Johannine discipleship and says, "The shift of emphasis concerning the disciples, from being primarily his first followers to the ultimate designation of all later believers, is best seen in the Farewell Discourses . . . In such a way later believers are included in Johannine discipleship."³⁴ Here no distinction is seen or made between general discipleship and the special vocation to which these disciples were called. There is no recognition of the special place within the Christian community that these men would occupy. The Gospel of John is used mostly as a window through which one can see and describe the later Johannine community.

R. Lemmer analyzes the "coming-going-being sent" motif in the Farewell Discourse using narrative criticism. His goal is to elucidate the possible significance of this motif for the implied readers. Lemmer lines up with the likes of Segovia when he says of the discourse's unity: "Contrary to the notion that there is more than one farewell discourse, usually posited because of ostensible textual dislocations and the abrupt transition from 14:31 to 15:1, it is now posited that--from a narrator's point of view--there is only one discourse, embedded in one scene . . . From a narrative point of view the upper-room scene constitutes *one* setting and *one* event and it is assumed that all elements, including discourse, are subservient to the development of the plot concerning the identity of the protagonist."³⁵ But when he speaks of the purpose of the discourse, Lemmer speaks almost exclusively of later disciples.

Lemmer sees 13:1-30 as an inseparable introduction to the discourse proper for here the very basis for understanding the discourse is laid out.³⁶ Throughout, the implied

³⁴ J.A. Du Rand, "Perspectives On Johannine Discipleship According To The Farewell Discourses", 313.

³⁵ R. Lemmer, "A Possible Understanding By The Implied Reader, Of Some Of The *Coming-Going-Being Sent* Pronouncements, In The Johannine Farewell Discourses", 293.

³⁶ See also J. Beutler, *Habt keine Angst: Die erste johanneische Abschiedsrede (Joh 14)*, 9-11, who holds that 13:31-38 is the conclusion to 13:1-20 and therefore a formal part of the

readers are reminded that they, too, share in Jesus' presence and blessings as his first disciples did. Of Jesus' prayer Lemmer states, "Chapter 17 is also very much a rhetorical (from a narrative point of view) appeal to the readers."³⁷ "Jesus is not only to be their *role model* in fearful and ominous circumstances, but in that he actually prayed for *them* (17:20) when they would find themselves in similar circumstances."³⁸ But is he the role model for ministry? This is not discussed. Lemmer's conclusions concerning the function of the "coming-going-being sent" motif do not include mention of a specific ministry for which these disciples are being prepared. It is only potential persecution and other general considerations (which will apply to any readers) which are mentioned. When Jesus is identified as a role model, it is as a role model for all implied readers in so far as being sent and facing opposition are concerned. The other characters of the narrative are ones with whom they can identify, too, according to Lemmer.

James Drickamer deals with the important question, "To whom is Christ speaking in John 13-17?"³⁹ So many of the works cited here demonstrate confusion or lack of consistency in identifying this group. Drickamer tackles this question in quite a precise exegetical manner. He first observes that in the New Testament distinctions between Christians are common: Eph. 4:11; 2:19-21; 1 Cor. 12:14-20; Heb. 13:17. Then, within the Farewell Discourse, he notes passages indicating that the physically present Christ is speaking to the original disciples, not all Christians in general (14:25; 15:27; 16:4; 17:12). This he does by exegetically examining the language and context of each verse. He also includes those passages containing predictions of Christ's imminent death (13:19, 33; 14:3, 19, 20, 28; 16:7, 16, 23). Next come those passages containing the special promise of the sending of the Holy Spirit to the disciples in the upper room (14:26; 15:26; 16:13), especially in view of the immediate context of these verses with those cited above.

In 15:16 Drickamer demonstrates that this is a reference to Jesus' choosing of them farewell context. This is distinct from seeing 31-38 as a self-contained unit of discourse. And J. Schneider, "Die Abschiedsreden Jesu: Ein Beitrag zur Frage der Komposition von Johannes 13:31-17:26", 103-12, who sees 13:31-38 as the introduction to the entire farewell discourse. If 13:31-38 is the conclusion to 13:1-30 and the introduction to the rest of the discourse, then the entire text of chapters 13-17 is a unified whole.

³⁷ R. Lemmer, "A Possible Understanding By The Implied Reader, Of Some Of The *Coming-Going-Being Sent* Pronouncements, In The Johannine Farewell Discourses", 297.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ J. Drickamer, *To Whom Is Christ Speaking In John 13-17?*

for a special vocation, not election to faith. In 16:25 Jesus speaks no longer in figures to those to whom he *has* spoken in figures *before*: the original disciples. In 17:20 Christ speaks clearly of those he is with as the original disciples through whom others will come to believe. And 17:26 is closely linked to verse 20. The difference between the two distinct groups of disciples is clearly between *immediate* vs. *mediate* revelation.

Is there, then, an application of John 13-17 to all Christians? Most assuredly: John shows what Christ has done for all by his own work and through those whom he has sent. “John 13-17 records Christ’s words to His first disciples as He prepares them for their coming work to be His apostles and for the coming time when He would leave them through the death on the cross. Thus, John possesses a strong teaching concerning the apostolate and shows that the apostles were given gifts that they do not share in common with all of christendom.”⁴⁰

David Aune makes a very strong identification of the mission and office of the apostles. He describes their mission as “a continuation of the mission of Jesus under different circumstances.”⁴¹ And speaking of the necessity of the *imitatio Christi* for the Johannine community, Aune in commenting on John 13:16, 20 and 17:18 says, “According to the Fourth Gospel, the divine commission of Jesus was transferred to the disciples . . . the mission of the disciples is therefore virtually identical with the mission of Jesus in both purpose and significance.”⁴²

Although Aune recognizes the apostolic office and the fact that it is derived from Christ, he does not develop this line of thought, unfortunately. His interest is in using the text as a window to attempt a reconstruction of the extra-textual community. But his strong understanding of the identity of the apostles and their office as virtually identical to the mission of Jesus in both purpose and significance is itself significant.

Narratological/Sociological Approaches

A narratological and sociological perspective on John 13:31-14:31 is presented by J.A. Du Rand. He states, “The function of the narrative in the First Farewell Discourse is to strengthen discipleship.”⁴³ Discipleship is not a topic he develops, however.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, ii.

⁴¹ David E. Aune, *The Cultic Setting Of Realized Eschatology In Early Christianity*, 80.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 82.

Structural divisions within this discourse and the themes enunciated which give rise to these divisions are the emphasis. Most of the theological points made by Du Rand are generalizations concerning Jesus' departure/return, the disciples' love, identity of the protagonist, and the confusion of the disciples.

Du Rand then turns from narratology to a discussion of a sociological reading of the discourse and its description of the Johannine community. He opts for placing the Johannine community in quadrant "C" of Mary Douglas' sociological model, disagreeing with both Neyrey⁴⁴ and Domeris⁴⁵ who place it in quadrants "A" and "D", respectively. Thus, we have three respected scholars, all applying the same sociological model to the Johannine community and coming up with three entirely different characterizations. How helpful is this approach? The narratological approach seems to be mainly concerned with the structure and inner workings of the text (while not actually addressing the text's intended sense) and Douglas' sociological approach leaves us with totally differing conclusions from which to choose.

Yet another sociological approach to the Farewell Discourse is offered by J.A. Draper. He claims that the disciples' "mission to the world . . . does not seem to be emphasized."⁴⁶ Indeed, they are described as an introversionist, inward-looking religious sect which has retreated from an aggressive mission towards the world. For Draper, group and community dynamics ("intensive group interaction") as gleaned from sociological studies are found in Johannine exhortations to exhibit mutual love and to abide. Such intensive interaction is maintained, says Draper, by the Paraclete whose sociological function is to maintain boundaries for the community over against a hostile world. Draper's conclusions fall short on at least two counts: (1) his claim that the disciples' mission to the world is not emphasized cannot stand in light of the larger context of the Gospel as a whole nor in light of specific comments in the Farewell Discourse;⁴⁷ and (2)

⁴³ J.A. Du Rand, "A Story And A Community: Reading The First Farewell Discourse (John 13:31-14:31 From Narratological and Sociological Perspectives", 33.

⁴⁴ J.H. Neyrey, *An Ideology Of Revolt: John's Christology in Social-Science Perspective*.

⁴⁵ W.R. Domeris, "The Farewell Discourse: An Anthropological Perspective", 233-250.

⁴⁶ J.A. Draper, "The Sociological Function Of The Spirit/Paraclete In The Farewell Discourses In The Fourth Gospel", 17.

⁴⁷ See Witherington, *John's Wisdom*, pp. 255, 270 for a discussion of the mission aspect of the Farewell Discourse. Also, A. Köstenberger, *The Missions of Jesus and the Disciples*, 30-

while noting that mutual love and abiding do point to group and community dynamics, Draper fails to note the major themes of the disciples' purpose within their community, Jesus preparing them to carry out that purpose, and Jesus himself modelling in words and actions that ministry.

P.J. Hartin employs a narratological approach to examine the ethical perspective in the Farewell Discourse. Attention is directed at discovering the ethical dimension emerging from Jesus' relationship-response to the Father, to his disciples and to the world. From the footwashing to Jesus' prayer, we find the ethical role for the believer in relation to God and to one another. "The ethical implications of the narrative show that the self-sacrificing life of Jesus becomes the model by which followers of Jesus must direct their lives."⁴⁸ This is representative of Hartin's generalizing of Jesus' words and actions to all believers. No reference is made in this work to the imminent ministry of these disciples or to Jesus being a specific role model for them.

In a major narratological work, D.F. Tolmie notes that scholarly discussion of John 13-17 seems to be moving in the direction of analysis without recourse to historical criticism. He cites studies by O'Day, Segovia and Culpepper. Tolmie's study is also based on the assumption that the Fourth Gospel (and parts of it) makes sense as a literary whole and he classifies his work with those cited above. He says his narratological purpose is "to indicate the way in which the implied author moves the implied reader to accept a particular perspective on discipleship."⁴⁹

The narratological model to be followed is that of Rimmon-Kenan as described in her *Narrative Criticism: Contemporary Poetics*. This model focuses on three basic aspects of the narrative text: story, text, and narration. Most of the discussion of narration involves an analysis of the communication structure of the Gospel of John.

Story is defined by the surface structure and the deep structure of events. This is analyzed by using the semiotic square developed by Greimas. The analysis shows a similar value system underlying the sections of John 13-17, that of discipleship. While the deep structure of the rest of the Gospel is dominated by the identity of Jesus, John 13-17 is dominated by the importance of "discipleship". This lends weight to my contention that

31, 35-36.

⁴⁸ P.J. Hartin, "Remain In Me (John 15:5)", 347.

⁴⁹ D.F. Tolmie, *Jesus' Farewell To The Disciples*, 13.

Jesus is here emphasizing the role they are about to assume with his departure. While Jesus' identity is still important, he is concerned with them understanding *their own* identity and responsibilities and how they are to carry them out.

Much space is taken up by Tolmie describing his methodology for uncovering the surface structure of John 13-17. He borrows methodology eclectically from others and then gives a quite detailed analysis of the textual structure of the chapters. Tolmie is describing or categorizing the verbal action which takes place in the text. When a particular chapter has been laid out in this manner, text linguistics does not add much that cannot be found otherwise. For example, Raymond Brown states, "I must admit that rarely do I discover from the semiotic analyses what I have not recognized through careful textual exegesis."⁵⁰ Tolmie's linguistic approach strikes me to be like sentence diagramming: it may tell you in a mechanical fashion *how* the sentence (in this case, text) is put together, but it does not tell you *what* it means nor does it give life-application.

The third basic aspect of Rimmon-Kenan's model used by Tolmie is "text", the written discourse read by the reader. It is noted that the amount of text devoted to a single evening (out of a 2 1/2 year period) indicates the importance of the Farewell Discourse. *Focalization* (or point of view) in John 13-17 is identified by Tolmie as external, narrator-focalization. In other words, the narrator-focalizer functions as an "on-looker". There are a few examples of internal focalization (for instance, when inside views of Jesus' mind are given). The type of focalization utilized in John 13-17 stresses the uniqueness of Jesus and the intimate atmosphere of the discourse in the room.

According to Tolmie, the whole interaction between the implied author and implied reader is dominated by the ideological theme of Jesus being the Christ, the Son of God.⁵¹ In 13-17 discipleship is integrated into this theme so that the implied reader will be led to understand what discipleship really entails and persuade him to act accordingly. This, however, seems to be a rhetorical concern, not a narratological one and would best be elucidated by a rhetorical analysis.

I agree with Tolmie that emphasis is on the identity of Christ and an attempt to persuade the disciples to a course of action. But I believe these themes are more specific than he recognizes. It is not just Jesus as Son of God, but Jesus defining and modeling the

⁵⁰ R. Brown, "Infancy Narrative Research", 661.

⁵¹ D.F. Tolmie, *Jesus' Farewell To The Disciples*, 191.

vocation to be carried out by those who will act on his behalf after his departure. It is not just discipleship in general that they must be persuaded about, but the vocation for which they are being prepared. Something more than Jesus' identity as the Savior and something more than generic discipleship is, I believe, being communicated by the evangelist in John 13-17.

Commenting on John 15:16 Tolmie speaks of the disciples' election by Jesus to bear fruit and in summary says, "Thus the implied reader is guided to perceive that the privilege of having been elected by Jesus should lead to a specific way of life."⁵² But this is far too general. No mention is made of what the fruit is or how Jesus' choosing of them placed them in a special relationship between the vine and the fruit. The closest Tolmie gets to recognizing what I see as an important aspect of the text, namely these disciples' preparation for vocation, is when he comments on 17:17-19: "The implied reader is reminded of the analogy between the mission of Jesus and that of the disciples. In the same way that the Father consecrated the Son and sent him into the world, the Son consecrates the disciples and sends them into the world."⁵³ But he leaves the discussion at that.

What is most interesting is that in his last two pages of summary, Tolmie draws it all together with statements of the *rhetorical* function of the Farewell Discourse, not a narratological discussion! That the two methods are not synonymous will become plain when Kennedy's and Kwon's works on rhetorical analysis are reviewed. It seems to me a rhetorical analysis of the Discourse would yield more specific fruit with regard to its structure, function, purpose, and meaning.

Genre Criticism

Genre criticism is applied to the Farewell Discourse by Ernst Bammel.⁵⁴ He states that John 13:31-17:26 is unquestionably a farewell discourse. "Testaments" were a common literary genre at Jesus' time. They are found in extra-biblical literature and elsewhere in the New Testament, for example at Luke 9:31 and 22:28; Paul's speech at Miletus, Acts 20:17-36; and possibly 2 Peter. While neither footwashing or a meal play an

⁵² *Ibid.*, 213.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 225.

⁵⁴ E. Bammel, "Die Abschiedsrede des Johannesevangeliums und ihr jüdischer Hintergrund", 1-12. (English translation in *Tyndale Bulletin*, 44/1 (1993), 103-116).

important part in Jewish farewell discourses,⁵⁵ two aspects of a departing man's speech that are common to both Jewish farewells and that of Jesus are a looking *back* on his life and a looking *forward* to the heavenly abode. But Bammel lists eight more substantive differences with Jewish farewells. This indicates that Jesus' farewell is different in structure and message and represents a transitional phase between Jewish farewells and early Christian literature. The analysis of constituent parts of the Farewell Discourse and a comparison and contrast with the structure and content of Jewish farewells are the main issues in Bammel's study. No specific treatment of the purpose of Jesus' discourse or what it says and why is addressed. The genre is adequately analyzed, but the theological content is not the issue.

Literary/Rhetorical Approaches

Fernando Segovia states that hardly any recent interpreters of the Gospel of John have looked upon the Johannine farewell speech as a literary unity. He highlights a number of the consequences of holding such a position: "the farewell speech is ultimately unintelligible in its present form . . . its meaning is to be sought mostly outside the present text . . . a variety of authors was responsible for the various layers in question."⁵⁶

As a result of the changes taking place in the nature and thrust of New Testament studies (the paradigm shift from diachronic to synchronic method referred to earlier, p. 2ff.), he believes that such studies can no longer be carried out as they once were. He states, "I now see the farewell speech as both an artistic and a strategic whole, with a unified literary structure and development, as well as unified strategic concerns and aims."⁵⁷ Segovia declares, "the speech is intelligible as it presently stands. There is no need to search for meaning outside the text, especially in terms of an excavative approach and by way of literary layers. There is no need to posit a variety of authors in the process of composition and addition of these layers" and, "from its beginning the farewell is concerned with both belief in Jesus as the Word of God . . . and matters of praxis",⁵⁸ something earlier views isolated from one another.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁵⁶ F. Segovia, *The Farewell Of The Word*, vii.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, viii.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, viii.

Segovia believes John 13-17 to be “a coherent and self-contained narrative section of the Gospel as well as a clear example of a farewell type-scene in which three smaller narrative units can be distinguished: 13:1-20; 13:21-30; 13:31-17:26.”⁵⁹ The first two units provide the farewell context. The last unit contains the farewell speech proper.⁶⁰ Yet Segovia does not consider in his analysis those sections providing the context for the Farewell. And while he states that he intends to handle chapter 17 in a separate book, his omission of both the context and the climactic end scene⁶¹ in his present discussion does tend to reduce the discussion from a “self-contained narrative” to something less.

The Farewell Of The Word describes four distinct units of discourse (13:31-14:31; 15:1-17; 15:18-16:4a; 16:4b-33) and analyzes them. In each, Segovia sees a two-fold rhetorical situation which called forth the complex and effective response contained within each unit. On the one hand there is the positive situation of the disciples being seen in relation to Jesus. On the other is the confrontation between the disciples and the opposition of the world. “Although their status and role as disciples of Jesus are affirmed, the disciples are also perceived to be under great duress and hence in need of sustained and extensive teaching and consolation.”⁶² Within each narrative unit different combinations of exhortation, admonition, teaching, consolation and polemic are used by Jesus to accomplish his aims. All four units are seen by Segovia as artistic, highly unified, coherent, strategic wholes that are carefully developed from beginning to end.

In a brief overview of different interpretive approaches to the Farewell Discourse, Segovia observes that “there are six basic approaches to the present text of the farewell speech: the historicizing, transpositional, redactional, symbolic, unfinished and compositional approaches.”⁶³ Concerning the redactional approach as the preeminent one he says, “Given this approach’s failure to deal with the present shape and arrangement of the farewell discourse from a literary rather than a historical perspective, it is now

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 20.

⁶⁰ See also J. Schneider, “Die Abschiedsreden Jesu: Ein Beitrag zur Frage der Komposition von Johannes 13:31-17:26”, 103-12. Schneider clearly sees 13:31-38 as an introduction to the entire farewell discourse, not a self-contained unit of discourse by itself.

⁶¹ Segovia describes chapter 17 as occupying “a climactic position within the scene itself-- the very end of both speech and scene”, 57.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 121.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 26.

justifiably seen as much too narrow and restrictive in vision and scope, as overly concerned with the excavative dimensions of the text while unconcerned with its present literary structure and development . . . there exists, therefore, an unquestionable need for a radical change in basic orientation, for a view of the present speech as an artistic and strategic whole.”⁶⁴

The primary purpose and intended outcome of Jesus’ Farewell Discourse is often described as “consolation.” With regard to this view, Segovia states that this position leaves too much unsaid. The purpose of Jesus’ speech and its “underlying rhetorical situation”⁶⁵ need to be clearly seen to rightly understand the discourse. In Jesus’ discourse, a message is conveyed from one party to another. But in the text as we have it before us, we must understand that this communication is taking place on two distinct levels: (1) “The literary level of the narrative plot itself, with its own rhetorical exigence, the farewell address of the main character (Jesus) to a corporate character (the group of his true followers or disciples)” and (2) “The extraliterary level of author and intended audience--the purpose behind the specific reconstruction of such a historical scene involving Jesus and his earliest disciples in a work written for a much later group of disciples.”⁶⁶ Segovia maintains that the socio-historical situation of the intended audience, a group of later disciples, is reflected in and addressed by this speech.

In speaking of the purpose of the discourse, Segovia describes it as “Jesus’ parting legacy to the disciples”⁶⁷ and his imminent death and ascension as “the coming time of separation” and “the time of departure and separation.”⁶⁸ But he goes into no detail as to how this discourse informs, motivates, persuades or encourages them for what lies ahead, especially their mission and ministry to their community. He says John 14:1-27 “can be described as a sustained exercise in the teaching and consolation of the disciples.”⁶⁹ Yes, but for what greater and more long-term purpose?

In his treatise, Segovia mainly engages in a complex re-telling of John 13:31-16:33 using a literary-rhetorical analysis of structures, units, sub-units, sections, sub-sections,

⁶⁴ Ibid., 48.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 47.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 55.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 76.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 76.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 80.

arrangements, patterns, formulations, components, and the like. However, he never engages the topic of Jesus' words and actions having a purpose beyond the mere consolation and teaching of the original circle of disciples. Nor does he speak of Jesus' words and actions being the context for their own imminent ministry after the departure when separation from Jesus is a reality. The closest he comes to it is in a footnote on p. 106: "Thus, in effect, the Spirit-Paraclete will continue Jesus' own mission in the world in and through the disciples." And again, "This task of 'convicting' the world must be seen as taking place in and through the disciples themselves, that is, in and through their own mission and 'witness' in and to the world . . . it is the Spirit-Paraclete who, as Jesus' successor in their midst, will inform and sustain their mission in and to the world."⁷⁰ But he never shows how the evangelist has Jesus use words and actions rhetorically to prepare them for this task.

Indeed, with most of the approaches to the Farewell Discourse, including Segovia's, the main concern seems to be the arrangement of the speech, an analysis of how it is structured. However, they do not treat substantively the purpose of the discourse or how it rhetorically accomplishes that purpose. It would appear that what is overlooked or by-passed by many is the evangelist's portrayal of Jesus first trying to prepare his disciples for their ministry to their community and to the world in light of his imminent departure. The evangelist shows him doing so with symbols in word and action. This has persuasive design: the later audience of the Farewell Discourse, who also must carry on in light of a "departed" Jesus, would be able to apply the teachings, consolation, encouragement and understanding to their own socio-historical situation.

A volume which brings a needed perspective to a discussion of the Farewell Discourse is J. Louis Martyn's *History and Theology in the Fourth Gospel*. Martyn states, "The text presents its witness on two levels: (1) it is a witness to an *einmalig* event during Jesus' earthly lifetime . . . (2) the text is also a witness to Jesus' powerful presence in actual events experienced by the Johannine church."⁷¹ This is very similar to Segovia's distinction of the "literary level" (Jesus speaking to his original disciples in the upper room) and the "extraliterary level" (the author reporting this to an audience). As David Cunningham notes, "Narrative thus situates itself in two contexts simultaneously--in

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 234.

⁷¹ J. L. Martyn, *History And Theology In The Fourth Gospel*, 29-30.

the milieu where the story takes place, and in the situation in which the story is told. This produces both an immanent and a transcendent quality, both a concrete and an abstract function.”⁷² Both aspects of the text must be accounted for.

In describing the ongoing operation of the Paraclete among Jesus’ disciples in this two-fold drama, the Christian witness is called “Jesus’ ‘double’ in that drama.”⁷³ Many of Martyn’s citations in laying out the relationship of presence and function between Jesus, the other Paraclete and the Christian witness are taken from the Farewell Discourse. Martyn points out that the world sees either the *einmalig* tradition of Jesus or it sees and hears the Christian witness, but does not see the profound connection (the Paraclete) between the two.⁷⁴ But for John, the two levels are played out simultaneously.

When one takes Martyn’s description of Jesus’ “double”, Aune’s description of the *imitatio Christi* of the disciple, and Drickamer’s understanding of who Jesus is speaking to in the Farewell Discourse, the importance of this motif of these disciples having a special calling and vocation within their community becomes rather striking. That this motif is a major one in John 13-17 and one that the evangelist has Jesus specifically address is foundational to my hypothesis.

Alan Culpepper’s work is one of the most comprehensive treatments of John using recent communication theories. He studies the narrator and point of view, narrative time, plot, characterization, motifs of misunderstanding, irony and symbolism, and the implied reader. For Culpepper, “John is, at points at least, ‘novelistic, realistic narrative’ ”⁷⁵ and is to be read as one would a story, not history. The Farewell Discourse is treated as a unit only in his chapter on “Plot” and this is a quick, one-paragraph overview of the flow of events.

D.A. Carson raises the following four concerns about Culpepper’s work: (1) Culpepper uses categories developed to study the poetics of the novel to study Gospel literature. On this view, truth claims from eyewitnesses are discounted as story, not history. (2) There is a distinction drawn between narrative truth and historical truth because it is claimed that fiction can be used to present a deeper truth. But the question then remains

⁷² D. Cunningham, *Faithful Persuasion*, 116.

⁷³ J.L. Martyn, *History and Theology in the Fourth Gospel*, 148.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 148-150.

⁷⁵ R. Alan Culpepper, *Anatomy Of The Fourth Gospel: A Study In Literary Design*, 8.

for the New Testament, what is historical and what is not? (3) For Culpepper, the Gospel of John is a mirror, not a window that enables us to see the ministry of Jesus. But according to Carson, if the text is reliable *in the sense of the novelist*, “we have sacrificed the gospel’s claims to certain historical specificity, and set sail on the shoreless sea of existential subjectivity, all on the grounds that we may legitimately treat John as a novel--the very point that remains to be proved.”⁷⁶ (4) Culpepper’s thinking is clouded by an influence of the poetics of the novel on him. His concept of the “omniscience” of the writer is slanted to fit the patterns generated by fiction writers. An author does not have to be omniscient to find out things he was not present to see or hear.

Reflecting on such approaches and underlying presuppositions, Carson speaks of an “epistemological bankruptcy”⁷⁷ in which scholars desire to retain a genuinely pious relationship to Christianity, but then rigorously use historical critical or new literary methods that deny the possibility of a foundation for such a piety. Carson’s concerns about the presuppositions of these new approaches must surely be taken seriously. Are we to assume *a priori*, for example, that a truth claim for historical specificity within scripture is to be taken instead as non-historical and treat the text as a novel? Also, Culpepper’s presuppositions are established by his assuming that the attributes of fiction can be used to analyze the scriptures, something he does not demonstrate but proceeds with as a given.

Positively speaking, Culpepper does treat the text as a finished literary product. Also, evidence that has been used by others to point to seams and disunity and disparate sources in John is seen as pointing to the unity of the work, instead.

Mark Stibbe also has criticism for Culpepper’s approach in treating the gospel as an a-historical novel. Stibbe declares, “The value judgment Culpepper passes on John’s story, that it is ‘magnificent but flawed’ (p. 231), could really be passed on his own work . . . Culpepper takes it too much for granted that a gospel can be studied as if it were a novel.”⁷⁸ After briefly recounting how some modern scholars have indeed come to treat the gospels as novels (following theorists of modern fiction), he says, “It is against the background of the Old Testament and Graeco-Roman narrative that Johannine narrative should be judged, and not against the background of the modern novel. As it stands,

⁷⁶ D.A. Carson, “Selected Recent Studies Of The Fourth Gospel”, 62.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ M. Stibbe, *John As Storyteller: Narrative Criticism And The Fourth Gospel*, 10.

Culpepper's method is fundamentally anachronistic."⁷⁹ Any consideration of Culpepper's work would have to take seriously the cautions raised by Carson and Stibbe.

Rhetorical Analysis

George A. Kennedy is one of the most oft-cited authorities in the application of rhetorical theory and practice to New Testament studies. He states in his book on the subject, "The writers of the books of the New Testament had a message to convey and sought to persuade an audience to believe it or to believe it more profoundly. As such they are rhetorical, and their methods can be studied by the discipline of rhetoric."⁸⁰

Rhetorical criticism looks at the text "from the point of view of the author's or editor's intent, the unified results, and how it would be perceived by an audience of near contemporaries."⁸¹

Given the Hellenization of the ancient Near East, the Greek language of the New Testament, the fact that rhetoric was taught as an academic discipline throughout the Roman empire and that its influence was felt at all levels of society, Kennedy says, "approaching the New Testament through classical rhetoric is thus historically justified. It is also philosophically justified."⁸² The goal of rhetorical analysis is the discovery of the author's intent and how that is transmitted through a text to an audience. Kennedy goes into some detail outlining the theory and methodology of classic Greco-Roman rhetoric, demonstrating how rhetoric is present in the New Testament writings. The bulk of his book is then spent discussing the three species of rhetoric (deliberative, epideictic, and judicial) and applying rhetorical analysis to different portions of the New Testament, including the Farewell Discourse in John.

He says of John 13-17, "It is clearly epideictic, for Jesus is concerned with the disciples' attitudes, feelings, and beliefs at his departure from life in this world."⁸³ And speaking of how the Discourse is structured Kennedy states, "Together, chapters 13-17 appear to be built around amplification of a small number of topics which are enunciated in the beginning of 13."⁸⁴

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 11.

⁸⁰ George Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation Through Rhetorical Criticism*, 3.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 10.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 77.

Kennedy then sketches a brief rhetorical analysis of the Farewell Discourse, showing how it follows rhetorical convention to achieve its intended result. His treatment of the Discourse is not a full-blown analysis, but is clearly meant as an example of how rhetorical analysis would be employed on such a unit. Theological emphases are not discussed by Kennedy.

Kennedy makes a convincing case for using rhetorical analysis on New Testament texts. Applying a method of analysis that is based upon the literary context in which the text was originally written would seem to be desirable to gain an understanding of the author's intent and how it was heard by its original audience. That is especially true when it is demonstrated that the text does in fact reflect and follow that convention of composition (rhetoric).

E.R. Wendland (1992) applies rhetorical discourse analysis to Jesus' prayer in John 17. He describes the discourse as a "historically reliable and complete artistic, rhetorical, and theological whole."⁸⁵ Wendland claims that the chapter 17 prayer functions as more than simply a farewell or a customary ritual (such as a closing prayer to a meal). It is, he says, instructional. Individual components of the prayer are seen to have different purposes (explanation, encouragement, promise) and are intended to achieve specific effects in the hearers/readers. The primary motive of this prayer is "to effect physical, psychological and spiritual reinforcement."⁸⁶ As Jesus fortified himself through prayer, so his disciples will be able to apply this same reinforcement to themselves. This was possible since, according to Wendland, this prayer was prayed out loud in their hearing.

Wendland then goes into a discourse/structure analysis of John 17 during the course of which he does make reference to the ministry for which the disciples have been commissioned. But he generalizes it to the ministry of all Christians in carrying on Jesus' ministry, a trait we have seen in many other commentators which does not do justice to the actual setting of the text. However, Wendland does take the text seriously as a literary whole and his application of rhetorical principles tackles the questions of what the text is trying to achieve and how it does so, i.e. the meaning of the text.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 78. See also Lombard and Oliver, "A Working Supper", 365-68, who identify several motifs in 13:1 which are repeated throughout John 13-17.

⁸⁵ E.R. Wendland, "Rhetoric of the Word", 66.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 69.

Jongseon Kwon in his doctoral dissertation analyzes John 13-17 using Greco-Roman rhetorical theory. He states, "The goal of this rhetorical analysis is to examine the author's method and means of persuading or influencing the reader. The final interest of this dissertation is in the effect of the discourse . . . The examination of the relevance of Greco-Roman rhetoric in the interpretation of the New Testament is also an important concern."⁸⁷

George Kennedy's five-step model of rhetorical analysis as applied to the Bible is cited as being widely recognized and highly praised and is the model of analysis followed by Kwon. An overview of classical Greco-Roman rhetorical theory is presented in a synthesis derived from the ancient sources. After discussing aspects of the rhetorical setting (unit, situation, kind of rhetoric), Kwon begins his analysis of the discourse.

These chapters in his dissertation basically ask, "Why is the discourse rhetorical?" (setting, situation, problem, etc.); and, "How is the discourse rhetorical?" (invention, arrangement, style). But the question "What is said by means of the rhetoric?" is not really addressed. Even in the analysis of the discourse, Kwon mainly presents the theory of ancient rhetoric and shows how the discourse reflects its many details. He does state, "Jesus does not teach the themes merely with words, but he himself becomes an example to follow"⁸⁸ and he "identifies himself with his disciples by doing their usual work, and asks them to identify themselves with him."⁸⁹ But he never develops this crucial theme. As he deals with the rhetorical "proofs" of the discourse, Kwon states that the major concern of Jesus is that of consoling the disciples and readers. But there is truly more to Jesus' words than consolation.

One must remember that the rhetoric employed in a work is not an end in itself, but a means to an end. In Kwon's analysis of the Farewell Discourse, the impression is given that the identification of the rhetorical devices with which the Discourse is structured is indeed the end.

Kwon's division of chapters 14-16 (the *probatio*) into five separate proofs, one of which (the fourth) is not even developed from a proposition in the *partitio* (13:31-38), seems to me to be a bit artificial and forced. As to the purpose of the discourse he states,

⁸⁷ J. Kwon, *A Rhetorical Analysis Of The Johannine Farewell Discourse*, 14.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 121.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

“The aim of the gospel (including the discourse) is probably not to inform them. Rather, it was to comfort and encourage by enlightening and illuminating through information they already had.”⁹⁰

Kwon’s dissertation accomplishes three things: (1) it gives a synthetic over-view of classic Greco-Roman rhetorical theory and method; (2) it demonstrates that the Farewell Discourse has a rhetorical framework and can be analyzed with rhetorical categories and principles; (3) it establishes (along with others) rhetorical criticism as a most significant interpretive tool. Kwon’s contribution is foundational, demonstrating the appropriateness of this method for New Testament studies. Utilizing this foundation, my contribution will be theological (examining what is being said in the discourse), methodological (how it is being said), and teleological (for what purpose it is being said).

Scholarly Commentaries

In reviewing scholarly commentaries, attention will be focused primarily on how the Farewell Discourse is understood in each, particularly with respect to the concerns of this study. Specific pericopes from each of the five chapters of the Farewell Discourse were examined with the proposed hypothesis in mind. They are:

13:12-20

14:25-26

15:1-4, 16, 26-27

16:13-15

17:17-20

These selections will provide adequate information to demonstrate how the various authors understand the meaning and purpose of Jesus’ discourse with his disciples, especially with reference to their being sent, their fruit-bearing, and the sending of the Paraclete and his role among them.

Chapter 13 (12-20)

C.K. Barrett clearly makes a connection between Jesus’ actions (vv. 5-11), his exhortation (vv. 14-15), and the disciples’ “being sent” (vv. 16, 20). He states, “so far as the feet-washing represents the whole redemptive work of Jesus the disciples must enter

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 177.

into this work.”⁹¹ Since “the death of Christ is at once the means by which men are cleansed of sin”⁹² and this is a non-repeatable, once-for-all-time sacrifice for sin, the disciples enter into it by undertaking their mission to the world. Others agree with this assessment. Ben Witherington III states, “The foot washing rite points forward to the actual cleansing work of Christ on the cross.”⁹³ Jesus’ command in v. 15 that “you should do as I did to you” is not, however, the institution of a new rite according to Witherington. “I suspect that the point here is not to institute a new rite but to insist on the practice of what the rite symbolizes . . . Jesus sees his followers as his agents and messengers sent out into the world to do what he has just symbolically done—offer cleansing from sin through Christ.”⁹⁴ Witherington sees a missionary motif all through the Gospel of John and especially in the discourse here. “The issue being addressed in the farewell discourses as a whole is the preparation of the disciples for Jesus’ departure and the promise that Jesus will equip them with the Advocate not only to remain faithful but to continue to carry out the evangelistic task to which God has called them, bearing much fruit, despite resistance and rejection.”⁹⁵

Raymond Brown also sees the link: “Even taken simply as an example of humility, the footwashing does not lose its association with the death of Jesus.”⁹⁶ Brown, however, sees verses 16 and 20 as redactional statements “loosely tacked on”⁹⁷ and so the concepts of being sent and doing “as I did to you” are not linked or developed.

W. Hendriksen, E.C. Hoskyns and B.F. Westcott also connect the footwashing to the efficacy of the death of Jesus in cleansing sinners. While Hoskyns⁹⁸ does not emphasize the “being sent” character of the disciples, Hendriksen⁹⁹ and Westcott¹⁰⁰ both speak specifically of their unique “office” and task in the Church and association is made

⁹¹ C.K. Barrett, *Gospel*, 443.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 443.

⁹³ B. Witherington III, *John’s Wisdom*, 237.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 237.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 255.

⁹⁶ R. Brown, *Gospel*, 569.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 572.

⁹⁸ E. C. Hoskyns, *The Fourth Gospel* (1947).

⁹⁹ W. Hendriksen, *Gospel*, 236.

¹⁰⁰ B. F. Westcott, *The Gospel According to St. John*, 153-54.

between Jesus' death, his footwashing, his command to them to "do as I did to you" and their "being sent."

Other commentators see in the footwashing primarily a moral/ethical example to follow and do not make a direct connection to the death of Christ. Among these are B. Lindars¹⁰¹, G.R. Beasley-Murray¹⁰² and L. Morris¹⁰³. They do, however, connect verse 20 with verses 14-16 and speak of the disciples' mission. Lindars, after discussing Synoptic parallels to verse 20, states that John "means it to have the same reference to the Twelve personally"¹⁰⁴ and Beasley-Murray says, "Every Jew would recognize in the last utterance (v. 20) the maxim, 'One who is sent is as he who sent him'."¹⁰⁵ The mission and witness of the original disciples is clearly the focus, even if this motif is not further developed by these commentators.

Rudolph Bultmann, one of the most well-known form-critical practitioners, demonstrates the results of form criticism on the Farewell Discourse in his commentary on John. Bultmann sees chapters 13-17 as a disarranged text whose original order must be "re-discovered"¹⁰⁶ and whose individual fragments must then be rearranged to provide the original sequence. He, too, takes the foot washing as a moral/ethical example to follow and states that such an attitude will provide new opportunities for relationship.¹⁰⁷ He does not tie the cleansing action of footwashing to the cleansing action of Jesus' death and then to the role to be undertaken by the disciples in being sent.

Ernst Haenchen specifically denies that the foot-washing action of Jesus is tied to the meaning of the cross or that it has salvific content. He makes very little of "being sent" and like Brown sees verse 20 as a later redactional insertion that "does not belong to this context at all."¹⁰⁸ Personal attitude, not witnessing to the gospel, is the emphasis for Haenchen.

¹⁰¹ B. Lindars, *The Gospel of John* (1972).

¹⁰² G. R. Beasley-Murray, *John* (1987).

¹⁰³ L. Morris, *The Gospel According to John* (1971).

¹⁰⁴ B. Lindars, *The Gospel of John*, 455.

¹⁰⁵ G. R. Beasley-Murray, *John*, 236.

¹⁰⁶ R. Bultmann, *Gospel*, 460.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 476.

¹⁰⁸ E. Haenchen, *John 2*, 110.

Chapter 14 (25-26)

Hendriksen sees a special operation of the Holy Spirit with the original disciples. He speaks of the Spirit enabling the disciples to perform the witnessing they are assigned to do.¹⁰⁹ This, he says, includes what Jesus had already taught plus more.

Westcott and Witherington both see this as the promise of a source of continuing revelation for the disciples, one which will aid them in their missionary work (Witherington) and allow the Gospel to be written (Westcott).

A number of commentators (Hoskyns, Beasley-Murray, Morris, and Brown) are quite clear in their descriptions of the reminding and teaching functions to be fulfilled by the Holy Spirit, but never quite get around to explaining why this was needed or what role these Spirit-aided disciples would themselves fulfill.

Lindars points to the fulfillment of this promise as applying to post-resurrection conditions, but does not specify it as a special involvement with those original disciples, providing immediate revelation to them in their role as the ones sent. Barrett, too, stops short of specifying what this promise meant to the disciples in their role as missionaries. He takes “all that I said to you” (v. 26) to be a recreation and perpetuation of the “situation of judgment and decision that marked the ministry of Jesus”¹¹⁰, not an accurate remembrance of his verbal teachings.

The function of the Spirit in the mission to be undertaken by the disciples is not touched upon by Haenchen. He emphasizes the relation between Jesus and the Spirit. Bultmann generalizes this promise beyond the disciples and states that the Paraclete is “the power given to the community” and the revelation he brings “will be bestowed anew in every future.”¹¹¹ Here, too, the purpose of this power and repeated bestowal is not elaborated.

Chapter 15 (1-4, 16, 26-27)

The various commentaries consulted handled these three portions of chapter 15 with quite a little diversity. The “vine/branches/fruit” motif was treated very specifically by some, generalized by others and glossed over in a few cases. The same was true of the

¹⁰⁹ W. Hendriksen, *The Gospel According to John*, 286.

¹¹⁰ C.K. Barrett, *Gospel*, 467.

¹¹¹ R. Bultmann, *Gospel*, 476.

“chosen/appointed/bearing fruit” language and the “Paraclete/witness” saying.

Hoskyns distinguishes the vine as Jesus, the branches as his faithful disciples and the fruit as converts that are made through the disciples’ preaching. Beasley-Murray approvingly quotes Hoskyns here (p. 273) and both Lindars and Barrett refer to the distinction between the apostles’ mission (as “branches”) and the results of their work (“fruit”). All four of these commentators point to the special function given to these men as Jesus’ representatives to the world with the “chosen/appointed/bearing fruit” language. They also see the witness of the Holy Spirit (v. 26) and that of the disciples (v. 27) as one witness, not two. Indeed, Beasley-Murray points to verse 27 as echoing the conditions of the apostolic witness in Acts 1:21-22 and Lindars states, “There is probably a reference here to the special function of the apostles as witnesses of Jesus . . . and therefore guarantors of the gospel message.”¹¹²

Another group of commentators (Brown, Westcott, Hendriksen) extends the “branches/fruit” motif to include all believers, yet still sees in verse 16 a reference to the upper room disciples and in verse 27 a description of their Spirit-aided witness to the world (although Westcott, while stating that this refers to the operation of the Spirit through the original disciples, says that it now continues through the church as others also bear witness--a witness based upon that of the disciples). Brown says of verse 16 that these words “are directed to those who have been with him from the beginning”¹¹³ and Westcott states that the “choice” referred to is that to the apostolate. He speaks of their “distinctive responsibility as ‘heralds of the gospel’.”¹¹⁴

Other commentators (Witherington, Haenchen, Morris,) not only generalize the “branches/fruit” image to all believers, but do the same with verses 16 and 26-27 (or else pass over these with little or no discussion). Witherington generalizes the whole discussion to all believers. Haenchen never really identifies “fruit” at all and says that verse 16 as referring to the disciples’ mission “may be what the author has in mind here”¹¹⁵, but says no more of it. While he discusses verse 26 at length with the relation between Jesus and the Spirit, he virtually dismisses verse 27 as describing something which just never

¹¹² B. Lindars, *The Gospel of John*, 497.

¹¹³ R. Brown, *Gospel*, 683.

¹¹⁴ B. F. Westcott, *The Gospel According to St. John*, 207.

¹¹⁵ E. Haenchen, *John 2*, 132.

existed--a post-resurrection mission undertaken by the disciples who now understood the truth about Jesus. Morris makes statements that generalize, then will say something that refers to the original disciples, then in the next breath is talking about all Christians.

Bultmann is rather in a class by himself with these portions of chapter 15. He specifically rules out a connection between fruit-bearing and missionary work without explanation (p. 532, footnote 6), says that “appointed” and “sent” are not related directly to the disciples’ task, but to their relationship to Jesus (“fruit” is their own quality of exhibiting a faith with vitality) and identifies the witness of the Spirit and the disciples as one and the same, but does nothing more with this.

Chapter 16 (13-15)

The repeated promise of the arrival of the Spirit of Truth is taken in one of two ways: either as referring to the disciples themselves, or as referring to these disciples plus all other believers (the church). Hendriksen, Lindars and Westcott take the former approach. Hendriksen says of verse 13: “The Holy Spirit, through the preaching of the apostles, will glorify Christ.”¹¹⁶ Lindars states that verse 15 is concerned “with the complete identity between the mission of Jesus and the mission of the disciples under the Spirit’s guidance.”¹¹⁷ With reference to “what is to come” (v.13), Westcott declares that “a special part of the whole teaching is marked out with reference to the work of the Apostles.”¹¹⁸ He understands the discourse to have been spoken historically to the apostles in preparation for their mission as heralds of the gospel, but applies to the Church at large in so far as the Church grows out of their witness and carries that witness to the world. Hoskyns describes the work of the Holy Spirit quite completely, but doesn’t include the connection to the disciples and their work as clearly as he had in previous sections.

Witherington, Brown, Barrett, Beasley-Murray, Haenchen, Morris, and Bultmann also describe the special work of the Spirit (to varying degrees), but generalize this to his work among believers and the church down through the ages. These commentators do not develop the idea of the Spirit working initially through the original disciples in the task for

¹¹⁶ W. Hendriksen, *The Gospel According to John*, 329.

¹¹⁷ B. Lindars, *The Gospel of John*, 506.

¹¹⁸ B. F. Westcott, *The Gospel According to St. John*, 224-25.

which they were chosen, appointed and sent.

Chapter 17 (17-20)

There is perhaps more agreement among the commentators on the understanding of this portion of the discourse than on any of the previous sections. The majority studied understand Jesus' words as referring to those at supper with him in the upper room, the eleven. They see these disciples being set apart for a mission that will follow the resurrection. They are spoken of as being distinct from those who will come to faith through their word. Concerning the consecration of both Jesus and his disciples (v. 19), Beasley-Murray states that the term consecration is used of the setting aside of persons to priestly or prophetic office and declares that it "must surely indicate an overlap in the meaning of the consecration of Jesus and that of his disciples . . . that they too may be dedicated to the same task of bringing the saving sovereignty to the world *in like spirit as he brought it* . . . his disciples can, and must, serve as its instruments and embodiment as they proclaim the good news to the world."¹¹⁹ As Brown describes it, the word that Jesus brought them cleansed them (15:3) and set them apart (17:17) for a mission of conveying it to others (17:20).

Other commentators (Haenchen, Witherington, Bultmann), while also speaking of those who are set apart to bring a message to the world, describe this as the sending of the Christian community. Witherington tries to incorporate both aspects by saying of verse 20, "it surely refers to at least the partial success of the mission of the original (and later the Johannine) disciples."¹²⁰

Summary

In drawing this history of research to a close, several observations can be made concerning its implications for my hypothesis. Among the devotional works and scholarly articles and monographs surveyed, a number of common denominators surfaced with regard to their treatment of the Farewell Discourse. 1. Frequently, the immediate audience to whom Jesus speaks is generalized to incorporate all Christians. Little or no distinction is

¹¹⁹ G. R. Beasley-Murray, *John*, 301.

¹²⁰ B. Witherington III, *John's Wisdom*, 270.

recognized between the first disciples in the upper room and later Christians (i.e. the two levels at which the text operates). The immediate context is often ignored in making application of the text. 2. Both teaching and consolation are often mentioned as important aspects of Jesus' words, but only in view of Jesus' *departure*, not as a preparation for the disciples' *future vocation*. 3. Some authors assume a disarranged text that must be rearranged to make sense of it. Others see it as a unified, coherent whole. The final form of the text clearly has a purpose as it is and to have the presupposition that it must be rearranged to make sense of it will affect how a text is understood. 4. Some methodologies (discourse and narratological) focus upon structure and structural relationships between semantic parts of the text while overlooking the intended sense of the finished product. This leaves questions about the purpose of the discourse, what is being said and how it is being said unanswered. 5. Other approaches (sociological and anthropological) end up with widely differing and conflicting results and focus on the later audience or the audience they see reflected in the text rather than on the meaning of Jesus' discourse with his original disciples. 6. A number of commentators touch briefly upon areas I feel are crucial to an understanding of the Farewell Discourse, but do not develop these ideas (the disciples' role as successor-agents of Jesus, their "being sent", Jesus' preparation of them with his words and actions for their forthcoming ministry). They do not engage the topic of Jesus' words and actions being the context for the disciples' imminent ministry after Jesus' departure, nor do they show how the evangelist has Jesus speaking rhetorically to teach, move, and encourage them. 7. Related to this, the mission motif is seen in John 13-17 by some, ignored by others, but generally undeveloped.

The scholarly commentaries were on the whole much more specific with regard to the major motifs I have stressed in the Farewell Discourse. A number of them recognize what I have identified as crucial elements in understanding the discourse, but do not develop these points further. For example, while the teaching and reminding functions of the promised Paraclete are pointed out, it is not at all uncommon for a commentator to never quite say *why* the teaching and reminding are needed or *what role* these Spirit-aided disciples will play after Jesus' departure. In some cases, there are also inconsistencies regarding the same subject matter from chapter to chapter. For instance, while the majority of commentators see the discourse in chapter 17 referring to those with Jesus at the Last Supper and their being set apart for a specific mission, a number of them generalize to all

Christians the very same subject matter in the previous chapters.

In summary, a survey of the history of the research on John 13-17 indicates that the main concerns of my hypothesis, while occasionally touched upon, have not been adequately dealt with in the literature. This being a section dominated by discourse, it would be of benefit to examine it rhetorically, analyzing its persuasive character in *what* is said, *how* it is said, and *for what purpose* it is said.

CHAPTER TWO

THE RHETORICAL DIMENSION OF THE TEXT

The Influence of Rhetoric

One question that must be asked and answered in this study is whether the elements and concerns of rhetoric can be demonstrated to be important components of, or influences upon, the biblical text. Or does engaging the text from a rhetorical perspective impose upon the text a methodology which is really foreign to the character of the text itself?

What will be demonstrated here is that the elements of rhetoric and its influences can be found in Old Testament texts, early Jewish texts (including Apocryphal and rabbinical sources), and New Testament texts. Not only, then, is a rhetorical analysis of the text justified, it is needed to provide a more full understanding of the text and correct or augment readings which do not take into account this dimension of the text.

Applying a method of analysis that is based upon the literary context in which the text was originally written would seem to be desirable to gain an understanding of the author's intent and how it was heard by its original audience. That is especially true when it is demonstrated that the text does in fact reflect and follow that convention of composition, in this case rhetoric.

Old Testament Texts

James Crenshaw rejects any dismissals of the presence of rhetorical elements and categories in the Old Testament.¹ He points to the personification of wisdom in Proverbs ("Dame Wisdom") and shows that wisdom demonstrates "rare skill at persuasion."² Indeed, her rhetoric appeals to the artistic *pisteis*³ of *ethos*, *pathos*,

¹ J. Crenshaw, "Wisdom and Authority: Sapiential Rhetoric and its Warrants", 10. See, for example, G. Kennedy, *Classical Rhetoric*, 120, for such a view.

² *Ibid.*, 11.

³ A category of classification in classical rhetoric describing the elements of communication: speaker, audience, and speech.

and *logos*.

Crenshaw then turns his attention to the Book of Job and uses these same categories to analyze authority in Job. He finds much evidence of a play upon all three *pisteis* as the attempt by the characters to persuade is made.

In a later work, Crenshaw examines the subject of education in ancient Israel and observes that Israelite teachers used “a combination of persuasive techniques and rhetorical strategies” in carrying out instruction of their students.⁴ He again cites the books of Proverbs and Job as using appeals to consensus, rhetorical questions, and the rhetorical strategies of appealing to *ethos*, *pathos*, and *logos*, to bring about persuasion. He believes that attention to rhetoric and literary devices demonstrates the great care with which these educators went about their responsibilities.

Phyllis Tribble offers an excellent discussion of rhetorical criticism and then demonstrates this method on the book of Jonah.⁵ Rhetorical structure, attention to the artistic *pisteis*, identification of rhetorical species, and use of rhetorical devices, are all applied and are all found to have ground for application in Jonah.

In her discussion of rhetoric as applied to the Bible, Tribble cites other works in which rhetorical examination of Second and Third Isaiah, Jeremiah, Samuel, First Isaiah, Amos, and Job proved justified and fruitful.⁶

The work of Crenshaw, Tribble, and others demonstrates the usefulness of rhetorical analysis in “unpacking” Old Testament texts. It has been established that those elements of a text that are of concern to rhetoric are indeed found in these writings.

Early Jewish Texts (Apocryphal and Rabbinic)

In the same way he examined Old Testament texts, James Crenshaw also analyzes other Jewish texts. Literary features are scrutinized in 1 Esdras, Sirach, and the Wisdom of Solomon.

1 Esdras 3:1-5:3 (the contest of Darius’ guards) is examined with regard to the rhetorical features of choice of subject matter, arrangement of the discussion, vocabulary, and style.⁷ All of these were found to be present (especially the use of irony and

⁴ J. Crenshaw, *Education In Ancient Israel: Across the Deadening Silence*, 130.

⁵ P. Tribble, *Rhetorical Criticism* (1994).

⁶ *Ibid.*, 29-48.

rhetorical questions) and combine to make these speeches truly persuasive. Crenshaw believes that other wisdom texts, as they are examined, will also show this “extensive mastery of rhetorical technique” and concludes by saying that “Israel’s teachers spoke with authority, but they also developed and refined persuasion to an art.”⁸

Crenshaw also points out that sages such as Joshua ben Sira were not immune to the allurements of the Hellenistic civilization. He describes how thoroughly ben Sira was immersed in such cultural concepts and practices⁹ and says that elements of style (which he calls “rhetorical devices”¹⁰) are present in Sirach. These include the hymnic praise of the creator, prayers, and the adaptation of the Hellenistic form, the encomium, to “heap accolades on heroes of the past.”¹¹ Such was also true, says Crenshaw, of the author of *The Wisdom of Solomon* (first century B.C.E.) who alludes to the Greek categories of knowledge in his day (7:17-22).¹²

Phyllis Tribble cites Toni Craven’s rhetorical reading of *Judith* as another example of the application of rhetorical method.¹³ Craven identified the formal symmetries that bind the two divisions of *Judith* (chapters 1-7 and 8-16) and from these symmetries of identities and antitheses discovered chiasmic structures in each of the two parts. In addition to this external structure, she identified an internal structure composed of several literary devices, including repetition which aids in the artistic and theological integrity of the story. Thus, rhetorical structure and rhetorical literary devices are present in this early Jewish literature.

This influence of rhetoric was also present in the work of the Jewish rabbis. David Daube, in his investigation of rabbinic interpretation claims that “the Rabbinic methods of interpretation derive from Hellenistic rhetoric . . . in its beginnings, the Rabbinic system of hermeneutics is a product of the Hellenistic civilisation then dominating the entire Mediterranean world.”¹⁴ Indeed, Daube declares of Hillel’s seven norms by which

⁷ J. Crenshaw, “Wisdom and Authority, 22-28.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 29.

⁹ J. Crenshaw, *Education in Ancient Israel*, 270.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 61.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² *Ibid.*, 14.

¹³ P. Tribble, *Rhetorical Criticism*, 36-38.

¹⁴ D. Daube, “Rabbinic Methods”, 240.

Scripture was to be interpreted: “all of them betray the influence of the rhetorical teaching of his age.”¹⁵

Daube’s contention is that Hillel (c. 30 B.C.E.), a contemporary of Cicero, along with other rabbis of his age, was deeply influenced by Greek reasoning. Both the fundamental ideas from which the rabbis proceeded and the manner in which these ideas were translated into practice had Hellenistic rhetoric as a foundation. Thus, the literary environment of Palestine and of the larger ancient Mediterranean world was significantly influenced by Greco-Roman rhetoric.

New Testament Texts

In another work,¹⁶ David Daube notes how the Hellenistic schools of rhetoric provided the common background not only for rabbinical Judaism (previous section), but for the New Testament writers as well. He cites the presence of Socratic forms of interrogation in both the rabbis and the Gospels.¹⁷ It took this form: the question by the enemy, the counter-question, the answer which the enemy is forced to make, and the refutation which thereby becomes possible. In the Synoptics, an example of this pattern can be found in the controversy between Jesus and the authorities regarding his credentials (Matt. 21:23ff.; Mk. 11:27ff.; Lk. 20:1ff.). In John (2:18ff.), a modified form is found: demand of the Jews for a sign, offer by Jesus of an apparently impossible miracle (rebuilding of temple in three days by Jesus), expression of disbelief on the part of the Jews, and the narrator’s explanation that the offer did not have the meaning it appeared to have and that the miracle was in fact performed (resurrection).

This pattern is in accord with a Greek rhetorical rule enunciated by Aristotle concerning interrogation,¹⁸ which was also set forth by Quintilian in the first century¹⁹ (both works citing Socrates). Thus, the New Testament exhibits the pattern of Socratic interrogation which comes to it from Hellenistic rhetoric. While the New Testament narrative is situated in a Jewish milieu, it must be remembered that Hellenistic rhetoric was

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 251.

¹⁶ D. Daube, *The New Testament and Rabbinic Judaism* (1956).

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 151ff.

¹⁸ Aristotle, *On Rhetoric*, 3. 18. 2, 279.

¹⁹ Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria*, ll. 5. 11. 3, 273.

the common property of the civilized Mediterranean world and served as source and background for both Jews and Greeks.²⁰

A wide variety of sources demonstrates the importance of rhetoric as an influence upon and background to the the New Testament texts. It is important to note that “the penetration of Greek education into Jewish circles in Palestine began . . . as early as the third century B.C.”²¹ Greek language and forms of rhetoric were put to use serving the Jewish cause in combating polytheism and lax morality and stressing the superiority of the Jewish religion. The teacher/disciple relationship within the Rabbinate followed more a Greek model than an Old Testament model and the dialectical form of instruction may have been influenced by the model of the Greek rhetorical schools.²²

As a measure of the influence of Greek education in Palestine, Martin Hengel points to the amazing number of Greek academics produced by the Hellenized cities of Palestine and Transjordan from the second century B.C.E. onwards.²³ Indeed, in 175 B.C.E., the high priest Jason prompted the building of a gymnasium at the foot of the temple mount and wanted to transform Jerusalem into a Greek polis with the right of Antiochene citizenship.

All of this exerted a profound influence upon writers like Justus of Tiberias and Josephus. Hengel points out that Josephus and his contemporaries essentially had two languages and two cultures (Jewish and Greek) and had the opportunity for “an excellent rhetorical training.”²⁴ Indeed, given the Hellenized state of Palestine and the influence of the rhetorical schools, Hengel points out that Josephus must have already received the basic foundation of his amazingly broad Greek education in the holy city.²⁵

Emil Schürer²⁶ cites Justus as one of the sources (non-extant) referenced by Josephus and others for a history of the Jewish people in the time of Christ. Justus was a Jew who had received a Greek education, survived and chronicled the Jewish war of A.D. 66-67, and was still alive in the beginning of the second century. He had an excellent linguistic and rhetorical education and Hengel states that in style and presentation, Justus’

²⁰ D. Daube, *The New Testament and Rabbinic Judaism*, 156.

²¹ M. Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism*, Vol. 1, 75.

²² *Ibid.*, 81.

²³ M. Hengel, *The ‘Hellenization’ of Judaea in the First Century After Christ*, 20.

²⁴ M. Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism*, 105.

²⁵ M. Hengel, *The ‘Hellenization’ of Judaea*, 23-24.

²⁶ E. Schürer, *A History of the Jewish People in the Time of Jesus Christ*, 65-69.

work was superior to that of Josephus, his contemporary and rival.²⁷

The richly Hellenized environment of the New Testament is also brought out by the contributions to the *Hellenistic Commentary to the New Testament*.²⁸ The purpose of this volume is to provide literary material from the historical context in which the New Testament was written. Such Hellenistic sources may help to illuminate the text by keeping the interpreter from reading into it his own modern cultural presuppositions. This is rather crucial, for “the Hellenistic reading of classical texts such as Plato and Aristotle was an influential factor in the thought world from which early Christianity was born.”²⁹ This commentary provides a wealth of Hellenistic sources having similar content and thought patterns to select New Testament passages.

In noting the number of authors in the first century who wrote in Koine Greek, Walter Jennrich points to the learned, cultured age in which the New Testament writings arose. He says, “the rich literary background of the New Testament is potentially a greater influence upon the style and language of its authors than has been heretofore imagined.”³⁰

He cites a number of the early Church Fathers (who themselves wrote in the Greek language and had an instinctive feel for its style) who admired the literary merits of the New Testament, especially the writings of St. Paul and the power of his rhetoric. These Fathers noted the elements of Paul’s style and the elements of rhetoric found in his writings.

Ruth Majercik states, “the influence of Greco-Roman rhetoric on the writings in the NT is becoming more widely acknowledged today than in the past, particularly concerning Paul’s letters” (Galatians, 2 Cor. 8-9, Philemon, and Romans are cited).³¹ This understanding of St. Paul’s background is also noted by Boaz Cohen: “Paul was eminently imbued with the culture of his day, and was undoubtedly familiar with the current doctrines of Greek rhetoric and Roman Law.”³² Cohen observes that Paul’s use of “letter and spirit” (Rom. 2:29; 2 Cor 3:6) is a modification of the Greek rhetorical antithesis, “verbal

²⁷ M. Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism*, Vol. 2, 68.

²⁸ *Hellenistic commentary to the New Testament*, M. Boring, K. Berger, C. Colpe, Editors (1995).

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 12.

³⁰ W. Jennrich, “Classical Rhetoric in the New Testament”, 31.

³¹ R. Majercik, “Rhetoric and Oratory in the Greco-Roman World”, *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, Vol. 5, 711.

³² B. Cohen, *Jewish and Roman Law: A Comparative Study*, 56.

and intentional.”³³ Cohen points out that in this way Paul was able to appeal to both Greeks, who would recognize the device, and Jews (especially rabbis) who were much concerned with the spirit of the law.³⁴

In a treatment of 2 Cor. 10-13, Mario DiCicco³⁵ utilizes actual speeches and letters from antiquity to demonstrate that Paul was influenced by and followed the rhetorical convention common in his literary world. DiCicco’s treatment is mainly a demonstration of Paul’s use of rhetorical devices in the text. This he convincingly does.³⁶ He claims that Paul used the three classical rhetorical proofs of *ethos*, *pathos*, and *logos* to refute those who vilified him. St. Paul, he says, “was quite designedly using these rhetorical strategies as parts of his own method of proof to convince the Corinthians . . . the response itself, on careful analysis, shows the influence of rhetorical training.”³⁷

Indeed, DiCicco finds both internal and external proofs of Paul’s use of rhetoric. Externally, he points to the Hellenization of thought and practice in Paul’s day and in his connection to Tarsus, a culturally prominent city.³⁸ Internally, the connection is seen in references Paul makes in his letters to classical literature and his own use of rhetorical techniques. All this, says DiCicco, “reflects formal schooling in Greek-Roman rhetoric.”³⁹

Not all scholars conclude, or see a necessity for assuming, that the authors of the New Testament were formally trained in rhetoric for there to be a rhetorical basis for their writings. Clifton Black is one of these: “the authors and readers of the New Testament

³³ *Ibid.*, 58-59.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 56-64.

³⁵ M. DiCicco, *Paul’s Use of Ethos, Pathos and Logos in 2 Corinthians 10-13* (1995).

³⁶ One criticism I have of DiCicco’s work is that he goes over the entire rhetorical unit (chapters 10-13) each time he discusses a major topic (*ethos*, *pathos*, and *logos*). Perhaps identifying each of these *pisteis* as he goes through the text sequentially would be more conducive to understanding the text as one naturally reads it. Also, DiCicco’s treatment is mostly topical, picking eclectically from chapters 10-13 to illustrate his points. Again, this does not explicate the text as thoroughly as one might expect or desire, but that is probably not his aim.

³⁷ M. DiCicco, *Paul’s Use of Ethos, Pathos and Logos*, 10, 15.

³⁸ See Demetrius, *On Style* (Introduction), 278. Paul’s writings are seen as proof that Tarsus was a literary and linguistic center, where Greek influence was pronounced.

³⁹ M. DiCicco, *Paul’s Use of Ethos, Pathos and Logos*, 28.

were situated in a culture whose speech and literature were suffused by the norms and techniques of persuasive discourse.”⁴⁰

This is also the sentiment of classicist George Kennedy who says that it is not necessary to assume that the evangelists or St. Paul had formally studied Greek rhetoric to account for its presence and influence in their writings. He points out that these writers (who wrote in Greek to be read by, or to, speakers of Greek) “would, indeed, have been hard put to escape an awareness of rhetoric as practiced in the culture around them, for the rhetorical theory of the schools found its immediate application in almost every form of written communication: in official documents and public letters, in private correspondence, in the law courts and assemblies, in speeches at festivals and commemorations, and in literary composition in both prose and verse.”⁴¹

One who disagrees with almost everything cited thus far about St. Paul is Roger Anderson who categorically states, “surely no one would contend that Paul knew any rhetorical theory,”⁴² but offers no immediate support of this statement and cites no other sources. This is a common feature of Anderson’s treatment of the subject. He draws a distinction between philosophical rhetorical theory (e.g. Aristotle) and school rhetoric and says that the “philosophical rhetoric was hardly popular in the rhetorical schools, nor does it appear to have had much influence on regular rhetorical practice.”⁴³ But no sources are cited, no proof for this assertion is given, no examples are shown. He states that a handbook like Aristotle’s *Rhetoric* is not a helpful source for his purposes, claims that it was of little value to later rhetorical theorists, that it would be an unlikely event for a hellenistic teacher of rhetoric to even take the trouble to read Aristotle, and declares that “Aristotle’s treatise may not have had much direct impact on later rhetoric.”⁴⁴ He also states that “the *Rhetoric* was almost certainly never prepared for publication,”⁴⁵ and that “scholarship, influenced by questions on its availability, has tended to doubt that the *Rhetoric* was widely read.”⁴⁶ But again, these are assertions unsupported by citations of

⁴⁰ C. Black, “ ‘The Words That You Gave to Me I Have Given to Them’ ”, 221.

⁴¹ G. Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation*, 10.

⁴² R. Anderson, *Ancient Rhetorical Theory and Paul*, 13.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 29.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 41.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 35.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 39.

scholarly work.

One gets the impression from Anderson's statements that Aristotle and his work *On Rhetoric* were essentially irrelevant to later rhetors and acamedicians. I have come across no one else in the course of my studies who so thoroughly minimizes or dismisses Aristotle's influence on ancient rhetorical theory and practice as does Anderson. On the contrary, Aristotle's work is seen as basic for an understanding of Greek rhetoric and foundational for later rhetorical works: "With his philosophic treatise, Aristotle became the fountainhead of all later rhetorical theory. As Lane Cooper has said, '...the Rhetoric not only of Cicero and Quintilian, but of the Middle Ages, of the Renaissance, and of modern times, is, in its best elements, essentially Aristotelian.'"⁴⁷ This is the understanding on which I have proceeded in this thesis.

Given the Hellenistic literary background in which the New Testament arose and the rhetorical elements which can be found in the biblical texts, it is not surprising that there would be a rhetorical dimension to the New Testament. And if this is so, taking this dimension into account would give a more fully informed interpretation of the text.

Literary Use Of Symbol And Rhetoric

Norman Perrin states that to discuss the biblical narrative in terms of symbols is certainly appropriate and valid because "the nature and function of symbol are of the very stuff of language itself and do not change in essentials from language to language, or from age to age."⁴⁸ Symbols are a large part of how we communicate and literary techniques recognizing the place of symbols must be utilized to study such communication. Elisabeth Fiorenza describes literary analysis as a method which "focuses on the compositional activity of the author and the aesthetic power of the work."⁴⁹ For her, aesthetic power can be found in the rich symbols which predominate in the Book of Revelation. She asserts that the language of symbol has "evocative power inviting imaginative participation" in the narrative.⁵⁰ Such symbols are able to elicit "reactions, emotions, convictions, and

⁴⁷ E. Corbett, *Classical Rhetoric*, 543-544.

⁴⁸ N. Perrin, *Jesus and the Language of the Kingdom*, 21.

⁴⁹ Elisabeth Fiorenza, *The Book of Revelation: Justice and Judgment*, 21.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 22.

identifications.”⁵¹

Symbols, then, are potent aspects of a literary work and as Perrin states, “the interpreter must need take seriously the nature and natural function of the literary form and language of the text he or she is concerned to interpret” or the point of the text is missed.⁵² And again: “If we are dealing with symbolic language then we must consider what a literary symbol is, how it works, what it does.”⁵³

This brings up an obvious question: what are literary symbols? Mark Stibbe offers this: “Symbols are connecting links between two spheres, the sphere of the symbol itself (surface reality) and the sphere which the symbol represents.”⁵⁴ For Stibbe’s work with the Gospel this is of prime importance since “it is often by recurrent themes, symbols and irony that John’s Christology is indirectly communicated.”⁵⁵

The use of symbol as a powerful literary, communicative device is also brought out by John Painter: “The symbols are derived from the world of sense experience and are used to communicate that which transcends the world in order that the transcendent might be experienced.”⁵⁶ Because man was created in the image of God and imbued with the capacity to hear and respond to the Word of God, “the symbols are appeals and calls to man to hear the Word.”⁵⁷ Thus the power of symbols to both communicate and evoke.⁵⁸

One of the more detailed discussions of symbol is found in Philip Wheelwright’s *Metaphor & Reality*. He describes how metaphor in language becomes symbol when it recurs and becomes repeatable—it comes to have stability in its own right. Wheelwright gives this definition: “A symbol, in general, is a relatively stable and repeatable element of perceptual experience, standing for some larger meaning or set of meanings which cannot

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 187.

⁵² N. Perrin, *Jesus and the Language of the Kingdom*, 7.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁵⁴ M. Stibbe, *John As Storyteller*, 27.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 27.

⁵⁶ J. Painter, *Reading John’s Gospel Today*, 140.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 141.

⁵⁸ For a unique use of metaphor see H. Zimmermann, “Struktur und Aussageabsicht der Johanneischen Abschiedsreden (Jo 13-17)”, *Bibel und Leben* 8 (1967), 279-90, who proposes that at John 14:31 Jesus uses a metaphorical declaration which is understood at the literal level by the audience, causing misunderstanding and confusion, which in turn produces a situation conducive to further teaching and instruction (chapters 15-16).

be given, or not fully given, in perceptual experience itself.”⁵⁹

Wheelwright notes that “the gospel according to John . . . offers the greatest treasure of Christian symbolic material.”⁶⁰ And of course John himself made use of symbols that were well known, especially to Christians of Jewish background.

In discussing symbols and their context, Norman Perrin approvingly cites Philip Wheelwright’s work and asserts that symbols become means by which the community comes to understand itself and make sense of its historical experience.⁶¹ Symbols, then, are fundamental to our understanding and to our communication of that understanding.

What can be used as symbols to evoke such understanding of the transcendent? As John Painter notes, “the variety of symbols used by the evangelist is an indication that *anything* can become a symbol for the revelation. But it is only truly revealing when its christocentric perspective is perceived.”⁶²

Just as symbols are important for Stibbe and Painter because of their ability to communicate the transcendent, and especially because of their expression of Christology in the Fourth Gospel, so also John Ashton discusses their effectiveness. For example, “death as departure” is a simple metaphor which the fourth evangelist uses to enhance his distinctive portrait of the role and nature of Christ. Says Ashton, “In the Fourth Gospel the idea of death as a final journey has been transformed into that of *the return from a mission*.”⁶³

Thus, the use of symbolic language points to a deeper, greater reality than simple, temporal death and is of crucial significance for John’s Christology. That “death as departure” takes on the significance of a journey or return at the end of a successful mission

⁵⁹ P. Wheelwright, *Metaphor and Reality*, 92. Wheelwright notes that among symbols, distinctions must be made. There are those symbols whose meanings can be shared in exactly the same way by a very large number of persons. With this type of symbol, a one-to-one correspondence exists between itself and its meaning. Examples would be such words as child, parent, dog, tree, sky. These are called “steno-symbols” (p. 33). On the other hand, there are “tensive symbols” whose set of meanings can neither be exhausted nor adequately expressed by any one referent. This is the language which creates representational and expressive forms, “verbal symbols” which suggest certain images (p. 57).

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 110.

⁶¹ N. Perrin, *Jesus and the Language of the Kingdom*, 22, 26-32, 62.

⁶² J. Painter, *Reading John’s Gospel Today*, 139.

⁶³ J. Ashton, *Understanding the Fourth Gospel*, 451.

becomes important for the theme of the “way” in John 14. Here two symbols, Jesus’ departure “where I am going” (13:33) and “the way” (14:4), are united and this more fully develops Jesus’ teaching of the salvation of his followers.

When an author, such as the fourth evangelist, makes use of a range of symbols for revelation to a community, it is proper to speak of the “symbolic universe” which then exists in that text. For instance, as Jerome Neyrey observes, the way in which the Jews in the first-century perceived their world is described as “their symbolic universe.”⁶⁴ How is this universe constructed? “People can be observed to draw lines which define and give meaning to their world in terms of six basic areas: self, others, nature, time, space, and God . . . All of these distinctions and classifications are evidence of our need to give shape and definition to our world or to bring order out of chaos . . . Such is the stuff of a symbolic universe.”⁶⁵

In discussing the concept of symbolic universe and the social function of a narrative, Mark Stibbe cites Peter Berger in *The Social Construction of Reality* (1984): “In a community’s linguistic sign-system, the symbolic universe of that community is established, described and maintained. The symbolic universe is ‘an overarching universe of meaning’ which is socially constructed.”⁶⁶ Observes Stibbe, “once a community has established a sense of tradition and a sense of corporate identity, the most common way of articulating those things is through narrative forms” and “once a coherent plot has been established, the process of storytelling can begin, and what the evangelist produces is an overarching narrative world or symbolic universe which makes sense of the real world in which his community lives.”⁶⁷ Tensive, symbolic language⁶⁸ thus creates a symbolic universe within a narrative which is able to effectively open up the transcendent to understanding and evoke a response.

What this thesis is concerned with is the rhetorical analysis of a self-contained unit of discourse which is rich in symbols and, more specifically, an examination of what those symbols mean, what their purpose is, how they do what they do and how it all fits together

⁶⁴ J. Neyrey, *The Social World of Luke-Acts*, 272.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 273.

⁶⁶ M. Stibbe, *John As Storyteller*, 53.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 54.

⁶⁸ See footnote 59, p. 49 for definitions of “steno” and “tensive” symbols.

as a coherent whole to accomplish this. Kennedy observes that “the rhetorical qualities inherent in the text were originally intended to have an impact on first hearing and to be heard by a group. In practicing rhetorical criticism we need to keep in mind that intent and that original impact, and to read the Bible as speech.”⁶⁹ This applies doubly to the Farewell Discourse: the intent and impact of Jesus’ words and actions on the circle of disciples that night as presented by the author; the intent and impact of the author’s account of these words and actions on his audience.

Rhetorical Analysis In New Testament Studies

The rhetorical dimension of language is “the energy inherent in emotion and thought, transmitted through a system of signs, including language, to others to influence their decisions or actions.”⁷⁰ The discourse of Jesus in John 13-17 is an excellent example of this. “Rhetoric,” says George Kennedy, “is that quality in discourse by which a speaker or writer seeks to accomplish his purposes.”⁷¹ In applying this to the Bible he says, “the writers of the New Testament had a message to convey and sought to persuade an audience to believe it or to believe it more profoundly. As such they are rhetorical, and their methods can be studied by the discipline of rhetoric.”⁷²

In her work on the Book of Revelation, Elisabeth Fiorenza applies rhetoric to the symbols she interprets and observes how rhetoric seeks to “persuade” or “motivate” people “to act right.”⁷³ An author will utilize rhetoric, then, to teach and instigate a change of attitudes and motivations in his hearers/readers. This is not an uncommon literary quality in the Bible or in religion in general. Kennedy asserts, “All religious systems are rhetorical: they are attempts to communicate perceived religious truth.”⁷⁴ Mark Stibbe makes note of this use of rhetoric in the Gospel of John, especially as it is employed in Christology: “NT narrative is a rhetorical phenomenon carefully engineered to reinforce a particular

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 6.

⁷⁰ Aristotle, *On Rhetoric: A Theory of Civic Discourse*, p. 7.

⁷¹ G. Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation Through Rhetorical Criticism*, p. 3.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 3.

⁷³ E. Fiorenza, *The Book of Revelation: Justice and Judgment*, 187.

⁷⁴ G. Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation Through Rhetorical Criticism*, 158.

theological understanding of Jesus in the minds of its readers.”⁷⁵

Kennedy reminds us that while rhetoric “originates in speech and its primary product is a speech act, not a text”, the rhetoric of historical periods can only be studied through texts.⁷⁶ Thus, the Bible, as it makes use of rhetoric, retains “an oral and linear quality for its audience.”⁷⁷ Since documents such as the Fourth Gospel would have originally been heard rather than read, it is not difficult to see the rhetorical character of the Farewell Discourse as persuasive speech to an audience. Rhetorical analysis of such a discourse would then be a fruitful direction in which to proceed for an understanding of the discourse’s context, structure and purpose. Indeed, Kennedy points out that “an awareness of classical rhetoric, if properly used, may become a tool to penetrate those features of the text which are culture-specific and to allow those which are universally valid to stand forth with greater clarity.”⁷⁸

Rhetorical analysis is defined by Benjamin Fiore as “a synchronic study of literary texts and their strategies of communication and persuasion.”⁷⁹ As a synchronic method, it does not concern itself with sources, historical origins and transmissions, or authorship. In discussing the use of this rhetorical methodology, Fiorenza states, “The ultimate goal of rhetorical analysis, briefly put, is the discovery of the author’s intent and of how that is transmitted through a text to an audience.”⁸⁰ George Kennedy observes that the Bible does speak through *ethos*, *pathos*, and *logos*, and to understand these is the concern of rhetorical analysis.⁸¹

It should come as no surprise that rhetoric and rhetorical concerns have a place in New Testament studies. As Burton Mack points out, “From the beginning it was taken for granted that the writings produced by early Christians were to be read as rhetorical compositions.”⁸² William Beardslee agrees: “Since persuasion was the aim of ancient rhetoric, and since persuasion has also been an important aim not only for New Testament

⁷⁵ M. Stibbe, *John As Storyteller*, 12.

⁷⁶ G. Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation Through Rhetorical Criticism*, 5.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 160.

⁷⁹ B. Fiore, “NT Rhetoric and Rhetorical Criticism”, 716.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 12.

⁸¹ G. Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation Through Rhetorical Criticism*, 159.

⁸² B. Mack, *Rhetoric and the New Testament*, 10.

writers but for those who have studied them in later times, it is not surprising that many of the approaches to literary study of the New Testament should have been in terms of this type of analysis.”⁸³ Unfortunately, says Mack, “. . . the knowledge of rhetoric was actually lost to us in the twists and turns of twentieth century scholarship. We now know that interest in rhetoric waned around the turn of the century, ushering in approximately four generations of scholarship without formal training in rhetoric and with very little knowledge of the tradition of rhetorical criticism.”⁸⁴

A renaissance of interest in rhetorical criticism then began in the 1960’s. Many point to James Muilenburg’s 1968 presidential address to the Society of Biblical Literature (“After Form Criticism What?”) as a starting point. Amos Wilder, however, had already in 1964 published a little volume, *The Language of the Gospel: Early Christian Rhetoric*, in which this interest is clearly evident. It is his contention that we should be concerned not only with *what* the early Christians said, but *how* they said it. “The Christian styles tend to evoke or restore the face-to-face encounter”⁸⁵ and, “The language of the New Testament has a large part of imaginative rhetoric, alone adequate to catch up the awareness and world-sense of the believers.”⁸⁶ These early applications of rhetoric, however, were too narrow in scope. Muilenburg’s approach was largely limited to matters of style and Wilder’s to poetics and the aesthetic effects of style on the imagination.

Rhetorical criticism began to flourish in a more fully developed sense in the 1970’s and 1980’s as it was distinguished by its attention to the art of persuasion. As described by Wilhelm Wuellner, rhetorical criticism moves us beyond semantics, hermeneutics and structuralism. “The rhetorical view of religious literature takes us beyond viewing language as a reflection of reality . . . and takes us to ‘the social aspect of language which is an instrument of communication and influence on others’.”⁸⁷ Wuellner points out that rhetorical approaches from Augustine on suffered from a reduction of rhetoric to questions of style and tropes, something that characterized Muilenburg and his followers as well. They had no identifiable methodology. Indeed, while there has been much research that purports to be rhetorical in direction, it concentrates on neither ancient stylistics nor

⁸³ W. Beardslee, *Literary Criticism of the New Testament*, 3.

⁸⁴ B. Mack, *Rhetoric and the New Testament*, 11.

⁸⁵ A. Wilder, *The Language of the Gospel: Early Christian Rhetoric*, 24.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 132.

⁸⁷ W. Wuellner, “Where is Rhetorical Criticism Taking Us?”, 449.

classical modes of persuasion and is indistinguishable from literary criticism.⁸⁸

But then came the model of rhetorical criticism articulated by classicist George Kennedy, a model that is the prevailing one in this discipline today. With his Greco-Roman based rhetorical approach to New Testament interpretation, a comprehensive methodology has been offered which takes into account both style, trope, and structural concerns on the one hand, and social descriptive concerns on the other. As Clifton Black asserts, Kennedy's concept of rhetoric "is that of the disciplined art of persuasion"⁸⁹ and, ". . . is probably the most useful for practical criticism . . . His is truly a method, not merely an interpretive perspective."⁹⁰ Wuellner tests Kennedy's model with an examination of 1 Corinthians 9 and gives a most positive appraisal as to its usefulness and the insights it yields.⁹¹

Kennedy himself asserts that given the Hellenization of the Near East before and during the time of Christ, and the rhetorical dimensions of the text of the New Testament, approaching the New Testament through classical rhetoric is both historically and philosophically justified. "The writers of the books of the New Testament had a message to convey and sought to persuade an audience to believe it or to believe it more profoundly. As such they are rhetorical, and their methods can be studied by the discipline of rhetoric."⁹² Clifton Black (1989) describes the focus of this discipline: "Rhetorical critics focus their attention on texts, not to dismantle them or to track their *Traditionsgeschichte*, but in order to probe the delicate interplay between ancient writers and their readers."⁹³ He states that "the coherence of biblical form and content" is respected in this method and that "meaning in discourse is communicated most profoundly by the marriage of a message

⁸⁸ Such is the study by Jeffrey Staley, *The Print's First Kiss*. Staley never quite defines what he means by "rhetoric." For him, "rhetorical levels of Johannine discourse" (p. 48) are actually the categories of reader-response criticism: real and implied author, reader, and so forth. "Rhetorical power," he says is the impact literary devices of narrative and reader response theory has upon the reader (p. 49) and rhetorical structure is not a discussion of rhetorical categories, but a structural analysis *per se* (p. 50ff.).

⁸⁹ C. Black, "Rhetorical Criticism and Biblical Interpretation", 253.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 256.

⁹¹ W. Wuellner, "Where Is Rhetorical Criticism Taking Us?", 458-460.

⁹² G. Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation Through Rhetorical Criticism*, 3.

⁹³ C. Black, "Rhetorical Criticism and Biblical Interpretation", 257.

and its means of conveyance.”⁹⁴ The form of the text, then, *how* it is said, is a key element in this approach. William Beardslee remarks that in utilizing this rhetorical approach there is “a theological point of view which can be extracted from the form; the form serves the essentially instrumental purpose of making this theological point of view persuasive.”⁹⁵

A number of scholars have applied this new rhetorical approach to the interpretation of the New Testament. As Burton Mack points out, however, “the new rhetoric is actually a rediscovery of the old.”⁹⁶ Among these are: Marty L. Reid⁹⁷ and Stanley Stowers⁹⁸ on Romans; Barth Campbell⁹⁹ and Margaret Mitchell¹⁰⁰ on 1 Corinthians; Hans Dieter Betz¹⁰¹ and Janet Fairweather¹⁰² on Galatians; Robert Jewett¹⁰³, Charles Wanamaker¹⁰⁴, and Steve Walton¹⁰⁵ on Thessalonians. Ben Witherington sees the Gospel of John following the approach of other ancient biographies “which had certain rhetorical aims involving the art of persuasion” and, “A good deal of the content of this Gospel is framed so as to be suitable for use in debates with opponents or possible converts.”¹⁰⁶

In his discussion of the literary composition and function of St. Paul’s letter to the Galatians, Betz declares, “Paul’s letter to the Galatians can be analyzed according to Greco-

⁹⁴ Ibid., 257.

⁹⁵ W. Beardslee, *Literary Criticism of the New Testament*, 4.

⁹⁶ B. Mack, *Rhetoric and the New Testament*, 16.

⁹⁷ M. Reid, “A Consideration of the Function of Rom. 1:8-15 in Light of Greco-Roman Rhetoric” (1995).

⁹⁸ S. Stowers, *The Diatribe and Paul’s Letter to the Romans* (1981).

⁹⁹ B. Campbell, “Flesh and Spirit in 1Cor. 5:5: An Exercise in Rhetorical Criticism of the NT” (1993).

¹⁰⁰ M. Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation* (1991).

¹⁰¹ H. D. Betz, *Galatians* (1979).

¹⁰² J. Fairweather, “The Epistle to the Galatians and Classical Rhetoric: Parts 1 & 2 & 3” (1994).

¹⁰³ R. Jewett, *The Thessalonian Correspondence: Pauline Rhetoric and Millenarian Piety* (1986).

¹⁰⁴ C. Wanamaker, *The Epistles to the Thessalonians* (1990).

¹⁰⁵ S. Walton, “What Has Aristotle to Do With Paul? Rhetorical Criticism and 1 Thessalonians” (1995).

¹⁰⁶ B. Witherington III, *John’s Wisdom*, 30.

Roman rhetoric and epistolography.”¹⁰⁷ He then outlines the epistle with rhetorical categories. Indeed, he cites both Martin Luther and Philip Melancthon as having already in the sixteenth century recognized the rhetorical dimensions of Galatians and Romans, respectively. He also points out that J.B. Lightfoot used rhetorical categories in his outline of Galatians.¹⁰⁸

Reid examines Romans 1:8-15 utilizing Greco-Roman rhetoric, specifically the five-step model proposed by George Kennedy (see Chapter Three). He demonstrates that this text, as part of a well-crafted rhetorical unit, does in fact introduce the basic purpose of the argument in Romans (something which more historical critical approaches have not seen). Reid concludes by saying, “rhetorical criticism offers a holistic methodology by which the interpreter can examine the relationship between the speaker, the audience and the discourse--issues that other approaches to Romans in the past have not made entirely clear.”¹⁰⁹ Expanding on this point, Wuellner says that, “Taking us beyond the diachronic reading to a synchronic reading of texts, rhetorical criticism makes us appreciate the practical, the political, the powerful, the playful, and the delightful aspects of religious texts.”¹¹⁰ This is not, however, to say that there is no historical dimension for, as Benjamin Fiore reminds us, “The rhetorical criticism based on the principles of classical rhetoric has a historical perspective and thus directly complements traditional historical criticism.”¹¹¹

Another recent contribution to the discussion of applying the faculty of rhetoric to theological studies is made by David Cunningham.¹¹² His main thesis is that the practice of Christian theology and the classical rhetorical tradition are compatible and complementary.¹¹³ He states, “Christian theology is best understood as *persuasive argument* . . . the most appropriate tool for analyzing theological language, then, will be able to account for the variety of ways in which persuasion occurs. This was precisely the

¹⁰⁷ H. D. Betz, *Galatians*, 14.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 14, footnote 97.

¹⁰⁹ M. Reid, “A Consideration of the Function of Rom. 1:8-15 in Light of Greco-Roman Rhetoric”, 191.

¹¹⁰ W. Wuellner, “Where is Rhetorical Criticism Taking Us?”, 461.

¹¹¹ B. Fiore, “NT Rhetoric and Rhetorical Criticism”, 718.

¹¹² D. Cunningham, *Faithful Persuasion: In Aid of a Rhetoric of Christian Theology* (1991).

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 30ff.

role of the ancient faculty of *rhetoric*.”¹¹⁴ Cunningham sees theology as a distinctly rhetorical activity, something which has been true since the earliest centuries and remains true today.¹¹⁵ Specifically, he sees the three rhetorical elements of persuasion (*ethos*, *pathos*, and *logos*) at work in the theological practices of doctrinal formulation, biblical exegesis and church historiography. While Cunningham states that Scripture itself is rhetorical,¹¹⁶ he limits his discussion to theological dialogue and does not consider the rhetorical dimensions of the biblical text itself. His overall thesis and analysis does, however, establish the appropriateness and usefulness of the faculty of rhetoric in theology.

It is clear that rhetorical criticism based upon Greco-Roman rhetorical principles has once again come into its own as a powerful tool for New Testament interpretation.¹¹⁷ Gary Burge, in giving an overview of some current trends in Johannine research, cites rhetorical criticism and states, “If there is a cutting edge to Johannine study, many writers would like to find it in rhetorical critical analysis.”¹¹⁸ This attitude is best summarized by Clifton Black: “The intelligent application of rhetorical principles does promise augmented insight into that quality of scripture so obvious to its readers yet so elusive to its critics: the power to instill and to enhance the life of faith.”¹¹⁹

Summary

The topic proposed in this paper has not been found to be a duplication of any other work. Either the concerns of these works are more structural, dealing with arrangement and classification; or, if they do draw theological conclusions, they are really quite shallow and do not give attention to what I believe is one of the major points of the Farewell Discourse.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 5.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 31-32, 204.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 32.

¹¹⁷ For a rather comprehensive review of this subject see Duane F. Watson, “The New Testament and Greco-Roman Rhetoric: A Bibliography”, 465-72 ; and D.F. Watson, “The New Testament and Greco-Roman Rhetoric: A Bibliographical Update”, 513-24.

¹¹⁸ G. Burge, *Interpreting the Gospel of John*, 32. See also D.A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 38.

¹¹⁹ C. Black, “Rhetorical Criticism and Biblical Interpretation”, 257.

Van Den Heever echoes this when he says, “Ever since the advent of literary-critical approaches to John’s Gospel, heavy emphasis has been laid on narrative elements . . . to the almost total exclusion of what is perhaps the most conspicuous feature of the text: its symbolism . . . the centrality of its use of metaphors.”¹²⁰ He says of these symbols in John, “As far I know, no one has yet approached them from the point of view of a theory of metaphor, and that located within narrative theory.”¹²¹ What Van Den Heever identifies as an unmet need certainly falls within my proposal of investigating the rhetorical dimensions of the discourse and the use of symbols. But again, it should not just be a study of metaphor for the sake of metaphor. Rather, what are the metaphors telling us? What purpose is achieved by the discourse? What is it saying? How is it saying it? Why is it saying it?

What I am proposing in distinction to other literary approaches is a classical rhetorical analysis in which the text is treated as a unified, coherent whole. The intended purpose of the text will be elucidated by a rhetorical analysis which will analyze the discourse’s structure and reveal its theological thrust. Applying a method of analysis (rhetorical) that is based upon the literary context in which the text was originally written would seem to be desirable to gain an understanding of the author’s intent and how it was heard by its original audience. For example, an analysis of the rhetorical artistic proofs of *ethos*, *pathos*, and *logos* (see Chap. 4, pp. 75-79) allows one to go beyond form criticism’s emphasis on a genre’s role outside of the text and focus on the verbal and thematic patterns of the text itself with due attention paid to both the structural patterns and the affective dimensions of the text.

This present analysis will deal with the text as it is before us in its final form, not assuming that it is defective or in need of rearrangement by us. It will seek to demonstrate that the evangelist presents Jesus as the one who defines and models what the disciples are to be in their own fast-approaching ministry to the community of believers and to the world. In this way, the author intends to persuade his readers regarding not only the person of Jesus, but their own situation as well (in light of the truth about Jesus), insofar as they may face difficult or threatening circumstances not unlike those faced by Jesus’ disciples in the narrative.

¹²⁰ G.A. Van Den Heever, “Theological Metaphorics And The Metaphors Of John’s Gospel”, 92.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 92.

CHAPTER THREE

THE RHETORICAL UNIT: CONTEXT AND GENRE

The Rhetorical Method

As we have seen, the model of New Testament rhetorical interpretation usually cited in recent literature as being the most useful is the model articulated by American classicist, George Kennedy.¹ Kennedy himself never states how many stages there are in his model, describing instead “the various stages involved in the practice of rhetorical criticism.”² While he sets it forth as a *sequence* of steps, he prefers to have it understood as a *circular* process with the final step being a synchronic overview of his diachronic sequence.³

The stages appear to be five in number: 1. Determining the rhetorical unit to be studied; 2. defining the rhetorical situation of the unit; 3. describing the overriding rhetorical problem that the speaker faces; 4. analyzing the arrangement of the material in the unit (which includes its structure, persuasive effects and formal features); and 5. reviewing the entire unit as described by these steps to evaluate its effectiveness in meeting the rhetorical exigence.⁴

This chapter will discuss the first stage, the identifying of the rhetorical unit to be studied. The context of this unit and its genre as a farewell type-scene will be examined.

The Rhetorical Unit

Kennedy describes the rhetorical unit as a portion of a text (sometimes the entire text itself) which has a discernible beginning, middle, and end.⁵ Signs of opening and

¹ C. Clifton Black, “Rhetorical Criticism and Biblical Interpretation”, 254, 256.

² G. Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation Through Rhetorical Criticism*, 33.

³ W. Wuellner, “Where Is Rhetorical Criticism Taking Us?”, 458.

⁴ G. Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation Through Rhetorical Criticism*, 33-38.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 33.

closure, the *inclusio*, mark the outer limits. These are often referred to in rhetoric as proem (or exordium) and epilogue, respectively. They set the unit apart from its surrounding context so that it is identifiable as a unit.

John 13-17 clearly meets these qualifications. C.K. Barrett, for instance, notes that the first part of the Gospel of John closes at 12:50 and sets forth chapters 13-17 as a unit in his own sketch of the Gospel's major divisions.⁶ Many of the scholarly commentaries and monographs on John recognize this feature of the Gospel.⁷ Thus, chapters 13-17 form an *inclusio* within the Gospel of John and will be the rhetorical unit analyzed in this paper. That this conclusion is justified will be seen in the following discussion of the unit's context.

The Context of the Rhetorical Unit

John 1-12 (the "Book of Signs") draws to a close with the end of Jesus' public ministry. Up to this point there has been a pattern of mounting conflict and tension. The Jews murmur against him (6:41) and on numerous occasions seek to seize and/or kill him (5:16,18; 7:30; 8:20; 8:59; 10:31; 10:39; 11:59; 12:10). In 12:36 Jesus eschews any more public appearances and the chapter ends on a note of eschatological warning. All the opposition, threats and plotting come to fruition later on (18:1ff.) with his arrest, trial, suffering and death. Set between these two emphases of public ministry and passion, and acting as the "major pivot"⁸ on which the whole narrative turns, is the Farewell

⁶ C.K. Barrett, *Gospel*, 435, 11, 14.

⁷ See G.R. Beasley-Murray, *John*, 222; B.F. Westcott, *Gospel*, 142; E.C. Hoskyns, *The Fourth Gospel*, 432-33; D.A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 455, 460; P. Minear, "To Ask and to Receive" (1981); F. Stagg, "The Farewell Discourses" (1965); F. Segovia, *The Farewell of the Word* (1991); R. Lemmer, "A Possible Understanding By The Implied Reader, Of Some Of The *Coming-Going-Being Sent* Pronouncements, in the Johannine Farewell Discourses" (1991); D.F. Tolmie, *Jesus' Farewell To The Disciples: John 13:1-17:26 In Narratological Perspective* (1995); E.R. Wendland, "Rhetoric Of The Word. An Interactional Discourse Analysis Of The Lord's Prayer Of John 17 And Its Communicative Implications" (1992); and J. Beutler, *Habt keine Angst: Die erste johanneische Abschiedsrede (Joh 14)*, 9-11, who takes 13:1-30 to be a literary unity with vv. 31-38 making chapter 13 an integral part of the full discourse.

⁸ Paul Minear, "To Ask and to Receive", 229.

Discourse. But to this thematic division can be added a number of other factors which set chapters 13-17 apart as a distinct unit in the Gospel of John. These would include elements of time, location, and content.

First of all, with regard to time, there is a discernible beginning and ending. 13:1 is set apart from the prior text by this element. The “hour” or “time” of Jesus that had not yet come (2:4; 7:6, 8, 30; 8:20) is declared to have now come in 13:1. Also, from 12:1 to 13:1 there has been a lapse of time (practically a week) so that in chapter 13 we are in the immediate context of the Passover. In chapter 17 Jesus is still alone with his intimate circle of immediate disciples as he addresses the Father. But in 18:1 there is a clear shift in the narrative after Jesus has “spoken these words”—the discourse is now completed. The time frame sets the Farewell Discourse apart as a distinct rhetorical unit with 13:1 as the proem and Jesus’ prayer in chapter 17 as the epilogue.

Second, the location of Jesus and his disciples sets chapters 13-17 apart. Previous to this unit, Jesus is portrayed in the “Book of Signs” actively engaged in his public ministry. But now he is alone with his disciples in an unspecified room in Jerusalem.⁹ This context ends with the beginning of chapter 18 where we find movement both spatially (across the Kidron and into the garden) and textually to a new dimension of the plot (confrontation, betrayal and arrest). The intimate association of Jesus with his disciples in this immediate context with the unique discourse that is reported identifies these chapters as a distinct pericope.

The content element is the third factor which sets the Farewell Discourse apart as a distinct unit of the Gospel. While discourses are present in earlier chapters, they usually *follow* Jesus’ signs, “unpacking” their significance.¹⁰ With the Farewell Discourse we have something different: it *precedes* the event it explains, Jesus’ departure. Here he speaks of his forthcoming death, burial, resurrection, ascension, and the coming of the Holy Spirit. With the exception of those verses (13:1-30) that give the immediate context for the conversations that follow, chapters 13-17 are essentially pure discourse (Jesus with his disciples and Jesus with his heavenly Father). The nature and content of these chapters

⁹ Whether one believes that the entire discourse took place in the upper room, or outside but somewhere near it, or at the temple, or along the way somewhere, Jesus’ immediate context is that of being alone with his intimate circle of disciples, discoursing with them.

¹⁰ See Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 455.

clearly identify them as forming a distinct unit.

Thus, the determination of John 13-17 as a rhetorical unit is demonstrated by elements of context, time, location and content. Its nature as discourse makes it an excellent subject for rhetorical analysis.

John 13-17 As A Farewell Type-Scene

In biblical and non-biblical literature, the farewell addresses (dialogues and speeches) of dying heroes and other great men are not uncommon. Ethelbert Stauffer is acknowledged as the first scholar to recognize and describe the *Gattung* of “testament” and to characterize it.¹¹ Stauffer discusses the farewell testaments of great men in four different types of material: Greco-Roman literature; the Hebrew Bible and extrabiblical Jewish material; the New Testament; and later Christian literature.¹² By and large, the elements of Jewish farewells are quite similar to those found in Greco-Roman examples. Differences are found in the presence of a blessing (in Jewish farewells, but not in Greco-Roman) and a farewell hymn (in Greco-Roman farewells, but not in Jewish). In an earlier work, Stauffer enumerated twenty-six characteristics for farewell speeches and their contexts.¹³ This listing does not contain any references to Greco-Roman and later Christian texts. Since Stauffer saw Jesus’ farewells reflecting the tradition of Jewish farewells, he apparently saw little need to include them. In his later study (1950) their inclusion demonstrates the many similarities between the two.¹⁴

¹¹ E. Bammel, “Die Abschiedsrede des Johannesevangeliums und ihr jüdischer Hintergrund”, 1.

¹² E. Stauffer, “Abschiedsreden.” *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum*, 29-35.

¹³ E. Stauffer, *Die Theologie des Neuen Testaments*, 321-24. Some of these characteristics which are also found in the Johannine Farewell Discourse are as follows: heaven reveals the approach of death (13:1; 17:1); the one prepared for death calls together those who are left behind (13:1ff.); he announces his forthcoming departure (16:28); they will not be able to follow him and it is better so (13:33); he takes a last meal with his friends (13:2ff.); he gives revelations about the future (14:29; 16:4), warnings and final injunctions (15:22), an exhortation to keep his words and instructions (14:21), and a commandment to love (13:34); he gives comfort and promise (14:1); and he prays for those he leaves behind (17).

¹⁴ For example: announcement of impending death, final instructions, exhortations to successors, thanksgiving to the gods and prayers, consolation, recalling past events, pronouncement of woes and blessings, theological reflection on the past and future, and

In another significant study of farewell speeches and their contexts, H.J. Michel presents thirteen categories (or elements) of this *Gattung*.¹⁵ Like Stauffer's listing, this study also omits references to Greco-Roman literature, perhaps for the same reason. Michel draws his study all together by presenting a four-fold pattern he has elucidated for farewell type-scenes: 1. the speaker is introduced; 2. the close associates are assembled; 3. exhortations and prophecies are given; 4. the speaker draws the farewell to a close. Keeping in mind such an over-arching outline for a farewell helps to maintain a sense of order, especially when one is dealing with a number of different descriptive elements (26 for Stauffer; 13 for Michel). It can be noted that John 13-17 does follow this broad outline: 13:1 presents the speaker; 13:2-20 describes the gathering of confidants; 13:21-16:33 contains exhortations and prophecies; 17:1-26 is clearly the epilogue of the farewell with the shift that takes place in 18:1.

This concern for identifying the unique characteristics of a farewell address and then interpreting the pericope from that perspective is highlighted by William Kurz in a study of Luke 22:14-28.¹⁶ Kurz maintains that while biblical farewells do have similarities to secular farewells, they also have unique qualities that set them apart.¹⁷ Noteworthy in Kurz' study is the observation that recognizing a pericope (such as Luke 22:14-38) as an example of a farewell address helps solve a number of problems that remain after other approaches have been applied (synoptic comparison, source studies, and focus on individual pericopes).¹⁸ This, I believe, is an important point. It means that if the rhetorical dimension of a text is not recognized and dealt with accordingly, parts of the text (or perhaps the main point of the whole pericope) may remain obscure and/or problematic to interpreters who are not engaging it in accord with its rhetorical content and structure.

Turning specifically to John 13-17, we find a number of studies that identify this rhetorical unit as an example of the farewell genre. William Kurz distinguishes a farewell

prophecies.

¹⁵ H.J. Michel, "Die Abschiedsrede des Paulus an die Kirche Apg. 20.17-38: Motivgeschichte und theologische Bedeutung", 17-38.

¹⁶ Wm. S. Kurz, "Luke 22:14-38 and Greco-Roman and Biblical Farewell Addresses", 251-68. Kurz analyzes the Luke 22 passage with 20 characteristics of farewell speeches and their contexts. He has drawn these from the work of both Stauffer and Michel.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 255-56, 261.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 251, 268.

such as we have in John 13-17 from those which combine the apocalyptic genre with the farewell (Mark 13) and also from farewell letters (2 Timothy, 2 Peter) which are not speeches within a narrative context.¹⁹ He analyzes the final canonical form of the farewell in its biblical context with the intention of discussing the application of the farewell to both its first century audience and to contemporary Christians. Multiple methods (diachronic and synchronic) are used,²⁰ however rhetorical methodology is not among them. Given the nature of Jesus' farewell as dialogue, though, rhetorical analysis would be especially helpful.

Kurz maintains that farewell speeches are especially suited to contemporary application because "they are intrinsically oriented to the situation after the time of the narrative, and therefore to the implied readers."²¹ Since farewells look explicitly beyond the time of the narrative itself, they implicitly address the time of the implied readers. Since the exigency created by Jesus' departure will largely remain the same for all generations until he returns, the issues addressed in the farewell will largely apply to all generations who await his return. Kurz notes that "explicit farewell elements dominate the five chapters of John 13-17,"²² but because of the length of the narrative, the repetitions, and apparent later additions, he believes that it lacks clarity as a unified farewell address. Had Kurz applied the conclusion of his earlier study²³ (that identification of the farewell genre helps solve literary problems) and the principles of rhetorical analysis to John 13-17, perhaps his view would be different! Rhetorically, the length of the dialogue is no problem and repetition is a rhetorical device. As far as apparent later additions are concerned, Kurz had pointedly stated in his introductory pages that he was working with the final canonical form of the farewell, a principle which I pointed out earlier in this paper is fundamental to rhetorical analysis. Perhaps, given these criteria, there is a clarity to John 13-17 that is not seen without respecting its rhetorical structure and content.

John 13-17 is also described as following a specific pattern of Old Testament farewell. Aelred Lacomara examines the Moses of Deuteronomy as a type of Jesus in John

¹⁹ Wm. S. Kurz, *Farewell Addresses in the New Testament*, 9.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 10.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 15.

²² *Ibid.*, 71.

²³ Wm. Kurz, "Luke 22:14-38 and Greco-Roman and Biblical Farewell Addresses", 251, 268.

13-16.²⁴ He notes that *external* resemblances are not lacking,²⁵ but that the *internal*, thematic resemblances of Deuteronomy and John 13-16 are even closer.²⁶ It must be said that Lacomara presents quite a convincing list of similarities between Deuteronomy and Jesus' Farewell Discourse in John. He concludes: "it was principally Dt and its prophecy of a 'new Moses' which the author of Jn had in mind when he gathered the sayings of Jesus into a final instruction to the disciples."²⁷ It is his contention that in incorporating Deuteronomic elements into the Farewell Discourse, John has incorporated the elements of covenant here. Indeed, he says that "Jn does, in fact, intend to present the new covenant in the FD" and, "in the chapters of the FD we have an extended commentary on the words 'of the new covenant'."²⁸ Thus, the Farewell Discourse does have a more profound purpose than simple consolation before departure. We have here a unique presentation of Jesus as the fulfillment of the prophecy of a new Moses in the context of the new covenant.

This Old Testament connection is seen also by Ernst Bammel²⁹ who compares John 13-17 with the two major characteristics found in Jewish writings for a departing man of God³⁰ and concludes that the Farewell Discourse in John does in fact derive from the Jewish heritage. However, he also notes eight differences between Jewish testaments and the Johannine Farewell.³¹ These are differences mainly in structure and content. He observes that in early Christian literature we find yet another *Gattung*, that of the speeches of the resurrected man, which then become the vehicles for expressing Christian teachings. Bammel sees the Johannine Farewell Discourse as a transitional phase between Jewish testaments and the early Christian *Gattung* of resurrection speeches.³²

²⁴ A. Lacomara, "Deuteronomy and the Farewell Discourse (Jn 13:31-16:33)", 65-84.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 66.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 66-82.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 82. See also P. Minear, "To Ask and To Receive", 229: "The Evangelist himself probably had in mind the scriptural traditions of Moses' farewell to the twelve tribes immediately before his death (Deuteronomy 29-33)."

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 83, 84.

²⁹ E. Bammel, "Die Abschiedsrede des Johannesevangeliums und ihr jüdischer Hintergrund", 1-12.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 5-7. The departing man looks back to his own life and beyond, to its achievements and shortcomings and looks forward to the heavenly abode as well.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 7-11.

³² *Ibid.*, 12.

John Ashton clearly sees John's Farewell Discourse as exhibiting the qualities of the literary form that gives it its name. But he also believes there is a *commission form* embedded in the discourse which has gone unnoticed.³³ This point deserves attention, for if Ashton's claim is correct (that there is a commissioning present in the Farewell Discourse), it lends weight to my hypothesis that far more is at stake in the Farewell Discourse than simple consolation and good-byes. The evangelist is presenting Jesus as the one who defines and models what the disciples are to be in their own quickly-approaching ministry to the community of believers in Jesus and to the world.

Ashton also states that not only similarities with the farewell form should be noted, but deviations from this form as well. For instance, in the Farewell Discourse, Jesus speaks not only of his departure, but of his return. Also, departure is not just death, but death which is seen as a return from a mission.³⁴ With Jesus announcing his imminent departure and urging his disciples to carry on with his work afterwards, he is following a recognizable pattern. But by including in the farewell the promise to return, he introduces something new for, "the tradition of the Second Coming is irreconcilable with any final goodbye."³⁵ Also, while there is a movement *upward* to heaven spoken of in the farewell (the departure), there is a movement *downward* from heaven as well, the indwelling of the believer by the Father and the Son (14:23) and ultimately the parousia (14:2-3). As Schnackenburg remarks, "the Johannine farewell discourse is particularly close to the early biblical and Jewish stylistic forms" and yet "clearly has a special character of its own."³⁶

A number of other authors have noted that the Johannine Farewell is characterized by most of the motifs found in farewell speeches in antiquity.³⁷ As such, it conforms to

³³ J. Ashton, *Understanding the Fourth Gospel*, 445-57. The commission form involves some task of special urgency while the farewell form focuses on a more generalized kind of behavior. Three key elements in the commission form are: 1. the encouragement 14:1; 2. the commission 14:15; 3. the promise of divine assistance 14:16-17.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 451.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 460.

³⁶ R. Schnackenburg, *Gospel*, 57.

³⁷ See R.E. Brown, *Gospel*, 597-601. Brown lists the features of biblical and post-biblical farewell speeches that are found in John's Farewell Discourse. Also, C. Talbert, *Reading John: A Literary and Theological Commentary on the Fourth Gospel and the Johannine Epistles*,

the pattern known as the farewell speech or testament. Beyond form and content, however, is the *function* served by these farewell addresses. In other words, identifying the elements commonly found in farewell type-scenes is not enough. The goals or functions intended in using such a genre should also be examined.³⁸

Farewells are described as “the last chance in narratives for leaders to provide for the future needs of their organizations and followers. This is the time to name successors and set up institutions that will carry on their work after their departure . . . This is the time to equip their successors with the powers they need to achieve their mission . . . the farewell address is intrinsically oriented to maintaining the traditions and community begun by the founder. Its function for later readers is conservative rather than innovative . . . it implies continuity between the original and later members of their communities.”³⁹ The functions most commonly served, then, by farewell discourses are these: consolation; the bestowal of authority; didactic at both the story and the reader levels; and paraenetic (exhortation giving counsel and advice) at both the story and the reader levels. As will be seen in the balance of this paper, this is precisely what the evangelist intends to achieve with his presentation of the events which transpired the night in which Jesus was betrayed.

Kurz⁴⁰ expands on Jesus’ farewell as follows: it shows and justifies the transition of authority from Jesus to the Twelve; it recalls foundations of teachings and practices so that there will be continuity from past to present; it is an apologetic for Jesus, distancing him from later deviations of the message; and it gives future predictions (prophecies) that demonstrate to future generations the divine plan in all that happened.

Thus, it can be said that the primary purpose of farewell speeches is “to provide narrative transition and continuity between founders or heroes and their successors and later generations of followers or descendants.”⁴¹ This function, as well as many of the

201. Talbert gives the following as generally accepted characteristics of farewell speeches: 1. A noteworthy figure knows he is about to die, gathers his primary community about him and tells them. 2. The hero gives a farewell speech to his primary community that includes a prediction of the future. 3. The farewell speech also contains an exhortation about how to behave after the hero has departed. 4. The farewell speech with its predictions and exhortations sometimes closes with a prayer for those the hero is leaving behind.

³⁸ See F. Segovia, *The Farewell of the Word*, 18, 308 for a discussion of “minimalistic” and “maximalistic” positions on identifying farewell motifs.

³⁹ Wm. Kurz, *Farewell Addresses in the New Testament*, 18.

⁴⁰ Wm. Kurz, “Luke 22:14-38 and Greco-Roman and Biblical Farewell Addresses”, 265-67.

elements of farewells already described, is seen throughout the Johannine Farewell. For example, farewells will often portray the speaker as a model for the disciples' behavior. In John 13:15, 34 we find Jesus exhorting his followers to imitate his example. Promises of future help or legitimation of their cause are often given and in John 14:14-17 and 15:26-27 Jesus promises the answer to prayer and the Paraclete. Predictions or prophecies are also made in farewells which will prepare the disciples for events beyond the time of the narrative. In John 16:2 Jesus prepares his disciples for future hostility with his prediction of opposition and violence. Finally, as just noted, farewells will often refer beyond the time of the narrative into the future time of the readers envisaged by the author. Jesus does just this in John 17:20 as he refers to those who will eventually come to believe through the word spoken by his disciples.

From the point of view of both content and function, then, "the speech emerges as a highly unified coherent whole. It is a complete and complex example of the farewell genre."⁴²

Summary

The Farewell Discourse of Jesus in John 13-17 has been demonstrated to be a distinct rhetorical unit. This can be seen in its role as the link between the Lord's public ministry and his passion. Elements of time (his "hour" had come), location (discoursing alone with his disciples prior to his arrest), and content (discourse concerning his departure and future events), also mark this portion of John as a distinct rhetorical unit.

It has been firmly established that John 13-17 is a farewell type-scene. While it most closely exhibits the pattern of *biblical* farewells, it certainly reflects many of the elements found in farewell speeches of antiquity as detailed by Stauffer, Bammel, Michel and Kurz. The importance of recognizing a pericope as a farewell to more adequately understand both its structure and content has been noted. Ashton's recognition of a commission form in John 13-17 (that differs from the normal farewell and has gone unnoticed) certainly has implications for my hypothesis that Jesus, in his words and

⁴¹ Wm. Kurz, *Farewell Addresses in the New Testament*, 22.

⁴² F. Segovia, *The Farewell of the Word*, 316. See also E. Bammel, "Die Abschiedsrede des Johannesevangeliums und ihr jüdischer Hintergrund", 2, 7.

actions, is here being presented as preparing his disciples for their apostolic ministry which will follow his ascension.

The chapter which follows will examine the rhetorical situation in John 13-17, explore the rhetorical problem faced by Jesus with his disciples, and offer an outline of the Farewell Discourse's rhetorical structure.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE RHETORICAL UNIT: SITUATION, PROBLEM AND ARRANGEMENT

The Rhetorical Situation

Definition and Elements of Rhetorical Situation

To “unpack” a literary production rhetorically, it is necessary to utilize the same components of rhetoric that were used to bring it into being. After determining the unit to be studied (Chapter Three), analyzing the rhetorical situation provides an understanding of the specific condition or situation which invited the utterance and the various dynamics which account for its persuasive content.

Lloyd Bitzer is cited as one of the first to put forward the concept of “rhetorical situation.”¹ He defines rhetorical situation as “a complex of persons, events, objects, and relations presenting an actual or potential exigence which can be completely or partially removed if discourse, introduced into the situation, can so constrain human decision or action as to bring about the significant modification of the exigence.”² A rhetorical reading thus examines the persons, events, objects, time, place, and the relations involved since they influence what is said and why.

Even though the ancient rhetorical handbooks do not speak directly of a category of “rhetorical situation,” there was a clear concern to account for the very elements that define this more modern category. For example, Quintilian states that an orator, in composing his speech, must consider “what he has to say, before whom and in whose defense, against whom, at what time and place, and under what circumstances he has to speak.”³ In other words, a specific situation will give rise to the oratory and will influence, if not dictate, what is said and how it is said. It is, quite simply, the context in which the speech takes place with its complex of constitutive elements.

¹ G. Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation Through Rhetorical Criticism*, 34.

² L. Bitzer, “The Rhetorical Situation”, 5.

³ Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria* IV. 1. 52, 35.

Bitzer identifies three elements that are basic to the rhetorical situation: the exigence, the audience, and the constraints.⁴ The exigence is that which contributes to the urgency of the situation and which can be modified. It is the set of circumstances under which individuals are called upon to make a response. In the Farewell Discourse, this would refer to the disciples' distress, sorrow, confusion, troubled hearts, misunderstanding, lack of understanding, discouragement, and shaken faith that flow from Jesus' announced departure, attacks from without (16:4) and the potential for attacks on their unity from within (15:1-17). Jesus speaks openly of these exigencies and with his discourse attempts to counter them.

The audience consists of those persons "capable of being influenced by the discourse and of being mediators of change."⁵ Following Segovia's distinction of the "literary" and "extraliterary" levels of the discourse,⁶ this would include Jesus' disciples, the author's intended audience and, by extension, any subsequent readers who equate themselves as being followers of Jesus and who find themselves subject to similar circumstances.

The constraints are all those elements of the situation which "have the power to constrain decision and action needed to modify the exigence."⁷ In the Farewell Discourse there are a number of elements which serve as constraints for the evangelist: (1) Jesus' authority: "the Father had given all things into his hands" (13:3; 17:2); he is "teacher and Lord" (13:13); anyone who has seen Jesus has seen the Father (14:8-9); Jesus is "the true vine" (15:1), the source of their life and fruit (15:5), whose words are means of grace in the disciples' lives (15:7); everything belonging to the Father belongs to Jesus (16:15) and when the Spirit of truth comes, he will bear witness to and glorify Jesus (16:14). (2) Jesus' ethos (character): he is depicted as possessing the three qualities of *ethos*: knowledge (wisdom), integrity (virtue), and good will (13:1).⁸ He has knowledge not only of his own future (13:1), but of that of his disciples as well (16:2-4) and is able to give advice for their well-being (16:4). (3) The disciples' identity: they are "his own" and loved

⁴ L. Bitzer, "The Rhetorical Situation", 6.

⁵ Ibid., 8.

⁶ F. Segovia, *The Farewell of the Word*, 55.

⁷ L. Bitzer, "The Rhetorical Situation", 8.

⁸ Aristotle, *On Rhetoric*, II. 1. 5, 121.

(13:1); they are “clean” (13:10; 15:3); they are the “branches” of the vine who bear fruit (15:5) and who are to be characterized by love (13:34; 15:12); they are Jesus’ “friends” who are appointed for a particular task (15:14-16); they are “not of the world,” but were chosen by Jesus “out of the world” (15:19; 17:16); and they are the ones whom Jesus sends (13:20; 15:16; 17:18). (4) The exigence created by Jesus’ announced departure: the disciples will be separated from Jesus (13:33). This creates a host of reactions (see description above of “exigence” and its results). At the second level of the text, if the author’s readers are facing persecution and other challenges, a rather direct application of Jesus’ words to his disciples about his absence and separation from them would be appropriate and meaningful. (5) The appeal to the authority of scripture: Jesus clearly sees prophecy being fulfilled with events in his life (13:18; 17:12) and cites the authority of scripture. Also, the allusions to scriptural motifs are strong: John 16:21 (the woman in labor) with Isaiah 13:8; 26:17; 66:7; and Hosea 13:13; John 15:1ff. (the Lord’s vineyard) with Isaiah 5:1ff; Psalm 80:8; and Ezekiel 19:10ff. Again, at the second level, the readers are constrained to consider confidently Jesus’ words in their own situation for Jesus is the focal point of holy scripture (John 5:39, 46).

Rhetorical Situation in John 13-17

The rhetorical situation of John 13-17 is established by the evangelist at the very beginning of chapter 13 with the reference to Jesus’ “hour” which had now come. Prior to this, during the time of his public ministry, we are told that his hour had not yet come (2:4; 7:30; 8:20). During this period there is clearly a sense of expectation for this hour and the significance it will have. Chapters 1-12 describe several visits of Jesus to Jerusalem culminating in his final visit (12:12-50) during which he is received joyously by crowds who acclaim him, “the king of Israel who comes in the name of the Lord” (12:13). Then, in 12:23, 27 his hour is described as being imminent. Jesus’ public ministry is quickly drawing to a close.

The evangelist describes Jesus’ earlier ministry of preaching, teaching, and working miracles giving way to a further development when, in 13:1, we are informed that “his hour had come.” What follows this in the rest of the rhetorical unit, is a transition to the resolution stage of the plot which commences in chapter 18. As William Kurz describes it, “The mention of Jesus’ imminent departure and love of his own ‘to the end’ provides the

setting not only for the footwashing in chapter 13, but for all the speech material in John 13-17 until the shift to the garden where Judas betrayed him (Jn 18:1).⁹ Indeed, chapter 13 as a whole forms an indispensable backdrop to the entire Farewell Discourse. The narrative context provided in this chapter describes the situation out of which Jesus' discourse with the disciples arose and serves as "an inseparable introduction to the actual narrations of the farewell discourse event."¹⁰

As the scene in chapter 13 opens, Jesus and his immediate circle of disciples are in an unspecified room in Jerusalem.¹¹ Some of this group of his intimates are named: Judas Iscariot (13:2); Simon Peter (13:6); the disciple whom Jesus loved (13:23); Thomas (14:5); Philip (14:8); and the other Judas (14:22). A change in the cast of characters occurs in this unit with the departure of Judas Iscariot from the upper room (13:30).

The disciples are portrayed in a two-fold manner by the evangelist during Jesus' discourse. On the one hand, they are shown in a positive light insofar as they are Jesus' disciples: they are his companions and intimates--they have a privileged status. On the other hand, they are also viewed as those in need of consolation, encouragement, correction, teaching, reassurance and warning. This is due to both the departure of Jesus from them and the reaction of the world to them. Both of these circumstances will create tensions and conflicts for these disciples. This two-fold portrayal of the disciples as blessed, yet under pressure from within (personal doubts and fears) and without (under attack by an unbelieving and hostile world) runs throughout this rhetorical unit.

The identification of the meal at which Jesus and his disciples are gathered in John 13 has been problematic. There are basically two camps: those who identify it as the same meal found in the Synoptics, the Passover; and those who believe that it was a more ordinary meal eaten on the day before the Passover. Regardless, both camps are by and large in agreement that the meal was eaten on Thursday evening before Jesus' arrest and crucifixion on Friday morning.¹²

⁹ Wm. S. Kurz, *Farewell Addresses in the New Testament*, 72.

¹⁰ R. Lemmer, "A Possible Understanding by the Implied Reader, of Some of the *Coming-Going-Being Sent* Pronouncements, in the Johannine Farewell Discourses", 296. See also R. Bultmann, *Gospel*, 475: "The whole section 13.1-20 acts as a prelude to the discourses that follow."

¹¹ F. Segovia, *The Farewell of the Word*, 2.

¹² See R. Brown, *Gospel*, 555-56, and D.A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 455-

With regard to the rhetorical situation, all that happens now in the narrative happens in the context of the “hour” that has come: the hour of Jesus’ departure. D.A. Carson’s view that one of the purposes of John 13-17 is to “unpack”, before it happens, the significance of Jesus’ departure: his death, burial, resurrection, exaltation and subsequent advent of the Holy Spirit, has much to commend it.¹³ Perhaps John is more concerned with the meaning of the events than with primarily reciting the fact of the events’ occurrences.

The rhetorical situation of John 13-17 can be briefly summarized: as the evangelist presents it, Jesus’ “hour” had finally come; his initial public ministry has come to an end; he is gathered with his disciples in a room in Jerusalem during Passover where he eats the Last Supper with them; here Jesus washes his disciples’ feet, foreshadowing a greater cleansing which is about to take place; his betrayer leaves the group; after supper Jesus announces his “departure” and engages his disciples in a lengthy discourse which is unique to John’s Gospel; the discourse is characterized by both monologue and dialogue; the rhetorical unit ends just prior to Jesus’ arrest with his prayer to the Father.

Analyzing the Rhetorical Situation

A rhetorical analysis of this situation will take into account all its various aspects: the immediate context; the speaker, audience and speech; the arrangement of the whole; and the rhetorical devices utilized. In the ancient rhetorical handbooks, the art of rhetoric was discussed under five chief categories: invention, arrangement, style, memory, and delivery.¹⁴ This five-fold division was especially developed by the Romans. The first three categories would primarily concern us here.

For Aristotle, rhetoric was divided into three main components: the preparation for the speech which included the discovery of all available means of persuasion; style, which included language, diction and emphasis; and organization.¹⁵ Style and organization

604.

¹³ D.A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 455.

¹⁴ Cicero, *De Oratore* I. 31. 142, 99. *Rhetorica Ad Herennium* I. 2. 3 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1954) 7. Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria* III. 3. 1, 383. Cicero, *De Inventione* I. 7. 9, 19.

¹⁵ David Cunningham, *Faithful Persuasion*, 17-18.

were treated by Aristotle with brevity. His primary emphasis was on the first category which corresponds to “invention.”¹⁶

Aristotle’s definition of rhetoric and his understanding of what constitutes effective communication is foundational for almost all other treatments of rhetoric. His work is the standard upon which others build or the point from which they depart and remains definitive. He writes, “Let rhetoric be defined as an ability in each particular case, to see the available means of persuasion.”¹⁷ These “means”, or *pisteis*, are the proofs by which a speaker or author brings about effective persuasion: “Of the *pisteis* provided through speech there are three species: for some are in the character [*ethos*] of the speaker, and some in disposing the listener in some way [*pathos*], and some in the argument [*logos*] itself, by showing or seeming to show something.”¹⁸ It is the interplay between these three *pisteis* that is used to bring about an effective movement (persuasion) of the hearers by the speaker. In simple terms, Aristotle recognized the importance of accounting for all the dynamics in persuasion: speaker, audience, and message.

As noted previously in the review of literature,¹⁹ scholars speak of communication taking place from one party to another in a text on two distinct levels. In the Farewell Discourse, there is the level of the plot itself, the reconstruction of the scene involving Jesus and his disciples on the night in which he was betrayed. There is also the level at which the evangelist is communicating with his intended readers, i.e. the purpose of the plot reconstruction for a later audience. These two levels will be referred to in this paper as the “first” and “second” levels, respectively.

While communication is taking place on both levels (and therefore rhetorical elements will be found in each), the appropriate level for a comprehensive rhetorical reading of the entire rhetorical unit (Jn 13-17) will be at the second level, that of the evangelist attempting to address persuasively his intended readers. The entire unit, with its rhetorical structure from 13:1 to 17:26 (inclusive of both dialogue and non-dialogue narrative), is the “speech act” of the evangelist to his audience.

¹⁶ The Romans came to emphasize style and arrangement much more than did Aristotle. His main concern was to discover in a particular case the available means of persuasion and construct the speech accordingly. See: Aristotle, *On Rhetoric* I. 2. 1, 36.

¹⁷ Aristotle, *On Rhetoric*, I. 2. 1, 36.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, I. 2. 3, 37.

¹⁹ See pp. 23-25 above for this discussion.

The goal of rhetorical analysis is to understand not simply what an author says, but how he says it to achieve his purpose (persuasion) . In other words, rhetoric is all about how to speak persuasively, rhetorical analysis is all about understanding an author's persuasive intent and how that intent is achieved in the text. In the Farewell Discourse, the evangelist reconstructs the scene between Jesus and his disciples on the night of his betrayal and speaks through this first level of the text to achieve persuasion at the second level. In the course of the present rhetorical analysis, therefore, attention will be paid to the rhetorical interaction between Jesus and his disciples (utilizing appropriate rhetorical categories) since this becomes the means by which the evangelist speaks to his audience. While the evangelist is the rhetor of John 13-17, he nevertheless presents Jesus operating rhetorically (in act as well as speech) and strategically uses Jesus' interaction with his disciples to seek a rhetorical outcome with his readers. As George Kennedy describes it, "Behind the rhetoric of this author or editor stands his perception of the rhetoric of Jesus."²⁰ Thus, when the rhetorical *pisteis* are analyzed at the first level, it is understood that this analysis serves as the means of presenting the evangelist's rhetorical approach to his readers at the second level. The evangelist's goal is persuasion (cf. 20:31) and he seeks to achieve this goal among his readers through the plot he presents.

Ethos

Of the three *pisteis*, the ethical appeal is for Aristotle the most effective mode of persuasion since the strength of the argument or reasoning rests to a great degree on the credibility the author or speaker establishes with the audience: ". . . character is almost, so to speak, the controlling factor in persuasion."²¹ Very often, the audience will have at its disposal "a considerable body of preestablished information"²² by which to evaluate a speaker's character. Insofar as the speaker's life has been public, it forms "a long prelude to his speech."²³ At the first level of the text, the close association of the disciples with Jesus during his three years of public ministry would have provided them with just such a "long prelude." His words and actions in this prelude (the Book of Signs) were now

²⁰ G. Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation Through Rhetorical Criticism*, 77.

²¹ *Ibid.*, I. 2. 4, 38.

²² David Cunningham, *Faithful Persuasion*, 121.

²³ Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, *The New Rhetoric: A Treatise on Argumentation*, 320.

giving way to the main movement, his “hour”, which had come. Jesus’ words and actions in the Farewell Discourse would have been evaluated by the disciples against this background. They had enjoyed a rich and intimate association with him which in itself would have established his standing with them and the authority of his words in their lives. The same could undoubtedly be said at the second level of the text, that of the evangelist and his readers. He is making his persuasive appeal to his audience through this presentation of the dynamics of the discourse of Jesus with his disciples. The evangelist is using the interplay between the *ethos* of Jesus and the *pathos* of the disciples, as he presents these to his readers, as his means of persuasion.

Three particular qualities were deemed necessary for an orator by the practitioners of rhetoric: practical wisdom (knowledge), virtue, and good will.²⁴ In the very first verse of chapter 13, the evangelist describes Jesus in just this way: he has special knowledge, his relationship with his own has been virtuous, and his intention toward them is definitely that of good will (“he loved them to the end”).

Manifesting these qualities will elicit trust in the hearers as the speaker is held in high esteem. A speaker’s strategy will thus take these character traits into account. Aristotle’s concern for the *ethos* of the speaker and its bearing on the effectiveness of the speech is echoed by Cicero²⁵ and Quintilian.²⁶ While Aristotle and Cicero are mainly concerned with strategy and style, respectively, in regard to *ethos*, Quintilian seems to emphasize the noble essence of the speaker as determinative (the “perfect” and “good” man with “excellences of character”).²⁷

Pathos

The appeal to the emotions of the audience, the *pathos*, is the second of the *pisteis* to be considered. “There is persuasion through the hearers when they are led to feel emotion [*pathos*] by the speech.”²⁸ *Pathos* is also an effective means of persuasion since it moves an audience. Emotion influences our will and our will causes us to act. Thus, the speaker appeals to the emotions to encourage support for his own position and to

²⁴ Aristotle, *On Rhetoric*, II. 1. 5, 121.

²⁵ Cicero, *De Oratore* II. 43. 184, 329.

²⁶ Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria* I. 9. 1, 11.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ Aristotle, *On Rhetoric*, I. 2. 5, 38.

discourage support for the opposing position.

While *pathos* in the narrow sense of emotions such as love, hate, anger, joy or sorrow is certainly a meaning of the term in Aristotle, there is a broader sense as well so that the speaker is not just being encouraged to “play on the emotions” of his hearers. This broader sense encompasses what one author calls, “the wide variety of ways in which the state or condition of the audience affects the persuasive appeal of the speech.”²⁹ Thus, whatever the audience brings to the rhetorical situation (background, attitude, relation to the speaker) will have an influence on the speaker’s approach to them.

Jesus’ attempts to evoke certain responses within his disciples (*pathos*) are found throughout the Farewell Discourse. As the evangelist portrays it, the rhetorical situation is conditioned by the disciples’ previous close relationship to Jesus and all that they had heard him teach, seen him do, and had been through with him. Jesus’ words (which he says are spoken so that they will be prepared for the future, have an example to follow, will believe, and will have peace and joy and confidence) elicit a variety of responses from them. It is this interplay in the discourse between Jesus and his disciples that will be examined rhetorically to determine what the evangelist is trying to accomplish with his readers through this narrative.

Logos

The third mode of proof in rhetoric, *logos*, is that which appeals to reason. This proof will consist of either the enthymeme, which is deductive, or the example (paradigm), which is inductive. “And all [speakers] produce logical persuasion by means of paradigms or enthymemes and by nothing other than these.”³⁰ An enthymeme is a statement with a supporting reason introduced by *for*, *because*, *since* or an *if . . . then* statement. The paradigm is an inductive argument from example. For Aristotle, the enthymeme was “the ‘body’ of persuasion”³¹ for the rhetor and “the strongest of the *pisteis*.”³²

Persuasion occurs when the speaker makes use of assumptions which are generally accepted by the audience and from these acceptable assumptions draws his conclusions.

²⁹ David Cunningham, *Faithful Persuasion*, 43.

³⁰ Aristotle, *On Rhetoric*, I. 2. 8, 40.

³¹ *Ibid.*, I. 1. 3, 30.

³² *Ibid.*, I. 1. 11, 33.

When enthymemes are not available, examples (“paradigms”) are necessary: “If one does not have a supply of enthymemes, one should use paradigms as demonstration; for persuasion [then] depends on them. But if there are enthymemes, paradigms should be used as witnesses, [as] a supplement to the enthymeme.”³³

Both of these categories are utilized by the evangelist in the Farewell Discourse with enthymemes being much more prevalent. Paradigms could be cited at 13:15 where he has Jesus point to his own action as an example of a deeper spiritual reality; also at 16:21 where an expectant mother is given as an example of what they will go through emotionally with Jesus as they experience his death and then his resurrection. The author employs enthymemes at 13:14-15, 35; 14:2-3, 28, 30; 15:5, 15; 16:13, 14, 27; 17:14, 24.

The integrated relationship between *ethos*, *pathos*, and *logos* is largely what rhetoric is all about.³⁴ Just as these categories have been used to describe, in part, the rhetorical situation of John 13-17, they will figure heavily in the rhetorical analysis of the entire unit for it is the interplay between these three that make up the discourse.

The Rhetorical Problem

In a given context, a speaker may face a particular concern or problem with his audience that he must overcome, if possible. It could be that an audience is already personally prejudiced against the speaker or is “coming to the table” with a preconceived set of ideas or attitudes that sets up an antagonism between itself and the speaker. For effective, persuasive speech, the speaker must surmount these barriers.

The Rhetorical Problem in John 13-17

In the Farewell Discourse, the problem presented by the evangelist is Jesus’ disciples’ lack of understanding and their misunderstanding concerning the nature of both his mission and their own. The revelation of a betrayer in their midst, Jesus’ announced departure, and the predicted hostility of the world towards them creates an atmosphere of distress, sorrow, and confusion to which Jesus must speak. The evangelist thus speaks

³³ Ibid., II. 20. 9, 181.

³⁴ Ibid., I. 2. 2, 37. Aristotle referred to these as the “artistic” proofs, those which were not already in existence, but which we ourselves invent.

rhetorically to his readers through this portrayal of Jesus and his disciples for the sake of accomplishing persuasion among them.

There are two additional categories in rhetoric that are best discussed under the subject of the rhetorical problem. They are: (1) a determination of the predominant “species” of rhetoric that is represented by the speech or text, and (2) stasis theory. When these are adequately accounted for, both the rhetorical problem and the speaker’s approach to overcoming this challenge will be more clearly understood.

Rhetorical Species

Aristotle describes three basic species of rhetoric: deliberative, epideictic, and judicial.³⁵ Generally, deliberative rhetoric seeks to persuade an audience to do something or accept a certain view, or to dissuade them, concerning future issues.³⁶

Judicial rhetoric is concerned with the past, especially in regard to accusation or defense.³⁷ The hearer must judge.

Epideictic rhetoric is usually associated with the present. It is the oratory of praise and blame or simply a category inclusive of all non-deliberative, non-judicial rhetoric.³⁸ John 13-17 is usually identified as epideictic.³⁹ While epideictic is concerned mainly with the present, it can also recall the past and anticipate the future.⁴⁰ F. Segovia describes it this way: “an attempt by an author to persuade an audience to hold or reaffirm some point of view in the present as the basis for a general policy of action, with a basic argument involving a change of attitude or a deepening of values.”⁴¹

Quintilian also recognizes that epideictic rhetoric encompasses a broader range of subjects than simply praise and blame.⁴² Whatever does not fit clearly into either the deliberative or forensic categories will be epideictic. This means there will be some overlap and boundaries will not always be as distinct as handbook definitions indicate. Epideictic

³⁵ Ibid., I. 3. 1-3, 47-48. See also: Cicero, *De Inventione* I. 5. 7, 15-17.

³⁶ Ibid., I. 3. 3, 48.

³⁷ Ibid., I. 3. 3-6, 48-50.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Thus, G. Kennedy (1984), F. Segovia (1991), and J. Kwon (1993).

⁴⁰ Aristotle, *On Rhetoric*, I. 3. 4, 48.

⁴¹ F. Segovia, *The Farewell of the Word*, 44.

⁴² Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria* III. 4. 3-4, 391-93.

can at times be concerned with the past, be interpretive of history, and promote values that need to be held in the present and on into the future.

The Farewell Discourse certainly falls into this description. At the first level, Jesus is portrayed speaking to his disciples at a time when his public ministry has come to an end. What he has to say is certainly reflective of his teachings and the events up to this point. But he also exhorts them to persevere both now and into the future. Indeed, it is clear that he is preparing his disciples for events that are yet to unfold. At the second level, the author presents Jesus as the Son of the Father whose teachings and truth are to be embraced. The readers themselves may be facing forces both within their community and from outside their community which threaten their unity, safety and faith. Being reminded and exhorted by the evangelist's presentation of Jesus' teaching will give later disciples a firm foundation and source of consolation in the face of similar threats.

Not only do the individual species at times embrace a wider subject matter and time frames than the handbook definitions would indicate, but these three species of rhetoric can be intermingled in any discourse so that there is not one, but a mixture of species present. One species, however, will be predominant and reflect the author's fundamental purpose in writing. F. Segovia, for example, sees both epideictic and deliberative rhetoric in John 13:31-16:33 with epideictic predominating. From 13:31 to 14:31 he finds epideictic with an emphasis on teaching and consolation through amplification of certain motifs. In 15:1-17 and 15:18-16:4a he sees primarily deliberative (with some epideictic) with an attempt at persuasion to future action. In 16:4b-33 he again sees primarily epideictic with encouragement and reassurance through amplification of specific motifs.⁴³ Since the evangelist does have both an immediate and future concern for his readers (what they are to hold to in the here and now and what should characterize them after his departure), finding both epideictic and deliberative rhetoric in the Farewell Discourse would not be unexpected.

Rhetorical Stasis Theory

In addition to these rhetorical species, stasis theory also helps to "flesh out" the substance of the rhetorical problem. Stasis asks the simple question, "What is the basic issue to be addressed?" Three categories elucidate this: fact (or conjecture), definition, and quality.⁴⁴

⁴³ F. Segovia, *The Farewell of the Word*, 292-96.

In the context of the Farewell Discourse, fact asks, “Did it happen?” With Jesus’ death and ascension, the Christian community has no doubt about this.

Definition asks: “What kind of departure was it? What kind of death occurred? Was it permanent? Did it constitute an abandoning? Does this show Jesus to be weak or powerless? Has Jesus been rendered useless to the Christian community?” The evangelist’s presentation of Jesus’ discourse with his disciples answers these questions: his departure would be a return to his Father; it would be a cleansing death; it would not be permanent for he would see them again; he was not abandoning them, but says, “I will come to you”; anyone who can return to them after such a departure is surely powerful; and it is to their advantage that he go away.

Quality simply asks, “Is it good or bad? Is it beneficial or detrimental?” This becomes central to the purpose of the Farewell Discourse and what the author was attempting to accomplish with his portrayal of Jesus and the disciples at the first level and thus with his readers at the second level. There is no room for doubt that his departure is beneficial.

George Kennedy observes that “ordinary deliberative and epideictic oratory do not exhibit stasis in the strict sense, since they do not necessarily imply an opponent.”⁴⁵ In the Farewell Discourse, however, there is as the evangelist reconstructs it an exigency facing the disciples apart from Jesus’ announced departure which strongly implies opposition: “the Jews” as opposition to them (13:33); “the world” and its hatred of them (15:18-16:4); “the prince of this world” as their enemy (14:30); and “the synagogue” as a profound issue of identity, fellowship and safety for them (16:2). Not only must Jesus’ departure and its implications be dealt with, but also the sources of opposition that will arise following his departure. The evangelist addresses both areas of concern in the discourse.

The Rhetorical Arrangement

The Importance of Arrangement

⁴⁴ Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria* III. 6. 3-10, 409-13. See Also G. Kennedy, *A New History of Classical Rhetoric*, 97-101. There is also a fourth category of stasis: jurisdiction. But the legal setting is not found in the Farewell Discourse and is therefore not discussed here.

⁴⁵ G. Kennedy, *The Art of Persuasion in Greece*, 311.

The final item of rhetorical concern to be considered in this chapter is the arrangement of the rhetor's material. This deals with the ordering and distribution of the matter at hand with each portion being assigned a place.⁴⁶ The importance of arrangement to the overall effectiveness of the speech is summarized by Quintilian: "... in speaking, however abundant the matter may be, it will merely form a confused heap unless arrangement be employed to reduce it to order and to give it connexion and firmness of structure."⁴⁷ What the rhetor seeks to accomplish is to determine what will be the most rhetorically effective composition of the speech and mold its elements into a unified structure.

Is such a rhetorical concern found in the literature of the New Testament? Margaret Mitchell argues for the compositional integrity of 1 Corinthians as a unified literary form (over against various partition theories) on the basis of a rhetorical investigation of the text.⁴⁸ She identifies 1 Corinthians as deliberative rhetoric which seeks to overcome community factionalism and restore unity. She demonstrates that in terms of arrangement this epistle is a cohesive deliberative argument and establishes the compositional integrity of the letter.

Specific aspects of arrangement are also found in the Farewell Discourse. Fernando Segovia states that "an analysis of the rhetorical situation reflected in, and addressed by, the farewell speech shows a careful and effective arrangement and development."⁴⁹ Indeed, Segovia demonstrates a chiasmic arrangement in 13:31 - 16:33. It takes this shape:⁵⁰

13:31 - 14:31 a firm, united community--teaching & consolation
needed;

15:1-17 community in danger from within--exhortation &
admonition needed;

15:18 - 16:4a community in danger from without--
exhortation & admonition needed;

16:4b - 33 a firm, united community--encouragement & reassurance

⁴⁶ *Rhetorica ad Herennium* I. 2. 3, 7.

⁴⁷ Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria* VII Preface. 1, 3.

⁴⁸ Margaret Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation*, 2-5.

⁴⁹ F. Segovia, *The Farewell of the Word*, 306.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 300-306.

needed.

Chapter 17 then effectively follows this arrangement with a prayer for unity.

At the close of this section on arrangement, I will propose a rhetorical arrangement for the entire Farewell Discourse (John 13:1 - 17:26). As Mitchell argues for the compositional integrity of 1 Corinthians (against partition theories) on the basis of a rhetorical analysis of that epistle, so I will argue for the compositional integrity of John 13-17 (against various disarrangement theories that see disorder, lack of continuity, and a need for a rearrangement of these chapters).

The Greco-Roman Model

Although the handbooks of rhetoric give a systematic ordering for the parts of a speech (depending on the species), the actual arrangement is never fixed or static. In other words, effective arrangement does not rely on a rigid form to be followed, but on the skills of the orator. The orator will adapt his arrangement to the subject matter and needs of his audience.⁵¹ In fact, actual speeches and letters in antiquity demonstrate more variety and freedom in form and content than the ancient rhetorical handbooks describe and prescribe.⁵² Thus, a prescriptive approach to rhetoric is not going to be all that helpful. There was more fluidity and freedom to finished products than what is described in the handbooks. An “ideal” was presented in the handbooks, to be sure, but in the actual literature there is a variety of expressions of rhetorical work.

As just mentioned, the arrangement of a speech would vary according to the species of rhetoric involved (judicial, deliberative, or epideictic). Arrangement could range from the quite simple to the complex. The “standard” form consisted of an introduction (*exordium*), a statement of the case (*narratio*), the supporting arguments (*confirmatio*), and a conclusion (*epilogos*).⁵³ The most full rhetorical arrangement would include *exordium, narratio, partitio, confirmatio, refutatio, and peroratio/epilogos*.⁵⁴

⁵¹ Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria* VII. Preface, 4-5.

⁵² David Aune, *The New Testament in Its Literary Environment*, 199. See also, M. Mitchell (1991, 9).

⁵³ Burton Mack, *Rhetoric and the New Testament*, 41. See also: Aristotle, *On Rhetoric*, III. 13. 1, 4, 258-59.

⁵⁴ Cicero, *De Inventione* I. 14. 19, 41.

Exordium

The *exordium* seeks to gain the reader's attention, interest and good will. It "ought to be sententious to a marked degree and of a high seriousness, and, to put it generally, should contain everything which contributes to dignity, because the best thing to do is that which especially commends the speaker to his audience."⁵⁵ In the Farewell Discourse, the *exordium* is found at 13:1 and clearly reflects the seriousness and dignity which Cicero advises. George Kennedy identifies five separate motifs in 13:1 which will be repeated and amplified throughout the discourse.⁵⁶ Lombard and Oliver see 13:1 (indeed, the whole of chapter 13) as an "*introductory prolepsis*" to the remainder of the farewell discourse with four central motifs (passover, mission, love and cosmos).⁵⁷ They maintain that the many repetitions which take place in the Farewell Discourse are in fact "reiterations of vital themes for the sake of accentuating and nuancing them."⁵⁸ These themes are those enunciated in 13:1 by the evangelist.

Narratio

The *narratio* follows the *exordium* and gives background information. It relates events that have occurred which provide the occasion for the speech. "A narrative based on the persons should present a lively style and diverse traits of character"⁵⁹ and have three qualities: brevity, clarity and plausibility.⁶⁰ In the Farewell Discourse, the *narratio* is found at 13:2-30. In this brief section, the author narrates those events which serve as the context for Jesus' discourse with his disciples. Indeed, all the farewell categories found in the speech are introduced here.⁶¹

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 51.

⁵⁶ G. Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation Through Rhetorical Criticism*, 78-79. The five topics Kennedy identifies are Jesus' relationship to the Father; Jesus' departure; the world; love; and Jesus' relationship to the disciples. He points out that these topics are then repeated in order in 13:31-38 and amplified through the rest of the discourse.

⁵⁷ Lombard and Oliver, "A Working Supper in Jerusalem: John 13:1-38 Introduces Jesus' Farewell Discourses", 366.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 368.

⁵⁹ *Rhetorica ad Herennium* I. 8. 13, 25.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, I. 9. 14, 25.

⁶¹ F. Segovia, *The Farewell of the Word*, 319.

Partitio

Next comes the *partitio*. This is “the enumeration in order of our own *propositions*, those of our adversary, or both.”⁶² The *partitio* is an advance statement of what will subsequently be spoken about. It helps to clarify the presentation, serving as an important transition between the *narratio* and *confirmatio*. In the Farewell Discourse, 13:31-38 serves this purpose.

A number of scholars have seen these verses as an introduction to the rest of the discourse while others, who see the final form of the farewell discourse as disarranged, have sought to insert later chapters here and there in the midst of it. Bruce Woll is one who sees 13:31-38 as an introduction to the farewell material in chapters 14-17, but in a secondary fashion.⁶³ Woll believes this was introductory first of all for chapter 14, then secondarily for the rest of the discourse. What I will demonstrate from within a rhetorical framework is the function of 13:31-38 as the *partitio* for the whole of the farewell discourse (14:1 - 17:26).

Specifically, the topics found in the *exordium* are found repeated in the first five verses of the *partitio* in the same order: Jesus’ relationship to the Father, 31-32; Jesus’ departure out of this world, 33; the centrality of love, 34; Jesus’ relationship to his disciples and theirs to him, 35. Then Jesus’ imminent departure and the concern it causes is highlighted in a dialogue with Peter, 36-38. These topics are then expanded upon, or amplified, in the body of the discourse (chapters 14-17). Becker also recognizes a division of vv. 31-38 based on a thematic sequence (glorification, departure, new command, and denial prediction).⁶⁴

What is unique here is that the topics of the *partitio* are amplified in reverse order throughout the balance of the discourse. Thus, the imminent departure spoken of in 13:36-38 is followed by the same topic in 14:1-31. Jesus’ relationship to his disciples and the new commandment to love (13:34-35) is found in 15:1 - 16:15. The “little while” of 13:33 is found amplified in 16:16-33. The mutual glorification of the Father and the Son in 13:31-32 is again expressed in Jesus’ prayer to the Father, 17:1ff.

⁶² Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria* IV. 5. 1, 137.

⁶³ Bruce Woll, “The Departure of ‘The Way’: The First Farewell Discourse In the Gospel of John”, 13.

⁶⁴ J. Becker, *Das Evangelium nach Johannes*, 219-21.

As previously noted,⁶⁵ there was more fluidity and freedom to finished rhetorical products than what is described as an “ideal” in the handbooks. In other words, the literature demonstrates more variety and freedom in form and content than the handbooks prescribed. In fact, Quintilian notes that due to the variety of situations that one could face, the orator must rely upon his own perception and judgment in adapting his arrangement to the subject matter.⁶⁶ This creativity with arrangement we find demonstrated in the evangelist’s arrangement of the Farewell Discourse. The first topic of the *partitio* (the mutual glorification of the Father and the Son) is incorporated and amplified as the opening statement of the *epilogos*. Thus, the final topic expressed is given prominence as the prelude of Jesus’ prayer to the Father.

The relationship of the *partitio* to the balance of the Farewell Discourse will be seen more clearly in the outline of the rhetorical shape of the Discourse that I will offer at the end of this chapter.

Confirmatio

The body of the discourse which follows the *partitio* is called the *confirmatio* (or *probatio*). We have already discussed some of the substance of the Farewell Discourse’s *confirmatio* in the preceding paragraphs. This is that portion of a speech or work, often the main portion, which sets forth all the arguments and information which lend credit, authority and support to the issue at hand.⁶⁷ Usually, the propositions that are set forth are supported by attributes of persons or of actions.⁶⁸ In the Farewell Discourse, Jesus is depicted speaking specifically about his person and his works, especially that work which occurs at his “hour.” For example, in chapter 13 we see the humility of Jesus expressed in the footwashing, an action which points forward to a deeper spiritual reality: the cross. In chapter 14 the reader is pointed to both Jesus’ works and his words as bearing witness to him (14:10-11). He is heard calling himself the “true vine” in relation to his disciples (15:1ff.) and calls them his “friends” (15:13-15). It is Jesus who will send them the Paraclete (15:26). This Spirit of truth will bear witness to Jesus and glorify him (16:13-

⁶⁵ See pp. 42, 80-81, 84.

⁶⁶ Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria* VII. Preface, 4-5.

⁶⁷ Cicero, *De Inventione* I. 24. 34, 69.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 70.

15). Jesus has a special relationship to the Father in that they glorify one another (17:1ff.).

Ethos, pathos, and logos are all present in the Farewell Discourse as the *pisteis* which bring about persuasion, and the propositions set forth in the *partitio* are clearly supported by the traits the evangelist attributes to Jesus' words and works. Thus, the elements of a *confirmatio* are found in the body of this discourse.

Epilogos

Rhetorical arrangement is brought to closure with the *epilogos*. Aristotle identified four aims of the epilogue: disposing the hearer favorably toward the speaker (and unfavorably toward the opponent); amplifying and minimizing various propositions; moving the audience with *pathos*; and giving a reminder of the chief points made in the speech.⁶⁹

Since the *epilogos* is the conclusion of the whole speech and has the potential of being powerfully climactic, Aristotle believed that in the epilogue "one should speak in recapitulation of what has been shown."⁷⁰ That is precisely what is found in John 17. After the first topic is presented in vv. 1-5, all the main propositions of the *exordium* and *partitio* are restated with amplification in this prayer: Jesus' knowledge of the arrival of his "hour"; his unique relationship to the Father; his imminent departure; both his and his disciples' relationship to "the world"; his relationship to his disciples; and love as the defining quality of the relationship between the Father, the Son, and the disciples. As George Kennedy states: "The prayer makes a splendid conclusion, recapitulating the topics presented earlier and providing an emotional fulfillment for the whole passage."⁷¹

Rhetorical Amplification

Throughout this discussion of the various aspects of rhetorical arrangement, there has been recurring mention of the subject of amplification. This is the intensification of a

⁶⁹ Aristotle, *On Rhetoric*, III. 19. 1, 280.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 281.

⁷¹ G. Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation Through Rhetorical Criticism*, 85. Quintilian also speaks of the emotional aspect of the *epilogos*. He states that there are two kinds of *epilogos*: those dealing with the facts of the case and those dealing with the emotional aspect of the case. *Institutio Oratoria* VI. 1. 1-9, 383-87. If the facts are moving or emotionally satisfying, both would be present in the same *epilogos*.

proposition to heighten its effect. By recasting a statement in different words, expanding on it descriptively, using words or images that evoke an emotional response, or utilizing actions to portray a statement graphically, a speaker amplifies a statement to drive home his intended sense.

The rhetorical handbooks go into some detail on this subject since it is one of the more common devices used in speaking effectively. Quintilian states that there are four basic methods of amplification: augmentation (the most impressive as it builds to an intensity), comparison, reasoning, and accumulation.⁷² Cicero declares that in amplification we find “the highest distinction of eloquence.”⁷³

In the Farewell Discourse, amplification of the topics found in the *exordium* (13:1) and *partitio* (13:31-38) is found in the balance of the discourse (14:1 - 17:26). Indeed, the first announcement of Jesus’ departure at 13:31-32 is most significant “since the remainder of the speech functions as an extended commentary on it.”⁷⁴ The whole discourse becomes an amplification of the motifs set forth in the beginning. This reflects the methodology advised by the ancient authorities on rhetoric for the most effective writing and speaking. For example, Aristotle describes how, in the ancient world, the composition of a story would proceed: the author should “first simplify and reduce to a universal form, before proceeding to lengthen it out by the insertion of episodes.”⁷⁵ Not only does this describe the composition of the Gospel as a whole,⁷⁶ but it accurately describes the overall pattern of the Farewell Discourse itself. As previously described, the Farewell Discourse is constructed with the basic components of rhetorical arrangement: *exordium*, *narratio*, *partitio*, *confirmatio*, and *epilogos*. The very methodology and arrangement advocated by Aristotle and others is found in the relation between chapter 13 (*exordium*, *narratio*, *partitio*) and chapters 14 - 17 (*confirmatio*, *epilogos*), with the latter being an expansion, in reverse order, of the propositions set forth in the former. What is unique here is the evangelist’s handling of the first topic. Instead of keeping it as part of the

⁷² Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria* VIII. 4. 1-29, 263-81.

⁷³ Cicero, *De Oratore* III. 26. 104, 83.

⁷⁴ F. Segovia, *The Farewell of the Word*, 309.

⁷⁵ Aristotle, *Poetics*, Chapter 17, 245.

⁷⁶ C. Talbert, *Reading John: A Literary and Theological Commentary on the Fourth Gospel and the Johannine Epistles*, 64.

confirmatio, he employs it as the opening of Jesus' prayer in chapter 17, including it in the *epilogos* yet giving it prominence and thereby drawing attention to the *ethos* of Jesus.

Rhetorical Repetition

One final subject must be touched upon before offering an overall outline of the rhetorical arrangement of the Farewell Discourse, that of the many repetitions that take place in the body of the discourse. Raymond Brown has produced a chart of these repetitions.⁷⁷ According to Brown and others, these repetitions are evidence of different traditions, different collections of Jesus sayings from different times, and the work of a number of redactors with the final redactor giving us this final form of the text. If this is an accurate appraisal, then the Farewell Discourse is indeed a disarranged hodgepodge of early and late materials without much continuity.

But regardless of whether or not the evangelist used a variety of sources, must we consider the final form of the text disarranged because of the repetitions that occur? Is their presence evidence of a lack of unity?

Or could these repetitions actually be an intentional literary device, creating the very literary unity that many assume is lacking? I will demonstrate with a rhetorical analysis of the discourse that the author, as a creative rhetor, constructs the Farewell Discourse in just this way to bring about the most effective persuasion of his audience.

The repetition of subject matter throughout the Farewell Discourse actually follows the format of Hellenistic rhetoric. Under the topic of refining a presentation, the author of *Rhetorica ad Herennium* states that this "consists in dwelling on the same topic and yet seeming to say something ever new."⁷⁸ However, care must be taken with this literary device: "We shall not repeat the same thing precisely--for that, to be sure, would weary the hearer and not refine the idea--but with changes."⁷⁹ Quintilian maintains that by dwelling on a point, repeating it, and digressing from and returning to his theme, an author gives his work life and vigor and in this way is able to make the desired impression on his audience.⁸⁰ What we find in the Farewell Discourse is a structure which conforms to the overall standard model of Greco-Roman rhetoric (arrangement) and which demonstrates the

⁷⁷ R. Brown, *Gospel*, 589-91.

⁷⁸ *Rhetorica ad Herennium* IV. 42. 54, 365.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰ Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria* IX. 2. 4, 377.

rhetorical devices of amplification and repetition throughout. I will now present an outline of the rhetorical arrangement of the Farewell Discourse.

The Rhetorical Shape of John 13 - 17

13:1 *Exordium*

13:2-30 *Narratio*

2-11 The footwashing

12-20 An exhortation

21-30 Disclosure of Jesus' betrayer

13:31-38 *Partitio*

31-32 Mutual glorification of Father & Son A

33 Little time remaining B

34-35 A mission of love C

36-38 Jesus' imminent departure D

[Now follows a chiasmic amplification of these 4 motifs]

14:1-16:33 *Confirmatio*

14:1-31 Jesus' imminent departure D'

15:1-16:15 A mission of love C'

16:16-33 Little time remaining B'

17:1-26 *Epilogos*

1-5 Mutual glorification of Father & Son A'

6-26 Recapitulation of chief topics

This outline is offered with the observation that the rhetorical models set forth in the handbooks are just that, ideals that describe “textbook” scenarios. As has been pointed out, in antiquity there was much flexibility and a variety of expressions of rhetorical work. While there was a fixed, systematic presentation of rhetoric, the actual literature shows a freedom owing to the creativity and effectiveness of the author/orator. That I believe is what we see in the Farewell Discourse (note again the use of the first topic as the prelude of the *epilogos*, as discussed above). Basic rhetorical arrangement is followed with the propositions of the *partitio* being repeated and amplified throughout the body of the discourse. There is attention paid to *ethos*, *pathos* and *logos* with both enthymemes and paradigms utilized in the latter.

Summary

The rhetorical situation for John 13-17 is adduced from 13:1-20. Here, in the *exordium* and *narratio*, we find the evangelist presenting the main speaker, the speaker’s audience, and the context within which the discourse with them takes place. All that happens in the narrative happens in the context of the “hour” that has now come: the hour of Jesus’ departure. Following the footwashing and supper, Jesus is shown announcing his departure and engaging his disciples in a lengthy discourse which is unique to John’s Gospel.

In analyzing the rhetorical situation as the evangelist speaks through the first level of the text (see pp. 75-76), attention must be paid to the exigence that exists, the audience and their relation to the speaker, and the constraints which are present (a number of these were discussed). Such an analysis will involve a detailed discussion of the *ethos*, *pathos* and *logos* present in the discourse, the *pisteis* by which persuasion occurs.

The rhetorical problem in the author’s presentation was found to be the disciples’ lack of understanding and their misunderstanding concerning Jesus’ mission. Distress, sorrow, and confusion ensue with his announced departure, the revelation of a betrayer and the predicted hostility of the world. Jesus must speak not only to the exigence created by his imminent departure, but also to that created by sources of opposition to his disciples following his departure. Identification of the species of rhetoric present in the Farewell

Discourse (predominantly epideictic) and a discussion of the stasis of the discourse focused our attention on the basic problem at issue.

The Farewell Discourse was also found to follow rhetorical protocol in its arrangement. It consists of an *exordium*, *narratio*, *partitio*, *confirmatio* and *epilogos*. Each of these was discussed in some detail, identifying the features of the discourse corresponding to these categories. Both amplification and repetition (as significant rhetorical devices) were found to be present in the Farewell Discourse. Their importance in helping us to understand the integrity and arrangement of the discourse as a whole was noted.

Finally, an outline of the rhetorical shape of John 13-17 was presented. This outline graphically illustrates how this rhetorical unit was constructed and exhibits the chief parts of rhetorical arrangement. The next chapters will present a rhetorical analysis of the Farewell Discourse, engaging it with the rhetorical approach described in this chapter. Being primarily heard rather than read by its initial audience, its rhetorical character as persuasive speech makes it an ideal subject for such an interpretive reading.

CHAPTER FIVE

A RHETORICAL READING: EXORDIUM, NARRATIO, PARTITIO

In the rhetorical analysis that follows, the rhetorical arrangement provided in the previous chapter for John 13-17 will serve as our guide. It will be demonstrated, as the text is dealt with sequentially,¹ that the author of the Gospel was adept at utilizing rhetorical conventions and that these actually help explain a text seen by others as disordered and disarranged.² The present analysis will show, among other things, that the text is not disordered, but follows a rhetorical format which enhances its overall effect.

The Exordium (13:1)

13:1

The rhetorical unit is introduced here by the evangelist in a most poignant manner. "There is nowhere else in the gospel such a strongly marked new beginning as the one at 13:1."³ This *exordium* arrests the reader's attention and strikes the chord which will be heard throughout the discourse. Indeed, the evangelist conditions the content of this introductory statement by the rhetorical problem that Jesus is seen facing in the discourse: the confusion and concern arising among his disciples on account of his announced

¹ Several recent analyses of the New Testament using rhetorical categories proceed by going back through the given pericope repeatedly, each time applying a different aspect of rhetoric. Examples are: M. DiCicco, *Paul's Use of Ethos, Pathos, and Logos in 2 Corinthians 10-13*, 1995; and M. Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation*, 1991. This approach seems to be a bit ponderous and lacking in continuity. I have proceeded by dealing with the text rhetorically as it progresses from 13:1 to 17:26.

² R. Bultmann, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1971) 459-61. Bultmann says of these chapters, "The order as we have it is partly due to accident, and partly to puzzled attempts to arrange the disordered material as well as possible." He re-arranges them in this fashion: 13:1-30; 17:1-26; 13:31-35; 15:1-16:33; 13:36-14:31; 18:1ff. Others, like R. Schnackenburg (*The Gospel According to St. John*, Vol. III, 1982), follow much the same course in seeing a disarranged text here.

³ R. Schnackenburg, *Gospel*, 1.

departure. This *exordium* is serious and dignified⁴ and introduces the topics that will be elaborated upon in the discourse.⁵

The rhetorical situation is highlighted by Jesus' "hour" which had now come. In 12:23 this hour was described as the hour of his being glorified and here it is the hour of his departure out of this world, his death. In 11:55 and 12:1 our attention was drawn to the Passover feast. Here, in 13:1, Jesus' departure is placed in this immediate context. This departure is the basis for much of the dialogue which transpires in the discourse. What the followers of Jesus must learn is that his departure is glorification and his "leaving" is not an abandonment, but is a fulfillment of his love, for "he loved them to the end." In 3:16, this love (ἠγάπησεν) was the love of the Father for the world. Here it describes the special relation of Jesus to those who receive him in faith, his own who are in the world, but not of the world (13:1; 15:19; 17:11, 14).

Here in the *exordium*, the evangelist highlights Jesus' *ethos*. He is shown to be fully in charge and exhibits the three qualities of rhetorical *ethos*: practical wisdom, virtue, and good will.⁶ He has special knowledge (of the present and future), his relationship with his own has been virtuous, and his intention toward them is definitely that of good will. Jesus has a keen awareness of all that will happen to him. This knowing (εἰδώς) is a reflection of an earlier awareness in 10:18 of his future and his connection to the Father. Thus, Jesus is truly a worthy object of faith for he has a unique relation to the Father and he "knows."

His relation to his disciples also provides a rhetorical constraint. They are "his own" who are loved. This relationship is also reminiscent of some earlier statements of Jesus: they belong to him as his own (10:14), they listen to his voice (10:27), and they are in his hand (10:28). The love describes the relationship between the shepherd and the sheep who "know" each other (10:14). In 13:1 the emphasis is on Jesus' love for his own. Their being *in* the world contrasts with his departure *out* of the world for they will

⁴ Cicero, *De Inventione* I. 14. 19, 41.

⁵ Aristotle, *On Rhetoric*, III. 14. 1, 260. See also: Kurz, *Farewell Addresses in the New Testament*, 72; Lemmer, *Neotestamentica* 25(2) 1991, 296; and Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation*, 78-79, for a discussion of the topics in 13:1 being the basis for the content of the Farewell Discourse.

⁶ *Ibid.*, II. 1. 5, 121.

remain with a task (on which I will elaborate in upcoming verses). They will, however, follow him later--something Jesus has already indicated (12:26) and will speak of again (13:36; 14:3).

Here, in the opening verse of the rhetorical unit, the topics of the discourse are presented: his “knowing” and his “hour”, his relationship to the Father, his imminent departure, and his love for his own. Thus, the *exordium* provides the setting for the entire rhetorical unit, gaining the reader’s interest and attention and expressing the major motifs that will be amplified in the balance of the unit’s chapters.⁷ Far from being merely “a piece of the disordered text, for which the redactor has found a home in the wrong place,”⁸ this verse is a finely crafted rhetorical introduction. It focuses attention on the *ethos* of the main speaker, clearly demonstrating why he is worthy of being heard, believed in, and followed. The reader is favorably disposed toward Jesus from the outset by this opening and is prepared for the *narratio* which follows.

The Narratio (13:2-30)

In this brief section, events are narrated which give rise to Jesus’ discourse with his disciples. Here is the background information which informs us about the events that provided the occasion for Jesus’ farewell speech. According to rhetorical rubrics, the *narratio* should have three qualities: brevity, clarity and plausibility.⁹ This does in fact characterize the pericope before us. Brevity: in just a few verses we are informed of the betrayal, the footwashing and dialogue with Peter, the interpretation of this humble action, a reference to the disciples’ mission, the revelation of the betrayer, and the betrayer’s departure. Clarity: the narrative is straightforward and informs the reader of the context in which the discourse takes place and what gave rise to the discourse that follows. Plausibility: the scene that is presented, with its attendant parts, is one that would strike a resonant chord with any Jewish Christians (or others) familiar with the festival of Passover and Jewish rituals.

⁷ See pp. 85, 86-87, 91-92 for a discussion of these motifs and an outline of the Discourse’s structure.

⁸ R. Bultmann, *Gospel*, 463.

⁹ *Rhetorica ad Herennium* 1. 9. 14, 25.

13:2-5

Immediately following the focus on *ethos* in v. 1, we find the author eliciting *pathos* in v. 2. He seeks to arouse sympathy for Jesus as the reader sees the one who knows and loves being betrayed by one of the chosen (Jn 6:70), an intimate, one who was entrusted with the disciples' treasury (Jn 13:9). What utter contrast: Jesus' loving them to the end is placed in bold relief next to this statement of devil-induced betrayal. How long before this time Judas was decided in his "incomprehensible breach of trust"¹⁰ we do not know, but "already" (ἤδη) indicates that it was some time before the Last Supper.

An appeal to Jesus' *ethos* is again made in v. 3 as his "knowing" (εἰδώς) is reiterated. Confidence in Jesus and in what he has to say is thus instilled. Also, the evangelist's rhetorical effect upon his readers with his interplay between Jesus' *ethos* and the *pathos* of his disciples is heightened as the betrayal is flanked on either side by Jesus' "knowing." His knowing in v. 3 is now extended beyond that in v. 1 to include his coming from God, his return, and the "all things" given him. Here is a reference to the enfleshment of the divine logos (1:14) and the giving to him of the whole salvific mission.

Here, too, the evangelist highlights Jesus' authority with the "all things." This is one of the rhetorical constraints that can modify the exigencies of the situation as Jesus' disciples and the author's audience consider the transcendence of his person. His authority is seen as unassailable because it is founded on the Father's power. "The one who comes from God and returns to God is superior to God's adversary."¹¹ πάντα ἔδωκεν αὐτῷ ὁ πατήρ εἰς τὰς χεῖρας is the same declaration of lordship as in 3:35. Nothing happens in a random way, apart from Jesus' knowing and control.

Repetition of topics in the first three verses (Jesus' knowing and his departure) is good rhetorical style.¹² As topics are reiterated, often with additions and changes, they are refined and the author can make the desired impression on his audience. It can be noted that multiple references to Jesus' death introduce the footwashing: v. 1 he will depart out of this world; v. 2 he is betrayed; v. 3 he is going to God. We should not be surprised, therefore, to find the evangelist connecting the footwashing intimately to Jesus' death: a

¹⁰ R. Schnackenburg, *Gospel*, 16.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 17.

¹² *Rhetorica ad Herennium* IV. 42. 54, 365. See also: Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria* IX. 2. 4, 377.

cleansing action done in humility for the sake of others.

The impression created by Jesus' action of girding himself and then washing his disciples' feet (vv. 4-5) is a dramatic and deep one. It is, as Bultmann describes it, "the absurdity of the event"¹³ that captures the attention. Jesus, the master, does for the disciples what is normally done by a slave. And it is not just his action, but also his appearance which becomes that of a servant as he performs the servant's task. The appeal to the Johannine Jesus' *ethos* is again strong. He is seen as noble and selfless: he serves by cleansing. The picture is striking. Jesus is truly one worth listening to, one worth following.

While the references in vv. 4 and 12 to "laying down" and "taking up" may be reminiscent of the language in 10:17-18 concerning Jesus' death and life, it is perhaps somewhat far-fetched to see a direct allusion being made here.¹⁴ In 10:17-18 the laying down and taking up are spoken of together as two aspects of one action. Here the actions are stated separately and one cannot escape the impression that the clear and simple sense of the text applies to clothing, not life. What can be said is that in laying down his own garments and girding himself, Jesus is presenting himself as a servant, ready to do a servant's task. And this is something which, as we will see, carries the deeper theological significance of spiritual cleansing.

13:6-11

The evangelist fills the first dialogue of the Farewell Discourse with *pathos*: Jesus' action leaves Peter bewildered and elicits a response. Is Peter merely puzzled? Is he offended or embarrassed by this new development? Is he reacting out of respect for Jesus? Perhaps all of these combine to make Peter's response what it is. In any case, it is certainly a mild protest, perhaps more of a statement than a question. The emphatic *σὺ* stands in contrast to *μου*. Peter is taken aback by Jesus' action.

¹³ R. Bultmann, *Gospel*, 466.

¹⁴ R. Brown (*Gospel*, 551) sees the connection between Jesus' laying down (v.4) and taking up (v.12) with the laying down and taking up of his life in John 10: 11, 15, 17-18 as not being out of the question. So also E. Hoskyns, *The Fourth Gospel*, 437. Others see no substantive connection. B. Lindars says simply, "Jesus strips for action, like a slave" (*The Gospel of John*, 450). While it may be an attractive literary connection to make, contextually there does not seem to be a lot commending the connection.

An appeal is then made to evoke *pathos*: Jesus' reply to Peter is not a rebuke for he treats him quite mildly. Although Peter does not understand now, he will hereafter. Since this would not be said of the ordinary ritual, this footwashing represents something more profound. Jesus understands Peter's lack of insight and gives a reassuring promise: in due time (μετὰ ταῦτα), Peter will "know" (γνώση). "After these things" refers to a time after Jesus' passion when understanding is given (see also 2:22; 7:39; 12:16; 20:9). After his death and resurrection, they would remember and understand, but even this would be mediated by the Spirit (14:26; 16:12-15, 25).

Strongly implied for the reader is the fact that Jesus knows what he is doing (*ethos*) and that is enough for now. This is more than just a lesson in humility. There are theological implications that can be understood only after "the hour" is over. Also, "what I am doing" need not be restricted to the footwashing. It is a reference to his whole salvific work (even as "after these things" points to an indefinite time after his death and resurrection). Jesus' disciples have repeatedly demonstrated that they do not fully comprehend what his mission is all about, but he assures them that one day they will.

His reassuring promise, however, is met with a vehement protest (v. 8): Οὐ μὴ νίψης μου τοὺς πόδας εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα. Peter is still resistant. For him to see the Master, their Teacher and Lord, as a humble slave is objectionable and he gives voice to this feeling. He will have no part in what Jesus wants to do. It is unthinkable that Jesus should do such a servile task. Over against this deeply felt protest stands Jesus' answer: a stark either/or. Having part with Jesus is dependent upon receiving this washing and Jesus himself is the agent ("If I do not wash you . . ."). Clearly, more than just the outward action, or ritual, is involved. There is a deeper, spiritual reality which is being spoken of here by Jesus. Raymond Brown traces the meaning of "having part" to the Hebrew understanding of the God-given heritage of Israel.¹⁵ Without the washing of which Jesus speaks, a disciple loses the heritage he shares with him.

To "have part" with Jesus is to be saved (3:16; 12:46). If that which separates mankind from God is the darkness of sin (cf. 1:5, 29), then to be cleansed is to have sin and its guilt removed. That cleansing which alone gives an individual part with Christ is given by the cross. Indeed, the reader is shown in 12:32 how mankind is drawn to Christ to have part with him. That is the washing which is spoken of here. As will soon be

¹⁵ Ibid., 565.

indicated (v. 10), it is a washing in which Peter already shares.¹⁶ Jesus is presented as posing only two alternatives to Peter, one of which is utterly unacceptable (not having part with Jesus). Reflecting on Jesus' statement "after these things" (when understanding arrived) would then lead the disciples to an acceptance of the scandal of the cross. The evangelist, in presenting this dialogue with Peter, thus challenges his readers with the same two options, one of which is just as decidedly unacceptable for them.

Faced with Jesus' either/or proposition and his own lack of understanding, Peter becomes frightened at the prospect of having no part with Jesus and reacts once again. Now the pendulum swings to the other extreme. Peter is again reluctant to allow Jesus his way. But now, instead of thinking what Jesus wants is too much, it is too little. If a little is good, a lot must be better! Peter's understanding remains clouded. He still takes Jesus in a literal way, not seeing the deeper significance: that this footwashing was a "symbolic enactment of what Jesus would do for his followers through his death."¹⁷

Jesus immediately (v. 10) gives a corrective to Peter's over-reaction, one that is full of reassurance. Since the washing of the feet represents the cleansing death of Jesus, the footwashing itself is a complete bathing and does not need to be augmented as Peter thinks ("You are already clean"). Jesus' cleansing action cannot be quantified in the way that Peter thinks of it. For when Jesus gave himself, he gave himself completely. Note especially the perfect passive participle, λελουμένος. Jesus, not the individual, is the agent who does the washing (v. 8). Also, the one who has once been bathed remains so.

There are two main variant readings in v. 10. The longer reading includes the words εἰ μὴ τοὺς πόδας while the shorter one omits them.¹⁸ Retaining the words draws a distinction between λελουμένος and νίψασθαι, while the shorter reading would

¹⁶ See also J. Dunn who says of the footwashing, "John intends us to see in this narrative a figure of the cross." And, "Jesus in washing his disciples' feet is acting out what his death will accomplish for his disciples. His death washes them clean." "The Washing of the Disciples' Feet in John 13:1-20", 248-49.

¹⁷ C. Koester, *Symbolism*, 116.

¹⁸ C.K. Barrett, *The Gospel According to St. John*, 441-42. Barrett gives a number of reasons for favoring the shorter reading and thus seeing λελουμένος and νίψασθαι as synonyms. The text, he proposes, was ultimately expanded to the longer reading due to a failure to see the words as synonyms and an accommodation to what was understood as a first century social custom.

make the two cleansing actions more or less synonymous. Since the longer reading does have greater ancient textual attestation,¹⁹ it will be retained in this rhetorical analysis.

The point would then seem to be that as a bathed person only needs to have his feet washed because of continued contact with a dusty road, so Jesus' disciples are spiritually clean--what they have need of is ongoing repentance as his disciples. Dusty though their feet may figuratively be, they are wholly clean (καθαρὸς ὅλος), including Peter (ὁμεῖς καθαροί ἐστε). His contrariness to Jesus (v. 8) would then be an example of how a cleansed person's feet become dirty and are in need of a continuing washing (repentance). The feet still needing washing could also refer to the completion of understanding that will happen in due time (v. 7). This is one of the rhetorical constraints in the narrative: the disciples' identity is established. Unity with Jesus is in place, a more complete, revealed understanding will come later.

The service Jesus performs that establishes their cleansed status is foreshadowed by the footwashing. Whoever receives Jesus' service is completely clean. How? In 15:3 the cleansing is by Jesus' word. But the person of Jesus and his word can never be separated, for he is the word made flesh (1:14). Thus, to have part with Jesus and to be cleansed wholly is to receive his word, to believe it, and this word is the word about his service for them (12:32-33). "The washing of the disciples' feet rests upon and interprets the death of the Lord."²⁰

The appeal to elicit *pathos* (that of Jesus' disciples and the author's readers) continues. Jesus pointed Peter and the rest to what was already theirs (v. 10), allowed for subsequent, additional understanding (v. 7), but then arrests their attention with reference to not all being clean. Verse 11 explains: he refers to the betrayer. Again, Jesus is shown to be the one who "knows": both the betrayer and his spiritual condition are known to him.

The sense of drama is heightened, the suspense builds. As he finishes his task, his dialogue with Peter closes with this bit of information: within that intimate circle there was one whose heart did not receive the washing and was unclean, having no part with Jesus. But he does not tell them who it is.

The footwashing foreshadows the cross and the cleansing it brings. Not only is Jesus' action here done within the context of repeated references to his betrayal and death,

¹⁹ B. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 240.

²⁰ E. Hoskyns, *The Fourth Gospel*, 437.

but in view of its connection to having part with him and making the sinner clean, it has a deeper significance. He washes the feet of both his friends and his betrayer, an action pointing to his cleansing work for all people on the cross.

13:12-15

Rhetoric is really the art of seeing how to persuade.²¹ In these few verses, appeal is made in a comprehensive way: through *pathos*, *ethos*, and *logos*. Within *logos*, we find the evangelist having Jesus use both enthymeme and paradigm for persuasive appeal.

Upon resuming his place at table, Jesus addresses them with a rhetorical question. But it is more than simply a question or abstraction. Jesus has done something for them (τί πεποίηκα ὑμῖν). Here was an example of love that is ready to render the lowliest kind of service to others. The disciples are the beneficiaries of Jesus' action and the persuasive appeal of his action and question is to move them to do the same.

The evangelist then has the rhetorical constraint of Jesus' identity brought to the fore by Jesus himself. He acknowledges that they correctly see him as ὁ διδάσκαλος καὶ ὁ κύριος. Here is the appeal to his *ethos*. He has noble stature. He possesses authority among them in both his words and actions, extending also to the washing of their feet. Just how far this extends Jesus indicates by declaring that as he has done, so also they ought to do. His humble mindset demonstrates the necessity for the disciples to take the Lord's way, not their own.

As noted above, both an enthymeme and a paradigm are employed as modes of appeal. First the enthymeme: this is an *argumentum a majori ad minus* in the form of an "if . . . then" statement. The word order (setting ὁ κύριος before ὁ διδάσκαλος) stresses the greatness of Jesus' person as a further reason to do as he did. The response of Jesus' disciples and the author's readers will rest upon their relation to this person, ὁ κύριος: if he, the Lord and teacher did so, then certainly they!

The enthymeme then receives further explanation with the use of a ὑπόδειγμα (v. 15). The deeper spiritual reality modeled by Jesus is to be found as a living reality in their lives. The giving of the ὑπόδειγμα anticipates the command of love in 13:34 and 15:12. What is enjoined upon the disciples is not the repeating of the identical external ritual, but rather the undertaking of action in relation to others that is grounded in the action of

²¹ Aristotle, *On Rhetoric*, I. 2. 1. 36.

Jesus.²² It is an ongoing doing (ποιῆτε) in the same manner (note that it is καθὼς, not ὅ). The disciples, and thus the evangelist's addressees, are to consider the powerful persuasiveness of this person and this person's action as the model to follow in their own lives.²³

13:16-20

With the solemn declaration of verity and authority, ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν, Jesus is now given to add an explanation of what should not prevent them from following his example in their lives. What he utters is rhetorically an external proof based on perhaps two sources. The first part (δοῦλος/κυρίου) is possibly a variant of a dominical saying such as that found in Matt. 10:24 and the second (ἀπόστολος/πέμπαντος) a variant from a familiar Jewish maxim: "One who is sent is as he who sent him."²⁴ If this be the case, Jesus is presented as appealing to commonly held beliefs among his disciples (rhetorically: *endoxa*) as a further basis of persuasion. If any disciple think himself too great to stoop so low, then he must think himself greater than his Lord and teacher who did the menial task out of love. To entertain such a notion would be unthinkable and thus the rhetorical proof is convincing.

The second allusion (ἀπόστολος/πέμπαντος) demonstrates that these men are more than just followers. Peder Borgen observes that John's christology and soteriology are moulded on Jewish rules for agency.²⁵ The *halakah's* principle of agency noted above ("an agent is like the one who sent him"²⁶) is found expressed in a variety of verses scattered throughout John (5:23; 12:44, 45; 13:20; 14:9; 15:23). Usually, the agent would be seen like the sender as far a judicial function and effect are concerned.²⁷ This likeness, however, could also be seen as extending to personal identity.²⁸ This identity

²² R. Bultmann, *Gospel*, 476.

²³ R. Schnackenburg (*Gospel*, 24) points out that imitating Jesus and following him are two different things. Imitating, in the sense of repeating the ritual, was a later development in the Hellenistic period of the early Church.

²⁴ As quoted in G. Beasley-Murray, *John*, 236.

²⁵ P. Borgen, "God's Agent in the Fourth Gospel", 67.

²⁶ See *Baba Qamma* 113b; *Berakoth* 5:5; *Baba Metzia* 96a; *Hagigah* 10b; *Qiddushin* 42b, 43a; *Menahoth* 93b; *Nazir* 12b (*The Babylonian Talmud*).

²⁷ P. Borgen, "God's Agent in the Fourth Gospel", 68.

of the Father as the sender and the Son as the one sent is seen in John at 10:30, 36-38; 14:10-11; 17:20-23.

Another principle of agency in the *halakah* was that “an agent can appoint an agent.”²⁹ This becomes central to the evangelist’s portrayal of Jesus’ preparation of his disciples for his departure in the Farewell Discourse. In 13:16, 20 Jesus makes clear the principles of agency. In 17:16 he reports to the Father the sending. In 20:21, after he makes an initial return following his departure, he appoints his disciples as his agents and sends them. Thus, the Johannine Jesus’ sending of “his own” closely follows the Jewish rules of agency.

Here, then, is one of the rhetorical constraints of the unit: the identity of the disciples. They are ones who are sent. According to the external proof used by Jesus (*logos*), they cannot refuse to do what their sender did as though it is below them. If it was not too low for Jesus, it is not too low for them. The appeal in v. 16 strengthens the “If I, then all the more you” motif in vv. 13-15. The evangelist’s presentation is a very closely argued point as his rhetorical *logos* is an appeal to elicit *pathos* among his readers on the basis of Jesus’ *ethos* (just as Jesus is shown doing with his disciples).

The outcome of such faithfulness for the disciples is a beatitude: μακάριοί ἐστε. Their knowing (a condition of reality--they do know) and their doing (a condition of expectancy) are both necessary. Blessedness (true joy and satisfaction) rests on their “knowing” moving to their “doing.” The promise of blessedness becomes a further persuasive appeal.

Unfortunately, this is not true of all of them (v. 18). This is a reference back to v. 10 which is explained in v. 11. The dreadful fact is that the betrayer is one of Jesus’ own. Yet, Jesus’ “knowing” goes back to 6:70: he “knew” when he chose that a later defection would occur. But this “knowing”, his foreknowledge, allows him to see in the betrayal, not a terrible misstep on his part, but the very fulfillment of the scripture (Ps. 41:10). Here is a powerful external proof for those who accept the authority of the Scriptures. The evangelist sees prophecy being fulfilled in Jesus’ life.

Here in John we have the darkest portrait of Judas of all.³⁰ He is a devil (6:70);

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ See *Qiddushin* 41a (*The Babylonian Talmud*); *Gittin* 3:5-6 (*The Talmud of the Land of Israel*).

he has base motives (12:4-5); he is a thief (12:6); he is unclean spiritually (13:10-11); and he is depicted in chapter 13 as a creature of the night (13:30). Here is the dark side of human nature, the side that the Johannine Jesus struggled with to bring about atonement (1:29). In Judas, Jesus embraced the darkness to know it, and in knowing it he ultimately overcame it.³¹

Again, on the basis of Jesus' *ethos* (he "knows"), the evangelist shows him appealing persuasively to the disciples' *pathos*: he is reassuring them, "Do not be shaken by what happens--I have foretold it." Here, confidence in Jesus and the future is instilled. This prediction will help the disciples with their faith in Jesus, especially since he is to be "lifted up" (12:32-33) and will "depart out of this world" (13:1) after being betrayed. Theirs can be confidence in the face of disloyalty and betrayal. Nothing deceives Jesus: he knows. He wants his disciples to understand this so that they do not think of him as defeated and Judas as successful. In fact, Judas' success is allowed by Jesus (18:8, 11). Their belief will rest in Jesus' *ethos* (ἐγὼ εἶμι). When it happens (the "hour"), they can reflect on what he has told them beforehand and believe (see also 14:29).³²

The solemn, authoritative declaration of verity (ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν, v. 20) again points to a wonderful truth: in spite of one's treachery, the rest are one with Jesus and are his "sent" ones. However, the focus is on those to whom the disciples are sent: whoever receives the messengers receives Jesus and his sender. Here again is a focus on the disciples' identity as his sent ones (ἄν τινα πέμψω). Jesus' appeal to elicit *pathos* within his disciples is great. Not only do they have the status of a special relationship with Jesus in spite of a traitor being in their midst, but those who receive them also end up having part with Jesus--an outcome having profound, salvific implications for those who receive Jesus' "sent ones." While some see v. 20 as "loosely tacked on to the end"³³ and included at the same time as v. 16 (a later addition), this verse is integral to the whole and brings closure to the rhetorical *logos* of the footwashing.

A common conclusion among form critical scholars is that there are two separate

³⁰ S. C. Barton, *People of the Passion*, 16.

³¹ *Ibid.* 19.

³² R. Schnackenburg: "Despite the incomprehensible fact of the betrayal, Jesus continues to be the one sent by God and, after the event of the cross has taken place, it will be clear that the disciple's betrayal and the plan devised by Satan even served Jesus' exaltation." *Gospel*, 26.

³³ R. Brown, *Gospel*, 572.

interpretations of the footwashing here: vv. 6-11 and vv. 12-17.³⁴ Different hands, at different times, utilizing different sources and adding miscellaneous strands of material are seen as the building blocks of this narrative. But is this sufficient to account for the text in its present form?

What is present here is an example of rhetorical amplification in which the topic at hand is expanded by means of augmentation (the increasing intensity we see as it proceeds from dialogue to monologue), comparison and contrast (clean/unclean; slave/lord; sent ones/sender), reasoning (enthymeme and paradigm), and accumulation (the build-up of statements, one after the other, in support of the general *logos*--vv. 12-17 here).³⁵

In vv. 6-11 the focus is on the meaning of the washing: Jesus' death which cleanses. It is, objectively, the service rendered by Jesus for all (12:32-33) that would take place at his "hour." In vv. 12-17 the focus is on the disciples' response. It is, subjectively, their appropriation of this paradigmatic action and the fruit it bears in their lives. The objective fact centering in Jesus becomes the basis for this subjective action being expressed in their lives.³⁶ And what is true for Jesus' disciples' in the scene presented by the evangelist is true as well for his readers.

If Jesus' disciples are to do as he did, and what he did was make them to "have part" with him and be spiritually clean, then they have a special mission as ones who are specially chosen, appointed, and sent by him. Is this mission not the bringing of the good news of the cleansing that is found in Christ to those to whom they are sent? Thus, the disciples are also to be involved in performing the cleansing insofar as they bring the gospel of Christ to others, preaching and teaching this cleansing word about Jesus (15:3). The "doing" of vv. 14, 15, and 17 is tied to their being sent. They are to be engaged in a service that results in cleansing.

Far from being a disordered sequence of material, this pericope is a skillfully woven

³⁴ See R. Bultmann, *Gospel*, 461-479, who declares that the two interpretations, from different sources, are contrary to one another. Also R. Schnackenburg, *Gospel*, 7-10, who cites a number of other scholars along these lines and who concludes that both interpretations are difficult to understand. R. Brown, *Gospel*, 562-569, also sees different hands at work here at different times.

³⁵ Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria* VIII. 4. 1-29, 263-81.

³⁶ J. Dunn also believes that they are mistaken who contend that vv.6-11 cannot be harmonized with vv.12-20. "The Washing of the Disciples' Feet in John 13:1-20", 249.

unit. It rhetorically accomplishes what is desired: Jesus is portrayed as one who is fully in charge; he has all things under control for he “knows”; he has the disciples’ best interests at heart (“he loved them to the end”); he provides a washing which symbolizes their subsequent cleansing through his service in death; and he sends them out as ones who are blessed (v. 17). Where the form critic speculates about a disordered text on the basis of hypothetical sources, the rhetor finds an ongoing, skillful shift in the *logos* which advances, and adds to, the persuasive appeal.

13:21-30

Jesus’ foreknowledge now leads to a direct effect upon himself. What he knows disturbs him profoundly³⁷ and leads to the third ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν declaration (16, 20, 21). However, this is more than just a maxim, or general truth, that is being stated. Jesus is making a prophetic proclamation. No longer does he speak indirectly of the betrayal. Now he speaks directly and with certainty as he predicts that one of the twelve will betray him. What an utter contrast this is to the characterization of the faithful disciple just described (vv. 16, 20).

Here we see the interplay at the first level of the text between Jesus’ *ethos* (and the troubled spirit it produces in him) on the one hand, and the *pathos* this generates within and among his disciples on the other. He testifies (ἐμαρτύρησεν) to them of the treason. This gives a serious, authoritative, quality to Jesus’ utterance. He is positive about this. Shock waves begin to ripple through the disciples at his words. They are perplexed and uncertain at his shocking announcement. Jesus is clearly preparing them for something that is yet to occur, something that will shake their foundations (Ps. 11:3). There will come a time, however (13:7, 19; 14:29), when they will understand.

But that time is not now. Their perplexity leads to questions and Peter’s character comes to the fore. He makes his approach to Jesus on behalf of the others through the disciple “whom Jesus loved.” This atmosphere of guarded gestures (νεύει) and whispered conversation in response to Jesus’ startling revelation adds to the dramatic effect of the narrative. Jesus’ words have created a sense of mystery and foreboding here.

The stature of the disciple so near to Jesus to whom Peter makes his appeal to

³⁷ R. Brown: “The dark shadow of Judas’ betrayal covers Jesus’ soul and throws him into gloom.” *Gospel*, 577.

identify the traitor is also emphasized. He is the one specially noted as being loved by Jesus (ὃν ἠγάπα)³⁸; he reclines upon the breast of Jesus; and because of Peter's own status with Jesus, Peter's approach to this disciple gives this disciple prominence. He is one who stands in special relationship to Jesus and even Peter acknowledges this by going to Jesus through him. While scholarly opinion regarding who this "beloved disciple" is has been legion,³⁹ it is clear that he is an intimate of Jesus, sharing a closeness that makes him a "very special confidant,"⁴⁰ one to whom Jesus perhaps revealed himself more than to others. The evangelist's language describing his closeness to Jesus (ἐν τῷ κόλπῳ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ) is reminiscent of that found in 1:18 of the Father and the Son (εἰς τὸν κόλπον τοῦ πατρὸς). The intimacy is striking and the *ethos* of Jesus (not to mention the special stature of the disciple whom he loves) stands in stark contrast to the devil-influenced character of the one who betrays him. As noted earlier, John's portrait of Judas is the darkest of them all. While Jesus states that he will not abandon his disciples (14:18), it is Judas who leaves him and then returns under cover of darkness with an armed mob to betray him (13:30; 18:1-12). Also, it is to be noted that Judas is depicted by Peter (Acts 1:25) as having abandoned the office of ministry and apostleship which he received from Jesus.⁴¹

The beloved disciple asks Jesus directly, "Lord, who is it?" and Jesus gives a direct answer. He reveals "who", but he does so by describing the action which will reveal the traitor. Here Jesus follows a course of action which holds open the door of repentance to the betrayer--rather than naming him and sealing it for good, allowance is made for the possibility of a change of heart. The evangelist makes the *ethos* of Jesus shine forth. He "knows" and yet he is compassionate, seeking the lost. Will the traitor refuse the morsel and repent of his conspiracy, or will he accept it and choose for Satan instead of Jesus?

The morsel having been given and accepted (v. 26), Jesus demonstrates his

³⁸ This "beloved disciple" is referred to five times in the Gospel, all in chapters 13-21 (13:23; 19:25; 20:2; 21:7; 21:20). A sixth reference is at 21:24, but the antecedent for "This" disciple is found in v. 20. Also, the vocable in 20:2 is "ἐφιλει", not "ἠγάπα", but this is perhaps not significant.

³⁹ See J. Charlesworth, *The Beloved Disciple*, 127-224, for a comprehensive synopsis of suggestions that have been made concerning his identity.

⁴⁰ R. Schnackenburg, *Gospel*, 29.

⁴¹ See Barton, *People of the Passion*, 14-20.

authority and control over his destiny (cf. 10:18). Seeing Judas' irrevocable malice, he takes the initiative to remove the traitor. He knew his hour had come (v. 1) and so insists that Judas carry out his plan (v. 27). The eliciting of *pathos* within his readers by the evangelist intensifies as the spiritual possession of Judas is shown coming to completion. Initially, it had been the intent of betrayal that had entered in (v. 2). Now it is Satan himself. But it is still Jesus who is shown to be in control: he is the one who "knows"; he exposes the traitor; and although Satan is directly involved, it is Jesus who gives the orders. What confidence the evangelist elicits with Jesus' *ethos*: when an individual is determined to do evil, a higher hand constrains and controls his actions for the sake of ends that are utterly beyond him! This is seen not only with Judas' betrayal, but also with Jesus' arrest, his trial, and his crucifixion. All will serve God's purposes, of that the author's readers can rest assured.

The disciples' continued lack of understanding is noted with the guesses they make concerning Judas' taking leave of them. Some commentators see in vv. 28-29 an "editorial addition"⁴² or "an insertion by the Evangelist into his source."⁴³ Rhetorically, it is an amplification⁴⁴, a parenthetical expansion which skillfully accomplishes two things: on the one hand it further characterizes the disciples with their lack of understanding and the incomprehensibility of the betrayal; on the other hand, it explains why none of the eleven tried to stop Judas from going out and following through with his plan. Their "not knowing" stands in contrast to Jesus' "knowing."

Judas' exit is immediate (εὐθύς) according to Jesus' command (τάχιον).⁴⁵ The motif of "night" (νύξ) heightens the contrast between Judas and Jesus. This one who now belongs to Satan goes out into the night to set in motion a deed fit only for darkness. This gives dramatic theological import to the narrative. Darkness has already been seen as the context in which evil deeds and being separated from goodness have been set (3:19; 9:4;

⁴² R. Brown, *Gospel*, 578.

⁴³ R. Bultmann, *Gospel*, 480.

⁴⁴ Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria* VIII. 4. 1-29, 263-81. There are four basic types of amplification: augmentation, comparison and contrast, reasoning, and accumulation. Augmentation is used here in vv. 28-29.

⁴⁵ Also note how quickly Judas shows up with the armed mob in the garden to arrest Jesus (18:1-3). Once Jesus has spoken (v. 27), events are set in motion which bring about his "hour" quickly.

11:10). Indeed, the betrayer and his action are set over against the “light of men” which “shines in the darkness” (1:4-5) and does so for the entire world of men (8:12).

The evangelist has given dramatic intensification to the betrayal: first, Jesus is shown making reference to not all being “clean” (v. 10); then he uses the external proof of Scripture to demonstrate that the evil design of the unclean one fulfills God’s will (v. 18); the morsel is dipped and given, exposing the betrayer (v. 26); Jesus speaks personally to Judas, showing that “he knows” (v. 27); and then Judas departs into the night (v. 30). This now serves, as Schnackenburg notes,⁴⁶ as a “dark foil” to set off the words about Jesus’ glorification that follow.

The *Partitio* (13:31-38)

Four Topics

The rhetorical situation of the unit is thus established by the evangelist with the *narratio*. Now, in good rhetorical style,⁴⁷ the main topics that will be elaborated upon in the body of the discourse are set forth. This summarizing character of the *partitio* is recognized by Christian Dietzfelbinger who notes concerning these verses, “Here the parameters are delineated from which the actual farewell discourse is developed.”⁴⁸ This is an important transition which helps to clarify the presentation and move smoothly into the discourse. The *Partitio* of the Farewell Discourse is composed of four major topics: “mutual glorification of the Father and the Son”; “little time remaining”; “a mission of love”; and “Jesus’ imminent departure”. As explained in the previous chapter, these topics are then taken up and amplified, in reverse order, in the *Confirmatio* and *Epilogos*.

13:31-32 The First Topic (mutual glorification of Father and Son)

The immediate departure of Judas from the group provides Jesus with the occasion to speak of the arrival of his hour and what that will mean for himself and the Father. If ever there had been doubt about the arrival of “the hour”, it is put to rest when Jesus

⁴⁶ R. Schnackenburg, *Gospel*, 32.

⁴⁷ Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria* IV. 5. 1, 137.

⁴⁸ C. Dietzfelbinger, *Der Abschied des Kommenden*, 27.

declares, Νῦν. This is the hour of the cross (12:28, 32-33). A sharp contrast is again apparent between the darkness of betrayal and night on the one hand (v. 30), and the glory spoken of here on the other. The rather painful scene of betrayal switches to that of glorification.

Jesus' *ethos* stands out as he is seen as the one who glorifies the Father. The glory being at the same time the Father's and the Son's reminds us of Jesus' declaration: ἐγὼ καὶ ὁ πατήρ ἐν ἐσμεν (10:30). The unity between the Father and the Son is seen in the reciprocal glorifying that takes place. Jesus is glorified in his "hour" of departure. God is glorified because he sent him in love (3:16) and this love will be manifested for all the world. What appears to be the darkest hour becomes in fact the hour of glory.

Here Jesus lays the foundation for the understanding that will come later for the disciples (v. 7). He is preparing them for the onslaught of darkness, when all will seem lost. There will come a time when they are reminded of what he has said (14:25-26) and they will understand and face the challenges of darkness confidently in the truth (14:29; 17:6-8). Who Jesus is and the positive nature of what will result for both he and the Father (δόξα) from his imminent (εὐθὺς) passion lift the dark pall of despair brought on by the announcement of betrayal. This first topic will be picked up and elaborated upon in the *Epilogos* (see 17:1-5 and the discussion above, pp. 87, 89-90).

13:33 The Second Topic (little time remaining)

In verses 31-32 we see what the "hour" means for the Father and the Son. In verse 33 we see what it means for the disciples. Here the exigence of the rhetorical unit is spoken clearly: a separation will take place between Jesus and the disciples due to Jesus' departure—and they will not be able to follow him. This accounts for much of the rhetorical problem to which Jesus speaks in the Farewell Discourse, especially since this departure is imminent (ἔτι μικρὸν).⁴⁹ As the glorification in vv. 31-32 was in contrast to the betrayal and night in v. 30, so the glorification is again contrasted to the announced departure here (at least as the disciples saw it!).

The appeal to *pathos* is two-fold: on the one hand Jesus addresses them as

⁴⁹ Since this "little while" means a short time until his hour and glorification, it is an optimistic reference to the nearness of God's salvation. In Isaiah 10:25 and Jeremiah 51:33 we find references where this language is used of the imminence of God's promised deliverance of his people.

τεκνία, a term of affection. On the other hand, his announcement of separation from them, about which they can do nothing (οὐ δύνασθε), will elicit sorrow and confusion. They will seek him, but will not be able to follow. Indeed, Jesus' death at his "hour" will be without associates, no one among his disciples will go with him. This solitary aspect of the redeemer's work was spoken of much earlier (cf. Isaiah 53 and 63:3) and would be part of the understanding to come later (13:7).

Here in v. 33 he refers his disciples to an earlier conversation he had had with "the Jews" (7:33-34). For them the separation was terminal as long as they remained in unbelief (8:24). For his disciples, who have part with him and are clean, it marks a transition in their relationship to him. After his "hour" that relationship would be mediated by word and Spirit.

With the theme of imminent departure, Jesus is shown preparing his disciples for what is yet to come, and that includes both departure and return (13:36; 14:3). His *ethos*, as the one who knows these things and reveals them, stands out and the attempt to elicit *pathos* is striking with the disclosure of his soon-to-be-accomplished separation from them. There is a progression of thought beginning here in the way that this is revealed to them: "where I am going you cannot come" (33) . . . "you cannot follow now, but you will follow hereafter" (36) . . . "where I am, there you may also be" (14:3). It will all transpire ἔτι μικρὸν.

13:34-35 Third Topic (a mission of love)

This topic is a reiteration of the topic of love found in the *exordium* (ἀγαπήσας τοὺς ἰδίους . . . εἰς τέλος ἠγάπησεν αὐτούς). Jesus' mission of love will now be the foundation and source for that of his disciples. This is a "new" commandment, not as having never existed before (νέα), but new in respect to himself (καινήν). Brown sees the language of covenant here,⁵⁰ especially that found in the Last Supper ("the new covenant in my blood") with reference to the fulfillment of Jeremiah 31:31-34. In any case, this new covenant flows from his love for them which is self-sacrificing, salvific, and having to do with the fulfillment of God's plan.

Here we see high values being associated with discipleship. The disciples' identity

⁵⁰ R. Brown, *Gospel*, 614.

(a rhetorical constraint) is characterized by love, a virtue grounded in that of Jesus' love for them. But Jesus' love does not just provide the norm for their love: it gives the reason for it (καθὼς ἠγάπησα ὑμᾶς). Jesus' love is not only the model, but the motivation.

Schnackenburg⁵¹ considers the “new commandment” to be an editorial addition at this point. Peter's reply, he reasons, (v. 36) seems to directly follow v. 33 and the subject of love is ignored and not taken into consideration in chapter 14. However, this ignores Peter's own character which has been demonstrated already in the footwashing. He has a tendency to hear what he wants to hear and focus on that, in spite of what else Jesus might say. Verse 36 is an example of this tendency. Also, the rhetorical arrangement of this unit answers Schnackenburg's concern that the commandment is not taken into consideration in chapter 14. Of course it wouldn't be found in chapter 14 if it is the third of four topics to be repeated and amplified in 15:1-16:15 (see explanation of rhetorical arrangement in chapter 3). It will receive its due treatment, but in its proper rhetorical order.

The world's attention will be drawn to this identifying mark of Jesus' disciples: the love they have for one another. A rhetorical syllogism (enthymeme) presents the proof with the apodosis (γνώσονται πάντες) being placed before the protasis (ἐὰν ἀγάπην ἔχητε), emphasizing not so much their relationship to one another as to the Lord. For ultimately, what is of utmost significance is not how one stands in relation to a disciple, as how he stands in relation to Jesus (v. 20). The disciple, as the one sent (vv. 16, 20), is simply the means whereby others are brought into this relationship.

Thus, those who “have part” with Jesus and who are “clean” bear a mystery within themselves which unites them intimately to one another and the Lord. It comes from Jesus, manifests itself among them, and as those sent by Jesus this love characterizes their demeanor and their message among others (ἐν τούτῳ γνώσονται πάντες). By presenting this scene between Jesus and his disciples in an effective rhetorical manner, the evangelist is appealing to his readers, attempting to evoke the same *pathos* among them as Jesus desired to evoke among his disciples.

13:36-38 Fourth Topic (Jesus' imminent departure)

Bultmann separates verses 36-38 from 31-35 by inserting chapters 15 and 16 after v. 35 and then introducing the final discourse in his scheme (ch. 14) with vv. 36-38. He

⁵¹ R. Schnackenburg, *Gospel*, 53.

believes that the ending to chapter 16 is just as much a conclusion to the farewell discourses as the end of chapter 14 and that “the question of the relation of the one to the other remains to be answered.”⁵²

Rhetorical analysis provides an answer. Within the rhetorical unit as a whole, we have identified 13:31-38 as the *partitio* which re-focuses the topics from the *exordium* and then introduces the *confirmatio*. Within the *partitio*, verse 36 logically picks up the theme of departure from verse 33 as Peter responds to Jesus’ declaration. The endings of chapters 14 and 16 are not competing endings that come from different sources and have been included by an editor in a disordered fashion. Rather, these endings are points of closure for the different topics of the *partitio*. Instead of marking awkward seams in the text, they are intentional rhetorical devices. Brown points out that Bultmann’s rearrangement is not really helpful since it creates a new problem with the question, “Where are you going?” following 16:28, “I am going to the Father.”⁵³ From a rhetorical point of view, no rearrangement is necessary since there is no disorder. The unit is set up rhetorically and internally there is a logical progression to the dialogue.

Peter’s question (v. 36) helps develop the *exordium* topic of Jesus’ departure which is the fourth topic of the *partitio*. The exigence to which Jesus must speak is plain: his disciples’ lack of understanding and their misunderstanding of how his mission will be fulfilled (not to mention their part in it). Noteworthy is the effect the evangelist seeks to achieve in Peter’s response to Jesus: Peter completely glosses over the subject of the “new commandment” and picks up on Jesus’ pointed statement about going where they cannot come. Peter’s line of inquiry is simple: “Tell me where, and I’ll follow.”

His first misunderstanding is that he understands the “going” and “following” to be activities taking place within the sphere of this world. Note again the character trait of Peter: he does not ask so that he might understand the separation—he is bound and determined that there be no separation! Of course, it is his love and devotion for Jesus that give rise to his reaction, but it is still a denial of Jesus’ words in v. 33, “Οπου ἐγὼ ὑπάγω ὑμεῖς οὐ δύνασθε ἐλθεῖν.

In Jesus’ response to Peter, the prospect of following Jesus to the same goal at a later time is given. This is an expansion of the statement in v. 33 and heightens the drama.

⁵² R. Bultmann, *Gospel*, 595.

⁵³ R. Brown, *Gospel*, 615.

Peter will follow. But his own hour for following Jesus is not yet “now.” It will arrive “afterward.” Once Jesus’ “hour” has come, Peter will undertake his own ministry (21:15ff) at the end of which he will meet his own “hour” (21:19). Thus, beginning at some time after Jesus’ departure, Peter will follow his Lord in his ministry and then in his death (see 13:36 and 21:19-- ἀκολουθήσεις δὲ ὕστερον and Ἀκολουθεῖ μοι--Peter’s following is linked to his martyrdom).

Again, Peter hears only, “You cannot follow.” Even though Jesus’ negative answer is mitigated with a promise to be fulfilled later (not unlike 13:7), Peter does not catch the other-worldly dimension of Jesus’ statement. Although he is willing to commit his life to it, he thinks it is a going and following that is a human possibility in the here and now (first, “Where?”; now, “Why?”).

The evangelist thus intensifies the dialogue in his attempt to evoke *pathos*. Peter’s questions betray his lack of understanding. His bold statement, τὴν ψυχὴν μου ὑπὲρ σοῦ θήσω, exposes his misunderstanding: it is Jesus who does everything on Peter’s behalf, not Peter who does something ὑπὲρ Jesus (see 13:8). But Peter thinks he is ready to take on the role of the shepherd who lays down his life for another (10:11). By asking “Why can’t I?” he apparently thinks that there is no impediment to following Jesus in this way. As the evangelist will later reveal, however, that role of the shepherd will only be conferred upon him after Jesus’ “hour” and when Jesus has said, “Follow me” (21:15-19).

The evangelist brings the fourth topic, and the *partitio*, to a haunting climax with Jesus’ reaction to Peter’s bold claim (v. 38). His rhetorical question cuts to the quick and with another authoritative statement of verity (ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω σοι) he gives immediate answer. The *partitio* closes with an emphasis on Jesus’ *ethos* and a dramatic appeal to *pathos*. Jesus speaks authoritatively and is the one who knows. He utters a prophecy which is quite specific--no generic denial of Jesus will fulfill it. Peter will do the exact opposite of what he promises: he will save his own life by denying Jesus three times, and it will happen that very night before the next dawn. Note well the terrible contrast between θήσεις and ἀρνήση: the one, the bold assertion of he who does not understand; the other, the emphatic prophecy of he who “knows.” Jesus’ prophetic declaration stands in bold relief as Peter makes no reply.

By means of this *partitio*, the evangelist has thus encapsulated and presented the four main topics that will be amplified in the balance of the discourse. They are presented

in reverse order, the fourth topic (vv. 36-38) taken up first (chapter 14), the third dealt with second (15:1-16:15), and so on. Following the *narratio* which set the scene, the *partitio* has effectively introduced the substance of the Farewell Discourse and has done so with due attention given to the rhetorical *pisteis* (proofs) of *ethos*, *pathos*, and *logos*.

CHAPTER SIX

A RHETORICAL READING: CONFIRMATIO

The author now proceeds with the main body of the discourse, the *confirmatio* (14:1 - 16:33). Here we find all the arguments and information which lend credit, authority, and support to the issue at hand.¹ This is the main portion of the work which sets forth all the information used by the evangelist to persuade his audience. What is asserted in a *confirmatio* is often supported by the attributes of persons or of actions.² This is precisely what the evangelist does with his narrative as Jesus makes reference both to his person and to his works as grounds for his disciples' faith. Throughout this *confirmatio*, *ethos*, *pathos*, and *logos* are all effectively combined to speak not only to the immediate concerns raised by Jesus' departure, but also to the subsequent and ongoing needs of the future Christian community.

Chapter 14 is an amplification of the fourth topic in the *partitio*, Jesus' imminent departure (13:36-38). Raymond Brown notes a number of attempts to divide chapter 14 into subunits. However, as Brown points out, "The internal organization of ch. xiv is not easy to discern."³ Brown himself opts for three subunits: vv. 1-14; 15-24; 25-31. He again notes, however, that these are not major subdivisions as we find in other chapters of the discourse for "the train of thought is reasonably consecutive throughout."⁴

A simple rhetorical analysis which takes the flow of the text in its natural

¹ Cicero, *De Inventione*, I. XXIV, 69.

² *Ibid.*, 71.

³ R. Brown, *Gospel*, 623.

⁴ *Ibid.* See also J. Beutler, *Habt keine Angst*. Beutler agrees with this division, but claims that these three subunits correspond to the Old Testament divisions of the Writings, the Law, and the Prophets, respectively. The announcement of Jesus' departure in vv. 1-14 is said to be a midrash on Psalms 42-43; vv. 15-23 comprise a three-fold promise of Jesus seen in light of Old Testament covenant theology; and vv. 25-31 present the eschatological gifts of Jesus. While interesting, this identification does not follow the actual Old Testament order of Law, Prophets and Writings and does not really advance our understanding of what is achieved persuasively by the discourse, either for Jesus' disciples or the author's readers.

monologue/dialogue format will be followed here, looking again at the effective interplay between *ethos*, *pathos*, and *logos*, and the rhetorical use made of repetition, amplification, enthymeme, and paradigm.

The Fourth Topic (Jesus' Imminent Departure)

14:1-31

14:1-4

Christian Dietzfelbinger⁵ observes that the theme of the Farewell Discourse is enunciated in the first three verses of chapter 14. This certainly correlates well with the fact that this chapter takes up the fourth topic of the *partitio*: Jesus' imminent departure. The balance of the chapter (especially vv. 4-26) is then to be understood, according to Dietzfelbinger, as the explanation of the faith to which they are exhorted in v. 1 and which will sustain them. That they need such exhortation is clear from the exigence: they are troubled by Jesus' revelation of his departure and their not being able to go with him.

With the present imperative passive, Μὴ ταρασσέσθω, we can see the distress among the disciples to which Jesus speaks and with the change to the second person plural we see that this distress encompasses them all, not just Peter. For not only will there be the betrayal of Jesus and his departure, but they will not be able to follow him and one of them will actually deny him (13:36-38). As Jesus' "hour" troubled him (cf. 11:33; 12:27; 13:21), so these pronouncements of his are troubling his disciples. But their distress is part of a larger picture: that of the struggle between Jesus and Satan (cf. 6:70; 8:44; 13:2, 27). The evangelist thus seeks through the first level to speak comfort and reassurance to troubled hearts.

Jesus' appeal to evoke *pathos* is strong. Their faith is threatened so they are called upon to trust in Jesus as they trust in God. Here there are not two faiths, but one: believing in God and Jesus at the same time.⁶ This faith is given beautiful emphasis with the chiasmic structure and use of asyndeton: πιστεύετε . . . θεὸν . . . ἐμὲ . . . πιστεύετε. While these parallel verbs in the chiasm can be taken as indicatives, imperatives, or as a

⁵ C. Dietzfelbinger, *Der Abschied des Kommenden*, 27.

⁶ C. Dietzfelbinger, *Der Abschied des Kommenden*, 29. See also R. Schnackenburg, *Gospel*, 60.

combination of these moods, it is perhaps best to treat both as imperatives since they immediately follow the negative imperative, *μὴ παρασέσθω*, at the beginning of the verse.⁷ The exhortatory nature of Jesus' words would then continue in a natural, coordinated thought pattern: not this . . . but this . . . and this.

This is not just faith in general, but faith in the context of Jesus' departure. God sent him (3:16; 12:44; 13:20) and now he will soon return (13:1, 3) having completed his mission (19:30) for their sake. Jesus' *ethos* is thus highlighted. He is put on the same plane as the object of saving faith (cf. 12:44). This relationship will be reiterated in a little different fashion in vv. 7 and 9.

In John, faith in Jesus is often the relational ground for faith in God (5:38; 8:46ff.) and here faith in God is the relational ground for faith in Jesus.⁸ Thus, to give up faith in Jesus would also be to give up faith in God. Here is a strong appeal to *pathos*. Indeed, *ἐμὲ πιστεύετε* is more than a request for a "vote of confidence."⁹ Faith binds them to Jesus and Jesus has overcome the world (16:33). In Jesus' death, the ruler of this world is cast out (12:31) and they share in this victory by faith. Thus the reassurance.

The encouragement to stand firm in the face of troubling news continues in vv. 2-3 with Jesus' accentuation of the positive. Jesus' "going" is one that prepares a place for them with the Father. And implicit in the phrase *ἐν τῇ οἰκίᾳ τοῦ πατρὸς μου* are such positive and comforting images as security, warmth, nurture, companionship, restfulness, and joy. So here is what they can trust about God and Jesus: the *μοναὶ πολλαί* are a present heavenly reality (*εἰσιν*) and Jesus is not just leaving them--he is going to secure and prepare a *τόπον* for them. In these *μοναὶ*, there is room enough for all. Raymond Brown observes the parallel between this and Deut. 1:29ff: "Jesus would be going before the disciples into the Promised Land to prepare a place for them."¹⁰

The rhetorical stasis of the topic of Jesus' departure (see chapter 4) can be described under both definition and quality in vv. 2-3. Definition: his going is a departure to the Father. It will not be permanent for he will see them again. He is not abandoning them, but says, "I will come again." He has already described it as a cleansing death (13:8).

⁷ C.K. Barrett, *Gospel*, 456. See also R. Brown, *Gospel*, 618; D.A. Carson, *Gospel*, 487-88; and R.C.H. Lenski, *Interpretation*, 969.

⁸ R. Bultmann, *Gospel*, 600.

⁹ R. Brown, *Gospel*, 624.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 625.

Quality: is his return to the Father good or bad for them? No room is left for doubt here that his departure will be beneficial.

These verses (2-3) form an enthymeme in which we find the rhetorical device of repetition (the “going” motif) and the use of the law of contradictories: he states the negative of the premise (no dwelling places in his Father’s house) and then refutes that with a sign (his going and his coming).¹¹ This rhetorical approach stresses the certainty of Jesus’ claim for his disciples.

In regard to John’s use of repetition in his Gospel, George Johnston states, “He means to repeat his themes and to build up to a climax.”¹² Rearrangement theories assume that Jesus should say a thing once and only once and there should be no loose ends allowed in his dialogues or monologues. Where these occur, disarrangements, different traditions from different times, and an editorial evolution of the text are postulated. Rhetorically, however, such repetitions are used effectively in persuasive discourse, building to a climax as noted by Johnston. Here in these verses we see a sophisticated use of *logos*.

That the going away of Jesus ought not be a cause of sorrow is seen in its temporary nature: he is coming again to receive them to himself. This is a unique feature to a speech of the farewell genre. Jesus not only came from the Father and is now returning to him. He will be returning for his disciples once again to take them to the τόπον he has prepared for them. This does not only denote “place”, but also opportunity and possibility for these disciples. “The old apocalyptic tradition is to be understood in a new and different way”--namely in terms of Jesus’ departure and return.¹³ Dietzfelbinger keenly observes that ἐτοιμάσαι (which only appears here in the Gospel of John) is frequently used in the New Testament to announce that the future hope is “prepared” (Matt. 25:34; 1Cor. 2:9; Heb. 11:16; 1Peter 1:5; Rev. 12:6).¹⁴ Already in the Old Testament (Is. 40:3), this word was used in connection with the announcement of an eschatological event. Its use here in 14:2 corresponds to that. Jesus will go, he will prepare a place, he will come again. Clearly, the separation is made bearable by his promise and is to be thought of only in

¹¹ G. Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation*, 80.

¹² G. Johnston, *The Spirit-Paraclete in the Gospel of John*, 163.

¹³ C. Dietzfelbinger, *Der Abschied des Kommenden*, 32 (my translation).

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 30.

connection with his return and their future blessing. As James Dunn points out, the future eschatological hope is not lacking in John's Gospel.¹⁵ It is being used here persuasively to counter the disciples' sorrow and distress.

Jesus' words are all comfort: he goes to prepare a place for them; he will come again to them; he will receive them to himself; and they will be with him. While some commentators allow that vv. 2-3 may not refer to the final parousia,¹⁶ Bultmann is clearly correct when he points out that "take you to myself" points to an existence beyond death where Jesus is.¹⁷

Yet another certainty for his disciples comes from Jesus' lips: they know the way where he is going. Emphasis rests upon τὴν ὁδὸν at the end of the sentence. Here "the way" to the goal, not the goal itself, is made the theme. Encouragement and comfort come from two emphases: they know the "where" (ὅπου), v. 3; they also know the "way there" (τὴν ὁδὸν), v. 4. These disciples know the way to the Father and his house because they know Jesus. But the "way" that is spoken of is not Jesus' way--it is the "way" the disciples themselves must take, a way which they already know and to which Jesus exhorts them in v. 1: faith in Jesus. "If they are to reach the goal, the disciples must continue to cling to Jesus and remain united with him through faith, even though they may outwardly be separated from him."¹⁸

Here, knowing the "way" is an emphasis, not on existence beyond death, but on a believing existence in the world. The other-worldly existence has been prepared and there is room for them, that is promised. But even now, in the face of hostility, separation from Jesus, and all the other challenges, they know the "way" there. Indeed, as Jesus' "going" is both a departure from the world and a victory over the world, so "following" Jesus on the way is done by faith, not by a physical following.¹⁹ This is the goal to which Jesus is persuading them while they are yet in the world: πιστεύετε εἰς τὸν θεὸν καὶ εἰς ἐμὲ πιστεύετε. This is "the way" for the disciples which, Jesus stresses in encouragement, they already know.

¹⁵ J. Dunn, *The Christ and the Spirit*, 255.

¹⁶ See R. Brown, *Gospel*, 625, and R. Schnackenburg, *Gospel*, 61.

¹⁷ R. Bultmann, *Gospel*, 602.

¹⁸ R. Schnackenburg, *Gospel*, 64.

¹⁹ R. Bultmann, *Gospel*, 597.

14:5-7

Jesus' words of comfort and encouragement, however, are interrupted by Thomas. Monologue turns to dialogue once again as the exigence to which Jesus must speak throughout his farewell discourse appears in Thomas' statement and question. But there is not just confusion and a lack of understanding of Jesus' words here. Jesus' statement in v. 4 is apparently provocative. His words seem to be evoking a certain frustration or exasperation on the part of the disciples. The attempt of this discourse to evoke a response in its audience is thus intensified.

With the first person plural, οἶδαμεν, Thomas speaks for the disciples collectively. He claims they know neither the destination (ποῦ ὑπάγεις) nor the way to it (τὴν ὁδόν). This is not unlike the response made by "the Jews" to Jesus' statement, "Where I am going you cannot come" (7:35; 8:22). The sense of frustration can be heard in their reactions to him. They do not believe in Jesus and do not understand his words (8:22-24).

Is such frustration unbelief in Thomas' case? According to 13:10, 13, Thomas was among those considered "clean" by Jesus and who called Jesus "teacher and Lord." More than likely, this was a discouraged faith at this point--a faith that looks, but cannot see clearly. For instance, Thomas knows that Jesus' departure means death (11:16), but he doesn't see the purpose and work of Jesus beyond that death. Raymond Brown approvingly quotes C.K. Barrett: "Thomas appears in John as a loyal but dull disciple, whose misapprehensions serve to bring out the truth."²⁰ While I do not believe that calling Thomas a "dull" disciple is an accurate description, the fact that his statement and question serve as a foil for the unfolding of more of Jesus' truth is seen in Jesus' response to him.

Jesus begins with his revelatory formula, Ἐγώ εἰμι. This is the sixth of seven "I am" statements in John that are specifically linked to metaphors.²¹ These probably go back to passages such as Isaiah 43:10-13; 48:12; and 52:6 which in turn may well be based on Exodus 3:14.²² If this is so, it heightens the appeal to Jesus' *ethos* with an identification of Jesus with God who revealed himself to Moses. Such an identification would also then be significant if John's Gospel is a polemic in which a tension between

²⁰ R. Brown, *Gospel*, 620.

²¹ The other six are found at 6:35; 8:12; 10:7,9; 10:11,14; 11:25; and 15:1,5.

²² A. Köstenberger, *The Missions of Jesus and the Disciples*, 47-48.

followers of Moses and followers of Christ looms large.²³

Here the entire emphasis appears to be on “I am the way” as it repeats the key word in v. 4 and is confirmed as the focal point by v. 6b.²⁴ “Truth” and “life” then become clarifications: “I am the way, that is, the truth and the life.” Rhetorically we see repetition in vv. 4-6, but more importantly amplification through augmentation in v. 6. The terms are piled up to heighten the effect.²⁵ With augmentation there is the intensification of a proposition and we see this in v. 6 with ἡ ὁδός. Jesus is the way because he is the truth (or revelation) from the Father and because he is the life. Since he lives in the Father and the Father in him, he is the conduit through which the Father’s life comes to men. Here “the way” is not only a way to truth, but the way of truth. That people with a Jewish background would have seen these as parallel expressions can be found in Old Testament references such as Psalm 86:11 where the Hebrew parallelism is clear: “Teach me Thy way, O LORD; I will walk in Thy truth; unite my heart to fear Thy name.”²⁶ When you are walking in his truth, you are on the Lord’s way. Indeed, Raymond Brown proposes that John 14:6 reflects the whole chain of usage of the imagery of “the way”, from the Qumran community (IQS ix 17-18), to John the Baptist (Jn 1:23), to the early Christians (Acts 9:2; 19:9,23, *et al*).²⁷ Jewish sources thus offer ample background for this motif.

With οὐδεὶς ἔρχεται πρὸς τὸν πατέρα εἰ μὴ δι’ ἐμοῦ, Jesus proclaims himself as the only way of salvation. With startling clarity the readers hear that there is no other access to the Father: it is Jesus or nothing; there is no hope of occupying the promised dwelling places of the Father apart from him. As Schnackenburg puts it, “by revealing the truth that leads to life and mediating that true life to the one who accepts and realizes that truth in faith, Jesus takes everyone who believes in him to the goal of his existence, that is, ‘to the father’; in this manner, he becomes the ‘way’.”²⁸

This claim of no other means of salvation is similar to an earlier statement of Jesus in 10:9. There, the revelatory formula, ἐγὼ εἰμι, is also used and connected to a metaphor: ἡ θύρα. The same exclusive claim can be found in the context of yet another

²³ J.L. Martyn, *History & Theology*, 102-128.

²⁴ R. Schnackenburg, *Gospel*, 64.

²⁵ For a more complete discussion of amplification see, Quintilian, *Institutio*, viii. 4, 263-81.

²⁶ *New American Standard Bible*.

²⁷ R. Brown, *Gospel*, 629.

²⁸ R. Schnackenburg, *Gospel*, 65.

Ἐγὼ εἶμι metaphor: Ἐγὼ εἶμι ὁ ἄρτος τῆς ζωῆς (6:35, 40, 44-64). Very likely, this focus on life coming only through Jesus points to a polemic against the Jewish belief that life comes by placing one's hope in Moses, the Law (which would be the doorway into the kingdom or the life-giving bread).²⁹ Indeed, in John 6:45 it appears that Jesus replaces the Torah as the instructor of the sons of Israel (Is. 54:13).

In 7:49; 9:28-29, and 12:34 we see the rabbinic tradition focusing on the law, while the Johannine presentation is one that focuses on Jesus. As James Dunn points out, "What the Christians were claiming for Christ, the rabbis were claiming for the law."³⁰ And again, "The wisdom of God is present in the Torah, but present in fulness only in Christ. Christ, not the Torah, is the embodiment of divine Wisdom, the incarnation of God's Word."³¹ Thus, John's Gospel becomes a polemic, not just against positions even the rabbis were opposing (apocalyptic and mystical visions)³², but against the Jewish rabbis themselves with their view that the law was the goal and the ultimate revelation of wisdom.

So, in what way is Jesus the only way of salvation? He is ἡ ἀλήθεια--this is what he is in relation to men. He is the only and true revelation of the Father who is the goal of the journey. He is also the way in respect to ἡ ζωη--this is his mission (10:10). The destination of the way is life with the Father and life comes through truth. The words of Jesus, who is the truth, are the source of life: Ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι ὁ τὸν λόγον μου ἀκούων καὶ πιστεύων τῷ πέμψαντί με ἔχει ζωὴν αἰώνιον (5:24); τὰ ῥήματα ἃ ἐγὼ λελάληκα ὑμῖν πνεῦμά ἐστιν καὶ ζωὴ ἐστιν (6:63).

Jesus' appeal to *pathos* is a direct answer to Thomas' reaction: he tells Thomas and the rest that they know more than they think they do. Distress and confusion have clouded their understanding. But all they need to be reminded of is that Jesus is the way (6a) and the Father is the destination (6b). To see Jesus spiritually, to believe in him, is to come to the Father; and to come to the Father is to receive the blessing of vv. 2-3, the heavenly dwelling. Here is true comfort.

Jesus' encouragement of his disciples continues in v. 7 with a simple fact condition. In v. 4 he has just said that they do know and v. 7 adds to that certainty (cf. v. 9).

²⁹ J.L. Martyn, *History & Theology*, 103-4.

³⁰ J. Dunn, "Let John Be John," 316.

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² *Ibid.*, 307-308.

Rhetorically, this is an enthymeme, a deductive approach to *logos* which for Aristotle was “the strongest of the *pisteis*”, the rhetorical proofs.³³ Jesus attempts to open up for them what they already know, showing them that the understanding of these things is not as far away from them as they might think. Here is assurance for them: anyone seeing the earthly Jesus in faith also “sees” the Father. That is why nothing else is required in order to come to the Father than faith in his Son, Jesus, who is present.

The reality of Jesus’ promises about knowing the way (v. 4) and the Father (v. 7) are grounded on Thomas’ present (γινώσκειτε) and past (έώρακατε) experiences of Jesus. Therefore, what Jesus speaks of is a temporal reality that has already been given to Thomas. He simply lacks comprehension of it at the moment.

In what manner do they know and see the Father *ἀπ’ ἄρτι*? In all the ways in which Jesus carries out the Father’s will (4:34; 12:27). The hour for the glorification of the Father and the Son has come (13:1, 32-33). With the death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus, the disciples, while having known the Father already, will come to know him like they never knew him before. For to know Jesus is to know the Father. The “already” character of this knowing, which is meant to strengthen faith, is described by Bultmann who says the point of the dialogue is “to show that the believer who is discouraged, and who cannot see his own possibility, only needs to discover what he already has.”³⁴ It is “the grasping hold of the possibility that has been given.”³⁵

With this interaction between Jesus and Thomas, the evangelist brings Jesus’ character and identity to the forefront and appeals to the emotions and faith-response of his readers with an effective use of persuasive speech.

14:8-10a

Jesus’ statement about knowing and seeing the Father now proves to be as provocative for Philip as his statement about knowing the way was for Thomas. The exigence continues to require response. While Jesus’ statement at the end of v. 7 indicates that this knowing and seeing is already within the disciples’ grasp, Philip is blind to it. With his statement, *ἀρκεῖ ἡμῖν*, Philip seems to indicate that he has followed Jesus’

³³ Aristotle, *On Rhetoric*, I. 1. 11, 33.

³⁴ R. Bultmann, *Gospel*, 608.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

statement to Thomas through v. 6, but what is revealed in v. 7 mystifies him. The *pathos* is pointed: one after another, the disciples express the confusion they are having with Jesus' words.

Philip's request, however, does give Jesus the occasion for speaking even more directly about this issue. If they cannot fathom the way in which they have seen the Father, Jesus will make it clear to them. It is interesting to note, though, that while Philip may lack comprehension, he regards Jesus as one who is actually able to show them the Father. Jesus' *ethos* is here underscored, not by himself, but by one of his disciples. Also, Philip's interjection gives Jesus the opportunity to reply in a way that helps to develop the *exordium* topic of Jesus' relation to the Father.

Such a dynamic is not uncommon in the Gospel of John. In 7:25-36 there is interaction between those who are perplexed by Jesus' statements, those who are hostile to him because of what he teaches, and Jesus himself. This dynamic gives Jesus the opportunity to continue his teaching and express the truth about himself in increasingly poignant ways. Another example is found in chapter 8. Here Jesus is confronted by an unfriendly crowd. However, in v. 30 we find that a number of them come to believe in him as he speaks to them. In vv. 31-32 he addresses these new believers. But then the larger group, still not believing, responds to him (vv. 33ff.) This gives Jesus still further opportunity to expand on his mission (vv. 36, 42, 51) and his identity (vv. 38, 42, 58).

But getting back to Philip, what is it he asks for? A vision? A theophany? The term δειξόν in John is one that occurs in the vocabulary of revelation (2:18; 5:20; 10:32), and demonstrable revelation at that.³⁶ Philip is apparently asking for the outward demonstration of a theophany of the Father. But he does not connect such a comprehension of the Father with seeing Jesus, v. 7.

Jesus sharply corrects Philip. He uses a rhetorical question which points to himself in answer to Philip's confusion. Here we see a play upon the *pathos* which is present with reference to the *ethos* of Jesus that has been with them τοσοῦτῳ χρόνῳ. The time Philip has spent with Jesus should have shown him the truth: to see Jesus is to see the Father. All that is necessary is to see Jesus rightly. Perhaps a warning can also be found here: do not look for special visionary experiences of God, but look only to Jesus who reveals the Father (cf. John 1:18). Raymond Brown observes that such an understanding is the

³⁶ R. Schnackenburg, *Gospel*, 68.

equivalent of saying that Jesus is the one now known as “my Lord and my God” as Old Testament Israel knew Yahweh.³⁷ This clearly points to the authority of Jesus and is one of the rhetorical constraints found in the Farewell Discourse.

If there is a warning in Jesus’ words about pursuing visionary experiences of God, it may be in response to an influence that was being exerted by Merkabah mysticism in the first century. That these influences existed at that time has been well documented.³⁸ And certainly, if Jewish converts to Christianity in the second century were conveying various aspects of Merkabah mysticism to Christian Gnostics as Scholem reports,³⁹ it is not unreasonable to expect that the same mystical influences may have been felt within Christian communities in the first century. Jewish apocalyptic visionaries claimed to ascend to heaven and there, with the help of interpreting angels, received revelations of cosmological secrets. This, in turn, led to an expanded understanding of history, divine wisdom, and divine retribution.⁴⁰ Thus, there were two major motifs in this mystical approach: 1) an ascent to heaven where one would have a vision of the throne of glory and the King; and 2) the receiving of divine revelation.⁴¹

Jewish Merkabah (“divine chariot”) mystical speculations were developed first in the circle of Rabbi Yohanan ben Zakkai in the second half of the first century C.E.⁴² (although traces of this mysticism are found earlier in Qumranic literature and other Second Temple period literature⁴³). This places its formative influence at the same time as most scholars would place the advent of the Fourth Gospel. Nils Dahl states categorically, “And very remarkable indeed is the attention which the Gospel [of John] pays to texts of importance for Jewish Merkabah mysticism.”⁴⁴ It is quite plausible, then, that the Fourth Gospel addresses this influence among its audience. Should they give credence to claims of ascents to heaven? Should they listen to claims of special revelation apart from that

³⁷ R. Brown, *Gospel*, 631.

³⁸ G. Scholem, *Major Trends*, 1941; I. Gruenwald, *Apocalyptic*, 1980; C. Rowland, *The Open Heaven*, 1982; J. Kanagaraj, “Mysticism” in *the Gospel of John*, 1995.

³⁹ G. Scholem, *Kabbalah*, 376.

⁴⁰ I. Gruenwald, *Apocalyptic*, 9, 99.

⁴¹ *Ibid.* See also, J. Kanagaraj, “Mysticism” in *the Gospel of John*, 53, 366.

⁴² I. Gruenwald, *Apocalyptic*, vii.

⁴³ G. Scholem, *Major Trends*, 42.

⁴⁴ N. Dahl, *Jesus*, 118.

given by and about Jesus?

Gruenwald tells us that Rabbi Yohanan ben Zakkai was himself an eyewitness to the events which led to the destruction of Jerusalem.⁴⁵ With the temple destroyed and the symbol of God's immanence no longer with them, the people turned to beliefs and cultivated various experiences which in some sense could replace what they had once had at the center of their religious lives. Perhaps John's audience was also experiencing influences from these mystical claims and the evangelist incorporated in his Gospel a polemic against such beliefs. There certainly seem to be such *loci* in the Gospel of John. J. Kanagaraj demonstrates not only the presence of elements of Merkabah mysticism as early as the second century B.C.E.⁴⁶, but does so with St. Paul in the New Testament (2 Cor. 12, Paul's ascent to the third heaven), and also with the Gospel of John. In John he cites anti-Merkabah polemic at 1:18, 51 (over against mysticism, there is no need to ascend to heaven to see God for he is seen in the Son of Man); 3:13-15 (an outright denial of ascents, except by the Son of Man); and 6:62 (the ascent of the Son of Man).⁴⁷ Nils Dahl points out that a christological interpretation of Old Testament visions and theophanies in John seems to be a polemic directed against the type of piety found in mystical visions of the heavenly world.⁴⁸

Since the visionary who bears witness of the heavenly reality in the Gospel of John is himself God's self-manifestation, no other claims of ascent or direct revelation are needed (and are in fact denied: 1:18, 3:13). Ascent to heaven is unnecessary since seeing God's glory is present and possible here on earth with Christ's death on the cross. And the majestic throne of Merkabah mystical visions is replaced in John with the cross of Christ: "Jewish throne-mysticism is turned into 'cross-mysticism' in John,"⁴⁹ the place where God's glory is revealed. To the list of anti-Merkabah passages cited, we could add those of the Farewell Discourse where Jesus points his disciples to himself to behold the Father (14:9-11) and to his quickly approaching death on the cross to see the throne where God's glory is revealed (12:23-24; 13:31-32).

Other scholars such as J.L. Martyn and James Dunn also see an anti-Merkabah

⁴⁵ I. Gruenwald, *Apocalyptic*, 47.

⁴⁶ J. Kanagaraj, "Mysticism" in *the Gospel of John*, 59ff.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 158-177.

⁴⁸ N. Dahl, *Jesus*, 118.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 271.

polemic in John's Gospel. Martyn states that the evangelist "stands strongly opposed to affirmations of ascent, the granting of heavenly visions, and divine commissioning for anyone except Jesus."⁵⁰ Dunn points out that Jewish desires for heavenly knowledge are all realized in Jesus: "the incarnate Logos has made God visible in his immanence."⁵¹ If Dunn is correct, then the fourth evangelist is seeking to present Jesus to his readership as the only one who ascends to heaven and the one through whom revelation comes.

Thus, where angelic intermediaries, streams of light and fire, a human-like Son of Man who reveals God's glory, divine commissioning, and the transformation of the mystic, are all prominent features in Merkabah mysticism, it is Jesus and the effect his truth has on people that takes the place of all this in the Gospel of John.

To return more directly to our text in chapter 14, the night on which these dialogues with Jesus take place clearly adds to their poignancy. The *pathos* of the disciples is heavy with confusion, lack of comprehension, and distress. Appealing to *ethos*, Jesus points to himself: Philip asks about the Father and Jesus shows how he and the Father are connected. Philip wants to see with his own eyes. Jesus wants him to see with faith. In the end, Jesus shows Philip the Father in a far superior manner than what Philip even requests: not in a vision, but with the incarnate Logos himself.

With a second rhetorical question, Jesus drives his point home: one cannot make such a request in view of who Jesus is. Then a third rhetorical question brings his dialogue with Philip to a close. Here is a question designed to draw out the appropriate response. A strong appeal to *pathos* is made with οὐ πιστεύεις, a form that expects a positive answer. Is Philip's request in line with his own faith in Jesus? Apparently not. He is being moved by Jesus' question in a pointed way to reconsider what he already knows, even as Thomas was (v. 7).

In "seeing" Jesus correctly, faith grasps that there is a complete bond between him and the Father so that their relationship is reciprocal: they are "in" one another. In other words, one really encounters God when one encounters Jesus. The Father reveals himself in the Son in his words (8:26; 12:49-50) and in his works (10:38; 14:11). Brown sees a possible reference here to the relationship of the sender and the one sent. The one sent, in Jewish understanding, "is like the one who sent him" or "ranks as his [master's] own

⁵⁰ J.L. Martyn, *History & Theology*, 104.

⁵¹ J. Dunn, "Let John Be John," 320.

person.”⁵² Certainly, in not seeing the Father in Jesus, Philip lacks a comprehension of what Jesus’ mission is.⁵³

The questions in vv. 9-10a seek to evoke the disciples’ sympathy as a means of grasping who Jesus is and what that means for them. Rhetorically, there is a pronounced application of the *pisteis*, or rhetorical proofs, in these verses at the first level to bring about persuasion among the author’s readers (see pp. 75-76). And the goal of this persuasion is the strengthening of faith and calming of distressed hearts.

14:10b-14

Both Thomas and Philip respond to Jesus’ statements with confusion, and both speak as though they represent all those present (οὐκ οἶδαμεν, v. 5; ἀρκεῖ ἡμῖν, v. 8). In his response to each of them, Jesus speaks personally to them as individuals. But now he turns his attention to the assembled disciples and addresses the group collectively (ὕμῖν).

The “formula of reciprocity”⁵⁴ from 10a is now used to describe the unity of the Father and the Son. Here the words and works of Jesus are brought together as witnesses of his union with the Father. The Father and the Son speak as one because they are one (10:30), Jesus in the Father and the Father in Jesus. Jesus does not speak simply from himself. Indeed, “in Jesus’ words, the work of the Father is brought to fruition.”⁵⁵ Here the unity of the Father and Son is understood in terms of revelation. And what is true of Jesus’ words is true of his works: the Father abiding in him does them (cf. 12:49-50; 8:28).

This appeal to both words and works as witnesses is rhetorically an appeal to non-artistic, or extrinsic, proofs.⁵⁶ With this stress on his unity with the Father and doing

⁵² R. Brown, *Gospel*, 632.

⁵³ See A. Köstenberger, *The Missions of Jesus and the Disciples*, for a comprehensive discussion of this mission motif.

⁵⁴ R. Bultmann, *Gospel*, 609.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ Non-artistic, or extrinsic, proofs are rhetorically those resources which the author draws upon, but has not “invented”: laws, witnesses, contracts, miracles, or Scripture quotations. Artistic, or intrinsic, proofs are the appeals to *ethos*, *pathos*, and *logos* within the text. These the rhetor is said to “invent.” See Aristotle, *On Rhetoric*, I. 2. 2-5, 37-39; I. 15. 1-

nothing on his own, Jesus' authority (one of the rhetorical constraints which can be used to speak to the urgency of the situation) is highlighted. In other words, Jesus is invoking his authority, based on his unity with the Father, to move his disciples from distress to an acceptance of God's will; from confusion to understanding; from wavering to firmness of faith.

The reciprocal relationship found in the question of v. 10 now becomes an imperative in v. 11. A sense of urgency is heard as he implores his disciples to believe the identification he claims for himself. His words and testimony should be sufficient for men to recognize him and what he brings. But in the face of confusion and doubt, his works will be the ultimate evidence (cf. 7:31; 11:45-47). It is apparent that Jesus deals with these disciples as believers and implores them to keep on believing. The grounds of such faith are his words and works: since the Father and Son are "in" one another, the words and works are those of both. The evangelist intends his readers to see that here, too, are the grounds for their faith and assurance.

In vv. 10-11 we see the rhetorical practice of repetition as an intentional literary device. Both the Father/Son reciprocity and the entreaty to believe are enfolded in one another and are reiterated in such a fashion that there is a movement to a climax: first a statement (v. 9), then a question (v. 10), and finally an exhortation (v. 11). Such fine rhetorical style (which effectively utilizes the three *pisteis*, enthymemes, rhetorical questions, amplification, repetition, and so forth) is not a stranger to John's Gospel. Rhetoricians who were contemporary with the fourth evangelist emphasized the notion of rhetorical grandeur and noting this emphasis, Clifton Black states: "Jesus' leave-taking in John 14-17, manifestly devoted to transcendent concerns for his disciples, evinces such rhetorical sublimity to an equally explicit and impressively precise degree."⁵⁷ The Gospel of John speaks in refined rhetorical style to persuade, even as the author bears witness near the end of his Gospel: ταῦτα δὲ γέγραπται ἵνα πιστεύ[σ]ητε (20:31). The intent of the author is to bring about the obedience of faith (3:36) among his readers through the message about Jesus Christ.

Jesus is going to the Father (13:33); the disciples will one day be there with him (14:3); they know the place and the way there (14:4); and they have seen the Father (14:7).

32, 108-118.

⁵⁷ C. Black, *The Words That You Gave to Me*, 223.

But what is to be their lot until that time when they join Jesus in the Father's house? With the solemn declaration of verity and authority, ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν (v. 12), Jesus speaks the first of several reassuring promises to his disciples. These promises are future and are made for the time following his departure.

The works of Jesus are the works of the Father in him (v. 10). Now Jesus tells them that their future works will be his works in them and thus the disciples will also be engaged in the Father's works. But not only will they do the same works as Jesus, they will do even greater ones. Here Jesus gives a great encouragement to these men who are distressed over his announced departure: they will not be left powerless, they will be engaged in a powerful mission.

In what sense will these works be "greater"? They are variously described as eschatological works,⁵⁸ post-departure works,⁵⁹ works that are a present continuation of what is past,⁶⁰ or the works arising from the community when the new word of Christ (13:34) is heard and understood and the community no longer looks backward, but engages the word of Christ in the present.⁶¹ Dietzfelbinger⁶² sees v. 12 as a reference to the promise in 5:19-23. However, it is specifically the relationship between the Father and the Son that is spoken of there, not that of the disciples to the Son. Also, the disciples will be remembering what is past when the Paraclete reminds them of all that Jesus has said to them (v. 26).

The meaning of "greater" works is found in the explanatory phrase ὅτι ἐγὼ πρὸς τὸν πατέρα πορεύομαι. These are indeed the works done by the disciples following Jesus' departure. They are not greater in the sense of geographic area (although some disciples may have covered a much larger area than Jesus in their subsequent mission work), nor because they were more spectacular or could have greater success attributed to them. They were greater in view of the completed work of Jesus and the changed situation of the disciples. With Jesus' work completed (τετέλεσται, 19:30), the carrying of the Gospel into all the world would begin. Non-believers would come to believe in Jesus as

⁵⁸ R. Brown, *Gospel*, 633.

⁵⁹ R. Schnackenburg, *Gospel*, 72. R. Lenski, *Interpretation*, 989.

⁶⁰ R. Bultmann, *Gospel*, 610.

⁶¹ C. Dietzfelbinger, *Die grösseren Werke*, 46-7.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 27-47.

the Christ, the Son of God, and would have life in his name (1:5; 10:10; 20:31).

Raymond Brown points to a number of the post-resurrection activities of the disciples as examples of these “greater” works: they will share in judgment (16:8-11; 20:21-23); and they will bring others a share in Jesus’ life (15:16).⁶³

On the night of the Farewell Discourse, Jesus’ work is not yet completed, he is not yet glorified. However, once his “hour” and glorification have come, the work of the disciples would be carried out in a time of fulfillment. These works will be completed on the basis of Jesus’ completed redemptive work and will take place in “a different, more advanced phase of God’s economy of salvation.”⁶⁴

Köstenberger points to a “rare terminological overlap”⁶⁵ between the works of Jesus and those of his disciples in 14:12. Usually, the term is used in the Fourth Gospel by Jesus regarding his own and the Father’s activity. But here his disciples share in it: “the exalted Jesus will continue to do his works through the disciples.”⁶⁶ A further reference to these “greater” works may be the “fruit” borne by the disciples which cannot be produced apart from him (15:5).

The evangelist thus pictures Jesus moving effectively to quiet the growing fears of his disciples by placing his departure within the context of a future for them that is bright. Not only are they reminded of his own works and told that they themselves will be doing the same, they are promised a post-departure future in which they will be doing *μείζονα τούτων*.

In v. 12 we find a statement of what the disciples will do that actually puts Jesus’ departure in a positive light. In vv. 13-14 Jesus adds another promise and here the promise is what he will do. Again, we see the rhetorical use of repetition in these verses, but not just simple repetition, and certainly not a superfluous addition or the result of poor editorial work. Here we see amplification through repetition so that in v. 14 the stress is no longer on what they ask for, but on the person who answers. Amplification has brought the focus back to the *ethos* of Jesus: he is of such a stature that even though he will depart, he will hear their prayers and answer them. He is a worthy object of faith (v. 12) and even though

⁶³ R. Brown, *Gospel*, 633. He also includes non-Johannine examples: they will take away life (Acts 5:1-11) and they will grant life and healing (Acts 3:6; 9:34, 40).

⁶⁴ A. Köstenberger, *The Missions of Jesus and the Disciples*, 175.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 72.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 74.

he is going away, they will not be bereft of his presence.

This promise to answer their prayers asked in his name occurs four times in three chapters of the Farewell Discourse (14:12-14; 15:5-8; 15:16-18; 16:22-27). Here in chapter 14 it further explains and applies the Father's and Son's union: both answer prayer (Jesus in ch. 14; the Father in ch. 15); the request is made in Jesus' name; and the purpose behind it is that the Father may be glorified in the Son (since it is the Father who does his works in him, v. 10).

This promise, however, also further describes the relationship between the disciples and the Father and the Son. Along with the other promises concerning prayer, this promise is issued as a phase in the final stage of the disciples' training. These promises "anticipate later places and times after Jesus has gone to his Father and the disciples have begun their work."⁶⁷ Indeed, they point beyond the present time of the Last Supper to the continuing intimate relationship between the disciples and Jesus. Note also that this continued relationship is maintained through prayer, not through visions or other immediate revelation. Perhaps this is yet another aspect of a polemic in the Fourth Gospel against influences of mysticism that looked for such revelation and interaction with God elsewhere.

The promise, "whatever you ask . . .", was made by one who was at home in both the heavenly abode and in the world with his disciples. While he is now departing out of this world to his Father (13:1), his disciples will be left in the world, but this promise will continue to bind them to him.⁶⁸ It will provide the help they need while they are fulfilling their vocation as his messengers, for they are dependent on the help they receive from the Father and the Son (and the Paraclete, as we shall see).⁶⁹ While their asking is an action that expresses their love for God, the fulfilling of their requests is an action that expressed God's love for them. The condition of asking ἐν τῷ ὀνόματί μου is a natural restriction and/or authorization, for a disciple will not ask for something which dishonors or is inconsistent with Jesus' name. Indeed, these requests are not trifling things, but such that when they are granted, the Father is glorified in the Son.

The καὶ at the beginning of v. 13 (and the thought of the verse) connect it to the previous promise in v. 12 concerning the works of the disciples. The sent one (Jesus,

⁶⁷ P. Minear, *John: The Martyr's Gospel*, 81.

⁶⁸ P. Minear, *To Ask and To Receive*, 227.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 232.

13:20) becomes the sender and the mission of his sent ones (the disciples) will be to do the same and even greater works than Jesus did as they depend on the glorified Lord who answers their prayers.

What comfort and encouragement, then, are found in Jesus' words for these disciples. While he will depart from them, he is still the one to whom they address their prayers and he is the one who will answer them. Moreover, God the Father is glorified in their asking and receiving from Jesus. With the repeated promise ἐγὼ ποιήσω at the end of v. 14, emphasis is given to the assurance that is theirs--a promise that will strengthen them for the works they will do.

Köstenberger sees an encouragement for the Christian Church down through the ages in these words for "as the Church carries out its mission, it can be assured that all of the resources needed for its outreach will be provided for."⁷⁰ Thus, through the first level of the text (the discourse of Jesus and his disciples), the author reaches out to his readers to reassure and give hope in the face of challenges both from within (betrayal, lack of love, and division of the community) and from without (hostility of the world to followers of Jesus).

14:15-17

The condition of expectancy, Ἐὰν ἀγαπᾷτέ με, urges these disciples to continue with what they are doing (i.e. continue to love him). The evidence is in the keeping of his precepts. This love of Jesus is linked to his λόγος (cf. 1:1,17 and 14:23-24) and is a reference to the disciples' constancy of faith as they face all the many challenges to their Christian existence. Raymond Brown observes that this love of Jesus fits well with the "covenant atmosphere" of the Last Discourse and the Last Supper and may reflect the demand of the covenant God of Sinai to be loved by his people (Deut. 6:5).⁷¹ It would appear, however, that if Jesus were making a demand of his disciples here, there would be a more direct imperative to that effect. Instead, this condition of expectancy is found in the midst of promises to the disciples.

To the former promises of dwelling with the Father and Jesus, doing greater works, and having answers to their prayers, is now added this promise: the gift of the Paraclete.

⁷⁰ A. Köstenberger, *The Missions of Jesus and the Disciples*, 211.

⁷¹ R. Brown, *Gospel*, 643.

For the sake of his disciples, Jesus asks, the Father gives, and another Paraclete comes. This is the first of five Paraclete passages in the Farewell Discourse (two of which occur in chapter 14).⁷² With the description of the Spirit being “another” Paraclete, it appears that Jesus himself is assumed as the other. Both these Paracletes are gifts, δώσει, from the Father (cf. 3:16 and 14:16). But while Jesus’ stay with the disciples was limited, this Paraclete’s (v. 16) is not. He will be with them forever and is a Paraclete precisely because he carries on the work of Jesus.

Discussion of the identity of this Paraclete in scholarly circles has yielded a rather wide range of possibilities. Since he will figure so prominently in the future of the disciples and will play such a crucial role in their quickly-approaching ministry, it is necessary to identify him with as much textual accuracy as possible. Many see the Paraclete sayings as intrusive interpolations from a variety of sources. Otto Betz⁷³, who relies heavily on Qumran documents, focuses on the intercessory work of angels and identifies the Johannine Paraclete with the angel, Michael. Thus, Jesus, the first Paraclete, is now the Advocate in heaven while God’s angel, Michael, works on earth. George Johnston, however, criticizes this position and quotes Kümmel: “The alleged influence of Qumran upon the Evangelist in Ephesus is completely a fabrication.”⁷⁴ Johnston himself sees the basic sense of ‘spirit’ not as person, but as divine power.⁷⁵ The Spirit-Paraclete is then not to be thought of as a “third hypostasis” called ‘the paraclete’, but rather is the spirit at work in apostolic preaching.⁷⁶

Hermann Sasse identified the promised Paraclete as the evangelist by way of whom the Paraclete does his promised work.⁷⁷ Sasse considered chapters 15-17 (which he identified as an earlier tradition) to be a later interpolation in the text and chapter 14 to be an earlier version. Along with Spitta,⁷⁸ Sasse regards the “Spirit of truth” to be a later addition making the identification of the Spirit and the Paraclete untenable. It is then

⁷² The others: 14:26; 15:26-27; 16:7-11; 13-15.

⁷³ O. Betz, *Der Paraklet*, 154-56.

⁷⁴ Quoted in G. Johnston, *The Spirit-Paraclete*, 106. See pp. 102-118 for the full critique of Betz’ identification of the Paraclete.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 119.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 123.

⁷⁷ N. Nagel, *Hermann Sasse Identifies the Paraclete*, 4.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 15.

concluded that the term must be understood as referring to some human person. The Paraclete can then be named as the great, unknown Christ-prophet from whom the Johannine Gospel originates.⁷⁹

Raymond Brown, while recognizing the danger in going too far with identifying Jesus and the Paraclete,⁸⁰ states that “the Paraclete is the presence of Jesus when Jesus is absent.”⁸¹ Brown goes into some detail showing the Johannine correspondences between Jesus and the Paraclete that has lead him to this conclusion.⁸²

James Dunn approvingly cites Brown’s characterization of the Paraclete in his works.⁸³ He states that the Paraclete promise in 14:16 may refer to a later bestowal following Jesus’ final return to the Father and would then be “the unrecorded Pentecost.”⁸⁴ The coming of this other Paraclete would fulfill Jesus’ promise to return and dwell in his disciples. The unity between Jesus and this other Paraclete is not just a unity in mission, says Dunn, but also a unity in personality: “The unity of Christ and Spirit in personality and mission is neatly expressed by identifying the Spirit as the ‘other Paraclete’ . . . so that the Paraclete continues the presence and the work of the Son once the Son has departed (John 14:16-28).”⁸⁵ But not only does the Spirit continue the work of Jesus, “we can put it more strongly, he continues the *presence* of Jesus.”⁸⁶

Also to be noted is Bili Domeris’ view that in John’s Gospel, the Paraclete is an ideological construct which gave legitimation to the content of the Gospel and specially to the position of the Evangelist within that community.⁸⁷ For Domeris, the social context of the community gave rise to the concept of the Paraclete and was then used by the

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 16.

⁸⁰ R. Brown, *The Paraclete*, 128. Brown identifies E.F. Scott and Ian Simpson as examples of this and says, “This theory does too much violence to the Johannine presentation; the patent thrust of the Paraclete passages is that the Paraclete and the risen Jesus have distinct roles in that Jesus will be above with the Father while the Paraclete continues the work on earth.”

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² *Ibid.*, 126-28.

⁸³ See J. Dunn, *Jesus and the Spirit*, 351; and, *The Christ and the Spirit*, 339.

⁸⁴ J. Dunn, *Baptism In the Holy Spirit*, 177.

⁸⁵ J. Dunn, *The Christ and the Spirit*, 17.

⁸⁶ J. Dunn, *Jesus and the Spirit*, 350.

⁸⁷ B. Domeris, *The Paraclete*, 18.

Evangelist to solidify his own position as leader and teacher among them.

What is the aim of the rhetorical strategy in the Paraclete passages in John? Both the evangelist and the readers are meant to benefit from them and, in the case of the evangelist, the light in which he is seen as a result of these passages is intended as a persuasive appeal to his readers. Thus, an ultimate concern for the reader's welfare lies behind these sayings in John.

In the first place, the evangelist's *ethos* in the eyes of his readers is heightened by these references. The Paraclete will take up residence with the believing community, continue the work of Jesus, will be only for the disciples (not for the world), and will oppose their enemies. Do they perhaps see the evangelist (as proposed by H. Sasse) as the promised Paraclete who carries on Jesus' work in their midst? He is one who knows about these things, bears witness to them of Jesus' truth, and speaks authoritatively. At the very least, they would see him as one through whom the Paraclete works to continue Jesus' mission and ministry among them. The evangelist's importance to them as being integral to the continuity of love and grace from the Father, through Jesus and the Paraclete, to them is then established.

Persuasive appeal is thus made to the readers to see the evangelist as a faithful, authoritative witness of Jesus to them and to see that, in spite of Jesus' departure, his ministry to them continues in this way. And while they may be facing stiff opposition as believers in Jesus, they are not left alone for the Paraclete is with them and their community can go forward confidently in the faith delivered to them by the evangelist, knowing that the mission and ministry of Jesus is active for them and among them.

Several comments also need to be made about positions taken on the Paraclete passages. First of all, the conclusion that later interpolations were intruded into the text is unwarranted. The Spirit-Paraclete sayings are part of the fabric of the narrative of chapters 13-17 and cannot be omitted without loss to the overall meaning. For if the Church is called upon to continue the work of Jesus, the Spirit-Paraclete sayings give the foundation for how this would be possible.⁸⁸ Indeed, Köstenberger maintains that "the sending of the Spirit is presented by the fourth evangelist as the key element in the disciples' mission."⁸⁹ Johnston provides convincing literary evidence that these sayings are

⁸⁸ G. Johnston, *The Spirit-Paraclete in the Gospel of John*, 67.

⁸⁹ A. Köstenberger, *The Missions of Jesus and the Disciples*, 192.

genuinely Johannine and not intrusive interpolations by another hand⁹⁰ and Schnackenburg also notes that these are not later insertions, but have irreplaceable functions within their own contexts.⁹¹

Also, what we find in the series of Paraclete sayings from chapter 14 to 16 is an example of rhetorical amplification. After 14:16-17, the subsequent sayings are built upon and are continuations of what is said there: he will be with them and in them. In other words, the five sayings about the Paraclete are not independent units that were subsequently introduced into the discourse. The second (14:26) presupposes the first (14:16); the third and fourth (15:26-27; 16:8-11) are extensions, or amplifications, of the first two; and the fifth (16:13-15) goes back to 14:26. Rhetorically, the text flows well as it is, the subsequently added details concerning the Paraclete amplify and expand our understanding of his work, and the loss of these sayings from the text would constitute an unwarranted intrusion upon its integrity.

One other aspect of the promised Paraclete must be discussed in view of the various identifications that are made of this figure. Jesus promises ἄλλον παράκλητον. According to R.C. Trench,⁹² ἄλλον is numerically distinct while being of the same character. On the other hand, ἕτερος adds the notion of qualitative difference. “Thus Christ promises to his disciples that He will send, not ἕτερον, but ἄλλον, παράκλητον (John xiv.16), ‘another’ Comforter therefore, similar to Himself.”⁹³ Galatians 1:6-7 is cited as a good example of the difference: a ἕτερον (different in quality) Gospel which is

⁹⁰ G. Johnston, *The Spirit-Paraclete in the Gospel of John*, 63-67.

⁹¹ R. Schnackenburg, *The Gospel*, 74. The question of whether the Paraclete figure originated from within or outside Judaism has also been an issue that according to Schnackenburg has had no satisfactory solutions (*The Gospel*, 147-48). He does, however, point to the work of U.B. Muller who took a literary approach to the question and provides a good explanation for the existence of the Paraclete sayings in the Johannine Farewell Discourse and the functions that are ascribed to him. To this can be added Raymond Brown’s observation that there is an Old Testament background for this figure (*Gospel*, 1137-39). There appears to be, then, no compelling need to assume an origin of these sayings outside of Judaism. See also G. Johnston, *The Spirit-Paraclete*, 92. After reviewing Bultmann’s claim that the Paraclete sayings are based on Mandaean Gnostic concepts, Johnston quotes R. Brown (“The Paraclete”, *NTS* xiii (2) 1967, 119ff.) and then concludes, “recourse to Mandaean sources is simply useless.”

⁹² R.C. Trench, *Synonyms*, 357.

⁹³ *Ibid.*

not ἄλλο (a distinct, yet equivalent) Gospel.

This choice of words by the author indicates that the Paraclete is uniquely distinct from Jesus and not to be thought of simply as Jesus in a different form. It also elevates this figure to prominence with regard to his distinctness, yet equivalence, to Jesus. He comes at Jesus' request as ἄλλον παράκλητον and continues the revelation of salvation to them. The Paraclete sayings taken together are an expression of faith in Jesus as the one who "came once and for all as the eschatological revealer and bringer of salvation" and in the Holy Spirit "who continues the work of Jesus Christ and at the same time preserves and discloses it ever again."⁹⁴ The Paraclete, then, is a heavenly representative of Jesus whose stature goes far beyond that of a human leader in the community.

Also, Jesus' description of this Paraclete being ἄλλον (implying that he himself was the first one) without a prior description of himself as such a one, may well indicate that the Christian community already had an understanding of Jesus as a Paraclete. Here, then, was a truly comforting and encouraging promise: Jesus would beseech the Father, the Father would give the other Paraclete, and thus the Father and the Son would provide for them after Jesus' departure in a way that was equivalent to what Jesus had provided while with them.

Further comfort is given in the fact that this Spirit of truth will be in opposition to the disciples' enemies in the world, but will be known by the disciples and they will be indwelt by him. Note the present (γινώσκετε) and the future (ἔσται) reality to the disciple's experience of the Spirit. While they know him now, there will be a future imparting of the Spirit following Jesus' departure. They will not be uncared for or left alone as they continue on as Christ's community in an unfriendly, unsympathetic, even hostile, world.

The characterization of the Paraclete as the Spirit of truth (ἀλήθεια) further draws the connection between the Spirit and Jesus who is the truth (v. 6). Combining this with the saying at 16:13-15 demonstrates the revelatory work of the Spirit in them: he continues the work of Jesus within the Christian community.

This Spirit is intended for the disciples only, not for the world, and identifies the disciples as the Lord's own chosen ones. Here is a rhetorical constraint which speaks powerfully to the urgency of the situation: they are being reminded of their status with

⁹⁴ R. Schnackenburg, *Gospel*, 149-50.

Jesus and the Father and are encouraged by this promise of one who will be with them and in them as an enduring help and inner strength. James Dunn notes that the word “knowing” (among others like life, loving, believing) reflects the vitality of religious experience enjoyed by the Christian community. It denotes “a living religious experience which the Johannine community could attribute only to the Spirit.”⁹⁵ Indeed, the Spirit’s presence in the Church, coming with the authority of Christ, will be the basis for a profound communion grounded in divine love (13:34-35; 14:21, 23).

Rhetorically, vv. 15-17 are a strong appeal to the disciples (then and now) to look beyond the narrow focus of distress over Jesus’ leaving and see what the Father and Son will be doing for them. Jesus’ will beseech the Father on the disciples’ behalf; the Father will give another Paraclete to the disciples who will be with them forever; this Paraclete will take up residence with them and, characterized by Jesus’ truth, will continue to have fellowship with them as those separated out from the world as the Lord’s own.

14:18-21

Jesus’ appeal to his disciples not to lose heart (v. 1) continues as he meets head-on what had to be the over-riding concern these men had in view of his announced departure: their being left alone, without their teacher and Lord (13:13), as they face uncertainty and the hostility of the world. His use of the term ὀρφανούς is graphic: it evokes an immediate mental picture. Both Bultmann⁹⁶ and Brown⁹⁷ note that this figure was used of the disciples of rabbis and of Socrates at their death.

The gravity of this word picture is both impressive and expressive, being aimed at the *pathos* of the disciples. This is the language of family (or lack thereof) and evokes powerful images and emotional issues. “Having part” with Jesus (13:8, 10) has given these men participation in a new family: the family characterized by faith in Christ.⁹⁸ This will be their family when persecution threatens, even from their own biological family. It was true of Jesus (John 7:1-5) and of those who confessed him (9:22-23, 34). And Jesus’ answer (in chapter 9) to the man who was separated from his family and the synagogue

⁹⁵ J. Dunn, *Jesus and the Spirit*, 350.

⁹⁶ R. Bultmann, *Gospel*, 618.

⁹⁷ R. Brown, *Gospel*, 640.

⁹⁸ S.C. Barton, *Living As Families*, 138.

was faith in the Son of Man (v. 35). Indeed, we find in Mark 13:9-13 the same context of hatred and violence from the synagogue as is predicted in John 16:2-3. And in that context we find reference to family division and rancor. The disciples were not unaware of what reactions might confront them and being separated from Jesus was the last thing they wanted to have happen.

Jesus' statement in v. 18 is designed to meet this exigence. The word ὀρφανούς itself presupposes the death of Jesus (his imminent death is surely in mind here), but they will be orphaned only briefly. He will not leave them in that condition. Their separation from him will only be a momentary interruption for he declares, ἔρχομαι πρὸς ὑμᾶς.

But what does he refer to: the coming of the Paraclete, his resurrection appearances, the Last Day, or something else? The parousia can be ruled out since the reference in v. 19 to the world not seeing him does not fit that event. Some, like Raymond Brown,⁹⁹ identify this "coming" as that of the Paraclete. Brown maintains that after his departure, Jesus' presence is accomplished in and through the Paraclete, that it is one and the same presence. Others reject this and point to the immediate future, Jesus' resurrection. As Schnackenburg observes, the promise of the Paraclete and the statement about Jesus' coming "each has its own place in the literary structure of the text."¹⁰⁰ Also, Jesus' statements that are meant to comfort his disciples with his being in them and with them following his departure (14:20, 23) are in the same context as the statements about the Spirit (v. 17) and the Father (v. 23) being with them. It would appear, then, that there are three whose presence is promised the disciples: the Paraclete, the Father, and the Son. And the Son's presence is promised soon after his departure.

But do the resurrection appearances fit the clear promise of Jesus that he would come back to them and that this would be an enduring presence? From the standpoint of physical sight, no, for these appearances were temporary themselves and the disciples were then orphans again, in the sense that they no longer saw Jesus among them. While the return of Jesus could certainly include these resurrection appearances, something else explains it. The indication, as noted above, is that the disciples will have both the Spirit and Jesus when Jesus returns. This is a spiritual presence. The "seeing" of the world is physical and they will not be able to see Jesus (v. 19).¹⁰¹ But the disciples will, for theirs

⁹⁹ R. Brown, *Gospel*, 644-45.

¹⁰⁰ R. Schnackenburg, *Gospel*, 77.

¹⁰¹ This is perhaps a parallel to Acts 10:40-41. Jesus did not appear to all, but only to the

is a spiritual seeing, that of faith. “A purely spiritual relationship is to supersede what was also a physical one.”¹⁰²

According to the Gospel, it was after the resurrection that the disciples began to put the pieces together and understand much of what Jesus had revealed to them (2:22; 12:16; 13:7). So, undoubtedly, with these verses, too, the readers would understand in light of the resurrection what “yet a little while” and “seeing” Jesus meant.¹⁰³

Still reaching out to them to conquer their distress, Jesus adds the promise of the life that is theirs in him. This is the resurrection life grounded upon the Easter experience. Jesus is the ζωή (v. 6). Thus, his disciples will share in that ζωή due to their union with him. The present tense, ζῶ, with regard to Jesus shows that even in the face of death, the life that he is and that he shares is not affected. And they themselves will continue in it (ζήσετε). All this is in the context of his coming in the flesh from the Father (1:18; 13:1, 3) and his hour of glorification, his departure to the Father (13:1, 32-33). Clearly, while his departure will occur, he places it in a light that gives abiding comfort, hope, and assurance. Jesus’ life is the basis and source of their faith and life. Their “seeing” (θεωρεῖτέ) is thus grounded in their shared possession of life with him.

In vv. 20-21 Jesus shows his disciples that far from being orphans, they will enjoy an intimate union with both the Father and the Son (union with the Spirit of truth was described in v. 17). Jesus assures them that the present uncertainty of their faith (vv. 8-11) will give way to a full knowing in faith. Indeed, the condition on which the mutual indwelling of v. 20 depends is given in v. 21: their love of Jesus and their keeping of his precepts. God’s love is encountered in their love of Jesus so that they now have the assurance of being the object of the Father’s and the Son’s love.

Interestingly, Jesus particularizes this picture for them as he shifts from second person plural (ὁμοῖν) to third person singular (ὁ ἔχων . . . ἐκεῖνός ἐστιν). This personalizes the truth for them as individuals. Jesus has spoken of the antecedent love of

disciples, his witnesses. Also, ἐμφανίσω, the verbal form of ἐμφανῆς (Acts 10:40), appears in John 14:21.

¹⁰² J. Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, 175.

¹⁰³ See C. Hoegen-Rohls, *Der nachösterliche*, 308-12. After establishing the post-Easter standpoint of the Fourth Gospel, Hoegen-Rohls concludes that this perspective plays the decisive role in the Fourth Gospel’s understanding of Jesus as the Son of God.

God that draws men to himself (3:16) and they know they are included. They have experienced the resultant love that a disciple has for Jesus (14:15) for they have come to believe in the love of God and the person and work of the one whom he has sent (13:20). And now they are assured by Jesus of the subsequent love of the Father and the Son for them and all those who so receive him.

Persuasion fills the discourse. Jesus tells these men matter-of-factly: they will not be orphaned; he will come to them; they will “see” him; they will share in his life; they will understand the Father-Son-believer relationship; they will be loved by the Father and the Son; and Jesus will manifest himself to them (probably the basis for their “seeing” in v. 19). The evangelist, speaking through the discourse of Jesus with his disciples, appeals effectively to the *pathos* of his readers in giving them reason after reason (*logos*) for seeing Jesus’ departure in the larger context of God’s economy of salvation. There is much more to “see” than just his departure and they are assured that they will “see” it.

14:22-24

While his disciples will “see” it, the world will not and this surprises Judas. The author is careful to designate this man οὐχ ὁ Ἰσκαριώτης for he is not the betrayer who has already made his departure. Note how even the mention of Ἰσκαριώτης, however, brings to mind the traitor and his treacherous act. Never are we far from the reality of Jesus’ death.

As Thomas’ question (v. 5) helped develop the *exordium* topic of Jesus’ departure, and Philip’s question (v. 8) helped develop the topic of Jesus’ relation to the Father, so Judas’ question (v. 22) now helps develop the *exordium* topic of Jesus’ relation to the world. He notes the marked contrast described by Jesus between the disciples and the world. Perhaps he, like Philip, is looking for a theophany that will get the world’s attention (which in turn would point to a certain Messianic expectation that underlies the disciples’ understanding). But if Jesus is not going to manifest himself to the world, how can this be harmonized with the teaching that Jesus is the Savior of the world (1:29; 3:16; 12:32) who has other sheep not of this fold (10:16) and that his mission is to all men (12:47 “anyone”)? The *pathos* is strong with confusion, surprise, and misunderstanding. This question of Judas’ will now give Jesus the opportunity to speak of the Father’s love and the Father’s and Son’s coming to abide with them.

Jesus' answer is essentially indirect, but goes to the heart of the matter. The manifesting (and thus the "seeing") is to be understood from the perspective of reception: those who cherish Jesus' word show that they love him and by faith see him for what and who he is. Those who do not remain "in the world." The believer thus has the assurance of the Father's love and the Father's and Son's presence. Jesus' statement in v. 2 about *μοναὶ πολλαὶ* is now fulfilled, but with a paradoxical change of emphasis: Jesus and the Father will make their dwelling with the disciple.¹⁰⁴ In 3:16 the giving of the Son was an act of the Father's love for the world. Here the indwelling of the Father and the Son after the resurrection is a special act of love for the Christian--he becomes their dwelling place. Thus, the disciples are now "where Jesus is", in the sphere of God's love. But this is not ultimate fulfillment. There will be a final revelation and sight of glory in the heavenly world.

The in-the-world result of loving Jesus by keeping his word is the spiritual indwelling of the Father and the Son (as well as the Spirit, v. 17) and being the objects of their love. In this way, the anxiety voiced by Thomas, Philip, and now Judas is answered.

With v. 24, Jesus finishes presenting his disciples with the stark reality of only two possibilities: either you love him and thus see him by faith, or you do not. Without love there is no keeping of Jesus' words and these are the words of the Father. The unbeliever thus rejects both the Father and the Son for himself. He is cut off from the way, the truth, and the life (v. 6) and faces judgment for his rejecting of Jesus' word (12:48). Or to put it another way: to reject the word is to reject Jesus' mission and the Father who sent him. The sent one is, after all, responsible to his sender to do his will, to speak his words, to do his works and also to be accountable to him. As this is true of Jesus with regard to the Father who sent him, so it is with regard to the disciples and Jesus who sends them. He is preparing them for his departure and its aftermath, and is also preparing them for their quickly approaching ministry to the Christian community and to the world.

Jesus thus meets Judas' question effectively, not only further developing the issue of the world's relationship to himself with regard to receptivity, but once again lifting these disciples up spiritually by reassuring them of what is true for those who love him as they do. The repetition of the love and abiding presence motifs serves to emphasize these benefits for the disciples so that their attention might be directed to the "bigger picture"

¹⁰⁴ R. Schnackenburg, *Gospel*, 81.

surrounding Jesus' departure. And the polysyndeton (multiple conjunctions) in v. 23 builds effectively to a climax with the indwelling of the Father and the Son. The persuasive power of this rhetorical appeal is pronounced.

14:25-28

With the next words of Jesus, the disciples are reminded that his time with them is limited and will be coming to an end. The words themselves carry the tone of someone who is about to leave and look back on his time spent with them and also to the words he has spoken to them. But again, Jesus gives reason why this is no cause for despair: the promised Paraclete enters the picture. Jesus spoke to them for only a limited time and did so visibly in their presence. Hereafter, his revelation to them will come in a different manner: the Holy Spirit.

To give the Spirit (δώσει) is to send him (πέμψει). He is the one who will carry the work of Jesus forward (διδάξει). And this teaching of his is not his own, for he is sent in Jesus' name and the substance of his teaching is Jesus' teaching: πάντα ἃ εἶπον ὑμῖν [ἐγώ]. If Jesus could say that his word is not his own (v. 24), then so too it is not difficult to see that the teaching of the Paraclete is not his own.¹⁰⁵ He simply takes to a "deeper level"¹⁰⁶ the things that Jesus himself taught. This reiterated promise of the Paraclete meets the anxiety of the disciples with assurance. They will be aided in their witness to Jesus by τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον.

There are some¹⁰⁷ who consider τὸ ἅγιον to be a scribal error which attempts to make the Johannine text conform to other New Testament witnesses and believe that the *Sinaitic Syriac* witness, which omits it, is the correct one. Thomas Slater, however, convincingly argues on the basis of textual criticism, grammatical, and structural grounds that τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον is the correct reading.¹⁰⁸ Brown agrees: "the identification of the Paraclete as the Holy Spirit in xiv 26 is not an editorial mistake."¹⁰⁹ Brown, however,

¹⁰⁵ R. Brown, *Gospel*, 653.

¹⁰⁶ R. Schnackenburg, *Gospel*, 83.

¹⁰⁷ See G. Johnston, *The Spirit-Paraclete*, 31-32. Johnston believes that τὸ ἅγιον is an insertion due to later orthodox theology. He says: "The Gospel material is more readily aligned with ideas of supernatural powers than with the Christian doctrine of the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity."

¹⁰⁸ T. Slater, *The Paraclete*, 103.

believes the Spirit's work to be purely didactic.¹¹⁰ This Slater rejects, pointing out that it goes beyond merely teaching and is also "a means of sustaining the community in Jesus' absence."¹¹¹ Indeed, Köstenberger maintains that the primary function of the Spirit is to ensure the continuity of Jesus' work after his departure and that the Spirit would also "legitimize Jesus' followers as representatives of the Messiah."¹¹²

Assuming τὸ ἅγιον is the correct reading, the evangelist's readers would be able to recall such Scriptures as Psalm 51:11 and Isaiah 63:10 and know that ἄλλον παράκλητον, the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of truth, would be with them and in them forever and would continue teaching Jesus' teachings. Thus, he will be a teacher (14:26), a preacher who bears witness to Jesus (16:14; 15:26), a prophet declaring things to come (16:13), and an advocate, defending the suffering disciples and overcoming the opposition as a prosecutor (16:8-11). James Dunn notes that as a crucial link between Jesus and the disciples, the Spirit's function is that of "reinterpreting the old to give it contemporary significance and that of revealing the new in a way consistent with the old."¹¹³ Jesus is truly giving them reason to see his departure in a positive light.

Christina Hoegen-Rohls observes that the connection between christology and pneumatology did exert a profound influence on ecclesiology in the post-Easter (*nachösterliche*) community of disciples. The naming of the Spirit as "Paraclete" for the disciples "binds the presence of the Spirit to the believers in the post-Easter period"¹¹⁴ where their prayers in Jesus' name will be answered and they will do the works of Jesus and even greater works (14:12). According to the Father's will, then, the Spirit will mediate both Jesus' pre-Easter word (*Jesu vorösterlichem Wort*) and the post-Easter revelation (*die nachösterliche Offenbarung*) to the post-Easter Christian community.¹¹⁵

Before bringing closure to this fourth topic with vv. 29-31, the words of the Johannine Jesus in vv. 27-28 summarize what has thus far been established as the basis for

¹⁰⁹ R. Brown, *Gospel*, 1140.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 1135-36, 1141.

¹¹¹ T. Slater, *The Paraclete*, 104.

¹¹² A. Köstenberger, *The Missions of Jesus and the Disciples*, 174.

¹¹³ J. Dunn, *The Christ and the Spirit*, 18.

¹¹⁴ C. Hoegen-Rohls, *Der nachösterliche Johannes*, 311.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 309.

his disciples' (then and now) assurance and understanding. "Peace" is the essence of it.

Εἰρήνη, peace, occurs five times in the Gospel of John: twice in the Farewell Discourse (14:27; 16:33) and three times in post-resurrection appearances (20:19, 21, 26). In the Farewell Discourse, this peace is Jesus' answer to the fear, trouble, and tribulation which the disciples will experience on account of the world. Jesus describes it, not as peace in the generic sense, but as εἰρήνην τὴν ἐμὴν (14:27), the peace which he himself establishes. It is found in him (ἐν ἐμοὶ εἰρήνην ἔχητε, 16:33), is mediated by his word (ταῦτα λελάληκα ὑμῖν, 16:33), and is his gift to them (δίδωμι ὑμῖν, 14:27). And this is all spoken of within the context of the "hour" which had now come for his departure and glorification (13:1, 31-32).

Following this glorification, Jesus appears to the disciples and speaks peace to them (20:19) and then immediately shows them the marks which bear witness to his departure and glorification (20:20). Thereupon he speaks peace to them a second time and gives them the commissioning of which he had spoken in the Farewell Discourse (13:15, 16, 20). In 20:26 we find the same connection between the peace that is spoken and the wounds that bear witness to his death on the cross, the latter giving rise to the former.

Jesus' glorification by crucifixion is thus the grounds for the disciples' peace, which in turn is the grounds for the undertaking of their mission. While Jesus speaks of this peace in the Farewell Discourse, it appears as though it is actually conferred in the post-resurrection appearances. In 20:22, after having peace declared to them (20:19), the wounds that gave rise to this peace presented to them (20:20), and the declaration of Jesus' sending of them (20:21), they receive the Holy Spirit who had been promised earlier (14:16-17, 26). Here the authority to forgive or retain sins (20:23) is given to the disciples, an authority based upon Jesus' person and work (1:29; 3:16; 8:24). These disciples, then, can venture forth into a hostile world to carry out their mission because of the peace that is theirs in Jesus, a peace that was established at his glorification. And the mission for which he commissions them will entail doing for others what Jesus did for them (13:15-16, 20) with the message of forgiveness in Christ at the center.

With the warnings in the Farewell Discourse about conflict arising from within (15:12-17) and from without (15:18-16:4a), it is clear that the peace referred to is not physical, worldly peace with an absence of warfare or the presence of prosperity. It is, rather, an eschatological reality which is enjoyed even during this life for it is the ongoing

enjoyment of knowing what Christ has accomplished and what is true of their relationship to the Father and the Son. This Jesus leaves and gives as a lasting legacy to his disciples. It incorporates all the other facets of the gift that Jesus has brought from the Father to humanity for it describes the status they enjoy as believers: outward appearances notwithstanding, they are at peace with God. Brown points out that the subject of peace is appropriate to a farewell address and “belongs to the covenant mentality we have seen exhibited at the Last Supper.”¹¹⁶ The one departing leaves behind a parting gift, one which will benefit his disciples.

Rhetorical stasis is seen in the source and quality of this peace. Jesus and the world are contrasted as sources and the quality of this peace is heard in the phrase οὐ καθὼς ὁ κόσμος δίδωσιν. What they possess in Jesus differs profoundly from what the world gives and transcends the world. Its transcendence was seen in previous verses in what they “see” and “know”; what their relationship is to Father, Son, and Spirit; the quality of works they will be engaged in; what they are assured of concerning answers to their prayers and future aid; and their future residence with God.

Flowing smoothly from this appeal to *pathos* with the declaration of peace is the repetition of the counsel from v. 1, μὴ ταρασσέσθω ὑμῶν ἡ καρδία, with the addition of μηδὲ δειλιάτω. These disciples are beneficiaries of a gift that drives away distress and fear. The negative imperative draws their attention to the necessity of focusing on the reasons why distress and fear should not upset them. In view of all that Jesus has assured them of, “Let not . . .” and they are brought right back to v. 1 and his opening exhortation.

Not only ought they not be distressed and fearful, says Jesus, his departure ought to bring them joy. Assuming that their love and faith comprehend what he has done and is doing, that would be the case. The contrary-to-fact condition, however, indicates that while they love him in a personal sense, their faith lacks a full comprehension of his revelation to them. Their love is not fully informed or they would see his going and coming (repetitions of vv. 3, 18) in a different light. As it is, with the fear and confusion that fill their hearts, they fail to recognize that in departing, Jesus is fulfilling his life’s purpose.¹¹⁷ The truth that should be reason for joy is that they share in his eschatological work and existence.¹¹⁸ Here again, rhetorical stasis is at work in defining Jesus’

¹¹⁶ R. Brown, *Gospel*, 653.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 654.

departure as an integral part of the Father's plan and something which is good and beneficial for the disciples.

Verse 28 is an enthymeme, for Aristotle the strongest of the *pisteis*, or rhetorical proofs.¹¹⁹ The supporting reasons for the joy they should have are introduced by the ὅτι phrases: Jesus is going to the Father according to plan and ὁ πατήρ μείζων μου ἐστίν. The first ὅτι phrase has been adequately discussed. The second, which contains apparently subordinationist language,¹²⁰ is also important in understanding Jesus' claim. Barrett suggests that the Messianic Secret concept can be helpful in understanding this language. He maintains that the Fourth Gospel carries the theological development of the Messianic Secret a stage further: "majesty is veiled in humility"¹²¹ and those who are not his sheep will not hear his voice (10:26). Thus, in Barrett's view, John both clarifies and obscures the question of how this man (Jesus) can have the value of God.

Others see actual subordinationism not being relevant to the Gospel of John. Schnackenburg, for example, sees the Father being "greater" than the Son in the sense that everything that happens with regard to the Son's mission and glorification (which fulfills everything spoken to them by Jesus) originates and is taken to its end by the Father.¹²² Thus, he is "greater" in the sense that it is he who glorifies the Son (13:31; 17:1). This view appears to be consonant with Barrett's description of the "mystery veiled in humility." In his humble estate, prior to his return to the Father, Jesus is subject to limitations, is the "sent one" carrying out the will of the Father who sent him, is glorified by the Father and in this way can say, "The Father is greater than I."

Since Jesus' going has always been connected to the disciples' going (13:36; 14:3), their reaction to Jesus' announcement should be colored by what the fulness of this going means for them: a dwelling place prepared for them in the Father's house and genuine joy.

The evangelist's appeal to his readers through this first level of the text is rhetorically well-constructed. He repeatedly sets forth the grounds for a healthy and confident faith-response in his readers with regard to Jesus' departure by establishing the

¹¹⁸ R. Bultmann, *Gospel*, 629-30.

¹¹⁹ Aristotle, *On Rhetoric*, I. 1. 11, 33.

¹²⁰ C.K. Barrett, "The Father is Greater Than I", 17-36.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 32.

¹²² Schnackenburg, *Gospel*, 86.

person of Jesus as the source of comfort, life, truth, peace, and joy.

14:29-31

Chapter 14 has been an amplification of the fourth topic set forth in the *partitio*, Jesus' imminent departure (13:36-38). Closure is brought to this topic with an *inclusio* in v. 29, an enthymeme in v. 30 which restates the topic's main thrust, and a reiteration of his relationship to the Father in v. 31 which is then followed by complete closure to the topic.

With πιστεύσητε, we hear an echo of v. 1 and the antidote Jesus prescribes for troubled hearts (which was again repeated in v. 27). This is the *inclusio* which helps bring closure to the topic. All that Jesus has told them has been with an eye to the future, knowing that they do not grasp it at the moment. Having told them now will form the basis for their faith later. He is forewarning them and preparing them so that when "it" happens they can reflect on it and believe, rather than be dismayed and confused. The "it" that will happen refers at least to his departure and may include the more full scope of death, resurrection, and ascension (cf. 2:22; 8:28; 12:16; 13:7; 13:19; 16:4). This is clear farewell language as those who are "left behind" are given encouragement to remain faithful to what their founder has taught them and carry on with the mission they have been given.¹²³ Jesus tells them πρὶν γενέσθαι. Thus, the post-resurrection retrospective especially will give understanding and faith¹²⁴ when the promised Paraclete brings to their remembrance all that Jesus has said to them (14:16, 26). The fact that he tells them πρὶν γενέσθαι lays even more emphasis on his *ethos*, giving authority to his word and his stature as a prophet (1:21, 45; 4:19; 6:14; 7:40; 9:17).

Jesus tells the disciples clearly that the time for his departing from them is quickly approaching. An explanation in v. 30 spells it out: he will not speak much more with them for the ruler of this world is coming. This one is already known to the disciples (12:31) and with the present tense Jesus indicates that his machinations have already begun and are even now in motion (cf. 13:2, 27).

And yet, Jesus speaks with confidence for in spite of this "ruler's" approach, he has no power over Jesus (ἐν ἐμοὶ οὐκ ἔχει οὐδέν). Whether this be power to accuse,

¹²³ See E. Stauffer, *Die Theologie*, 321-24; H.J. Michel, *Die Abschiedsrede*, 17-38; Wm. Kurz, *Luke 22:14:38*, 251-68; R. Brown, *Gospel*, 597-601; and C. Talbert, *Reading John*, 201, for a discussion of farewell motifs.

¹²⁴ C. Hoegen-Rohls, *Der nachösterliche Johannes*, 308-312. Also, R. Brown, *Gospel*, 655.

power to control, or power to change the outcome, he cannot prevail. What the Father has ordained, the mission in which Jesus has been engaged, will be fulfilled in view of the truth expressed in 10:18 (cf. 19:11). Will the quickly approaching events appear disastrous? The disciples are being prepared by Jesus to respond to these things in the confidence of a fully informed faith.

To instill confidence in his readers, the evangelist sets before them the firm resolve of Jesus to fulfill his mission. He fulfills that commission from the Father by going to the cross for the world (1:29; 3:16; 8:12; 12:32). Even as the Christian's love for Jesus is evidenced by his carrying out of Jesus' precepts and word (14:15, 21, 23), Jesus' love for the Father is evidenced by his obedience and this is a powerful witness to the world. The love that brings Jesus to the cross has one intended goal: τῆς τοῦ κόσμου ζωῆς (6:51). This goal will not be thwarted, no matter how insurmountable and negative the appearances may be. On this the disciples are to be focused as the time approaches.

Jesus' final statement (Ἐγείρεσθε, ἄγωμεν ἐντεῦθεν) has generated much discussion among scholars and resulted in a number of questions about the integrity, authorship, structure, and composition of the Farewell Discourse (and indeed, the entire Gospel). Down through history, the Church's common response has been that the first two chapters, 13-14, are set in the upper room while the rest continue the dialogue along the road to Gethsemane, culminating with the prayer of chapter 17.¹²⁵ However some modern interpreters, like Bultmann, see the whole discourse (13-17) as disarranged with 18:1 following 14:31 directly¹²⁶; others see 18:1 following 14:31, but assert that rearrangement hypotheses are not satisfactory and that chapters 15-17 were a later insertion by a final editor¹²⁷; Brown sees more of a literary allusion here (a similarity to Mk 14:42 with the approach of Judas in Gethsemane and Jesus' response), but then goes on to say that "the final editor made the best of a difficult situation and did not seek to force a new meaning on 31"¹²⁸, indicating that the final editor inherited a problem from previous

¹²⁵ D.A. Carson, *Gospel*, 477. See pp. 476-78 for a brief review of the divergent views on 14:31.

¹²⁶ R. Bultmann, *Gospel*, 460-61.

¹²⁷ R. Schnackenburg, *Gospel*, 89-90.

¹²⁸ R. Brown, *Gospel*, 657. See also, Dodd, *Interpretation*, 409, for the literary approach to this issue.

editors, but left it as it was. Still others postulate that the signal to go was given, but there was a delay in going during which the balance of the discourse took place.¹²⁹

How are we to understand a statement such as we find in John 14:31, Ἐγείρεσθε, ἄγωμεν ἐντεῦθεν, especially given the continued flow of the discourse from 15:1ff.? One of the first things we must come to grips with, as we are reminded by James Dunn, is the *distinctiveness* of John.¹³⁰ For instance, classic religionsgeschichtliche approaches, which see 14:31 as problematic and indicative of multiple authors/editors and disarrangement, have dominated the study of the Fourth Gospel. However, they have had a tendency to see the Gospel of John through synoptic spectacles, not allowing for John's distinctiveness. These Johannine distinctives and discontinuities must be understood by hearing the Gospel in its own context.¹³¹

Frank Thielman sees two major categories of Johannine distinctives: grammar usage and compositional structure.¹³² The notable characteristic under grammar usage is redundancy or repetition, a literary device we have already identified as reflecting good rhetorical style. The elements of compositional structure that stand out in John are such things as ambiguity, discourse on two levels, and apparent abrupt breaks in chronological sequence (5:47-6:1; 14:31-15:1). Such compositional peculiarities have often been attributed to the use of unsophisticated Greek, Aramaic origins, multiple sources, clumsy editing, dislocations of the text, and the like. Thielman, however, observes that the redundancies present both in John's grammar and composition are related as the author frequently repeats pronouns and the actions and words of the characters. Thus, John's uniqueness in grammar and structure "seems to be a calculated feature of the book as a whole."¹³³

But is this a valid literary rubric that has support from ancient literary sources? Thielman believes that ancient literary (rhetorical) critics do hold the answer. According to these ancient critics, there was a kind of writing that was appropriate to religious themes.¹³⁴ He observes that from the first century B.C. to the second century A.D.,

¹²⁹ R. Lenski, *Interpretation*, 1024.

¹³⁰ J. Dunn, "Let John Be John," 301.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 300-301.

¹³² F. Thielman, "The Style of the Fourth Gospel," 169-171.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 172.

¹³⁴ More recently, Ernesto Grassi in a work on the philosophy of rhetoric (*Rhetoric As*

sublimity, obscurity, and solemnity were three stylistic characteristics identified by the ancients as belonging to religious themes.

Sublimity was lofty language befitting the discussion of God and the things of God (or the gods). Obscurity gave grandeur and dignity and pleasantness to speech by keeping it from being too plain or commonplace. With religious themes, it preserved the mysterious nature of the religious.¹³⁵ Solemnity was also suited to religious themes, giving grandeur and dignity to a discussion of the divine.

Citing ancient authorities on religious style (Dionysius discussing Thucydides; also the writings of Philo, Clement of Alexandria, and Hermogenes), Thielman claims that such literary styles are in fact reflected in the Fourth Gospel. Is the abrupt transition at 14:31 - 15:1 a purposeful attempt at obscurity? He suggests that “the evangelist may have obscured the organizational pattern of his Gospel by design--to keep out those whose eyes were blind and whose hearts were hard (12:40).”¹³⁶ This view would be supported by Wayne Meeks’ argument that John is a “book for insiders.”¹³⁷

Thus, the unusual features of John (such as the abrupt break at 14:31) need not be seen as the result of disarrangements, later traditions, and the like, but are “a product of the evangelist’s desire to write in a way appropriate to the mysterious and profound nature of his subject.”¹³⁸

Does such a literary device secure the reader’s attention? Does it give him pause for thought? Does it lift the discourse to a level beyond a simple, unfolding narrative and cause the reader to ask questions of the text and reflect carefully on its contents? If so, then the author has succeeded in using sublimity, obscurity, and solemnity to engage the reader and lend grandeur to his work. Rhetorically, not only is this effect produced by the abrupt transition from 14:31 to 15:1, but as I have already demonstrated, this ending brings literary closure to a major topic within the overall rhetorical framework of the Farewell Discourse.

Philosophy, 103-104) also supports the idea of a distinctive rhetoric of religion as he describes the characteristics of the rhetoric of sacred language.

¹³⁵ Demetrius, *On Style*, 2.101.

¹³⁶ F. Thielman, “The Style of the Fourth Gospel,” 181.

¹³⁷ W. Meeks, *The Man From Heaven*,” 44-52. See also D.M. Smith, *Johannine Christianity*, 3.

¹³⁸ F. Thielman, “The Style of the Fourth Gospel,” 182.

The complex nature of narrative such as we have in the Gospel of John is well described by David Cunningham: “Narrative thus situates itself in two contexts simultaneously--in the milieu where the story takes place, and in the situation in which the story is told. This produces both an immanent and a transcendent quality, both a concrete and an abstract function.”¹³⁹

At the first level of the text (Jesus’ interaction with his disciples) we are given just so much information and are left to ponder the untold historical events: were they still in the upper room as 15:1ff unfolds; were they on their way to Gethsemane; were they at the temple, pausing momentarily on their way to Gethsemane; or were they somewhere else outside the upper room, but not yet on their way?

At the second level of the text (author and audience), we simply have the transcendent move from the closure of one topic to the beginning of the next. Here the historical element (first level) is transcended by the literary approach to the audience (second level).

To sum up: the Farewell Discourse has a rhetorical structure in which the four major topics of the *partitio* (13:31-38) are taken up and amplified, one after another, in reverse order, from chapter 14 through chapter 17. As each of the topics is concluded, there is clear evidence of closure in the text. The fourth topic, Jesus’ Imminent Departure (14:1-31), exhibits such closure. Instead of postulating problems with the text and looking for all manner of explanations to account for the obvious closure at 14:31, rhetorical analysis provides an answer: closure has been brought rhetorically to a major topic. The text may now proceed without interruption to the next topic without having to account for historical, authorial, or other rationales. The text flows rhetorically to achieve the persuasive purpose for which it was written: that people trust in Jesus alone as the Son of God who is the way, the truth, and the life (14:6) and that believing they have life in his name (20:31).

The Third Topic (A Mission of Love)

15:1 - 16:15

With closure having been brought to the fourth topic of the *Partitio* in 14:31, we

¹³⁹ D. Cunningham, *Faithful Persuasion*, 116.

now take up the third topic, “A Mission of Love.” With the focus on the future existence of the disciples within their community as they confront challenges from within (15:1-17) and those from without (15:18 - 16:4a), there is a continuation of the overall thought-pattern of chapter 14: the identity of Jesus, comfort in their distress, their future work as his sent ones, and the promised Paraclete. Indeed, Schnackenburg observes that chapter 15 is a suitable continuation of Jesus’ Farewell Discourse on the basis of ideas set forth in chapter 14 that are carried over into chapter 15.¹⁴⁰

There is also rhetorical movement in the flow of the persuasive appeal from chapter 14 to chapter 15. In chapter 14 the key emphasis seems to be relationship: the reciprocal relationship of the Son to the Father and that of the disciples to both of them. The monologue/dialogue of this chapter takes on a didactic character as Jesus teaches and consoles. In chapter 15 (and the first half of 16), relationship is still emphasized, but now with the added note of responsibility: the disciples are to serve one another in love and be Jesus’ witnesses. They are seen here in relation to Jesus (they are to abide in him, vv. 1-11), to one another (they are to love one another, vv. 12-17), and to the world (they are not of the world and because of Jesus are targets of the world’s hostility, 15:18 - 16:4a).

Three major sub-sections comprise this third topic: 15:1-17; 15:18 - 16:4a; and 16:4b-15. The first deals with a threat to their unity from within: the potential for division among the disciples themselves. They must remain in Jesus (vv. 1-8) and in his love (vv. 9-17) to prevent this. The second deals with the threat from without: the hostility of the unbelieving world. In the third, the disciples’ ultimate well-being is assured by God’s provision for them: the Paraclete will arrive who will convict the world and lead the disciples into all the truth.

The third topic is all monologue. Rhetorical analysis will be carried out in each of the three sub-sections as before, the natural flow of the Johannine Jesus’ discourse being taken up with smaller sub-units, thus elucidating the evangelist’s persuasive intent with his readers.

¹⁴⁰ R. Schnackenburg, *Gospel*, 94-95. Schnackenburg includes such motifs as the continuing relationship between Jesus and his disciples following his departure, the keeping of his commandments mediating a relationship of the disciple with both the Father and the Son, the promise of answers to prayers, the world as a threat, and the Paraclete sayings.

15:1-3

The third topic begins with Jesus' declaration of his seventh and final "I am" statement linked to a metaphor: Ἐγὼ εἰμι ἡ ἄμπελος ἡ ἀληθινή. Schnackenburg observes that ἡ ἀληθινή is emphasized with its placement after the noun.¹⁴¹ Jesus is not merely like a vine. He is more. He is the genuine vine and stands in contrast to all who might claim to be a vine. Jesus has already identified himself as the genuine bread given by the Father from heaven (τὸν ἄρτον ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ τὸν ἀληθινόν, 6:32). So also here. Jesus is the genuine vine whose origin is from heaven (cf. 3:13, 6:62). The character of Jesus is once again highlighted by the evangelist: he alone is the true source of their life and the ground for their being. This is also one of the rhetorical constraints within the Farewell Discourse, Jesus' authority. He is the source of everything for them: their life, the fruit that is borne by them, and the word that makes them clean (v. 3). The author's readers are clearly being pointed to the one true source of life for themselves.

The "vine" is a common Old Testament image for God's people, Israel (cf. Hosea 10:1; 14:8; Is. 5:1-7; 27:2-6; Jer. 2:21; 5:10; 6:9; 12:10-11; Ezek. 15:1-6; 17:5-10; 19:10-14; Ps. 80:9ff; 2Esdras 5:23).¹⁴² Christian Dietzfelbinger observes that "the author has picked up an old picture-word and stuffed it full of christology."¹⁴³ It should be noted that with this direct allusion to an Old Testament symbol, there is an implicit appeal to the authority of Scripture here. This is one of the rhetorical constraints found in the Farewell Discourse and is also a rhetorical appeal to an extrinsic proof.

In these references, Israel is the vine and is often seen as disappointing to the Lord because of her unfruitfulness. In John 15, Jesus applies the Old Testament term to himself and a collective image is transferred to one person. Jesus replaces Old Testament Israel and

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 97.

¹⁴² R. Brown (*Gospel*, 669) asserts that an Old Testament and Jewish background for Johannine symbolism is far more plausible than others, namely Gnostic and Mandaean sources. He points out, for instance, that as Ezekiel 34 offers a close parallel to the shepherd passages of John 10, so Ezekiel 17 shows a close parallel to the vine imagery in John (*Gospel*, 671). So also C. Dietzfelbinger who rejects a Mandaean source in favor of the Old Testament and Judaism (*Der Abschied des Kommenden*, 109-110).

¹⁴³ C. Dietzfelbinger, *Der Abschied des Kommenden*, 109.

as such the Jews are now invited to join “the universal Messianic community”¹⁴⁴ inaugurated by the mission of the Son of God. Thus, the Jews are no longer the community to whom others come, but themselves must be joined to another community through faith in Jesus as the Messiah.

The use of this Old Testament image vividly illustrates the unity between Jesus and his disciples and pictures him as their continuing source of nurture and strength. The primary emphasis is on a present reality, Ἐγώ εἰμι, and its continuation in the lives of the disciples: remaining in Christ. It is also possible that there is a polemic here against the unproductive Judaism surviving in the synagogue. The vine certainly was suggestive of Judaism (ornamentation at the temple¹⁴⁵ and as a symbol on their coinage¹⁴⁶). And if, as is suggested by Martyn, the Gospel of John was a polemic against the synagogue,¹⁴⁷ this use of the vine as a polemic symbol is a distinct possibility.¹⁴⁸ Again, Jesus stands in contrast to all who might claim to be a vine for God’s people and presents himself as the only genuine option.

The mention of the Father further qualifies the kind of vine we have here: it belongs to the heavenly order. This is a rhetorical amplification by means of augmentation--the figure is expanded. The affirmation of Ἐγώ εἰμι is further augmented by ὁ πατήρ μου ὁ γεωργός ἐστίν (this kind of augmentation is also found in v. 5 with ὑμεῖς τὰ κλήματα).

The reason for speaking of the “vinedresser” is brought out in verse 2: the branches are the focus of his attention and his activity among them will result in his being glorified, v. 8. Never is the quality of the vine called into question (it is ἡ ἄμπελος ἡ ἀληθινή), but only that of the branches.¹⁴⁹ The whole idea here revolves around the bearing, or not bearing, of fruit by the branches. There are consequences either way: the unfruitful branches (Jesus describes them as having been ἐν ἐμοί¹⁵⁰) are taken away. The fruitful

¹⁴⁴ A. Köstenberger, *The Missions of Jesus and the Disciples*, 166.

¹⁴⁵ *Josephus* (Antiquities, XV. XI. 3), 335. Also, A. Edersheim, *The Temple*, 58.

¹⁴⁶ W. Barclay, *Gospel*, 2:201.

¹⁴⁷ J.L. Martyn, *History and Theology*, 37-89.

¹⁴⁸ So also C. Dietzfelbinger (*Der Abschied des Kommenden*, 117) who thinks this anti-synagogue polemic with the “genuine vine” motif to be rather likely.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 112.

¹⁵⁰ See, however, J. Laney (“Abiding Is Believing,” 61, 64) who maintains that branches “ἐν

ones are cleansed. There may be a play on words here between αἵρει and καθαίρει to draw attention to these consequences. This is an appeal to *pathos*. It is a wake-up call to the disciples: simply assuming a relationship to Jesus is not enough. He expects their relationship to him to result in their bearing of “fruit.” An unfruitful branch will be seen as dead and will be taken away by the Father (this removal will be further developed, amplified, in v. 6).

The cleansing action, on the other hand, will remove whatever inhibits the bearing of fruit and make the disciple even more fruitful. There is an emphasis here on ongoing productivity. As Bultmann points out, even a fruit-bearer cannot rest secure in what he has brought forth. He must continue to bear even more fruit.¹⁵¹ Since fruit-bearing is strongly related to their apostolic ministry (v. 16), and being clean (v. 3) has already been linked to their being sent to others (13:10, 14-16), this strongly suggests that the essence of fruit-bearing is in the communication of life to others (cf. 13:15-16, 20; 14:26; 15:26-27; 17:20). The life that comes from Jesus will come to others through these disciples. The evangelist’s audience would recognize this very dynamic in their own relationship to the one who communicates the alone saving message of Jesus to them.

The cleansing Jesus speaks of in verses 2 and 3 apparently takes place on two levels: there is the cleansing that makes them branches to begin with (cf. 13:10) and then there is the ongoing cleansing that promotes fruit-bearing. Verse 3 is a strong appeal to elicit *pathos* in Jesus’ followers as it removes any doubts they may have had about their status: here is certainty of their status with the Father and the Son--they are clean. This certainty lies in Jesus’ word, not in themselves. This is undoubtedly a reference to Jesus’ whole teaching (cf. 14:26, πάντα ἃ εἶπον ὑμῖν). Jesus’ words, which they have received, are life-giving words (6:63, 68)¹⁵² and their assurance is in the fact that being

ἐμοὶ μὴ φέρον καρπὸν” (v. 2) is a reference to those who merely profess to be Christians, who have only an external association with Christ, and have not been connected to him by faith. Laney sees “ἐν ἐμοὶ” as adverbial (modifying μὴ φέρον καρπὸν), not adjectival (modifying κλημα). The emphasis, then, is not on the connection of the branch to the vine, but on the process of fruit-bearing.

¹⁵¹ R. Bultmann, *Gospel*, 660.

¹⁵² See C. Dietzfelbinger, *Der Abschied des Kommenden*, 113: “The word imparts, according to John’s thought, the faith, and this faith translates into true life (5:24; 6:63; 8:31, 51; 12:47-50; 14:23; 17:17).”

“in Jesus” is not a goal to be striving for--they are already there. The goal is now fruit-bearing which comes from their connection to him.

Schnackenburg sees v. 3 as a later editorial addition which corrupts the structure of the discourse.¹⁵³ On the contrary, in view of what is said in v. 2 about unfruitful branches “in Jesus” who are taken away, the Johannine Jesus moves to assure these disciples of who they are in his eyes. Additionally, the cleansing force attributed here to Jesus’ word is thoroughly Johannine (cf. 5:24; 6:63; 8:31-32, 51; 14:23; 17:8, 17). Far from having the structure corrupted by this verse, the discourse moves smoothly from the identification of Jesus as the genuine vine (v. 1), to a focus on branches and fruit-bearing (v. 2), then to an assuring of the disciples of their identity and condition (v. 3), and will now move in the next verses to the exhortation to remain in that intimate faith-bond.

15:4-5

The phrase, “remain in”, is used ten times in vv. 4-10. Clearly, stress is being placed on the continuous nature of the action. It describes a reciprocal relationship: the disciples remaining in Jesus and Jesus remaining in the disciples are the two sides of the one communion. What is implied in μέινετε, however, is that they are already in Jesus and he in them--the connection is in place.¹⁵⁴ And this connection will continue as a post-resurrection communion between them (cf. 14:19-20). The addition of καὶ γὰρ ἐν ὑμῖν brings comfort to the disciples for it is his promise that he will remain in them.

The imperative μέινετε also implies, however, that the connection can be broken. Thus, while the disciples are assured of their present place with Jesus, they are also made aware of the delicate balance that must be maintained: remaining is the persistence of the life of faith, a loyal steadfastness to the life-giving connection which has been established with the vine.¹⁵⁵ So, too, the author’s readers would be moved by the exhortation to consider this delicate balance in their own lives, abiding in the life of faith. To remain, then, is to believe and to believe is to receive: answer to prayer (14:14), the Paraclete (14:16), peace (14:27), cleansing (15:3), freedom from sin (8:31-36), eternal life (3:16, 36).

¹⁵³ R. Schnackenburg, *Gospel*, 98-99.

¹⁵⁴ J. Dillow, “Abiding Is Remaining in Fellowship,” 49: “The word ‘remain’ implies staying in a position already obtained, not entering for the first time.”

¹⁵⁵ R. Bultmann, *Gospel*, 535.

There is an appeal to *pathos* here: in spite of Jesus' farewell and departure, this life-giving relationship can continue and indeed it must, for remaining in Jesus is the prerequisite to being fruit-bearers. In John's Gospel, καρπός occurs only in chapter 15 and in 4:36 and 12:24. In the latter, the emphasis is on the fruit borne by Jesus' death and the fruit of the harvest for eternal life. Here in chapter 15, the mission of Jesus' disciples is brought to the fore with the emphasis on fruit-bearing: they are sent ones (13:16, 20) who are to do as Jesus has done to them (13:8, 15) by bringing cleansing to others with Jesus' word (15:3) which the Paraclete will bring to their remembrance (14:26). The emphasis is not just on "remaining in Jesus", but on remaining in him to bring forth fruit.

With v. 5 we have the rhetorical repetition of the vine figure and, as noted above, the figure is amplified by augmentation with the phrase ὑμεῖς τὰ κλήματα. Dietzfelbinger draws attention to the sense of urgency and intensity found with this repeated figure. Nowhere else, he says, is the "I am" formula with metaphor presented twice like this, and nowhere else does it express such warning as here in v. 5ff.¹⁵⁶ In v. 5 Jesus says positively what he had said negatively in v. 4 and we see the total dependence of the disciple upon Jesus. The last half of v. 5 is an enthymeme, the strongest of the rhetorical proofs.¹⁵⁷ It focuses the attention of the reader on both the identity of Jesus (the life-giving source) and the identity of the disciples (branches who are totally dependent on the vine for fruit-bearing). Mankind, of course, can achieve all kinds of things apart from Jesus. But what is of concern here is the fruit of the gospel. In the face of that, everything else is an οὐδέν.

Perhaps there is an echo here of John 1:3-- χωρὶς αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο οὐδὲ ἓν. Man himself is a created being (by the logos, 1:1-3) and must be brought back into a living relationship with God because "flesh" has given birth to "flesh" (3:6). Thus, it is understandable that man himself, apart from Jesus, can do nothing. The fruit is only a possibility while remaining in him.

But what really is the fruit and who are the branches in John 15? In perusing both scholarly commentaries and devotional works, there is an almost near universal assumption that branches = Christians in general, and fruit = the good works in the Christian's life. No attempt is made to demonstrate this conclusion exegetically, it is simply assumed as a

¹⁵⁶ C. Dietzfelbinger, *Der Abschied des Kommenden*, 117.

¹⁵⁷ Aristotle, *On Rhetoric*, I. 1. 11, 33.

foregone conclusion. But is this a *Johannine* understanding?

As pointed out under the discussion of v. 4, καρπός is found in John only at 4:36, 12:24, and 15:2, 4, 5, 8, 16. In 4:36 the reference is that of individuals receiving eternal life. In 12:24 we find the results of Christ's glorification (v. 23): fruit borne through his death. The context is eternal life (v. 25) and how that life is secured (v. 23). In both cases, the reference to fruit is a reference to people being brought into relationship with Jesus and receiving eternal life. The "fruit" in John 15, then, most likely refers to Christian converts (cf. 15:16 and 17:20) who are no longer only "flesh" and the evangelist's readers could identify themselves as being such fruit.

Of whom is Christ speaking in John 15 when he refers to "branches"? Are we to understand this as a reference to all Christians? Most commentators assume so. It should be noted, though, that in a number of statements made by Jesus, the original group of disciples (the "twelve", 6:70) can be the only group intended. For instance, when 14:26 is read in conjunction with 14:25, 15:26 with 15:27, and 16:13 with 16:4, it is clear that this is a special sending of the Paraclete to the original disciples, those with whom Jesus was physically, visibly present "from the beginning." In 16:25 he will speak no longer in figures to those to whom he has spoken in figures before: the original disciples. In 17:20, Christ speaks clearly of those he is with as the original disciples through whom others will believe. And 17:26 is closely linked to 17:20. The difference between these two groups of disciples is the difference between immediate and mediate revelation: the original group receiving it directly from Jesus, others receiving it mediately through them.

Having said this, does this mean that there is little or no application of the evangelist's concerns in vv. 1ff. to later Christians? In a word, no. Abiding in Jesus, abiding in his love, bearing fruit, and keeping his commandments will apply to any believer. However, in John 15 there is a one-to-one correspondence between the vine/branches/fruit motif and Christ/apostles/converts. What is being emphasized is the mission of Jesus' disciples who will bear witness about him to others with the word they are given (14:26; 15:3; 17:8). This word will be all about Jesus: who he is ("I am . . .") and what he has accomplished for all (12:32). As a result, others (the evangelist's audience, for example) will come to believe in Jesus through them (17:20) and in this way these apostles will be fruit-bearers.

Paul Minear observes that John's readers "probably viewed themselves as being the

works and fruits of the original disciples (15:5, 15; 17:20)”¹⁵⁸ and speaks of “John’s disciples’ readiness to identify themselves with the fruit produced by these branches, the initial company of Jesus’ apostles.”¹⁵⁹ Minear also points out that the vocation of these original disciples differed from the communities within which they ministered: “Their assignment from him [Jesus] entailed the full acceptance of homelessness and the surrender of family ties, along with the abandonment of possessions and of the normal forms of self-protection.”¹⁶⁰ Jesus’ life would be their life (15:20). They occupied a position between Jesus (the bearer of revelation) and the community of believers in that revelation. Indeed, the community came about and was nurtured through them (17:20; 15:4, 16).

B. Lindars identifies the bearing of fruit as the continuation of Jesus’ mission by his disciples¹⁶¹ and Hoskyns states clearly, “Those who have believed in Jesus through the apostolic preaching are the fruit of the vine and its branches (xvii. 20).”¹⁶² G.R. Beasley-Murray quotes Hoskyns approvingly.¹⁶³ That this is not a new or novel understanding of the branches and fruit of John 15 we cite Theophylact (11th century): “The fruit of the Apostles are the Gentiles, who through their teaching were converted to the faith, and brought into subjection to the glory of God.”¹⁶⁴

The vine/branches/fruit picture points directly to the quickly approaching mission and ministry of Jesus’ disciples to their community and to the world. The evangelist portrays Jesus preparing them for this in the Farewell Discourse. Jesus is the vine, the apostles are the branches, and converts to Jesus are the fruits brought forth by the branches as their living connection to the vine remains. Insofar as the readers of the Gospel recognized the evangelist carrying out that ministry in their midst, his *ethos* would be established and they would see themselves as beneficiaries of the living connection to Jesus, the true vine.

¹⁵⁸ P. Minear, “To Ask and to Receive”, 248.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 238.

¹⁶¹ B. Lindars, *Gospel*, 489.

¹⁶² E. Hoskyns, *The Fourth Gospel*, 476.

¹⁶³ G.R. Beasley-Murray, *John*, 273.

¹⁶⁴ Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on the Four Gospels*, 481.

15:6-8

What happens to the branch that does not remain in Jesus is now described. Here is a more full explanation of what ἀίρει referred to in v. 2. In fact, this is a rhetorical amplification of v. 2 by augmentation: an intensity is achieved with the progression of “thrown outside”, “withered”, “gathered”, “thrown into the fire”, and “burned”. The consequences are clear. The unfruitful branches are destroyed. The inner separation that takes place when a branch no longer remains in Jesus is followed by a terminal one: it is thrown into the fire to be burned.

The description in v. 6 dramatically illustrates the judgment a disciple calls down upon himself when he separates himself from Jesus. While he is under judgment already in this life for unbelief (3:18), there will also be an eschatological accounting (5:22, 27-29; 9:39; 15:6).¹⁶⁵

The question essentially aimed at the disciples is pointed: will they remain, or will they fall away? The consequences for the latter are stark and uninviting and move the disciple to guard his relationship with Jesus. Here we see the persuasive appeal to *pathos* as a rhetorical proof. Could the evangelist’s readers fail to see the application for themselves in these words?

Having moved from a positive picture in v. 5 to a negative one in v. 6, there is now a shift back to the positive in v. 7 with a promise: the assurance of their prayers answered. But notice how this is mediated. Everything depends on their relationship to Jesus and here

¹⁶⁵ Niemand (“Spuren der Täuferpredigt in Johannes 15:1-11”, 13-28) sees the judgment motifs in vv. 1, 2, and 6 being closely related to those found in the preaching of John the Baptist (Matt. 3:7-10, 12; Luke 3:7-9, 17) and postulates that the followers of John the Baptist may have provided material that influenced this discourse. While the Baptist’s preaching undoubtedly influenced many early Christians, it is hardly demonstrable that 15:1-6 reflects a direct dependence on a *Täuferpredigt* community.

In a rather novel approach, J. Dillow (“Abiding Is Remaining,” 49-53) draws a distinction between believing in Jesus and having fellowship with Jesus. “Remaining,” according to Dillow, refers not to believing in Jesus, but to having fellowship with him. The “casting out”, then, of v. 6 is not separation from salvation, but from fellowship. And the fire of judgment is divine judgment in time, not in hell. This whole position, however, rests upon the assumption that there are three classes of people with regard to Jesus: non-Christians, obedient Christians, and “carnal” Christians (a definition, as far as I am aware, that is unique to fundamentalist evangelicals).

it is seen that Jesus and his revelation (τὰ ῥήματά μου) are virtually interchangeable. Abiding in Jesus' words is what abiding in Jesus is all about. The indwelling involves a life lived in harmony with Jesus' revelation. Thus, what they want will be what Jesus wants since he is in them and they in him. The content of their prayers, then, will be molded by the reciprocal relationship μείνατε ἐν ἐμοί, καὶ γὰρ ἐν ὑμῖν, v. 4. That this is mediated by faith in Jesus' words has already been enunciated in 14:10-14 where there is another "ask and you will receive" promise. If the content of the asking in 14:13-14 is qualified by the μείζονα of 14:12, then "whatever you will" of 15:7 may well be qualified by the abiding in Jesus that is encouraged.¹⁶⁶ The disciple's prayer will ever be to remain in this union.

With this emphasis that Jesus abides in the disciples when his words abide in them, there is also perhaps a denial that mystical ecstasy is the way to achieve relationship with, and blessings from, God.¹⁶⁷ In John, "abiding" in Jesus denotes relationship and the sharing in the life which Jesus imparts. By believing in the incarnate Son of God who is the life-giving food (6:56), one absorbs his life and is united with him permanently. As Kanagaraj points out in his work on mysticism in John, this differs markedly from both Hellenistic mysticism (and that found in Philo) which saw abiding as "absorption" *into* the divine or "deification", and Jewish Merkabah mysticism with its emphasis on an ecstatic experience through which the mystic achieves a personal and intimate communion with God.¹⁶⁸

Over against such schools of mysticism, "abiding" in John "denotes the divine *life* absorbed *by* the believers."¹⁶⁹ For instance, while John 14:2-3 portrays an ascent of the disciples in union with Jesus at a later time, 14:23 portrays his descent in union with the Father prior to any such ascent. "John's reinterpretation of the heavenly journey contains polemic against several mystical traditions, including Merkabah mysticism, to affirm that *the purpose of heavenly journeys*, i.e. union with God, is now *available on earth in Jesus*."¹⁷⁰ With this emphasis on the need for an abiding connection to Jesus to have communion with God, and remaining in his words to remain in him, the author's readers

¹⁶⁶ C. Dietzfelbinger, *Der Abschied des Kommenden*, 116.

¹⁶⁷ P. Minear, *John: The Martyr's Gospel*, 84.

¹⁶⁸ P. Alexander, *Textual Sources*, 26.

¹⁶⁹ J. Kanagaraj, *Mysticism*, 224-225.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 226.

are warned against trying to establish such communion with God in any other way or gain revelation from any other source than Jesus.

In being exhorted so pointedly (as they are in chapter 15) to remain in Christ, the disciples are not being called to a mystical experience, but to bear fruit in the world.¹⁷¹ As if to highlight this very point, Jesus brings closure to the thought by saying that his Father is glorified by their bearing much fruit, thereby demonstrating their discipleship to him. We have already been told that the Father is glorified in the mission of the Son (12:28; 13:31-32; 14:13). Now we see that the Father is also glorified as the Son's disciples continue his mission as his sent ones.¹⁷² What they do in continuing that mission grows directly out of abiding in his words (8:31ff.; 14:10, 15, 21, 23; 15:7): these they proclaim to others (15:27).

To know that their fruit-bearing glorifies the Father in heaven is another appeal to *pathos*. Their faithful activity of remaining in Jesus and winning converts to the faith resounds in heaven itself for the effects of the Father's activity of v. 2 (καθαίρει) is seen in their lives.

15:9-11

What "remaining in Jesus" in the previous verses means is here explained: remaining in his love. This love of Jesus for the disciples is equated with the Father's love for Jesus. And this in turn is the love based on the Son's willing self-sacrifice (10:17) and his doing of the Father's will (15:10). It is a love the Father had for the Son πρὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου (17:24). Jesus' love for his disciples, which is of such magnitude, embraces them (13:1; 15:9) and is the love in which they are to abide. Jesus does not love them to provide "self-enjoyment."¹⁷³ Rather, he fulfills the commandments of the Father, who loves his own, and thus remains in the Father's love. The love emanating from Jesus,

¹⁷¹ R. Schnackenburg, *Gospel*, 100. See also my comments on John 14 for a discussion of possible anti-mystical polemic in John.

¹⁷² C. Dietzfelbinger points out that the Father has not been forgotten after being mentioned in v.1. Indeed, the discourse in vv.1-8 finds its aim in the glorification of the Father. He simply "stepped behind the vine in vv.3-7" and in v.8 "steps to the forefront" once again. In confessing that Jesus is the vine planted by the Father and was sent into the world by the Father, the disciples glorify the Father (*Der Abschied des Kommenden*, 117).

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, 134.

then, is identical with the love the Father has for him (even as his teaching is identical with the teaching of the Father, 7:16, 14:10).

There is, perhaps, an *imitatio Dei* here for the disciples which is rhetorically significant. The reciprocity of the Son and the Father (14:7-11) indicates that the disciples' modeling of the Son would then be a modeling of the Father as well. Thus, in their relationship to one another, they are called to be imitators of God. This is a high calling, indeed, and one that gives them a unique identity (and identity is one of the rhetorical constraints in the discourse). The full extent of this love that is to be modeled will be described in v. 13: the giving of his life for them. To hear of such love is powerful motivation, indeed, for remaining "in Jesus" and thus in his love.

But how does one do this? In v. 10 the love/commandment motif of 14:15, 23 ("if you love . . . you will keep") is repeated, but now it is reversed: "if you keep . . . you will abide." Love and commandments are not just associated, but are mutually dependent.¹⁷⁴ Clearly, those who love are those who keep and those who keep are those who love. The disciples' existence is grounded in Jesus' love for them which in turn is grounded in his relationship to the Father. Jesus' own keeping of the Father's commandments and thus abiding in his love is the model for disciples.

This "keeping" can be seen either as the proof of one's love for Jesus (14:15) or the basis of one's remaining in his love (15:10). It is a reciprocal relationship with one love (that of the disciples) responding to the other's love (that of Jesus for them). Bultmann sees here testimony to the fact that to continue in the blessed state Jesus describes, it is not necessary to indulge in states of ecstasy or mystical transformation, but to keep his commandments.¹⁷⁵ The practice of mysticism was clearly known in the first century C.E., including Christian circles.¹⁷⁶ In John, however, the believer's state of blessedness in union with God is not mediated by a mystical vision coming by an ascent to heaven. Rather, it is found in the daily abiding in Jesus (15:4) and the keeping of his commandments (15:10). Here again, then, is possible evidence in the Gospel of a polemic against the influence of mysticism in the early Christian community.

Verse 11 is a transitional statement in the discourse. With the perfect, *λελάληκα*,

¹⁷⁴ C.K. Barrett, *Gospel*, 476.

¹⁷⁵ R. Bultmann, *Gospel*, 541.

¹⁷⁶ J. Kanagaraj, *Mysticism*, 77-86.

the end of the discourse on the vine is marked. “These things” does not merely refer, then, to vv. 9-10, but to his whole vine/branches/fruit discourse in vv. 1-10.

The purpose of his teachings, what he has spoken to them, has been to give them “joy”. Even as Jesus’ joy was found in his love for and obedience to the Father (14:31), so also theirs: it will flow from their love and obedience to Jesus. The evangelist could well be signalling his readers that such joy is not the ecstasy of seeing God on his throne through a heavenly ascent (as in Merkabah mysticism¹⁷⁷). It is found rather in their remaining in Jesus and that means, as we have seen, continuing his mission in the world and bearing fruit.

Joy is one of the major fruits of the teaching of Jesus (15:10-11) and the eschatological hope held by Christians on account of this teaching is to keep them joyful (14:28). Thus, the life that is theirs in Christ now and the hope of the glory to come bring the inward state of joy to the Christian. While the joy of unbroken fellowship with the Father and the Son can be realized in its perfection only in heaven,¹⁷⁸ there is an eschatological joy which can be experienced while the believer is still in this world—a joy mediated to them by the words Jesus speaks (15:11; 17:13) and having to do with their assurance of eschatological salvation in union with him.

How so? Everything thus far has been preparatory and is yet to be fulfilled (πληρωθῆ, 15:11). The time of this fulfillment refers to his hour which had now come for him to depart out of this world (13:1). In 14:28 Jesus describes his departure to the Father as “their joy”. Raymond Brown points out how often “joy” in John’s Gospel is associated with the saving work of Jesus and is a salvific gift here as well.¹⁷⁹ Schnackenburg equates this joy with the joy that will be theirs after Easter and therefore with the joy of Christ’s lasting presence.¹⁸⁰ It is seen already in John the Baptist (3:29), has been mentioned briefly in the Farewell (14:28), will be spoken of again (16:20-24), and is a joy that is embedded in them (15:11) and cannot be taken away from them (16:22).

What is a reality already in Jesus (his joy) is to become a reality in them as well. Thus, they are to remain in him and in his love (15:4, 9) and keep his commandments

¹⁷⁷ G. Scholem, *Major Trends*, 5, 15, 50-60. See also P. Alexander, *Textual Sources*, 26.

¹⁷⁸ W. Morrice, *Joy*, 108.

¹⁷⁹ R. Brown, *Gospel*, 681. Brown cites John 3:29; 4:36; 8:56; 11:15; and 14:28.

¹⁸⁰ R. Schnackenburg, *Gospel*, 104.

(15:10). All this is mediated to them by his words: “These things I have spoken to you” (15:11).

In the discourse, then, Jesus speaks effectively to his disciples’ sorrow, confusion, and distress; he explains how all that happens is to their joy and lasting benefit; and prepares them for their own quickly-approaching ministry, the continuation of his mission in the world.

Through this first level of the discourse, the evangelist speaks effectively to his readers focusing their attention on the life-or-death necessity of abiding in Jesus, the true source of life, love, joy, and heavenly communion.

15:12-15

The third major rhetorical topic of the Farewell Discourse with which we are currently engaged is re-stated in v. 12: a mission of love. The rhetorical practice of repetition, or descanting upon a thought, is found in this chapter with references to the love motif at vv. 9-10, 12-13, and 17. In good rhetorical style, the author uses this repetition to refine and amplify his point and make the desired impression upon his audience.¹⁸¹

Here the τὰς ἐντολάς of v. 10 are now seen as being constituted by one ἡ ἐντολή, ἵνα ἀγαπᾶτε ἀλλήλους. This is not merely a summary of all the rest of Jesus’ commandments. It is, rather, a demonstration of what all his precepts are like: they are grounded in love. The use of the present subjunctive, ἀγαπᾶτε, emphasizes the continuous, life-long quality of this attribute.

Jesus’ own love for them, καθὼς ἠγάπησα ὑμᾶς, is the basis and model for their love for one another. More than mere attachment to or devotion for one another, this is to be a love that expresses the same concern for one another that Jesus has for them. What constitutes such love is elucidated in v. 13.

The Johannine Jesus states what is perhaps axiomatic, a truth widely recognized in the ancient world as the supreme evidence of love: the laying down of one’s own life for another. The comparison drawn with μείζονα is a form of rhetorical amplification which gives emphasis to the issue at hand and the ἵνα clause is expegetical, explaining ταύτης- the giving of one’s life for his friends.¹⁸²

¹⁸¹ See earlier discussion of rhetorical repetition, pp. 90-91 (especially with regard to *Rhetorica ad Herennium* and Quintilian’s *Institutio Oratoria*).

In 10:11, 17-18, Jesus identifies himself as the one who lays down his life for his friends. Here in 15:13 he states that there is no greater love than this. And herein lies the substance of love: beyond feelings or emotion, it is action. It is willing self-sacrifice for another. The disciples are called to love one another as Jesus has loved them and here is his understanding of that love. Their love must be willing to rise to this height, following his example.

They have every reason to do so for he describes them as his “friends”, v. 14. Here is a persuasive appeal to arouse *pathos* within the disciples and one of the rhetorical constraints of the Farewell Discourse: the identity of the disciples and of Jesus. He is the one who makes the supreme sacrifice, they are his φίλοι who are to follow his example of love.

The ἐάν is a condition of expectancy. They are already Jesus’ friends, the conditional phrase simply “specifies the condition whereby what they already are can be fully realised in them.”¹⁸³ In other words, the evidence of this relationship is seen in their doing, ποιῆτε, of his command, v. 12. Jesus is one who stoops down in calling them his friends (3:13; 8:23; 13:1, 5) and they are lifted up in being called his friends, those who are the beneficiaries of his self-sacrificing love. The audience of the evangelist would hear in these statements words of encouragement for themselves as they are ones who have Jesus’ words, keep his commandments, abide in his love, and are therefore his friends. That they would then be compelled to extend this love to one another is the appeal of the evangelist.

Within the Roman and Hellenistic cultures of the first century, friendship was “the ideal horizontal relationship”¹⁸⁴ among people. Indeed, for the prevalent and influential Epicurean outlook on life, friendship was the basic pleasure, replacing other desires.¹⁸⁵ However, while there may have been some Hellenistic influence of this concept of “friendship” on the evangelist’s readers, “there would seem to be more immediate

¹⁸² Schnackenburg (*Gospel*, 109-110) sees the influence of Hellenistic thought in Johannine Christianity here. Friendship, he says, is a theme that played a very important role in the Graeco-Roman world and points out that the love of friends going as far as death has many parallels in ancient literature. He cites articles by G. Stählin, *ThWb* IX, pp. 149-151, and K. Treu, ‘Freundschaft’, *RAC* VIII (1972), pp. 418-424 as evidence of this.

¹⁸³ R. Bultmann, *Gospel*, 543.

¹⁸⁴ E. Ferguson, *Backgrounds*, 56, 303.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 354.

analogues in the Judaism of Jesus' day."¹⁸⁶

In turning to the Septuagint, we find that the nuances of φίλος are those of someone trusted and close: a personal friend (Deut. 13:6); the friend of the house (Prov. 27:10); the friend of the bridegroom, the best man (1 Macc. 9:39); the supporter of someone in high position (Est. 6:13); a friend of the king (1 Ch. 27:33).¹⁸⁷ One of the finest instances of friendship in the Old Testament, of course, is that between David and Jonathan, described by David in his lament for Saul and Jonathan, 2 Sam. 1:26.¹⁸⁸

In Rabbinic Judaism, "friendship" is applied to the relation between teachers of Torah and their students: a friend's honor "should stand as high as reverence for God."¹⁸⁹ Would this not be especially true, then, of Jesus and his disciples? They call him "teacher and lord" (13:13), he claims identity with God (5:18; 10:30), and appropriates the divine name, identifying himself as the Messiah (4:26) and the "I am" (more on this with v. 21). And would not the evangelist be employing this picture of Jesus and his disciples (with the motif of friendship) to reinforce both his own relationship to his readers as their teacher and transmitter of Jesus' words (thus their friend), and their relationship to him, to Jesus, and to one another as friends who love?

The term φίλος is part of the imagery of the family of God.¹⁹⁰ In John, for instance, Jesus calls his disciples "ἀδελφούς μου" after the resurrection (20:17). Both "friend" and "brother" thus denote a special, close relationship. In John there is also a correlation between friendship and joy (3:29) which is not a friendship of equals: "he must increase, I must decrease" (3:30). So also in John 15 where Jesus speaks of their joy being made full (v. 11) in the same context as calling them his "friends" (vv. 12-15), friends who do what he commands them (v. 14). He, after all, is their teacher and lord.

There is also a correlation in John between friendship and table fellowship (11:3, 11; 12:2), a fellowship which involves discipleship (cf. 11:11 Λάζαρος ὁ φίλος ἡμῶν).¹⁹¹ Jesus' friends are his intimates, people who are loved by him and who attach

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., 355.

¹⁸⁷ G. Stählin, "φίλος", 154.

¹⁸⁸ "I am distressed for you, my brother Jonathan; you have been very pleasant to me. Your love to me was more wonderful than the love of women." *New American Standard Bible*.

¹⁸⁹ G. Stählin, "φίλος", 157.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., 163.

¹⁹¹ Ibid., 165.

themselves to him, believing his teachings.

Genuine friendship is also characterized by “unrestricted self-impartment”¹⁹²--not only that of Jesus for his disciples, but of theirs for one another. Thus, they will love one another as Jesus has loved them, even to the point of laying down their lives for one another.

In v. 15 we find repetition and amplification of this “friend” motif. Amplification is by way of a contrast between δούλους and φίλους. The contrast is between mere obedience, and revelation resulting in comprehension; for the δοῦλος does not have a comprehension since the master does not make everything known to him. Also, the “friend”, in contrast to the slave, is free and his freedom is an “eschatological gift”¹⁹³ resulting from the revelation of the truth (8:31-36). Jesus is the truth (14:6), reveals the truth with his word (8:31), and makes all things known to his friends (15:15).

Οὐκέτι does not speak in a narrowly temporal way as though to say that they have not been his friends until this point in time. It is a new relationship he has created with them through his revelation of all that he heard from the Father.¹⁹⁴ No longer are they slaves, but free men (with regard to the consequences of sin, 8:34-36) and his friends. This does not mean, however, that it is improper to call them servants. From the perspective of service in following his example (13:15) they are servants (13:16, 15:20), but from the perspective of his revelation to them they are his intimates, φίλοι.

Here in the Farewell Discourse we see the full Johannine understanding of “friend”: as intimates of Jesus, they participate in table fellowship with him (13:13); receive his words which are intended to bestow fulness of joy (15:4); and are humbly subordinate in love as they keep his commandments (15:10, 14). Such ones Jesus calls “friends”. Within the third topic (13:34-35) this is an amplification of “his own” (13:1) and carries a forceful appeal to *pathos*: at the first level, there is motivation for Jesus’ disciples to continue faithfully in their calling as his sent ones; at the second level, the evangelist is persuasively appealing to his readers to see themselves as the objects of Jesus’ love, his friends, who will continue faithfully to keep his command (v. 12).

¹⁹² Ibid., 166.

¹⁹³ R. Bultmann, *Gospel*, 543.

¹⁹⁴ C. Dietzfelbinger, *Der Abschied des Kommenden*, 141.

15:16-17

As the first sub-section (vv. 1-17) of the third topic draws to a close, repetition and amplification are again used effectively to highlight the disciples' status and their mission. The verb "to choose" (ἐκλέγομαι) is used in both 6:70 and 13:18 of the Twelve and in 15:27 it is clear that this is the group now being addressed, those who have been with him ἀπ' ἀρχῆς (minus, of course, the betrayer). That it was Jesus, not they, who chose is a testimony to their inability to do anything apart from him (15:5). They did not choose to become his φίλοι, Jesus calls them φίλοι.

But Jesus' action goes beyond choosing: he also "appoints" them to a task. Both θῆ (v. 13) and ἔθηκα (v. 16) are from the same root verb, τίθημι, drawing perhaps a connection between the appointing of the disciples and the example of love Jesus gives. His sacrificial death for his friends, his love, is the ground for their mission as his appointed, sent ones. Brown observes that the use of the Greek word "to appoint" in Old Testament passages for mission and ordination (Num.8:10; 27:18) lends another hint of mission to this verse.¹⁹⁵

How the disciples are to respond to this appointment as Jesus' agents is brought out with two ἵνα clauses. In the first, the combination of "going" and "bearing fruit" gives the connotation of a mission to others, especially in view of 13:15-16, 20. The disciples are to be engaged in a ministry of serving others which enables such ones to have part with Jesus (13:8) so that they, too, will be clean (15:3). "The fruit primarily in this verse is the fruit that emerges from mission, from specific ministry to which the disciples have been sent. The fruit, in short, is new converts."¹⁹⁶ The disciples will minister to others with Jesus'

¹⁹⁵ R. Brown, *Gospel*, 683. See also C.K. Barrett, *Gospel*, 478.

¹⁹⁶ D.A. Carson, *Gospel*, 523. See also A. Köstenberger, *The Missions of Jesus and the Disciples*, 185. Köstenberger notes that this fruit of converts is perhaps closely linked or even to be identified with the "greater works" of John 14:12. R. Schnackenburg, on the other hand, is representative of many who generalize the references to branches, fruit, chosen, appointed, going, bearing fruit, being sent, to all Christians in general instead of referring to the mission work of the original disciples. He describes 15:16 as descriptive of the "fruitfulness of Christian life, especially demonstrated in brotherly love" (*Gospel*, 112). This, I believe misses the distinctive thrust of Jesus' comments to his disciples in the Farewell Discourse.

commandments (14:15), his word (14:23), which will be mediated to them by the Paraclete (14:25-26).

Here the disciples' task is described as bearing fruit. In 4:36-38 another agricultural metaphor was used of their responsibility: reaping. In both instances the disciples are not credited with producing anything: reaping that for which they did not labor and bearing fruit only by abiding in Jesus, fruit that remains. An analogous description is found in 1 Corinthians 3:5ff. where St. Paul also uses an agricultural metaphor to drive home the same point. Both Apollos and Paul were engaged in mission work (planting and watering). Yet neither one of them, only God, is credited with the resultant productivity.

The second ἵνα clause describes their going to the Father in prayer and having their prayers answered. This, too, is the task to which Jesus has appointed them. Indeed, "such asking is in itself an act of friendship"¹⁹⁷ and is a repetition of v. 7 where remaining in Jesus and his words and asking are closely linked to bearing fruit, glorifying the Father, and thus demonstrating their relation to Jesus (v. 8). It also repeats the condition of 14:14, ἐν τῷ ὀνόματί μου: the disciple will only request those things consistent with Jesus' name and the Father's will.

Closure is brought to vv. 12-17 and to the whole first sub-section (vv. 1-17) with a re-statement in v. 17 of the third topic from 13:34-35 and 15:12, ἵνα ἀγαπᾶτε ἀλλήλους. The "remain" motif which was introduced in vv. 1-8 is intensified in vv. 9-17 where the depth of Jesus' love for his disciples (15:13) and their response to it (15:12, 16) are elaborated.

In this first sub-section (vv. 1-17), the evangelist deals with a threat which can arise from within: potential division within the believing community. However as long as they all remain in Jesus, his words, and his love, their unity will remain intact. But there are other forces that must be dealt with: threats from without, the hostility of the unbelieving world. That will be the evangelist's issue in the second sub-section.

15:18 - 16:4a

15:18-19

Here is a stark contrast: the community bonded together in love is hated by the

¹⁹⁷ C. Dietzfelbinger, *Der Abschied des Kommenden*, 143.

world. This sharp differentiation shows us how this Christian community would understand itself in relation to Jesus, one another, and those not “in Jesus.” This is a condition of present reality, μισεῖ (present tense), not something yet to happen. The world already hates them. But Jesus would have them be aware that before it ever hated them, it hated him. The perfect tense, μεμίσηκεν, indicates that it has hated and continues to hate. These are not necessarily words of comfort, but words that are meant to prepare them by forewarning them and explaining the cause of this hatred.

This sharp delineation between Jesus and the world is found already in 7:7 where the world hates him because he testifies against it that its deeds are evil, and in 8:23 where he is described as being from above (not of the world) and they are from below (of this world). In 14:17, 19, 22, 27, 30, the world is depicted as an unknowing, uncomprehending, unaccepting, opposing threat to Jesus and his followers. In 8:43-47, 48-52, Jesus denounces οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι and they denounce him. This opposition party to Jesus in the Gospel is representative of unbelief.

“Hate” is simply characteristic of the world’s reaction to God and his revelation in Jesus. The disciples’ relationship to Jesus (and identification with him) is the basis of the world’s hatred of them as well. Jesus bids them keep in mind how the world has treated him--it will be less strange when they find themselves treated in the same way.

Schnackenburg points to a tension in the concept of “the world” in the Gospel of John.¹⁹⁸ On the one hand it is seen as being in need of and being capable of being saved (12:47)--it is still the object of God’s love (3:16). On the other hand, it is seen as hardened (12:37-40), in darkness without faith (1:5; 8:12; 12:35), and full of hatred (15:18-19). Yet both of these descriptions are true and Jesus’ aim is to have his disciples be fully aware (γινώσκετε) and encouraged to carry out the mission on which he sends them.

Verse 19 is a rhetorical amplification of v. 18. The hatred of the world for the disciples is explained by its own separation from God and the separation of the disciples from it by Jesus’ choosing of them. To be ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου (which they are not: contrary-to-fact condition), would be to have the world’s nature and be one with it--“its own”. They, however, are Jesus’ own (13:1) and the world’s wrath is evoked in part because it sees these disciples as traitors who have been taken from it and set over against it. The disciples are still in the world, but they are not of it (17:15-16). As they abide in Jesus,

¹⁹⁸ R. Schnackenburg, *Gospel*, 114.

they are identified with him and that means they are making common cause with one who claims to be greater than Moses and Torah.¹⁹⁹ To the extent, then, that Jesus is accused of blasphemy (10:33-36; and presumably at 5:18 and 8:59), the Twelve also will be identified as blasphemers who are deserving of hatred (15:18) and hatred's ultimate fruit, death (16:2).

Jesus' choosing of these disciples is repeated from v. 16. While ἐξελεξάμην is amplified there by καρπὸν φέρητε, in v. 19 it is amplified by ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου. They have been chosen, not just to be not of the world, but to go and bear fruit in the world. This poignant description of the disciples (the ones of Jesus' own choosing, chosen out of the world, chosen and sent to bear fruit) is one of the rhetorical constraints of the discourse: their identity.

Here, then, is the evangelist's forceful appeal to his reader's *pathos* on the basis of Jesus' *ethos*: the hatred that strikes them does not release them from their responsibility as believers, but because Jesus has forewarned them about it they will be able to see it as a burden worth enduring--it is theirs on account of him, the holy one of God, who has the words of eternal life (6:68-69).

15:20-21

Jesus exhorts his disciples to remember the one thing that is the key to all they will experience: the axiomatic statement from 13:16. There the emphasis was on their humble, other-centered service as they followed Jesus' example. Here it is intensified to include the necessity of facing the same sort of treatment that Jesus faced.

Two deductions follow from this, both as fact conditions. They can expect no more and no less than Jesus. If Jesus was persecuted, it will be unavoidable for them as well. On the other hand, to the extent that Jesus' word was accepted, theirs will be, too. Since they know how extensive the rejection of Jesus was, their own future is being brought into focus here.²⁰⁰ They are clearly being prepared for what awaits them, yet there is comfort in all this since they really are Jesus' φίλοι (15:14) to the extent that they faithfully share

¹⁹⁹ See S.C. Barton, *Spirituality*, 119.

²⁰⁰ There is an Old Testament precedent for God's messenger and his message being rejected by the very ones to whom he is sent because they reject the one who sent him: Ezekiel 3:4-7. "Yet the house of Israel will not be willing to listen to you, since they are not willing to listen to me" (v.7). See also John 13:20 where the positive side of this is expressed.

his destiny.

The persecution that this will entail is now described as *ταῦτα πάντα*, “all these things”. The hatred of the world for them, as it persecutes them, will be expressed in a number of ways. Jesus is removing any possible false sense of security with stark realism about what they can expect.

But here is the real and ultimate cause of this reaction: Jesus’ *ὄνομα*. He identifies himself as the Messiah (4:26) and the “I am” (23 times in John, 7 times with metaphors). He calls himself the “Son of Man” (1:51; 3:13-14; 8:28; 13:31) and “Son of God” (10:36; 11:27), is referred to by others as the Son of God (1:34, 39; 11:4; 19:7; 20:31), describes himself as “one” with the Father (10:30), and numerous times refers to himself as the Son and calls God his Father. The reaction to the *ὄνομα* Jesus claims for himself can be seen in 8:58-59. Because of his use of the divine name, οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι (v. 57) try to stone him.

This name is the revelation of who Jesus is. The disciples are to believe in his name (1:12; 2:23; 3:18), confess his name (12:13, 42), pray in his name (14:13-14; 15:16; 16:23-26), receive the Paraclete in his name (14:26), have life in his name (20:31), and suffer in his name (15:21). Just as Jesus is known by his words and deeds (14:10-11), so the disciples will be known and this will result in their persecution. The world will resent them because they are in effect seeing and hearing Jesus in the disciples.

But why such hostility for Jesus? Because the world really does not know the Father who sent him (cf. 8:12ff.--even among the very religious who speak about God, there is great darkness in that they do not know him; see also 9:40-41). Earlier (8:19; 12:44; 14:7), Jesus made knowledge of the Father dependent on knowledge of the Son. Here in v. 21, knowledge of the Son is dependent on a knowledge of the Father who sent him. It is, as we have now seen repeatedly, a reciprocal relationship: to truly know the one is to know the other. Since the world does not truly know the Father, they reject Jesus and persecute the disciples who witness his *ὄνομα* in the world. Clearly, the evangelist is sending a strong message to his readers as ones who identify with Jesus and witness his name in the world. If they are hated, they will know why. And this is all the more reason to remain faithful.

15:22-25

The world's rejection (hatred) of the Father and the Son (and thus the disciples) is further amplified in vv. 22-25. The result of this hatred is persecution for Jesus and the disciples and the guilt of sin for the world. But this is not sin in general. It is the rejection of Jesus as the Messiah. With a contrary-to-fact condition, Jesus elucidates their sin: he did come and speak and they were and still are guilty. There simply is no reason for rejecting him. He revealed himself and his divine origin adequately in both word and deed (14:10-11; 15:22, 24) so there is no excuse for their unbelief--it is sin. It does not yield to the light of truth (8:12), but loves darkness rather than light (3:19). For this reason they are in sin and separated from God.

The words and works of Jesus are those of the Father (5:36; 14:10; 17:8). Indeed, we know the Father only in Jesus whom he has sent (1:18; 14:7) and in the advent of Jesus we see the Father (14:8-11). Even as Jesus stated earlier, "he who receives me receives him who sent me" (13:20), so also the opposite is true--a person cannot hold to the one and deny the other (8:19). Having heard the evidence (v. 22), the unbeliever hates both the Father and the Son for what is revealed. Rhetorically, v. 23 is an amplification of v. 22 in that it reinforces the accusation that their disbelief and hatred in the face of all the evidence is sin.

Not only have they heard the evidence, they have also seen it: Jesus' works which no one else performed, v. 24. The appeal to the works of Jesus is rhetorically an appeal to extrinsic proofs.²⁰¹ These works have great import for they are the basis for belief (9:32; 10:37-38; 11:45; 14:11). Yet the unbeliever, even though he hears Jesus' words and sees his works, responds with hatred for both the Father and the Son. The perfect, *μεμισήκασιν*, indicates an enduring hatred. The repetition of this hatred (vv. 23-24) is an example of amplification by accumulation: v. 22 begins an amplification of vv. 18-21; v. 23 amplifies v. 22; and v. 24 repeats the amplification of v. 23. The real character of unbelief is thus exposed in an intensified fashion. Jesus is preparing his disciples for what they will face after his departure.

A final statement (v. 25) is designed to bring understanding to the disciples as they

²⁰¹ Rhetorically, extrinsic (or non-artistic) proofs include such evidence as laws, witnesses, contracts, miracles, and quotations from Scripture. Intrinsic (or artistic) proofs are those based on the rhetorical categories of *ethos*, *pathos*, and *logos*.

endure the world's hatred: it is in accord with what is written in the Scriptures. "Those who hate Jesus without any reason are, like the traitor (13:18; 17:12), the subject of scriptural prophecy."²⁰² In this case, their own scriptures convict them and the groundlessness of their response emphasizes their guilt.

In presenting Jesus' preparation of his disciples for the time following his departure, the evangelist has made a strong appeal to the *pathos* of his readers with his dwelling on the subjects of love and hate, subjects designed to evoke deep emotional reactions. Effective use of extrinsic rhetorical proofs by the evangelist has also been made with reference to Jesus' words, his works, and the citing of Scripture. Here we see the benefit provided by the rhetorical analysis of a text. With a focus on the interplay between *ethos*, *pathos*, and *logos*, there is a sensitivity to the distinctive properties of biblical discourse--what Ernesto Grassi calls "sacred language."²⁰³ Structure and style, form and content, are not separated, but are seen as a unified whole so that a message and the means for conveying that message together yield meaning. Rhetorical analysis thus makes us more aware not only of the rational and cognitive dimensions of a text, but also of the emotive and imaginative ones--the very "stuff" of the disciplined art of persuasion. It yields, as Clifton Black points out, augmented insight into the ability of scripture "to instill and to enhance the life of faith."²⁰⁴ It is precisely this purpose that is served by the rhetorical strategy of the evangelist in the Farewell Discourse.

15:26-27

Following this extended description of the world's hostility which his disciples will face (vv. 18-24), Jesus reiterates the promise of the sending of the Paraclete. With ὅταν, it is seen that the coming of the Paraclete is assumed (from the promise made in 14:16, 26). In 14:26 it is the Father who sends, while here it is the Son who sends. Since Jesus has already stated in 10:30 that he and the Father are one, and since they possess a reciprocal relationship, this dual sending is not a problem: there is one coming of the Paraclete, being sent by Father and Son.

The essence of the Paraclete's mission is witness, a witness about Jesus. Indeed, the offense which Jesus' words and works caused in the world (vv. 22-24) will not

²⁰² R. Schnackenburg, *Gospel*, 117.

²⁰³ E. Grassi, *Rhetoric*, 103.

²⁰⁴ C. Black, "Rhetorical Criticism and Biblical Interpretation", 257.

disappear with his departure, for the witness which he bore of himself (his ὄνομα) will be taken up by the Paraclete. This, after all, is τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς ἀληθείας who continues Jesus' revelatory work which is to reveal the truth as it is in him (Ἐγώ εἰμι . . . ἡ ἀλήθεια, 14:6).

But τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς ἀληθείας does not bear witness autonomously. He is sent to the disciples and works through them and dwells with them (14:16-17). Thus, the testimony of the Paraclete and the disciples goes out into the world as one, the disciples bearing the witness of the Spirit.²⁰⁵ These are the men who have been with Jesus ἀπ' ἀρχῆς. From the time they were called to follow Jesus they have heard him. All they have heard will be brought to their remembrance (14:26) and they will be witnesses of this supreme revelation of God to man (1:18).

This has been described as "Johannine evangelism."²⁰⁶ As Jesus came and witnessed concerning the Father (5:19-24), so the Paraclete will come and witness concerning Jesus. As Jesus came and stood between the Father and the Christian community, now the Paraclete will stand between Jesus (who is with the Father) and the community, maintaining a union between the two spheres (cf. 1:51). So, Jesus bore witness to the disciples about the Father; the Paraclete bears witness to the disciples about Jesus; and the disciples bear witness to the world about Jesus. And since "Jesus was exalted in the spoken and written story of the cross"²⁰⁷ the word about the Son of Man who must be lifted up (3:14; 8:28; 12:32) will form the substance of their witness.

Here, then, is reason why the world hates the followers of Jesus like it has hated him: they represent Jesus by bearing witness of him to the world and in striking out at them the world is still striking out at Jesus. The evangelist wants his readers to understand the reality of the hostility that will face them (and what lies behind it) so that they will not be surprised by it, but will be prepared to stand up to it.

²⁰⁵ This is in harmony with other New Testament passages which describe the Spirit speaking through the disciples: Matt. 10:20; Acts 1:8; 5:32; 6:10; 15:28; 1John 4:13-14. And, of course, John 16:13-15 where the guiding, speaking, and disclosing are all done in conjunction with the disciples.

²⁰⁶ T. Slater, "The Paraclete As Advocate," 104.

²⁰⁷ G. Johnston, *The Spirit-Paraclete*, 34.

16:1-4a

Twice (vv. 1, 4a) Jesus states why he is telling his disciples about future persecution: so that they not be caused to give up the Christian faith and fall away. To be scandalized or to stumble (σκανδαλίζειν) means to be entrapped and destroyed.²⁰⁸ That could be the outcome of the hostility they face: to be tempted, by the unpleasantness that awaits them, into giving up their confession about Jesus and the truth as it is in him. The worst that can happen to these disciples, however, is not the harsh persecution ahead, but falling away from Jesus and no longer abiding in him (15:6). Herein lies the rhetorical exigence, or urgency, of the discourse: these things will come to pass and Jesus must prepare them in the little time remaining before his departure to be adequate to the challenges ahead that they may, indeed, continue to remain in him and bear fruit.

The harsh and painful features of discipleship have been fully disclosed (Ταῦτα λελάληκα includes 15:18-27). They have been told what to expect. While their witness is intended to benefit the world (3:17), the world will see their work as a threat to itself and will respond accordingly. Jesus has told them these things to fortify them for the future: the temptation to fall away will be there, but they can endure.

Just how bad things will become is set forth in v. 2. They will be cast out of the synagogues. But it escalates beyond that: they will also be killed. In other words, the inducements to falling away will be very real. To be cast out of the synagogue, the center of their community and religious life, would be bad enough. But to have the death penalty exercised for confessing Jesus as Messiah was taking persecution to the ultimate degree. Yet, the persecutors, because they have a zeal for God, live under the illusion that they are offering service to God. C.K. Barrett sees an example of Johannine irony here: the persecutors think they are serving God while the real λατρεία is offered by the Christian victims.²⁰⁹

Interestingly, just as Jesus' ὄρα would and did come (13:1) and referred to his departure by death, so also the ὄρα for the persecutors will come and it, too, will be characterized by death--that of the disciples. And their death will be on account of confessing the ὄνομα of him who died for them.

²⁰⁸ Bauer, *et al.*, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 760.

²⁰⁹ C.K. Barrett, *Gospel*, 485. But did this actually happen? R. Brown provides a number of references to show that Jews of the first century did in fact put Christians to death thinking that in doing so they were serving God (*Gospel*, 691-92).

A word of explanation (v. 3) is offered for these extreme responses on the part of the opposition. While this can be seen as an interruption of the thought pattern of the text,²¹⁰ it is in fact a rhetorical intensification as it reminds the reader once again of the attitude of the opposition and what gives rise to it. This is a repetition and amplification of 15:21. While the opponents of Jesus claim to know God (8:41), John's Gospel denies this (5:37-38; 7:28; 8:27, 55) and repeats it here. This is why they take the extreme measures of excommunication and killing in response to Jesus' disciples: their conception of God and his revelation in Jesus is so flawed they believe offering these human sacrifices will be serving him. Far from being an interruption in the text, this statement functions rhetorically to fortify the disciples in their understanding of why these things are happening to them and actually serves as a bridge in the text connecting the thought: "these things I have spoken . . . these things they will do . . . these things I have spoken."

Two New Testament scholars, Raymond Brown and J.L. Martyn, are representative of those who focus on the second level of the text rather than on the first level (Jesus and the Twelve). Raymond Brown suggests that this description (16:1-4a) perhaps reflects the situation faced by the author's audience, the Johannine community.²¹¹ He notes that among the Gospels, John is the strongest in setting up a contrast between Christian and Jew.²¹² First of all, there is an attack in the Gospel against the religious position of Judaism where the term "the Jews" identifies the religious authorities who are hostile to Jesus. There is also a distinction drawn between the terms "the Jews" (unfavorable) and "Israel" (favorable).

Second, says Brown, John's Gospel is an appeal to Jewish Christians in Diaspora synagogues. These are people who believe in Jesus but do not want to desert Judaism. So John encourages them to confess Jesus as the Messiah and recognize that in him there is a replacement of Jewish institutions and feasts. These Jews were in a difficult position. Not only were believers in Jesus seen as subversive, but one of the petitions in the chief prayer of the synagogues (the twelfth of the Eighteen Benedictions) was a curse on the *minim* or heretics (primarily Jewish Christians). John's language, says Brown, has the purpose of countering Jewish propaganda. "John's attitude towards 'the Jews' is not missionary, but

²¹⁰ R. Brown, *Gospel*, 702.

²¹¹ *Ibid.*

²¹² *Ibid*, Vol. 29, LXX-LXXV.

apologetic and polemic.”²¹³

J.L. Martyn ²¹⁴ argues forcefully that the threats and attempts on Jesus’ life in John’s Gospel actually reflect the situation occurring in the Johannine community: that authorities from the local synagogue were taking hostile action against the Jewish Christians. Thus, the situation presented in 16:1-2 is in actuality already happening as John writes.

In the context of the healing of the blind man in John 9, Martyn observes a distinction that is drawn between followers of Christ and followers of Moses (9:28) that he believes could not have happened during Christ’s lifetime. This Christ vs. Moses motif is for Martyn the essential expression of the synagogue-church rivalry and one of the key problems with which John wrestled.²¹⁵

With regard to the agreement already reached by “the Jews” concerning putting people out of the synagogue (9:22) Martyn states, “The agreement is, then, a formal one, reached by an authoritative body within Judaism, intended to separate the two rivals, and at John’s writing it has already been in effect for some indeterminate time.”²¹⁶ Not only ordinary folks (like the blind man’s parents), but even rulers among the Jews (12:42) feared exclusion from the synagogue for a Messianic confession of Jesus.

Whether we are speaking of Martyn’s first, or *einmalig*, level of the text (events during Jesus’ earthly lifetime),²¹⁷ or his second level (events experienced later by the Johannine church),²¹⁸ we are dealing with a serious threat to the disciples’ well-being and their confession of Jesus. Thus, the forewarning that is heard from Jesus at the first level of the text will be beneficial for the author’s readers at the second level. As noted earlier (pp. 75-76), the evangelist reconstructs the scene between Jesus and his disciples on the night of his betrayal and speaks through this scene at the first level to achieve persuasion at the second level, that of his readers. Persecution will not come as a shock to them nor will it be incomprehensible. Indeed, the contrast in v. 2 between “they” and “you” will be that

²¹³ *Ibid.*, LXXIII.

²¹⁴ J.L. Martyn, *History and Theology*, 67ff.

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 39.

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 29-30.

²¹⁸ *Ibid.*

between those willing to kill and those willing to be killed to remain faithful.

With v. 4 there is a return to the thought of v. 1: ταῦτα λελάληκα (an *inclusio*). The reference is to 15:18 - 16:3 and the hostile challenges ahead when the ὥρα of the persecutors arrives. Indeed, they are not only forewarned, but in that ὥρα their faith in Jesus will be strengthened as they reflect on what he had told them about this. Jesus' *ethos* will be magnified in that hour as they "remember". Again, this *ethos* is one of the rhetorical constraints within the discourse: Jesus' identity as one who has knowledge of the disciples' future and is able to give advice for their well-being. Their "remembering" fits well with the context of the Paraclete saying in 15:26-27 for one of the functions of the Paraclete will be to cause them to remember all that Jesus told them (14:26). It is also reminiscent of 13:19 and 14:29 where they are told that at a later time they will remember and understand (13:7). Here the evangelist is appealing to the *pathos* of his readers that they themselves would be moved to remember these things about Jesus and be strengthened whenever their own "hour" of persecution comes.

This belief that there were events or teachings from the past that deserved to be preserved in memory was important to early Christians. Concerning this, Nils Dahl states, "They need to preserve what they have received and to remind themselves of it in order to live out the reality into which they have been introduced."²¹⁹ This was especially true with the "farewell" genre of discourse. E. Bammel observes that the farewell speech of a departing man of God looks in two directions: back at his own life and then beyond his departure as well. His audience is admonished to "remember" and "keep" what has been said to them.²²⁰ In E. Stauffer's compilation of farewell speech characteristics,²²¹ the departing one's recollections of what he has taught and his exhortations to his followers to keep his words and instructions also highlight this aspect of "remembering" in farewell addresses.

There are many New Testament examples of this "remembering" motif. To cite just a representative few: Jesus exhorts his disciples on the night in which he is betrayed to

²¹⁹ N. Dahl, *Jesus*, 15. Dahl also says, " 'To remember', in the New Testament, signifies almost always to recall something or to think about it in such a way that it is expressed in speech or is formative for attitude and action" (p.13).

²²⁰ E. Bammel, "Abschiedsrede", 5.

²²¹ E. Stauffer, *Theologie*, 321-24. See also R. Brown, *Gospel*, 597-601, and F. Segovia, *Farewell*, 4-20, for a discussion of these characteristics of farewell speeches.

observe the Lord's Supper "in remembrance" of him (Luke 22:19). St. Paul's encouragement to the young minister, Timothy, included: "Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, descendant of David, according to my gospel"²²² (2 Tim. 2:8). John tells us that it was after Jesus had been raised from the dead, after he had been glorified, that his disciples "remembered" the things he had told them and the things that were written about him (John 2:22; 12:16). And in another New Testament farewell speech, St. Paul urges the elders of Ephesus to remember his own ministry among them and the words of the Lord Jesus (Acts 20:31, 35). Thus, Jesus' statement to his disciples here in the Farewell Discourse that he has spoken these things to them so that at a later time they may "remember" them is consistent with the New Testament witness to "remembering" in general, and the farewell genre of speeches in particular.

The strongly rhetorical nature (appeal to persuade) of John 13-17 is captured by Paul Minear who describes the appeal of these chapters to later readers (second level of the text): "These chapters of John were anything but pleasant devotional readings to be used on an afternoon stroll with Jesus in the rose garden. They were weapons being used in a tense nip-and-tuck struggle for the ultimate allegiance of men and women who were about to enter their own Gethsemane, often feeling that they were engaged in a futile struggle with overwhelming power."²²³ At the first level of the text, Jesus' discourse carries this strong appeal. Jesus' warnings and assurances are the "weapons" with which he equips the Twelve as the time for them to enter "the garden" (18:1) and face the challenges beyond quickly approaches. Here we find a profound appeal to evoke *pathos* with the *ethos* of Jesus standing as the only reason that such a future would be accepted by his followers. In this way, the evangelist seeks to reinforce the rhetorical effectiveness on his readers of his retelling of the Jesus story.

16:4b - 15

16:4b - 5

Prior to this time, from the time they became associated with him as his disciples, the hostility was all directed at Jesus, not at them. In the eyes of the authorities, they were

²²² Quotations from *New American Standard Bible*.

²²³ P. Minear, "To Ask and to Receive," 242.

apparently a rather negligible quantity. Soon, however, that would change. This is brought out with the contrast ἐξ ἀρχῆς . . . νῦν δε . They will speak and act on Jesus' behalf (15:27) and the hatred, anger, and violence that had been directed at him will now be directed at them. Up to this point, his being with them had exempted them from having these concerns. With his departure, the hostility of others would fall on them.

The departure of Jesus, however, is portrayed in a positive light. It is a return to his sender, death having been transformed into “the return from a mission”²²⁴ which has been brought to successful completion. Yet, the disciples are not seeing this in its fulness. Rather, they see themselves as the bereaved, perhaps as those who are about to be orphaned (14:18). Thus, none of them asks Ποῦ ὑπάγεις; Already in 14:28 he told them he was going to the Father and that it was for their benefit, a cause for joy. But all they hear is departure and separation. Surely Schnackenburg is on the right track when in view of v. 6 he says, “they are made so speechless by sorrow that they are unable to ask him where he is going.”²²⁵ Barrett points out that the present tense is emphasized here: while they have asked before where Jesus is going, they are so sorrowful, no one asks now.²²⁶ They are looking primarily at themselves. This scene incisively evokes the *pathos* of the readers: will they themselves turn inward and miss Jesus' point? Or will they see with the eyes of faith and persevere?

A number of commentators, because of Peter's question in 13:36 and Thomas' implied question in 14:5, see here a disarranged text in need of rearrangement.²²⁷ In other words, the question Ποῦ ὑπάγεις had indeed already been asked of Jesus, so 16:5 must be out of order. But there is no need for this conclusion. While the question in its absolute form has already appeared in 13:36, the context was quite different. There Peter was more concerned about his own involvement in the events than with the meaning of the events themselves (cf. 13:37). He was struck more by the impossibility of his following Jesus than by Jesus' identity and the implications of his departure. And Thomas (14:5) expresses frustration and agitation at Jesus' statement. Indeed, the question isn't even posed directly

²²⁴ J. Ashton, *Understanding the Fourth Gospel*, 451.

²²⁵ R. Schnackenburg, *Gospel*, 126.

²²⁶ C.K. Barrett, *Gospel*, 485.

²²⁷ R. Brown (*Gospel*, 584) cites Bernard, Bultmann, and Moffatt as typical treatments which assume disarrangements in the text.

there because the disciples do not understand what this ποῦ refers to (οὐκ οἶδαμεν ποῦ ὑπάγεις). Thus, claims of discrepancies between 16:5 and 13:36; 14:5 disappear when it is seen that Jesus is speaking of their lack of asking at the present time in view of all that he has told them. In depicting this scene of sorrow and lack of understanding on the part of the disciples (not to mention the lone figure of Jesus standing before them, knowing their lack of comprehension), the author is skillfully playing upon the sympathy and faith-response of his readers. Do they see Jesus rightly? Do they understand what his departure means for them? Can they put the world's hostility in proper perspective? These questions are all effectively brought to the fore by the rhetorical skill of the evangelist.

16:6-7

Had the disciples asked “Where?” in the way that Jesus indicates, they could have been comforted. Instead, sorrow has filled them, *πεπλήρωκεν*. And being filled, there is no room left for anything else. This is the kind of overwhelming sadness that numbs the senses and has left them speechless.²²⁸ The warning or exhortation to guard against such an influence was already made in 14:1, 27, but they are hearing only the dreaded news of Jesus' leaving, their being “left”, and the hostility that awaits them.

In this context, we find a focus also on the impact of the disciples' reactions on Jesus (as we did at 14:28). He must bear the disappointment that his own had such little comprehension or appreciation of what his leaving really meant for them. Such deep sorrow and lack of understanding would be reversed by the events of Easter (2:22; 13:7), but at the present time, prior to his departure, Jesus makes his appeal by showing them the necessity of his departure in terms of the coming of the Paraclete.

Jesus begins v. 7 with words that have a revelatory character: “I tell you the truth.” Jesus' *ethos* is magnified as the one who not only is truth (14:6), but who proclaims truth. Here the revelation is of the future coming of the Paraclete and what he will do with regard to the world (vv. 8-11) and with regard to the disciples (vv. 13-15). Verse 7 is an enthymeme, a deductive rhetorical proof composed of a statement with a supporting reason.

Jesus begins by telling them plainly, *συμφέρει ὑμῖν ἵνα ἐγὼ ἀπέλθω*. He hits squarely the problem of how they misunderstand his departure.²²⁹ For greater effect, he

²²⁸ R. Schnackenburg, *Gospel*, 126.

²²⁹ This language is also used at 18:14 where it refers to Jesus' death: *συμφέρει ἓνα ἄνθρωπον*

then uses the sharp contrast of a negative followed by a positive. Jesus' work must be completed. If it is not, the Paraclete will not come, but if he goes according to plan, the Paraclete will come. Already at 7:39 the sending of the Spirit was tied intimately to Jesus' glorification, the completion of his mission with his departure.

Since the Paraclete will bear witness of Jesus to the disciples (14:26; 15:26), Jesus' promise of sending the Paraclete becomes a promise of his own ongoing mission and ministry among them. Here we see a strong appeal to the *pathos* of the disciples: first, Jesus says straight out that his leaving is to their advantage (cf. 14:28); second, he shows that his leaving is not a cessation of his own existence or his involvement with them for he says that after he goes he will send the Paraclete; and third, the disciples are given an either/or: they cannot have it both ways. The sending cannot take place without his going. What the Paraclete's benefit to the disciples will be is elaborated in the following verses.

16:8-11

The Paraclete's work is here described as being directed toward the world. He will expose or uncover the world with regard to sin, righteousness, and judgment. Thus, the forensic sense of ἐλέγξει as "convict" would be supported. What we have is the description of a cosmic court proceeding²³⁰ in which the world's guilt is exposed, leading to its conviction. The repetition of περὶ and the conjunction καὶ lifts each noun to prominence for these are serious matters the Paraclete will prosecute.

Here the "bearing witness" of 15:26 is given substance. Judgment will occur in and through the existence of the disciples. It is a judgment that "continues to take place in the continuing proclamation of his [Jesus'] word by the community."²³¹ As they bear witness, the values and standards of the world are uncovered and it stands guilty with regard to these three subjects. That the Paraclete would stand in this relationship to the world is not surprising. Already in 14:17 the world was described as neither knowing nor seeing him and therefore being incapable of receiving him.

Rhetorical amplification now takes place as these three counts against the world are each taken up separately and expanded upon in verses 9, 10, and 11.

ἀποθανεῖν ὑπὲρ τοῦ λαοῦ.

²³⁰ R. Bultmann, *Gospel*, 562.

²³¹ *Ibid.*

The ἀμαρτία is unbelief concerning Jesus, as spoken of in 15:21-25. This is the basic sin which is grounds for all others. It is the one sin which merits God's enduring wrath (ἡ ὀργή τοῦ θεοῦ μένει ἐπ' αὐτόν, 3:36). It is a remaining in the darkness (12:46). This is stubborn unbelief in Jesus as the Messiah (ἐὰν γὰρ μὴ πιστεύσητε ὅτι ἐγώ εἰμι, ἀποθανεῖσθε ἐν ταῖς ἀμαρτίαις ὑμῶν, 8:24). He has come among them with his words and his works (14:10-11; 15:22-24), but they have rejected the revelation concerning him. This the Paraclete will expose.

In going to his Father, Jesus is shown to be righteous, totally vindicated against the world's desire to convict him as a sinner (9:24). Indeed, they will judge him to be guilty (18:29-30; 19:7), but in being glorified and returning to the one who sent him (7:33) Jesus will demonstrate his righteousness. Since the world does not believe in him, it does not share in this righteousness.

The fact that after a certain point in time the disciples will no longer behold Jesus is to be seen as a victory, for he has ascended to where he was before (6:62). He, not the world, is the one who stands in right relationship to the Father. Already he has appealed to his disciples (14:28) with the assurance that this departure to the Father is to be a cause for joy, not sorrow. The Paraclete, in bearing witness in and through these disciples, will bear witness of this vindicated Jesus to the world and will convict the world for its lack of true righteousness insofar as it does not believe in Jesus.

Indeed, the world is to see its own judgment in Satan's judgment (v. 11). The perfect tense, κέκριται, makes the action definitive--it has already taken place. This happens already in unbelief (3:18) and it happens at the hour of Jesus' glorification: in 12:31 the judgment of the world and the casting out of the ruler of this world are seen as events occurring νῦν (at that time) and in the context of the cross (12:32). 16:11 is clearly related to the latter where ὁ ἄρχων τοῦ κόσμου τούτου is summarily dealt with.

The Paraclete will effectively convict the world in and through the witness that is borne of Jesus for in his life, death, and resurrection the ruler of this world is judged. Again the perfect tense, κέκριται, demonstrates that it has been assured as a focal point of God's plan and can be spoken of as already in effect. We have seen such certainty of things concerning Jesus at 12:38; 13:18; 15:25; 17:12; and 19:24, 36 where events happened that the scripture might be fulfilled. The disciples are assured here that Satan's judgment is just as certain. The Paraclete's message: those who continue under the

leadership of the ruler of this world, as did Judas (13:2, 27), will share the judgment of their ruler (12:31).

The Paraclete's dealing with the world in this manner is a strong appeal to *pathos* for here again is an antidote for sorrow: the world will not be allowed to remain as it is with impunity—it will come under judgment, the same judgment as dealt to their ruler. The disciples (then and now) can be encouraged to bear witness to Jesus (15:27) and guard against stumbling (16:1). Jesus' departure is a good thing for with his leaving the Paraclete will be sent, and he, when he comes, will convict the hostile world. This they must hear: συμφέρει ὑμῖν ἵνα ἐγὼ ἀπέλθω (16:7).

It has been observed by Kelly Reese that the majority of commentators see the work of the Paraclete in 16:7-11 as being primarily for the benefit of the world, not believers, which causes difficulty in understanding these verses.²³² Reese, on the other hand, proposes that the work of the Paraclete here is primarily for the benefit of believers, not the world (which certainly correlates well with verse 7: συμφέρει ὑμῖν).

She argues that in 1 John 2:1 (the only other occurrence of "Paraclete" in the New Testament outside the Gospel of John), Jesus Christ is the Christian's advocate before the Father in heaven. In John 16:7-11 the "other" Paraclete (the Spirit of truth, 16:13) does the same in the world. Jesus is therefore the advocate for believers before the heavenly tribunal while the Paraclete serves as advocate for believers before the earthly tribunal. Here is an appeal to *pathos* in that the readers are given encouragement: when they face accusation and threats in the earthly realm, they have the assistance of a divine advocate sent by the Father and the Son.

In this way, the Paraclete with his work guarantees the continuance of the Johannine community.²³³ While the world did not believe in Jesus, the disciples did (16:9). While the world did not know where Jesus came from or where he was going, they did (16:10). The ruler of this world has been judged already, so Christians can live without fear (16:11). As Reese concludes, "The Holy Spirit is not concerned here with the salvation of sinners but with the defense of believers."²³⁴ This is an encouragement and a comfort for those who have heard the Johannine Jesus describe the opposition and violence

²³² K. Reese, "The Role of the Paraclete in John 16:7-11," 39.

²³³ T. Slater, "The Paraclete As Advocate," 105.

²³⁴ K. Reese, "The Role of the Paraclete in John 16:7-11," 47.

they may well face from ὁ κόσμος (15:18 - 16:4).

16:12-13

Verse 12 is a transition statement bridging the activity of the Paraclete with regard to the world (vv. 8-11) and his activity as teacher of the disciples (vv. 13-15). Here is further reason why Jesus' departure should be cause for joy instead of sorrow for them. Jesus assures them that he knows their condition and has taken it into account. They have a future and need to be ready to withstand what it will bring. Presently they have all they can handle, but this will change and the Paraclete will be there to assist them.

The contrast between ἄρτι and ὅταν δὲ demonstrates that only after Jesus' death and resurrection will there be a full understanding, a theme common in John (2:22; 12:16; 13:7). Jesus will eventually tell them the "many things" he speaks of here, but they will be communicated through the Paraclete. "The Paraclete is not only his [Jesus'] interpreter, but also his 'successor' who will continue his revelation."²³⁵ The Paraclete only receives what belongs to Jesus (14:26; 16:13-14) so Jesus remains the chief revealer of God to man.

The assurance Jesus gives deepens with verse 13. The future may be uncertain, but it is illumined by a word of revelation. The one who gives this revelation is called τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς ἀληθείας, as he was in 14:17 and 15:26. Nothing will be withheld for he will lead them into τῆ ἀληθεία πάση. Such leading or guiding by God's Spirit does have an Old Testament background: "Make me know Thy ways, O Lord; teach me Thy paths. Lead me in Thy truth and teach me, for Thou art the God of my salvation; for Thee I wait all the day" (Ps. 25:4-5); "Teach me to do Thy will, for Thou art my God; let Thy good Spirit lead me on level ground" (Ps. 143:10).

There are two main variant readings in v. 13.²³⁶ The first is the substitution of εἰς and the accusative (εἰς τὴν ἀλήθειαν πᾶσαν) for ἐν and the dative (ἐν τῆ ἀληθεία πάση) and essentially does not affect this reading. The majority reading is accepted. The other deals with variants of ὅσα ἀκούσει and with what are seen as doctrinal (ὅσα ἀκούει) and grammatical (ὅσα ἂν ἀκούσῃ) improvements. Again, the majority reading is accepted with the variants not affecting the outcome of the rhetorical reading. Since the sending of the Paraclete will be future to the discourse of Jesus with his disciples, the

²³⁵ R. Schnackenburg, *Gospel*, 133.

²³⁶ B. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary to the Greek New Testament*, 247.

future (ἀκούσει) is not out of place with regard to the truth he will hear and declare to them.

This truth, however, into which they are guided will not be something new in contrast to, or in addition to, Jesus' teaching. Rather, whatsoever he "will hear" he will speak and since both Father and Son send the Holy Spirit, what he will hear will come from them (12:49; 14:10, 26). Jesus has already identified himself as ἡ ἀλήθεια (14:6), so what will be revealed by τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς ἀληθείας are the saving realities connected to Jesus. Since the disciples will be convinced of the rightness of their knowledge, belief, and cause, and will ultimately be victorious and vindicated (16:33), they will see themselves as true Israel who worships God "in spirit and in truth" (4:23).²³⁷

There is movement in verse 13 from the source of this revelation ("not from himself") to its content ("whatsoever he will hear") with special mention being made of "coming things". Here is true encouragement: the disciples will not be left in the dark, but will have all the truth and even future circumstances revealed to them to prepare them. R. Brown observes that the Paraclete's work is perfectly consonant with the fact that he is sent by the Father, for in his declaring of things to come he is performing a function peculiar to God alone.²³⁸

With verses 12-13 we see a strong appeal through the first level of the text to the readers' *pathos*. Recognizing and acknowledging this interplay between the speaker and his audience as an important dynamic in the understanding of the text is a contribution of the rhetorical approach. It gives a more interpersonal and sensitive reading of the text than those approaches that are more focused on form and tradition critical issues. Here the Johannine Jesus is shown empathizing with his disciples' current condition, but indicates that everything he needs to tell them will eventually be communicated to them by yet another Paraclete. In the face of an uncertain future comes news of the provision that the Father and the Son have made for them to equip them to carry on Jesus' mission in the world. The readers are thus assured by the evangelist that they, too, are beneficiaries of the Paraclete's work. For Jesus' mission has been carried to them through the work of the evangelist and in this way their needs have been provided for by the Father and the Son.

²³⁷ T. Slater, "The Paraclete As Advocate," 105.

²³⁸ R. Brown, *Gospel*, 708. Brown cites F.W. Young, "A Study of the Relation of Isaiah to the Fourth Gospel," *ZNW* 46 [1955], 224-226, in support of this view.

The rhetorical *logos* used in v. 13 is an enthymeme: a deductive proof comprised of a statement with a supporting explanation. Jesus' *ethos* is highlighted here and in the following verses as the one who knows the overall plan, who cares for his own, and whose teaching is the truth and is synonymous with the Father's truth.

16:14-15

The enthymeme of v. 13 is followed by another in v. 14 where the rhetorical constraint of Jesus' identity is brought into bold relief: the Paraclete will glorify him. Jesus, with all that he is and all that he had done for them, will be held before them by the Spirit. The work of the Spirit, after all, is to bear witness to Jesus (15:26). That which belongs to Jesus, what the Spirit takes and declares to them, is "all the truth" of v. 13. Indeed, as Jesus glorified the Father by revealing him to mankind (17:4), so the Paraclete will glorify Jesus by revealing him to man.

In verse 15 we have a reminder of the unity and reciprocity of the Father and the Son. In declaring what belongs to Jesus, the Paraclete is also declaring all that belongs to the Father, for the Father and Jesus possess all things in common. The Father has it (ἔχει), the Son owns it (ἐμὸν ἐστίν), and the Spirit takes it and declares it (ἀναγγελεῖ). The work of Jesus and the Spirit are not autonomous for the Spirit is Jesus' successor who will continue his revelation. The outcome of this message: "in Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph, men and women could 'see' the I AM of the Mosaic covenant, the Eternal One who inaugurated the 'age to come' by the incarnation of his Son."²³⁹

The *ethos* of Jesus is magnified in verses 14-15. He is one who, along with the Father, is glorified. His authority (a rhetorical constraint in the Farewell Discourse) is clear for he holds all things in common with the Father who sent him. He knows the Father's plan for the disciples and cares enough for them to reveal it to them. Not only so, but when his hour has come to depart, he will make provision for their future by sending "another Paraclete" who will be with them forever (14:16), teach them all things and remind them of all that Jesus had said to them (14:26), bear witness of Jesus to them (15:26), convict the hostile world (16:8-11), guide them into all the truth (16:13), and declare to them the things to come (16:13).

Here, the final sub-section of the third rhetorical topic of the *Partitio* (A Mission of

²³⁹ G. Johnston, *The Spirit-Paraclete*, 38.

Love) is brought to a close. In the first sub-section (15:1-17), the disciples were warned of the threat to their unity from within: the potential for division among themselves. In the second (15:18 - 16:4a), they were told about the threat from without: the hostility of the unbelieving world. In this last sub-section (16:4b-15), the disciples' ultimate well-being is assured by God's provision for them: the Paraclete and his work for them in the world and among themselves.

Throughout this third topic of the Farewell Discourse, the Johannine Jesus' *ethos* (his character as the divine revealer who loves his own and will continue to provide for them) has appealed to the *pathos* of the evangelist's readers (whatever sorrow, confusion, frustration, and lack of understanding they may have) and has done so with an effective use of amplification, repetition, extrinsic (or non-artistic) proofs, enthymemes, and metaphor. Such a rhetorical reading of the text I believe to be an improvement over alternative readings which see repetition, apparent interruptions or dislocations, amplifications, and so forth to be imperfections in the text. I have shown, to the contrary, that these are intentional facets of the first level of the text (the rhetoric of the author) which, when "unpacked", speak persuasively to the challenges faced by the author's readers in their life of faith.

The evangelist draws the attention of his readers to what Jesus has brought his disciples (comfort, joy, assurance, peace, understanding, and hope) while realistically dealing with his own departure and the threats that will continue to confront them. The readers are thus encouraged to see themselves abiding in this same Jesus and being partakers in all that is his. As they consider how Jesus is portrayed preparing his disciples to continue his mission to others with the witness of the Paraclete, they have the joy of seeing themselves as the very ones who have become recipients of this ministry of love and who are now to extend that love to one another.

The Second Topic (Little Time Remaining)

16:16-33

We now take up the second topic of the Farewell Discourse, "Little Time Remaining." This is a rhetorical amplification of 13:33, the second topic set forth in the *Partitio*. The arrival of Jesus' "hour" has been the crucial backdrop for the entire Farewell Discourse (13:1). Here we see what this hour means for his disciples. The exigence of the

rhetorical unit stands out boldly: Jesus' departure is imminent, his disciples will soon be separated from him and will not be able to follow him (13:33). And yet, what he reveals to them in this second topic about the immediate future (16:16) is to create a joy that will overcome and replace all their sorrow (16:20-22). Portrayed with his *ethos* as the one who knows all these things and reveals it all to them, Jesus strikingly appeals to the disciples' *pathos*, initially evoking confusion and exasperation (16:18) and then speaking in such a way that they become convinced that they now understand what he is talking about (16:29-30).

An awareness of this rhetorical dimension has been lacking in most treatments of the scriptural text. What is being demonstrated here is that a rhetorically informed reading is an improvement on most form and source critical readings. It accounts for both structure and content and probes the delicate interplay between the speaker and his audience (and the author and his readers at the second level of the text). It demonstrates not only that a text is persuasive, but describes with rhetorical insight how the text achieves persuasion.

16:16-18

The "little while" of 13:33 enabled the disciples to know that Jesus would be leaving them and going where they could not follow. But the phrase was also used to encourage them with the news that they would see him again (14:19). Here both ideas are combined with a double μικρόν: Μικρόν . . . καὶ πάλιν μικρόν. A break in continuity occurs during a succession of time: there will be a short interval till Jesus' departure and again a short interval till they see him again. These two "little whiles" refer to the sorrow of the Passion and the joy of Easter.²⁴⁰ And yet, as Jesus has already pointed out, his return to his Sender is to be an occasion for joy for them (14:28; 16:7). Here the note of comfort is added that the separation from Jesus they experience will be only for a "little while", for they will soon thereafter see him again.²⁴¹

The first "little while" will embrace only a matter of hours for his disciples until his glorification occurs when he is "lifted up" in death (12:32-33). The second time span will

²⁴⁰ R. Schnackenburg, *Gospel*, 155.

²⁴¹ R. Brown (*Gospel*, 720) cites Isaiah 26:17 as Old Testament background for the idea of there being only a "little while" before happiness with God is found after a period of tribulation.

also be short: from Friday afternoon until early on the morning of the first day of the week (20:1).

It should be noted that there is a change in the verbs for “see” from one “little while” to the next. The change from θεωρεῖτέ to ὄψεσθε may indicate a change in the nature of the “seeing”: to have him visually removed during his departure and then to see him later not only visually in the resurrection, but in the context of a fully comprehending faith. This would follow well the Johannine motif that at a time subsequent to Jesus’ glorification, the disciples would come to understand fully the things that had beforehand been so cryptic (2:22; 7:39; 12:16; 13:7; 20:9).

According to Michaelis,²⁴² the verbs for “seeing” do not carry a particular significance when used by themselves. So, for instance, βλέπω is used interchangeably with both ὁράω and θεωρέω throughout the New Testament.²⁴³ This holds true also in the Gospel of John. There, for example, we find that the “seeing” of Jesus’ miracles is described by θεωρέω in 2:23, by ὁράω in 6:2, and εἶδον in 6:14. And seeing the resurrected Jesus is described by θεωρέω in 20:14, by ὁράω in 20:18, 25, 29, and by εἶδον in 20:20.²⁴⁴

When these verbs (θεωρέω and ὁράω) are used in conjunction with one another, however (as they are in the verses before us), purposeful differences in nuance are apparent. For instance, the use of θεωρέω in John 16:10, 16, 19 clearly refers to the seeing of Jesus up to the time of his going to the Father. On the other hand, the use of ὁράω in 16:16, 19 with the second “little while” refers to a time following Jesus’ departure. This “seeing”, says Michaelis, is that “which takes place in faith under the work of the Holy Spirit.”²⁴⁵ In any case, employing two different verbs in these verses certainly sets the two “little whiles” of John 16 apart and perhaps acts as a signal of the significance that should be attached to this.

Jesus’ words are intended as comfort and encouragement, but they are lost on his

²⁴² W. Michaelis, “ὁράω”, 343ff.

²⁴³ Ibid.

²⁴⁴ While βλέπω is found in John in the context of miracles being done (9:7) and the resurrection (20:1,5), it denotes sense perception, being able to see, as distinct from blindness (Michaelis, “ὁράω”, 343). It is not used as describing the vision of God (Ibid., 344). One exception to this is not used of the disciples, but of Jesus himself (5:19).

²⁴⁵ W. Michaelis, “ὁράω”, 362.

disciples. Monologue ends with the reaction of not just an individual (as in chapter 14), but with the group of disciples. They confer together privately, expressing perplexity and probably exasperation at Jesus' words. Here *pathos* takes center stage. Jesus' words are not only cryptic, but striking. The disciples, while acknowledging that Jesus is going away (they themselves add his words of v. 10: "because I go to the Father"), are struck by the fact that they are to see him again in "a little while."

In verse 18 they go on asking one another what this can mean. Brown points out that such repetition is not uncommon in the Near East.²⁴⁶ It is also a common rhetorical device used for emphasis. Schnackenburg observes that this reaction of the disciples has the effect of also causing the reader to reflect on Jesus' words.²⁴⁷ Here we see the rhetorical skill of the author at work, painting a verbal picture for his readers that causes them to internalize and reflect upon the meaning of the departure of Jesus and "seeing" him again.

The "little while" until the disciples see Jesus again sounds so hopeful, and yet they must say οὐκ οἶδαμεν because of the departure which Jesus has made so clear. The problem is with this little space of time separating their inability to see Jesus and then "their new capacity to see, connected with a new future."²⁴⁸

Bultmann observes that in not addressing Jesus directly, "it is as if he had already left them."²⁴⁹ This same lack of direct inquiry was seen in 16:5. The author may be suggesting that the depth of sorrow that filled them (v. 6), and perhaps depression over not being able to understand, caused them to withdraw somewhat from Jesus. So they have a private, perhaps agitated, discussion among themselves. Their perplexity is amplified with the repetition of Jesus' words and their question in v. 18. And one can sense the level of frustration present in their words, οὐκ οἶδαμεν τί λαλεῖ.

16:19-22

This condition of perplexity, distress, and sorrow is met head-on by Jesus' omniscience: Jesus knows what is on their minds and hearts and before it is openly asked,

²⁴⁶ R. Brown, *Gospel*, 720.

²⁴⁷ R. Schnackenburg, *Gospel*, 157.

²⁴⁸ A. Etienne, "Birth", 234.

²⁴⁹ R. Bultmann, *Gospel*, 577.

Jesus anticipates their question with his answer. Here the *ethos* of Jesus is emphasized by the evangelist. He is one to whom they can turn in utter confidence and in whom they can believe because he “knows”.

This quality of Jesus of knowing without having heard or been told has been seen before in the Gospel: 1:47ff.; 2:24-25; 4:17-18; 6:61, 64. This special knowledge is clearly presented as being supernatural, a characteristic of the one who is the Holy One of God (6:69), who has been sent from God (16:30), and who is one with the Father (10:30). Seeing Jesus in this light gives greater certainty to his predictive words for he “knows”. It also speaks directly to the *pathos* of the disciples (then and now) for here is one whose very character brings comfort, assurance, and hope. This is not lost on the disciples who a little later on (16:30) enthusiastically respond to Jesus’ omniscience. But for now, they are confused and Jesus’ response in v. 19 forms a transition to his explanation of the “little while” with his words about sorrow and joy and the example he employs.

The explanation begins with the solemn statement of verity and authority: ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν. This authority of Jesus is one of the rhetorical constraints in the Farewell Discourse and illumines his *ethos*. A stark contrast between the disciples and the world is set forth in which an ironic twist takes place. The disciples will weep and lament over their master’s death (an amplification of the sorrow in v. 6). These are words commonly used for mourning in bereavement.²⁵⁰ The world, however, will rejoice. The witness borne against it by Jesus (15:22-25) will apparently be ended. But, as explained earlier, the hatred from the world will be transferred to the disciples because in them the offensive witness of Jesus against the world continues (15:18-16:4a). So the disciples do have grounds for sorrow: the death of Jesus and the hatred and persecution directed at them by the world. Nothing is softened. Set before them is the bare truth of what will soon occur.

But then, the unexpected reversal of it all: the sorrow that overwhelms and paralyzes the disciples (in contrast to the joy of the world) is to be turned into joy, an enduring joy (16:22). This joy does not just follow sorrow, but will arise out of it. Sorrow is the actual origin of this joy, marking the necessity of Jesus’ departure. As Anne Etienne observes, “The gap made by Jesus’ absence is not the void of non-being, but a place of transformation.”²⁵¹ In a “little while” these disciples will go down into the abyss

²⁵⁰ A. Etienne, “Birth,” 234.

of deep sorrow and yet in a “little while” they will rise up in joy. Since they seem to grasp the fact of his departure (v. 17), Jesus places the emphasis of his explanation on the second part of his cryptic statement: “and again a little while and you will see me,” v. 19. His words will be “decoded”²⁵² by means of a figure of speech (the *logos* of rhetorical proofs, an inductive proof from example).

This figure of speech is essentially an analogy, harking back especially to the Old Testament (Isaiah 26:16-19; 66:7-14).²⁵³ An expectant woman in the midst of labor who then gives birth is an example of what they will endure with Jesus’ death and resurrection. In one and the same event we find that anguish turns into deep joy.

Some (e.g. R. Brown²⁵⁴) see in the example of v. 21 a possible reflection of Genesis 3:16 (pain in childbirth) and 4:1 (“man” used instead of “son”) and a connection between the mother of Jesus and “her hour.” Others (e.g. Schnackenburg²⁵⁵) believe it to be too extreme to establish such a connection. Most agree that there are points of contact between this figure and an Old Testament background: the birth pangs of Israel before the Messiah comes forth from her (Is. 26:17-18; 66:7-10; Hosea 13:13; Micah 4:9-10; 5:2-3).²⁵⁶ This would then be an appeal to the authority of Scripture (extrinsic proof), one of the rhetorical constraints in the Farewell Discourse.

In any case, the *tertium* of this simple, everyday image appears to be clear: the profound change of sorrow into joy with the events that unfold. That is clearly the author’s point. As in the reality of the example, so also the reality of the events unfolding with Jesus: his death causes sorrow; seeing him again brings joy, a joy that no longer remembers the tribulation that was suffered to bring forth the cause of joy. As a woman is

²⁵¹ *Ibid.*

²⁵² R. Schnackenburg, *Gospel*, 157.

²⁵³ C.K. Barrett, *Gospel*, 493.

²⁵⁴ R. Brown, *Gospel*, 721.

²⁵⁵ R. Schnackenburg, *Gospel*, 158.

²⁵⁶ Sister Anne Etienne (“Birth”, 228-237) briefly traces the use of the richly evocative image of “giving birth” in both the Old Testament and New Testament as a compelling presentation of the message of the living and life-giving God: the birth of a child (Gen. 4; 16; Luke 1); the birth of a new people (Gen. 15; 17); the spiritual re-birth of individuals (John 1;3); the end times (Is. 13); and the birth of a new universe (Rom. 8). Then she focuses on the birth image in John 16. She observes that all this taken together is the image of divine blessing.

sustained in the anguish of childbirth and kept from despair by the certainty of what will be, so his disciples will be able to endure the travail of his departure, being assured of its blessed outcome. These words become words of encouragement for the evangelist's readers who also must deal with a departed Jesus: abiding in Jesus as his own, they will be able to endure travail and look for a joyful outcome.

The change from “you will see me” (v. 19) to “I will see you” (v. 22) perhaps indicates the transformation to the situation that Jesus brings about by coming to them as the risen Christ. It is, nonetheless, a mutual seeing, a seeing which will begin on Easter morning just “a little while” after the departure which caused them to weep and lament.²⁵⁷ While the assurance “no one takes your joy from you” indicates an enduring joy, it also calls to mind the hostility and opposition of the world--it will indeed try to take it from them! This joy, however, will remain their blessed possession.

16:23-24

Their blessed condition at that time is further characterized as people whose prayers are heard and answered by the Father. In the context of vv. 16-22, his reference to ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ would be synonymous with “a little while and you will see me”, v. 16; the time of birth after the “hour” of the woman, v. 21; and “I will see you again”, v. 22. The disciples' perplexity will cease ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ. Having seen Jesus after “a little while” (and having been seen by him), and having been taught by the Spirit of truth (14:26; 16:13-14), they will no longer ask questions from a lack of understanding (cf. 13:24, 36; 14:5, 8, 22; 16:17).

The questioning referred to, ἐρωτήσετε, concerns asking a question for information to give understanding. Up to now they have lacked understanding, but a time is soon approaching (μικρὸν; ἐκείνῃ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ) when this will change.

On that day, however, they will ask (αἰτέω) the Father. This refers to making a request, a petition, not interrogating for information. Thus, the point here is not a contrast between the Father (of whom they do ask) and the Son (of whom they do not), but between the state of the disciples before and after ἐκείνῃ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ, i.e. the time when they see him again and their sorrow is turned to joy. What an appeal to the *pathos* of the disciples

²⁵⁷ R. Bultmann (*Gospel*, 580) observes that since Jesus' coming again to the disciples after his departure is not seen by the world (14:19), it cannot refer to the Parousia, but to Easter.

this is: their state of joy ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ will be characterized by a full comprehension of the truths concerning Jesus--there will be no need to request further information.

Not only so, but their petitions to the Father will be granted. Both the asking (14:14; 15:16) and the giving (16:23) are in Jesus' name. Thus, the relationship between the one who prays and God who gives is mediated by the relationship that one has to Jesus. This includes ὅτι, "whatever", one asks. In 14:13, Jesus places such requests in the realm of things that glorify the Father in the Son. Here Jesus is encouraging his disciples with a marvellous promise of how things will be when the "little while" he has spoken of has arrived--the Father will grant their petitions in his name.

Does this mean that the prayers of the disciples up to this time had been deficient or weak or in error? Not at all--it's simply that ἐκείνῃ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ had not yet occurred. Before this, the disciples had prayed in the name of God in connection with Old Testament promises and the revelation of God there. These promises were now being fulfilled and so they were to pray in the name of the Messiah who fulfilled them.

The present imperative, αἰτεῖτε, indicates the on-going nature of their petitioning: they are to be persistent and "keep on asking." To what end? That their joy may be made full. The perfect passive, πεπληρωμένη, indicates that the joy that arises will continue on as a lasting joy for them. The one who answers their prayers in Jesus' name will, by his answers, cause this joy.

For what do they make petition? In 15:11, the joy that fills the disciples has to do with the things spoken by Jesus. Thus, fullness of joy for the disciples will come through the understanding of Jesus' revelation and knowing the truth (8:31-32; 14:6). Once ἐκείνῃ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ has arrived and there is no further need for asking questions, this joy will fill them. Since their joy is made full and their understanding is made complete in connection with the things spoken by Jesus when "that day" has arrived, there may again be a polemic here against a mysticism that would look elsewhere for revelation and lasting joy. It is found only in Jesus.

The author's persuasive powers are evident in the passage before us. His readers are brought face-to-face with a Jesus who wants them to pray persistently in his name with the promise that the Father will hear and answer. Further compelling is the knowledge that

their joy is both the Father's and the Son's concern. What is seen here is not merely Jesus saying "farewell", but rather that as believers they are being effectively prepared for what lies beyond: their continuation of his mission in the world under the guidance of the Paraclete.

16:25-28

With the words of v. 25 there is the sense that closure is being brought to this portion of the discourse. A "now and then" contrast is set forth concerning the words Jesus has been speaking and those he will speak later: speaking in figures, veiled utterances (ἐν παροιμίαις), vs. speaking plainly (παρρησία). Such figures have already been seen in the Farewell Discourse with the footwashing (13:8ff.), the servant and messenger (13:16), the vine, branches, and fruit (15:1ff.), and the woman in labor (16:21). That Jesus' speech thus far had been enigmatic to his disciples is evidenced by their individual responses at the end of chapter 13 and in chapter 14, and collectively in chapter 16 (v. 17).

The "hour" when this transition to speaking plainly occurs is most likely synonymous with the second "little while" (v. 16), the time of labor ending with a birth (v. 21), and "that day" (vv. 23, 26). While Jesus' speech up till now has been cryptic (even for these disciples who believe), there will be a full revelation and understanding in the future. It is not that Jesus will say anything new. What has already been said (and done) will become comprehensible. Father and Son will send the Spirit and the Spirit will take what is Jesus' and declare it to them (16:14-15) and cause them to remember his words (14:26). He will guide them ἐν τῇ ἀληθείᾳ πάσῃ (16:13).

Being in that condition on "that day" (v. 26), no intercession by Jesus will be needed to ask the Father to grant their requests. They will ask in Jesus' name for themselves (in accordance with 16:24) and, as has already been promised, such prayers are answered (14:13). Again, "that day" is the "hour" of v. 25, the second "little while" of v. 16, and the time of birth following labor, v. 21. Here is great encouragement, for these disciples are being assured that they have direct access to the Father.

The grounds for this access is the Father's love for them which in turn grows out of their love for, and belief in, Jesus as having come forth from the Father. The perfect tenses in v. 27 (πεφιλήκατε καὶ πεπιστεύκατε) describe their relationship to Jesus: it came into existence and remains firmly established. They have believed in Jesus' origin and

mission²⁵⁸ and the Father loves them accordingly. While the love of John 3:16 is an antecedent love that embraces the world (whether the world believes or not), this love of the Father for the disciples is a consequence of their love for Jesus, insofar as they are believers.

Verse 27 is an enthymeme, a deductive rhetorical proof consisting of a statement with a supporting reason (see earlier discussion under *Logos*, Chapter Four). Here, to give encouragement to his disciples in the face of both his imminent departure and his figurative language which has been cryptic to them, Jesus emphasizes their relationship to both Father and Son and the abiding benefit that is theirs.

In verse 28 there are four verbs: two describing Jesus' arrival and stay, two describing his departure. These are placed in a chiasmic arrangement: came from the Father - have come into the world // leaving the world - going to the Father. Here the *ethos* of Jesus as one who is in confident control of past, present, and future is manifest. By his own action he came and will return with no outside power controlling this (cf. 10:17-18). All four verbs are theologically descriptive. The first, ἐξῆλθον, is aorist and points back to John 1:14 and the enfleshment of the logos. The second, ἐλήλυθα, is perfect and describes the enduring effect of Jesus' coming. The third, ἀφίημι, and fourth, πορεύομαι, are present tense, fitting well with the theme of "a little while"--it is imminent, in the process of happening.

The last two verbs are especially important here in the Farewell Discourse since Jesus declares that he is leaving, but his leaving is a going, a return to the Father from a successful mission. It is vitally important that his disciples grasp this. Indeed, just as these words enhance the *ethos* of Jesus, they also evoke a deep *pathos*, for here is true comfort: his departure is actually a return to the Father who sent him and yet he will not leave his own as orphans (14:18). Rather, he will send them the Paraclete (14:16; 15:26; 16:7-8), he will see them again (16:22), and he will eventually return to take them to himself (14:3).²⁵⁹

²⁵⁸ The "coming forth" that Jesus describes (ἐγὼ παρὰ [τοῦ] θεοῦ ἐξῆλθον) undoubtedly involves his entire mission and is understood as such by the disciples. They have believed both in his origin and what he came to do.

²⁵⁹ R. Brown (*Gospel*, 736) cites Swank in pointing out that there may be echoes of Isaiah 55:10-11 heard here: "For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return there without watering the earth, and making it bear and sprout, and furnishing seed to the sower and bread to the eater; so shall my word be which goes forth from my mouth; it shall not

“A victorious certainty can be heard in Jesus’ declaration.”²⁶⁰ As the subsequent reaction of the disciples demonstrates, everything Jesus has said is to be seen against this background. That is precisely the goal the evangelist desires his rhetorical skill to achieve with his readers. He wants them to persistently and confidently pray in Jesus’ name, be assured of the Father’s love for them as Jesus’ own, and recognize (in spite of the enigmatic language used to describe it) the positive outcome for them of Jesus’ coming and going.

16:29-30

The response to Jesus among the disciples now changes substantially. In contrast to vv. 17-18 where we find confusion and frustration, the disciples are now apparently delighted that Jesus is already using the openness of speech that he promised for a future day. In other words, compared to the earlier mention of “a little while” in 13:33 (where this third topic was introduced in the *partitio*) and in 16:16, v. 28 is spoken plainly.

And yet, they do not fully understand what v. 25 promises nor will they until after the sending of the Paraclete (14:26; 16:13-15)--otherwise Jesus would not have had to add the words of v. 31ff. They, however, are convinced of their newly arrived at understanding and are willing to boldly confess what they believe to be the truth about him.

Verse 30 is a confession from the disciples’ lips that Jesus is omniscient and beyond that, that he is divine.²⁶¹ Here the *ethos* of Jesus is again brought to the forefront by the evangelist and elevated. Why is there no need for anyone to inquire of him? Without their asking, he has answered what was in their hearts and minds and has knowledge (οἶδας πάντα) which he communicated to them, as in vv. 19-20. Raymond Brown cites the Jewish idea that the ability to anticipate questions and not need to be asked is a mark of the divine.²⁶² Thus, the disciples verbalize their faith in Jesus’ revelation of

return to me empty, without accomplishing what I desire, and without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it.”

²⁶⁰ R. Schnackenburg, *Gospel*, 163-64.

²⁶¹ That a mark of the divine can be seen in the knowing of the heart and mind before a question is asked can be seen in such passages as Isaiah 65:24; Matthew 6:8 (the prefatory comment to Jesus teaching his disciples how to pray); and John 2:24-25 (Jesus’ full, antecedent knowledge which makes anyone else’s witness to him unnecessary).

²⁶² R. Brown, *Gospel*, 725.

himself and the evidence of this they have experienced (v. 19). They confess his deity and with that his saving mission. Of course, the “little while” that perplexed them (vv. 16-17) has also been elucidated: in their confession they fully accept v. 28 and his imminent departure and then seeing him again shortly thereafter. As stated above, the $\nu\hat{\upsilon}\nu$ οἶδομεν may be a bit impetuous. They have faith, but not a fully informed faith--that will occur with the later sending of the Paraclete.

Howard Bream notes that the disciples’ statement, “you do not need to have anyone question you” has baffled interpreters who would think that it most logically would read, “you do not have need to question anyone.”²⁶³ He surveys interpreters from the early Christian Fathers down to the present day and finds two main camps: the majority take this statement to mean that the disciples are impressed by the demonstration of Jesus’ ability; the rest see the emphasis of the need focused on themselves, not on Jesus (where the text has it): they no longer need to ask him questions.²⁶⁴

Bream notes that in the Old Testament, the Book of Daniel offers a remarkable parallel to John 16:30. Citing Daniel 2 he states, “Like John, the writer of Daniel shows dramatically the hollowness of revealers who need raw material upon which to operate.”²⁶⁵ Those Babylonian soothsayers needed their king not only to inquire of them, but to give them enough information in his inquiry that they might thereby know the subject matter. Such “knowing” was clearly not divine in nature.

The *Didache* contains specific instructions for dealing with travelling prophets to distinguish between the true and the false (*Did.* 11-13); and the *Shepherd of Hermas* gives perhaps the perfect illustration of the kind of revealer with which John 16:30 implicitly contrasts Jesus: “For no Spirit given of God needeth to be consulted; but, having the power of deity, speaketh all things of itself, because it is from above, even from the

²⁶³ H. Bream, “No Need To Be Asked Questions: A Study Of Jn. 16:30”, 49.

²⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 59: “The speech of the disciples invites us to contrast Jesus with revealers who do indeed need to have someone question them.” Who are such “revealers”? Among the Israelites would be included the prophets, priests, and rabbis (who interpreted dreams). Among the gentiles there were oracles and sages. This, notes Bream, was widespread in the pagan world. And among Christians, prophetic activity was acknowledged with Jesus, John the Baptist, the disciples at Pentecost (Acts 2:1-18), other incidents in Acts (e.g. some disciples in Ephesus after their baptism, 19:1-6; the four virgin daughters of Philip the Evangelist 21:9), and Paul and others at Antioch (Acts 13:2).

²⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 67.

power of the divine Spirit. But the spirit which is consulted, and speaketh according to the desires of men, is earthly and fickle, having no power; and it speaketh not at all, unless it be consulted.”²⁶⁶

Thus, the false prophet needs to have men ask questions of him to be given enough information on which to know what the inquiry is about and then formulate an answer. Jesus, on the other hand, intuitively perceived both that the disciples wanted to ask him questions and what it was they wanted to know (16:19). In 16:30 they show that they identify him as truly being from God because he needed no priming questions, as other, non-divine revealers did. Here again, we may be hearing a polemic in the Gospel against pursuing any other source of revelation than that which comes in and through Jesus.

For the first century Christian, there were a number of such sources of revelation to which they could turn. We have already cited the prevalence of Merkabah mysticism with its influence in the first century. Being based as it was on Scriptural passages, this could have been quite attractive to early Christians.

In the heavily Hellenized and Romanized culture of the first century Mediterranean world, there were also the influences of the Greek and Roman oracles. The influence of these, as noted above by Bream, was widespread in the ancient world. A case in point is the use of the Sibylline oracles, a Jewish/Christian collection of oracles based on the pagan Sibylline Books.²⁶⁷ These were used by both Jews and Christians, being highly esteemed and often quoted by the latter.²⁶⁸

In the late first century, then, there was among both groups considerable interest in

²⁶⁶ *The Shepherd of Hermas*, Mandate the Eleventh (*The Apostolic Fathers*, 434-35).

²⁶⁷ *The Concise Oxford Dictionary*, 473.

²⁶⁸ H. Bream, “No Need”, 67. Certain motifs in the Sibylline oracles apparently had an influence on post-A.D. 70 Judaism, especially with regard to hopes for the future: a final intervention on God’s part to vindicate his people (see J. Riches, *The World of Jesus*, 90-91, 99-100). So we know that within the first century such prophetic material was being utilized and was influential. The genuineness of these prophetic utterances was also accepted by many of the Church Fathers who quoted and/or referred to them in defense of Christianity (see Justin Martyr, *First Apology* XVIII and XX, 168-69, where he appeals to the pronouncements of oracles and the Sibyl, respectively and the esteem in which they are held). The prophecies of Hystaspes were also so regarded and used (see H. Chadwick, *The Early Church*, 78 and J. Martyr, *First Apology*, 169 n. 9). The early Christian Fathers’ acceptance of such prophetic materials may reflect an even earlier reliance upon them in the Christian community.

the possibility of achieving heavenly knowledge through visions and heavenly ascents. As noted by James Dunn,²⁶⁹ in reaction to this interest “one of the most consistent emphases of the fourth Gospel” is that of seeing Jesus as the ultimate revealer. Indeed, the revelatory significance of Jesus is stated in the Gospel’s prologue so that “all God’s self-revelation now comes to focus in and through Jesus (1:18; 51); God can only be seen to the extent that one sees him in and through (the revelation of) Christ.”²⁷⁰

The claim of the fourth evangelist is that Jesus alone reveals God, is the way to God, and conveys the fulness of God’s grace and truth. This is because “he is the Wisdom of God incarnate, the fullest possible embodiment in human flesh of God in his outreach to this world.”²⁷¹

Should followers of Jesus, then, be pursuing any other revelation than that which comes in and through Jesus? The author of the Gospel (using the first level of the text to persuade his readers at the second level), seems to be giving a categorically negative answer to this question. Jesus has come from above (3:31; 8:23) and is the true revealer of God (1:18; 12:45; 14:7-10). This the disciples (then and now) confess when they declare:

πιστεύομεν ὅτι ἀπὸ θεοῦ ἐξηλθες.

16:31-33

That their faith is not complete or fully informed at this point becomes clear with the doubt expressed by Jesus’ question in v. 31 and in his announcement that they will be scattered and leave him alone, v. 32. This is also brought out in the word “now”. Bultmann²⁷² points out that *vûv* (v. 30) carries the nuance “now at last”, looking back at the past, while *ἄρτι* (v. 31) looks ahead to the future: “now already”. The disciples seem delighted that “now at last”, with Jesus speaking plainly, they finally understand and believe. Jesus, however, is speaking with an eye toward the future: do they really comprehend “now already” what is yet to come to pass? And with the divine quality they had just confessed concerning him (v. 30), he predicts some unsettling events that will transpire at that “hour”.

²⁶⁹ J. Dunn, “Let John Be John: A Gospel for Its Time”, 306.

²⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 310.

²⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 318.

²⁷² R. Bultmann, *Gospel*, 591.

They will be scattered, σκορπίζω, each to his own, ἕκαστος εἰς τὰ ἴδια, and will leave Jesus quite alone, μόνον. The appeal to evoke *pathos* here is strong. The confidence they expressed in vv. 29-30 is abruptly curtailed with this prediction that they will desert him. Each will look out for his own interest, not that of Jesus. The scattering is passive with a hostile power causing it. The leaving, however, is not: they actively leave Jesus (ἀφῆτε) and the guilt is their own.

The reference to “scattering” implies the image of a flock tended by a shepherd (cf. John 10). This fits in well with the larger image of “the eschatological Messianic shepherd-teacher calling his followers to participate in gathering the Messianic harvest.”²⁷³ The background for this image with the scattering is the prophecy of Zechariah (13:7) and the ἵνα indicates that it would occur to fulfill this prophecy, even as Judas’ betrayal had fulfilled Psalm 41:9 (John 13:18).

Yet, in spite of their desertion, Jesus is not alone. As he had told the unbelieving Jews about his departure and their inability to follow him (7:33-36) and then repeated it to his own disciples (13:36), so he now tells his disciples what he had earlier told the Jews about the abiding presence of the one who sent him (8:16, 29). There is distinct irony here, for it is not Jesus who is alone when the disciples leave him. Rather, it is the one who leaves Jesus who is quite alone in the world: bereft of the bread of life, the light of the world, and the Good Shepherd. The “hour” for this to occur has come for these disciples--soon, in a matter of hours, the full impact of Jesus’ words will be upon them.

Throughout his narrative, the fourth evangelist speaks of Jesus’ impending “hour”. Time is thus used as a metaphor in this Gospel for the approach of Jesus’ crucifixion/resurrection. It indicates “the movement of time toward a critical moment.”²⁷⁴ O’Day notes that “all notions of present and future in the discourse are recast against the arrival of the hour.”²⁷⁵ In this way, the meaning of Jesus’ hour can be explained before the events play themselves out in full. In the Farewell Discourse, then, Jesus speaks as one for whom the future is as real as the present moment. The temporal perspective of the

²⁷³ A. Köstenberger, *The Missions of Jesus and the Disciples*, 133. See also John 13:13, 20. Jesus as teacher and Lord sends his own into the world that they might continue his mission. The “harvest” occurs when those in the world receive the disciples’ message and as a result receive both the Father and the Son in faith.

²⁷⁴ G. O’Day, “‘I Have Overcome the World’ (John 16:33)”, 158.

²⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

Discourse is that future reality is already a reality and can be spoken of as such (13:31), even though the events of the hour that effect it are yet to occur. Thus, in 16:32, what is still future is the present reality of the Discourse: “The hour is coming, indeed it has come...”

The interaction portrayed between Jesus and his disciples in vv. 29-32 is not unlike that found in 13:36-38 and 14:1-4. A bold pronouncement is made by a disciple(s) and then the doubting question is posed by Jesus. This causes the issue to remain open, gives the disciples further reason for deeper reflection, and gives Jesus an opportunity to speak even more pointedly and proclaim a promise that encourages his disciples.

Indeed, Jesus declares that the purpose of his revelation to them is that they have peace, peace through his words. The hatred and persecution coming from the world will create anxiety in their hearts, but here is the answer. A great contrast is set forth between ἐν ἐμοὶ and ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ; and between εἰρήνη and θλίψις. The tribulation is that predicted in 15:18-16:4, 20. Peace²⁷⁶ is a condition Jesus promises his disciples while they are still in the world and subject to such tribulation. This peace will provide them with security despite the distress. It is not a worldly peace (c.f. 14:27). Rather, it is a salvific peace and is present in the midst of the distress and sorrow they will experience. Also, this peace is “in Jesus”, not in themselves. Thus, there is assurance: the forthcoming events will scatter them, but all is not lost and they need not despair. The certainty of their faith rests in the object of faith, Jesus, not in themselves. And so it is in faith that they will successfully confront the tribulation arising from the world. Whatever the situation of the evangelist’s readers may be, they are here directed to the only possible alternatives: either remain with Jesus (by faith) or be scattered and thus leave themselves quite alone in the world. To remain with Jesus means to have peace through his words which the evangelist has given to them. The contrasts of Jesus/the world and peace/tribulations are strong appeals to the evangelist’s audience to abide in Jesus, especially in view of threats they may be under from the world.

Jesus exhorts his disciples to a courageous reaction on the basis of his victory over the world, a victory that is once for all time (νενίκηκα) despite the world’s hostility.²⁷⁷

²⁷⁶ See my comments on John 14:27, pp. 147-49.

²⁷⁷ J. Bruns (“A Note On John 16:33”, 451) observes that the use of words connoting “victory” in the New Testament is predominantly Johannine. Thus, it is not unusual to see it

After all, the ruler of this world has already been judged (16:11), is now to be cast out (12:31), and has no power over Jesus (14:30). The world can hardly be distinguished from the prince of the world in whose power the world lies (c.f. 16:8-11). Thus, the victory is over the world (16:33) which inflicts the punishment of death (16:2) and that means it is a victory over the devil (13:2), Satan (13:27), the evil one (17:15), the prince of this world (14:30), the one who is a murderer (8:44), the agent of death. Jesus conquers this enemy and those who believe in him share in this victory by faith (c.f. 8:24; 14:1; 1John 5:4).

With *νενίκηκα*, we again see the fluidity of time in the Farewell Discourse. It clearly serves a literary and theological function for it is seen that Jesus is not limited by temporal categories.²⁷⁸ What is temporally in the future is a present reality for these disciples. Nothing is uncertain about the future for them for it is already known in the present words of Jesus. Before they experience Jesus' death, their own persecution, and even their own death, they are given the promise that the victory over the world is already available. In this way, the evangelist ensures that those who believe in Jesus will recognize Jesus' victory and embrace what it offers them.

The second topic (Little Time Remaining) thus ends on a note of triumph. Such a chord was struck also at the end of the fourth topic (14:29-31) and the third topic (16:8-11). The author clearly has words of encouragement for his readers even as they may face what appear to be overwhelming odds and this encouragement is a prominent feature in each of the topics. The second topic (16:16-33) achieves closure with a reiteration and intensification of departure and time motifs in the final verses (aspects of rhetorical amplification) and with the poignant claim of victory. The *ethos* of Jesus as the divine one who "knows" is made to stand out boldly and the appeal to evoke the *pathos* of the readers (to a radical optimism) is strong, both as the author seeks to move them beyond their present sorrow and distress and as he prepares them in view of Jesus' triumph over the world to realistically face the future with confidence.

used here as Jesus' antidote for the disciples' fear and distress in the face of a threatening world.

²⁷⁸ G. O'Day, "I Have Overcome the World' (John 16:33)", 153.

CHAPTER SEVEN

A RHETORICAL READING: EPILOGOS

We have now arrived at the *Epilogos* of the Farewell Discourse (17:1-26). Here, closure is brought to the rhetorical unit's arrangement. Aristotle identified four aims of the epilogue: disposing the hearer favorably toward the speaker (and unfavorably toward the opponent); amplifying and minimizing various propositions; moving the audience with *pathos*; and giving a reminder of the chief points made in the speech.¹

Since the *epilogos* is the conclusion of the whole speech and has the potential of being powerfully climactic, Aristotle believed that in the epilogue "one should speak in recapitulation of what has been shown."² That is precisely what is found in John 17. All the main propositions of the *Exordium* (13:1) and *Partitio* (13:31-38) are restated with amplification in Jesus' prayer: Jesus' knowledge of the arrival of his "hour"; his unique relationship to the Father; his imminent departure; both his and his disciples' relationship to "the world"; his relationship to his disciples; and love as the defining quality of the relationship between the Father, the Son, and the disciples. As George Kennedy states: "The prayer makes a splendid conclusion, recapitulating the topics presented earlier and providing an emotional fulfillment for the whole passage."³

Indeed, Jesus' prayer deepens and intensifies the overall contents of the Farewell Discourse as the evangelist's readers hear for themselves the communication from the Son to the Father concerning himself, his first disciples, the world, and future believers. It "gathers up much of what has been said, both in the Book of Signs and in the Farewell Discourses, and presupposes everywhere the total picture of Christ and His work . . .

¹ Aristotle, *On Rhetoric*, III. 19. 1, 280.

² *Ibid.*, 281.

³ G. Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation*, 85. See also Quintilian (*Institutio Oratoria* VI. 1. 1-9, 383-87) for the moving or emotionally satisfying aspects of the *epilogos*. S.C. Barton (*Spirituality*, 126) notes that here in the prayer of Jesus to the Father, the efficacy of praying in Jesus' name (which had been enjoined upon his disciples, 16:23) finds its climax. See also G. O'Day ("I Have Overcome", 163): "The prayer of chap. 17 is both theologically and narratively dependent on the assertion of 16:33."

almost every verse contains echoes.”⁴ John 17 is thus an integral part of the Farewell Discourse, serving as a climax to it. Several key words and themes of the Farewell Discourse (glory, life, revelation, election, the world, believing, joy, and love) are present in the prayer and thus the whole Discourse is tied together.⁵

The *Epilogos* is still discourse, but the focus has changed: Jesus is now speaking to the Father. The overall impression is that this prayer was spoken aloud before the disciples and that they overheard Jesus’ deep concern for their welfare and that of later believers.⁶ C.D. Morrison points out that the technique of using prayer as a medium of instruction for an audience was nothing strange to the ancients.⁷ Thus, such an understanding is not out of place here, given the context of Jesus being alone with his disciples on the night in which he was betrayed, discoursing with them. Elsewhere in John, we see Jesus praying before others at 6:11; 11:41-42; and 12:27-28. At the narrative level, then, we have Jesus in prayer to the Father, his disciples being present and overhearing his intercession with the Father on their behalf. Through the evangelist’s presentation of this scene, his readers are “overhearing” the same intercession which includes Jesus’ concern for them as well.

While the focus of the discourse in John 17 has changed, the effect remains the same: Jesus’ words continue to be persuasive, even as they are overheard by others (disciples then and now). This persuasion is effected by the focus on *ethos* and *pathos*, the intrinsic rhetorical proofs primarily found in chapter 17. There is little formal logical argument here by means of examples or enthymemes (*logos*), although enthymemes do

⁴ C.H. Dodd, *Interpretation*, 417. See also S. Theron (ἸΝΑ ὉΣΙΝ ἘΝ, 78): “Most of the key words in John 17 echo and finalize themes and concepts advanced and developed in the foregoing ‘Book of Signs’ and ‘Farewell Discourses’.”

⁵ J. Ferreira, “The So-called ‘High Priestly Prayer’ of John 17”, 29. Ferreira also notes similarities between John 17 and the eucharistic prayers of the *Didache* and posits a dependence of the latter on the former (32-34). While this speaks to the importance and influence of Jesus’ prayer on the early Christian community, it does not affect the rhetorical analysis of the text itself and thus is only noted here.

⁶ R. Brown, *Gospel*, 748; R. Schnackenburg, *Gospel*, 167-68; Lenski, *Interpretation*, 1114; Dietzfelbinger, *Der Abschied des Kommenden*, 289.

⁷ C. Morrison, “Mission and Ethic: An Interpretation of John 17”, 59-60. See also J. Ukpong, “Jesus’ Prayer”, 52-53.

occur at vv. 14 and 24, for the topics themselves function as the premises upon which a wider ability to persuade takes place. This is especially true with reference to Jesus' authoritative *ethos*. Also, the nature of the discourse here (prayer, not argumentation) points to its intercessory function.

Persuasion from *ethos* is found in Jesus' unique relationship to both the Father and the disciples. *Pathos* is found, not in distress over Jesus' death, but in the joy that is theirs from his victory and the future he provides. Also, in hearing this solemn prayer, the disciples are having their future task once again set before them. Jesus is praying with a view to all who do believe in him (v. 8) and who will come to believe in him (v. 20). Consolation is brought to completion with the transcendent reality of the love that exists between the Father, the Son and the disciples, and the Son's indwelling of them (v. 26). The most striking rhetorical feature of the *Epilogos* as a whole is the repetition of the rhetorical unit's topics with amplification (the first topic is amplified in vv. 1-5 as part of the prayer; all topics are then recapitulated in the balance of the prayer).

As was discussed in Chapter 3, the literary genre of John 13-17 is that of a farewell discourse. It was not unusual for a farewell to end with a prayer and here we see it forming an *inclusio* with the *Exordium*, 13:1. The topics of the *Exordium* are all taken up in the *Epilogos*, amplified, and the rhetorical unit is brought to a grand climax.

While some, following Bultmann, see chapter 17 as a disarrangement which really belongs after 13:1 as an introduction to the original farewell discourse, Raymond Brown and others consider such a rearrangement to be a "literary blunder"⁸, observing that this prayer serves better as a climax than an introduction. Brown's own theory of composition, however, makes chapters 15-16 and 17 later redactions of an original that were inserted between 14:31 and 18:1.⁹ But as I have demonstrated with rhetorical analysis, it is not necessary to speculate about disarrangements or redactions to account for the present literary form of the Farewell Discourse.

There are some interpreters, both ancient and modern, who have not seen John 17 as a prayer at all¹⁰ and others who have seen it as a special eucharistic prayer reflecting

⁸ R. Brown, *Gospel*, 745. See also R. Schnackenburg, *Gospel*, 167: "In the present configuration of the Gospel, there is no more suitable place for this prayer and there would also be no better place in a possible original form of the Gospel."

⁹ *Ibid.*, 585-587.

¹⁰ J. Ukpong, "Jesus' Prayer", 51.

early Christian Last Supper liturgy.¹¹ By and large, however, this prayer has been seen as a priestly prayer, a tradition going back to Cyril of Alexandria, but especially to the Lutheran theologian, David Chytraeus, who called it the “high-priestly prayer” of Jesus. F. Moloney concedes that this is indeed a prayer, but maintains that here Jesus prays, not as a priest, but rather as the Son to the Father in a bond of loving obedience.¹² Jesus’ actions, however, do have a priestly cast to them. His prayer is intercessory; he will offer a sacrifice for the people (12:50-51), indeed for the sins of the world (1:29; 3:16-17; 12:32-33); and the intercession he makes is for himself, for his own, and for those who will believe in him through their word—not unlike the actions of the High Priest on the Day of Atonement who interceded and made sacrifices for himself, the priests and Levites, and the whole congregation of Israel (Lev. 9:7; Num. 29:4-11).¹³

Over against those who see John 17 as a eucharistic prayer or a reflection of early Christian worship,¹⁴ stands the consolatory, intercessory character of the prayer. It is prayed in view of the imminence of Jesus’ crucifixion and in anticipation of the disciples’ persecution at the hands of the world. It is meant to strengthen and encourage them in the face of it all (13:19; 14:29; 16:4). “Just as the prayer in front of Lazarus’ grave was uttered for the sake of the people who were standing near by (John 11:42), so this prayer is made for the benefit of the disciples.”¹⁵ Indeed, this prayer has as its main object believers (at the first level those present when Jesus spoke; at the second level those of subsequent generations, v. 20, who overhear it through the evangelist). In this intercession, the theme

¹¹ *Ibid.* See also E. Hoskyns, *The Fourth Gospel*, 495. The difficulty with this view is that it is speculation lacking proof.

¹² F. Moloney, “The Prayer of Jesus’ Hour”, 79-83.

¹³ A. Edersheim, *The Temple*, 306.

¹⁴ S. Agourides, “The ‘High Priestly Prayer’ of Jesus”, 143-45. Ernst Käsemann, *The Testament of Jesus*, is one who sees a pronounced Gnostic influence in the Gospel and in chapter 17. He claims the Gospel came into being within “a conventicle with gnosticizing tendencies” (73). Stephen Smalley (“The Testament of Jesus: Another Look”) takes Käsemann to task for ruling out, with his presuppositions, any historical tradition behind Jesus’ prayer. Citing C.H. Dodd (*Historical Tradition*, 1-9), J.A.T. Robinson (“The New Look”, 94-106), and an article of his own (“New Light”, 35-62), Smalley points out that “the existence of a genuinely historical background to the Fourth Gospel cannot be dismissed as lightly as Käsemann finds possible” (498).

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 144.

of 11:41-42 and 12:27-28, the glorification of the Father and the Son, is expanded.¹⁶

The question of the structure (arrangement) of John 17 is a rhetorical concern and has already been alluded to above in the discussion of the objects of Jesus' intercession. There are those who see no structure in John 17,¹⁷ but this prayer is not just a random placement of topical units. In the structure of the Farewell Discourse, the author has used his rhetorical skill creatively, discussing the last of the chiastically arranged topics in the initial portion of Jesus' intercession in John 17 (see structure diagram, Chapter Four). The individual segments of the prayer are significantly ordered "to form multiple lexical-thematic patterns that criss-cross a particular passage."¹⁸ It can thus have an arrangement that is not unlike that of poetry. Indeed, the Jerusalem Bible does present the entire prayer as poetry.¹⁹

Why poetry? In the Bible, discourse of a particularly important nature (especially that of God) is marked in an obvious way, utilizing a variety of poetic devices available in ancient Hebrew and Greek.²⁰ The rhetorical function achieved with such structure and style is that of impact and appeal. The overall effect of John 17, however, is not due to figurative speech, rhetorical questions, scriptural quotations, and the like. Rather, its clarity, impact, and appeal are produced by the repetition of all the rhetorical unit's major topics in an over-lapping, amplified pattern. The simplicity of style, familiarity of content, and depth of subject matter produce a cumulative rhetorical effect: the readers are drawn forward, on the basis of what Jesus has already taught and recalls here, to engage the world by continuing his ministry to the world in their own going forth in his name.

The arrangement of Jesus' intercessory prayer that I will follow in doing the rhetorical analysis is this: vv. 1-5 amplification of the first topic: the mutual glorification of the Father and the Son; vv. 6-26 recapitulation of major discourse topics (vv. 6-12 the

¹⁶ M. Thompson, "Intercession in the Johannine Community", 230.

¹⁷ M. Rosenblatt, "The Voice of the One Who Prays in John 17", 142-43. Rosenblatt describes John 17 as an "unstructured form" lacking a consistent and logical structure, an identifiable set of poetic boundaries, a chronological sequence, and a theological conclusion. What she has missed is that the prayer itself is the theological conclusion to the entire Farewell Discourse.

¹⁸ E.R. Wendland, "Rhetoric of the Word", 62.

¹⁹ *The Jerusalem Bible*, 183-85.

²⁰ E.R. Wendland, "Rhetoric of the Word", 76.

eternal security and unity of the disciples; vv. 13-19 the disciples in the world; vv. 20-23 future generations of believers; vv. 24-26 faith-knowledge leading to love--an *inclusio* with 13:1).

Perhaps the quality of this prayer which attracts our attention and continues to provide a seemingly unfathomable depth of riches to investigate, is best captured by C.K. Barrett who speaks of Jesus' use of human language to speak to the Father: "The ordinary language of prayer breaks down because Jesus is speaking, as it were, within the Godhead."²¹ There is an emphasis in this prayer on the reciprocal relationship between the Father and the Son: Jesus' will (θέλω, v. 24) and the Father's will are one. And while this is primarily an intercessory prayer to the Father, persuasion takes place as those who believe in Jesus are able to "listen in" and be moved to a more confident faith by the *ethos* and words of Jesus. This conversation within the Godhead, overheard by the disciples and coming to later believers through the evangelist's word, is now the final portion of the Farewell Discourse to be rhetorically investigated.

The First Topic (Mutual Glorification of Father and Son)

(17:1-5)

In the Farewell Discourse, the four major topics set forth in the *Partitio* (13:31-38) are taken up and amplified in reverse order from chapter 14 through chapter 17. The order is: 1 2 3 4 4' 3' 2' 1'. We have completed work on the fourth, third, and second topics and are now ready to begin a rhetorical analysis of this concluding portion of the rhetorical unit, the first topic: the mutual glorification of the Father and the Son.

17:1-5

"These things" succinctly gathers together the whole preceding discourse²² and readies us for the finale: Jesus' prayer to the Father. The importance of what is now said is indicated by his eyes being lifted to heaven, the gesture of prayer. This is reminiscent of 11:41 when Jesus prays publicly before the tomb at the raising of Lazarus. Jesus is the model man of prayer.²³ In describing Jesus as a man of prayer in Luke's Gospel, S.C.

²¹ C.K. Barrett, *Gospel*, 514.

²² R. Schnackenburg, *Gospel*, 170. See also G. Johnston, *The Spirit-Paraclete*, 170: "Every phrase in this paragraph [vv. 1-8] recalls passage after passage throughout the Gospel."

Barton observes that “Luke’s primary concern is to present Jesus as the one who teaches about prayer by doing it . . . Jesus is the humble, obedient Son and the model of how to pray in testing times.”²⁴ The same is true in the instances of Jesus at prayer in John’s Gospel as Barton notes when he characterizes chapters 13-17 as “teaching, by action and by word.”²⁵ This supports the present hypothesis: that the Johannine Jesus, in his words and actions, defines and models what the disciples are to be in their own quickly-approaching ministry to the community of believers in Jesus and to the world--truly a time of testing.

As Jesus begins his address to the Father (πάτερ) with his eyes lifted to heaven in a gesture of prayer (cf. 11:41), he makes reference to his “hour” which has now come. This forms essentially an *inclusio* with 13:1 where the *ethos* of Jesus is seen with his “knowing” that his hour had come.

Dietzfelbinger observes that there are three uses of the word “hour” in John’s Gospel: (1) the chronological use to specify a literal time period (1:39; 4:6; 11:9); (2) the christological use (here) with two points of reference--the “hour” is not come with reference to the passion (7:30; 8:20); the “hour” is come with reference to the passion (12:23, 27; 13:1; 17:1); and (3) the community’s hour--of persecution (16:2,4); of understanding (16:25); of scattering (16:32); also of their worship (4:21, 23) and their resurrection (5:25; 28).²⁶ These last descriptions of the community’s “hour” speak of its fate and life as qualified in relation to Jesus. Thus its “hour” is always seen in relation to Jesus’ “hour”. And insofar as Jesus’ “hour” has glory, so also theirs. This is a play on the *pathos* of the disciples, for even persecution is then cast in a positively meaningful light.

Here in 17:1, with the perfect tense (ἐλήλυθεν), Jesus indicates that the indefinite period of his “hour” had arrived: having come, it is now here. It apparently began with the coming of Greeks to see him (12:20-23) and runs to his dying on the cross (19:30).

Jesus’ petition sets forth the foremost concern of his mission: his sender’s glory (cf. vv. 4-5). Here the reciprocal relationship between Father and Son that we have seen before (14:9-11) is seen in the mutual glorifying for which Jesus prays. The final aim is

²³ C. Dietzfelbinger, *Der Abschied des Kommenden*, 270.

²⁴ S.C. Barton, *Spirituality*, 89.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 125.

²⁶ C. Dietzfelbinger, *Der Abschied des Kommenden*, 280-282.

the Father's glory, but this glory is only realized when the Son receives glory. And precisely because Jesus is not seeking his own, but the Father's glory, he is glorified by the Father.²⁷

Herein is the Father glorified by the Son: his giving of eternal life to those whom the Father has given him. It was for this that the Father gave Jesus authority over all flesh. In the Gospel of John, the authority given to the Son is the authority of judgment (5:27); authority over his own life (10:18); and authority to give life to others (17:2). The latter authority to give life is that which glorifies the Father.

This authority (ἐξουσία) is one of the rhetorical constraints in the Farewell Discourse. These constraints are all those elements of the rhetorical situation which "have the power to constrain decision and action needed to modify the exigence."²⁸ In other words, they are those aspects of the dynamic existing between speaker and audience which can be used to bring about persuasion. Confronted by a sense of urgency (the exigence), the speaker will use these constraints effectively to move his hearers (or readers).

The *ethos* of the Johannine Jesus, also a rhetorical constraint, is once again highlighted. He has been given authority over all flesh: especially the giving of eternal life to those who are his and then exercising judgment over the rest.²⁹ Everything is a gift: the giving of authority to Jesus, Jesus' giving of eternal life to all those whom the Father has given him. The community of believers in any age is thus reminded that they are dependent on God and guided by God.

This gift of eternal life is further defined in an explanatory sentence. This explanatory style is, as Brown notes,³⁰ a Johannine trait (cf. 1:19; 3:19; 15:12). This life is in their "knowing" of Jesus: "in the recognition of Jesus as the one sent by God, man recognizes God as the one who gives life."³¹ This is τὸν μόνον ἀληθινὸν θεόν, a statement directed against both pagan polytheism (Isaiah 37:20; Exodus 34:6) and Jewish unbelief (rejection of Jesus as the Messiah, 8:24). This is the God who is known through

²⁷ Ibid., 285.

²⁸ L. Bitzer, "The Rhetorical Situation", 8. Rhetorical constraints in the Farewell Discourse would include Jesus' authority, Jesus' *ethos*, the disciples' identity, the exigence created by Jesus' announced departure, and the appeal to the authority of Scripture.

²⁹ R. Bultmann, *Gospel*, 494.

³⁰ R. Brown, *Gospel*, 741. Also C. Dietzfelbinger, *Der Abschied des Kommenden*, 273.

³¹ C. Dietzfelbinger, *Der Abschied des Kommenden*, 273.

his Son (1:18; 14:9-11). Thus, God allows himself to be recognized through the sending of Jesus and it is in this recognition that people apprehend eternal life. Schnackenburg points out that “knowing God” has the Old Testament meaning of “having communion with God.”³² This life spoken of by Jesus is achieved through community with God and it is Jesus Christ who leads people into that relationship.

Köstenberger sees in the frequency with which ἀποστέλλω is used in John 17 (seven times) an emphasis on this chapter being the focal point for the “sending” theme in the Fourth Gospel. This we would expect of the *Epilogos* where the major themes are recounted for the reader/listener. Jesus is just reaching the pinnacle of his mission as the Father’s sent one (vv. 3, 8, 18, 21, 23, 25)--his “hour” of glorification. The disciples’ mission is about to begin as his “sent ones” (v. 18).

Here in vv. 1-3, Jesus speaks of himself in the third person. He then turns to the first person for the remainder of the prayer (4-26). This is similar to the *Partitio* where he speaks initially (vv. 31-32) in the third person, and then (vv. 33-38) in the first person--“a deliberate stylistic similarity.”³³ The rhetorical effect of this style is to focus first upon the Father-Son relationship in the context of the themes of the “hour”, glorification, eternal life, and sending, and then with the switch to first person to draw attention in a most personal way to the “I” of the discourse. Jesus is the saving object of their faith (12:47), he who gives eternal life (17:2).

In verses 1-3, Jesus makes a request for glorification with a view to what he will do after he is glorified. Verses 4-5 are a request for glorification in view of what he has already done. The essence of Jesus’ glorifying of the Father is his completion of the work the Father has given him. The “work” he accomplished would certainly include his healing miracles (9:1ff.), his revelation of the truth (8:31ff.), his raising of the dead (11:38ff.), and pronouncements of judgment (8:37ff.). But primarily, it is a reference to his saving mission, culminating at the cross. Here Jesus again speaks in a timeless fashion, as though all has been achieved when in fact his death, resurrection and ascension are yet to take place.³⁴ His mission, of course, was fulfilled with his “lifting up” on the cross (19:30,

³² R. Schnackenburg, *Gospel*, 172.

³³ C. Dietzfelbinger, *Der Abschied des Kommenden*, 272.

³⁴ W. Boyd (“The Ascension of Jesus According to St. John”, 20-27) argues that since the prayer in John 17 is not appropriate in its context (in contrast to the Synoptic account of the

τετέλεσται). This is already stated in chapter 3 where his saving of the world (v. 17) is spoken of in the context of vv. 14-15, his being “lifted up”. This corresponds to 12:32-33 which indicates the way in which Jesus is glorified at his “hour” (12:27-28).

Here in v. 4, τελειόω is used in conjunction with ἔργον which Köstenberger identifies as a mission word in the Gospel of John under the semantic field of “the accomplishment of a task.”³⁵ When seen in light of 19:30 (τετέλεσται) and the other references to his being “lifted up”, it is clear that this “work” refers primarily to Jesus’ overall mission being completed at the cross. This is then a proleptic reference to his completed death: from Jesus’ perspective, as he faces his passion, its completion is a certainty.³⁶ More than that, he speaks of it as already completed since his “hour” has now come (v. 1).

In accomplishing his mission, Jesus does not seek his own glory, but that of the one who sent him; he does not do his own work, but the work of the one who sent him; and the word he gives his disciples is not his own, but the word of the one who sent him. In this, Jesus is an example for his disciples, the ones who he in turn sends into the world. He is the one who models with his words and actions what they are to be as they continue his mission in the world. They glorify him, not themselves; they do the work he sends them to do; and they carry his word to others. This supports my hypothesis that in the Farewell Discourse the Johannine Jesus is doing far more than simply saying “farewell.” He is preparing his disciples to continue his mission to the world after his departure. He does so by encouraging and comforting them and by modeling with his words and actions what they are to be to one another and to the world.

Verse 5 forms an *inclusio* with verse 1 and in good rhetorical style amplifies the repeated motif of glorification. It also brings closure to the first topic of the discourse (as agony in Gethsemane which is), chapter 17 is a displacement from its original position following the passion. He believes that the prayer embraces post-passion conversations leading up to the ascension. He identifies 10 examples of what he believes are marks of the ascension-character of the prayer in John 17. Most of these are seen as displacements due to chronology: they seem to fit a time period later than the night in which Jesus is betrayed. Boyd, however, fails to take into account the same phenomenon throughout the Gospel where Jesus speaks of future events prior to their having occurred or speaks of them as having already occurred (see A. Culpepper, *Anatomy*, 51-75; also G. O’Day, “I Have Overcome the World”, 159-165).

³⁵ A. Köstenberger, *The Missions of Jesus and the Disciples*, 27-31.

³⁶ C. Dietzfelbinger, *Der Abschied des Kommenden*, 275.

we have seen done with each of the four topics). The glory Jesus speaks of is not just pre-incarnate, it is pre-cosmos. This gives additional depth to the verb “glorify” for while people saw and heard Jesus’ glory during the time he was in the flesh (1:14; 2:11), the glory for which he petitions the Father here is that shared by the Father and Son before the world began.

The two *παρὰ* phrases are in contrast to “on the earth.” The first speaks of his return to the Father; the second of his former presence with the Father. Dietzfelbinger observes that nowhere else in the New Testament is the pre-existence of Christ developed to the extent that it is in John’s Gospel.³⁷ It’s emphasis is that what came into the world with Jesus is rooted in God, not in the world. Here the *ethos* of Jesus is magnified: he is seen as divine, pre-existent, in glory with the Father. Possessing this glory before the world came into being indicates his superiority to the world. There is also in this a strong appeal to *pathos*: this is the one who wishes to have the disciples with him, sharing his glory (17:24; 14:1-3).

Thus, Jesus’ glorification is spoken of in the past, the present, and the future: he shared the Father’s glory before the world was (17:5); he has a glory which is seen (1:14); there is a glorifying which has already begun (13:31-32); and there is a glorifying which is not yet complete (12:28, “have . . . will”). All this is meant to bring Jesus’ disciples of all ages to a “corrected fulness of recognition”³⁸ so that they will believe in Jesus with a fully informed faith and walk in light, not in darkness (8:12; 12:35, 46), having eternal life.

The *Epilogos* Continued

Recapitulation of the Chief Topics (17:6-26)

17:6-12

By all that he is, says, and does, Jesus manifests the Father’s name to the disciples. This is an amplification of “I glorified” in v. 4. The Father’s name is everything by which God is known and therefore apprehended in faith. In Jesus, then, God himself was at work, disclosing himself to the disciples. They were chosen out of the world (15:19) and are now not of the world. This is one of the rhetorical constraints of the discourse: the

³⁷ *ibid.*, 279.

³⁸ *ibid.*, 276.

disciples' identity. Here again we see the reciprocity of action of the Father and the Son: Jesus chose them out of the world, the Father gave them out of the world as a gift to Jesus. This repeats and amplifies the statement of v. 2 concerning all those given to Jesus.

Those given to Jesus have kept the Father's word: they have believed it and remained firm in it. The exhortation to keep Jesus' word was heard earlier in the Gospel (8:51) and in the Farewell Discourse (14:23). Jesus' words will soon be identified as given to him by the Father (v. 8). Thus, Jesus can affirm that these men have kept the Father's word by believing the revelation of God in Jesus. Those who have been given the revelation are set in contrast to the world. Indeed, this is what separates them from the world. They do not identify with the world, but seek instead to reach out to the world by participating in Jesus' mission to it.

For the disciples, there has been a deepening realization that everything about Jesus is from the Father (cf. 16:30). With the verb δίδωμι (vv. 7-8) the Father is seen as the one who possesses, gives, and grants everything. Verse 6 is thus amplified by vv. 7-8: how they have kept the Father's word and how they got it to begin with are set forth.

A certain level of maturity in faith has been attained by the disciples (νῦν, v. 7) to which Jesus responds with intercession on their behalf. They "received" the words that Jesus himself had received from the Father, "understood" from whence Jesus came, and "believed" in his mission: that he was specifically sent by the Father (ἀποστέλλω). The identity of Jesus (a rhetorical constraint) and the power of his revelation as the instrumental means by which they have understood and believed in him are given prominence here.

In the utterances of Jesus, the disciples heard the voice of God (8:26, 28; 12:49-50) and this was how the Father's name (v. 6) was made known to them: Jesus gave them the Father's words (v. 8). This is a rhetorical amplification of the word that is kept by them (v. 6) and all things, πάντα, that are given to Jesus (v. 7). The focus of this revelation to them is Jesus' identity as the sent one of the Father. Clearly, his mission was the substance of his message for this is what Jesus highlights as the outcome of faithfully giving to them what the Father had given to him: they "truly understood that I came forth from Thee, and they believed that Thou didst send Me."³⁹

The descriptive mission phrase σύ με ἀπέστειλας is a refrain that is heard four

³⁹ *New American Standard Bible.*

more times in this prayer (vv. 18, 21, 23, 25). In John's Gospel, the Twelve are never technically referred to as "apostles". The only occurrence of ἀπόστολος is at 13:16 where, in an axiomatic saying, it appears to have a more generic meaning as simply "one sent". Jesus is the "apostle" par excellence in John's Gospel. Who he is and the point of his mission is to be the object of the believer's faith. This understanding of Jesus as the pre-eminent "apostle" in the Gospel supports my hypothesis that he is the model for the disciples, the example of what they are to be as his "sent ones" (13:16, 20; 15:16; 17:18).

Far from being evidence of a number of different redactors dealing with different traditions and sayings from different times, repetitions such as "you sent me" (which we find throughout the Farewell Discourse) are intentional literary, rhetorical devices which aid in the refining of the presentation. The author of *Rhetorica ad Herennium* states that such effective repetition "consists in dwelling on the same topic and yet seeming to say something ever new."⁴⁰ Quintilian maintains that by dwelling on a point, repeating it, and digressing from and returning to his theme, an author gives his work life and vigor and in this way is able to make the desired impression on his audience.⁴¹ This rhetorical technique is precisely what we find in the Farewell Discourse, as exemplified in the instance before us of the repeated emphasis on Jesus as the "sent one" of God. The readers would thus be impressed with the centrality and importance of Jesus' mission to the world and its centrality and importance for their own mission to the world as well.

In verses 9-10 Jesus states that he petitions the Father specially for those who were given to him. He excludes the world from his intercession. This is not harsh, but in line with what was said earlier (14:17) about the world's inability to receive the Paraclete. While God's love extends to the whole world (3:16), and Jesus indeed prays later on that the world would come to know him (17:21, 23), his attention is directed primarily to the security of his disciples. Positively, this is an emphatic recommendation of the disciples who have believed the revelation of God in Christ. Negatively, it is an acknowledgment that the world has excluded itself from such a relationship through its unbelief.⁴²

Here again is an appeal to *pathos* as the disciples overhear that they belong to the Father. This is an encouragement to the disciples, for their identity (a rhetorical constraint

⁴⁰ *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, IV. 42. 54, 365.

⁴¹ Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria*, IX. 2. 4, 377.

⁴² R. Schnackenburg, *Gospel*, 178.

in the discourse) is assured and in this identity as God's own is their security. This affirmation by Jesus that they belong to God is a repetition of v. 6, but in a reversed order: "were yours . . . you gave" (v. 6) / "you have given . . . are yours" (v. 9). The emphasis of this structure in v. 6 is the giving of the disciples to Jesus, hence their relationship to Jesus; in v. 9 it is the disciples' continuing relationship to the Father who gave them to Jesus.

Jesus' words denote a stark contrast between those who believe in him and "the world", as has been seen throughout the discourse. Paul Minear observes that of the key terms used in this prayer, "world" is perhaps the one that may be the most difficult for readers to understand, precisely because we think we understand its referent.⁴³ In this prayer, everything worldly is defined by its relation to heaven and God. "The world comprises the hidden jurisdiction of the Evil One."⁴⁴ The characters (Jesus, disciples, later believers) are seen in their dual relationship to the world and to God. For believers, to know God and Jesus Christ whom he has sent is to possess eternal life (17:3). For the unbelieving world, the Son is the judge (5:22) and does not make intercession for them.

Verse 10 once again sets forth the full reciprocity of the Father and the Son. There is no difference between what the Father possesses and what the Son possesses. They are, after all, "one" (10:30). With the topic of glorification, we return to the main theme of the *Epilogos*. Jesus is glorified in the disciples in that they see and believe that Jesus came from God, was sent by God (and is, therefore, the Christ of God), and holds all things (πάντα) in common with God.

Here the *pathos* of the disciples noted in v. 9 is amplified. The disciples belong to both the Father and the Son (14:9ff.; 16:15). This is not unlike the Johannine portrayal of the shepherd and the sheep in 10:27-30. They are in both the Father's and the Son's hand and in this relationship they are secure. With this full reciprocity of the Father and the Son, Jesus' *ethos* stands out: he shares all things with the Father and is a worthy object of their faith. This one in whom they believe is the giver of eternal life and makes intercession with the Father in their behalf.

The past, the present, and the future are united into one in vv. 11-12 as Jesus speaks as if he had already returned to the Father's glory. In v. 13 he will revert to

⁴³ P. Minear, "John 17:1-11", 177.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 179.

speaking “in the world”, but in both cases (οὐκέτι εἰμι ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ / λαλῶ ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ) he says “I come to Thee.” Since he will soon be departing and leaving his disciples in the world, he comes to the Father with a request. The address “holy Father” does not create distance between the disciples and the Father, but closeness: those who believe in Jesus have access to the Father through him.⁴⁵ As the disciples have kept the Father’s word (v. 6), so Jesus requests that at his departure the Father keep them in his name, the word Jesus had been given and had in turn given to them.

The *pathos* evoked here is strong: in a hostile world, the possibility exists that the relationship can be severed, Jesus’ disciples could lose their connection to the divine name. Yet Jesus petitions the Father for their well-being. Here the evangelist’s readers might be expected to discern an allusion to the protective power of God’s name as seen in Proverbs 18:10--“The name of the LORD is a strong tower; the righteous runs into it and is safe.”⁴⁶ While he was with them, Jesus kept them secure. Now that he is departing, he petitions the Father to keep them in that powerful name.

The purpose of doing so is that they be “one” over against the world. The present tense, ὧσιν, has a durative sense and can be translated “may continue to be” or “may go on being”, thus indicating that this oneness is already a reality among them. The model for this unity is that which exists between the Father and the Son. It cannot be duplicated, only imitated (καθώς). The bond that unites the disciples with one another and the Father and the Son is the name of God, the word revealed to them in and by Jesus. It is when their connection to this revelation is severed that they lose their identity and perish. Thus Jesus’ petition for them.

Verse 12 is essentially an amplification of “keeping them in your name”. Jesus revealed God to them and guarded them from perishing. There was only one exception to this and that was so that Scripture might be fulfilled.⁴⁷ The “son of perdition” is a reference to Judas as the tool of Satan (6:70; 13:2, 27, 30). The falling away of Judas from the keeping power of Jesus does not lie in Jesus’ inability to keep him. He separated

⁴⁵ R. Schnackenburg, *Gospel*, 180.

⁴⁶ *New American Standard Bible*. R. Brown points out (*Gospel*, 764) that if the divine name is ἐγὼ εἰμι, we see its protective power in John 18:5-8 where the mob falls down powerless at the name and Jesus demands that they let his disciples go unharmed.

⁴⁷ This reference to Scripture is an appeal to an extrinsic rhetorical proof (in contrast to the intrinsic proofs of *ethos*, *pathos*, and *logos*). It is the appeal to a source of authority.

himself as the Scripture had foretold (a reference probably to Psalm 41:10 as quoted in John 13:18). Jesus' ministry is thus a fulfillment of what had been earlier predicted by the prophets.

Schnackenburg⁴⁸ maintains that the mention of "the son of perdition" here is "superfluous" and was probably introduced by a later author or editor who had a special interest in the traitor. Rhetorically, however, it serves as a great contrast to the disciples who were kept from perishing, highlights Jesus' ministry as a fulfillment of Scripture, amplifies the earlier statements about Judas as the betrayer (6:70-71; 12:6; 13:2, 27), and explains why, in spite of Jesus' intercession, one disciple was lost.

Far from being "superfluous", this reference adds depth, interest, and emotional appeal to Jesus' prayer. In the context of the discourse where Jesus predicted in their hearing that one of them would betray him (13:21), his reference to this one who perished (in contrast to those for whom he prays) is striking. His mention of the "son of perdition" recalls his betrayal which takes us forward to the garden (18:1ff) and ultimately to the cross where he will be lifted up and take away the sins of the world (1:29; 3:14-16; 8:28; 12:32-33).

17:13-19

With the words "But now", Jesus indicates that he is at the point of leaving. While he was with his disciples, he was keeping them (v. 12). Now he turns it over to the Father. The things he has spoken have been for the benefit of his disciples: that they might have Jesus' joy made full in themselves. This is crucial since at the present, sorrow fills their hearts (16:6).

This reference to "joy" is clearly reminiscent of 15:11 and 16:20-24. Jesus wants this joy of his communicated to his disciples so that while they are still in the world they will be able to face and endure the hostility of the world. As they come to comprehend the significance of his coming (being sent) and his going (being glorified), the joy that fills his heart over what he will accomplish will fill them and be their strength in the world.

Elsewhere in the Gospel of John (11:41ff.; 12:28) we see that as Jesus prays, his prayer is already heard and thus fulfilled. So, all who hear this prayer as prayed for them can be reassured of their well-being in the face of a hostile world, they can know that they

⁴⁸ R. Schnackenburg, *Gospel*, 182.

are protected and that their future with God is assured, and that in Jesus' going to the Father their joy will be made full.

They are separated from the world (v. 6), they belong to Jesus, and from him they receive eternal life. Jesus' prayer thus radiates confidence, comfort, and hope for the future. In this way, the Johannine Jesus speaks persuasively to the urgency of their situation, directing his disciples' sorrowing hearts to all that he and the Father (and the Paraclete) have done, are doing, and will continue to do for them. This prayer, then, is not just a one-way communication between the Father and the Son, but a means of reaching out to all those who hear this prayer to confirm them in their faith and strengthen them for perseverance.

Jesus has communicated God's being to his disciples with the word that was given to him. To what effect? They are now, like Jesus, foreigners to the world. More than that, in their being separated from the world, the world sees them as traitors and hates them. The world loves whatever belongs to it (15:19) and hates whatever separates itself from it. Having received the Father's word through Jesus, they, like Jesus, are now "not of the world". This is a repetition of the same thought in 15:18-19. In Johannine thought, Christians are begotten from above and are of God (1:12-13; 3:3-6), not of the world. Therefore they are the objects of the world's hatred.

Verse 14 contains an enthymeme: "the world has hated . . . because . . .". The disciples have already experienced with Jesus the hostility and rejection of others (5:16-18; 7:32; 8:48-59; 9:22; 10:31, 39; 11:53; 12:10). With this enthymeme, the evangelist broadens this hostility's scope from that of the disciples' Jewish brethren to "the world" and what they can expect in the future. His words sharpen the contrast between them and the world so that they will not be lulled into spiritual apathy and fall under the world's influence. Instead, they will clearly see what the world is in relation to the Father and the Son and they will understand themselves in view of their dual relationship to the world and to God.⁴⁹

Considering their forthcoming mission (v. 18), it would not be appropriate to ask the Father to take them out of the world. Instead, since they will remain in the world, Jesus asks that they be guarded from the evil one. The world is the evil one's realm (12:31; 14:30; 16:11) and the evil one is Christ's personal adversary (13:2; 14:30) whom he

⁴⁹ P. Minear, "John 17:1-11", 178.

overcomes at the cross (12:31).

Does τοῦ πονηροῦ refer to “the evil one” or “evil”? Jesus has spoken of the “evil one” already in personal terms (see references above) so it is most probably more than just a reference to evil in the abstract. This is evil personified: the devil, Satan, the ruler of this world. Here is a strong appeal to elicit *pathos*: Jesus prays for the ongoing guardianship and protection of the Father in their lives while they remain in the world. S.C. Barton⁵⁰ notes that a number of scholars have argued that the Fourth Gospel betrays a bias towards sectarianism and that the prayer of Jesus (“I do not pray that Thou shouldst take them out of the world”) may speak as a corrective against this possible tendency towards separation (an “us versus them” mindset). Whether or not such sectarianism was in fact practised by the early Christian community, it is clear that the disciples of Jesus are to see themselves as his community in the world and that the distinguishing mark separating them from the world is their relationship to the Father and the Son, mediated by the words given them.

Verse 16 is a repetition of the truth enunciated in v. 14 and 15:18-19. As a repetition, it serves as yet another reminder to the followers of Jesus (then and now) of the reality of their situation: “in”, but not “of” the world, and hated.⁵¹ But it is more than simply a repetition. It is a transitional statement, once again giving the grounds for making the petition for their protection (v. 15) and leading to a further petition for their safe-keeping (v. 17). It succinctly captures their identity, one of the rhetorical constraints of the discourse, and with the word order (ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου placed forward) appeals to *pathos* by emphasizing that identity in relation first to the world and then to Jesus. Standing in proper relation to Jesus, the giver of eternal life, they will be able to endure the painful vicissitudes of life as they continue his mission to the world.

With ἀγίασον (v. 17), Jesus makes a further petition for the disciples’ continued well-being in the world. This request deepens and develops the earlier petition that they be kept in the Father’s name (vv. 11-12). The means of their sanctification and the realm into which they are sanctified is “the truth” and Jesus identifies the Father’s word (ὁ λόγος) as that truth. These disciples can remain separated from the world only by virtue of the

⁵⁰ S.C. Barton, *Spirituality*, 135.

⁵¹ R. Schnackenburg (*Gospel*, 184) observes that recapitulating the statement from the end of v. 14 “encloses” the petition of v. 15 and reinforces the idea (“not of the world”). This, he says, is not unusual in a literary style of this kind.

revelation upon which they have been grounded: the word given to them by Jesus. Thus, their separateness and holiness are possible only on the basis of the word that separates them from the world (v. 14) and cleanses them (15:3). In the reassurance given to Jesus' disciples, the evangelist's readers may find assurance as well for they, too, have the Father's word as given by Jesus and have been allowed to overhear Jesus' desire for their welfare.

John's understanding of "truth" is the truth of God as it is in Christ's appearing (1:14). In the Farewell Discourse, Jesus has already identified himself as the truth (14:6). Here he petitions the Father to keep them "in" that truth even after his departure. The sphere of truth in which he would have them kept is the truth as it is in Jesus. This truth is given to Jesus by the Father (in his words) and Jesus has given it to them (vv. 6-8). With the word of God which is truth coming into the world through Jesus, Dietzfelbinger sees also a separation here from Old Testament Judaism as exemplified by the synagogue: as a source of truth from God, "the word spoken by God through Jesus has replaced the Torah."⁵² This would indeed fit since in their rejection of Jesus as the Messiah, unbelieving Jews would fall within the wider designation, "the world", in their opposition to Jesus.

But the world still remains the object of God's love: as the Father sent the Son into the world to save it, so the Son sends the disciples into the world and in this way the mission of Jesus is transferred to them. They now have the privilege of taking part in the harvest of souls Jesus had spoken of earlier (4:38). As ones who are sent by Jesus, their labors will have this result: entering into Jesus' labor to reap the harvest.

Instead of withdrawal from the world, theirs will be a mission to the world and they are equipped for this by being sanctified in the truth. As Jesus himself was sanctified by the Father (10:36) and sent into the world, so also the disciples. And the voice of Jesus will continue to be heard in the world through them. In this way they will continue to hold open to the world the possibility of faith and inclusion in the kingdom (3:16; 17:21, 23).⁵³ Again, my hypothesis is supported: in this prayer for his own disciples, the

⁵² C. Dietzfelbinger, *Der Abschied des Kommenden*, 311. See also S.C. Barton, *Spirituality*, 119.

⁵³ Chapter 17 contains 11 of the 36 occurrences of κόσμος in John. While the "world" is often characterized negatively, it remains the object of God's love and the target of the disciples' mission.

Johannine Jesus seeks to encourage the evangelist's readers for their own mission. He himself is the model, the sender, and the enabler (with the words he has given them).

Behind the sanctification of the disciples for this mission stands Jesus in his sanctification. Verse 19 forms an *inclusio* with v. 17, the last clause of v. 19 repeating the first clause of v. 17. As we have seen, such sanctification takes place in conjunction with the Father's word, the word of truth. In John, Jesus is both the word and the truth (1:1, 14; 14:6) and so to be sanctified in a word that is truth is another way of describing one's belonging to Jesus--and to belong to Jesus is to belong to God (v. 10).

It is ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν that Jesus sanctifies himself. The forward placement of this phrase emphasizes the vicarious action of Jesus. ὕπερ is used elsewhere in John to describe Jesus' death for others (11:51; 18:14; 10:11, 15; 15:13; 6:51). Indeed, it would be accurate to say that Jesus' giving of himself into death in behalf of others is stressed in John in these and other references. Thus, its usage here in v. 19 may well refer to his offering himself up in death, a sacrificial and atoning death which he voluntarily enters upon (cf. 10:17-18).

Also, Jesus' death does appear to be interpreted in John as a passover offering (1:29, 36; 13:1; 18:28; 19:14, 36). Schnackenburg⁵⁴ points out that even the use of ἀγιάζω here is sacrificial vocabulary as it was used in the Septuagint for the consecration of sacrificial animals (Ex. 13:2; Deut. 15:19) and the consecration of priests for their duties (Ex. 28:41; 40:13; Lev. 8:30; 2 Chr. 5:11). Thus, underlying the disciples' sanctification for their mission in the world is Jesus' sanctification which is grounded in his sacrificial death (17:4; 19:30--τελειόω). Their sanctification takes place through the Father's word which Jesus gives to them. Following his departure, this will be the work of the promised Spirit of truth: to take what is Jesus' and declare it to them (16:13-15). Therein will also be their continued sanctification while they are still in the world, but not of the world.

17:20-23

The Johannine Jesus' prayer now turns to future generations of disciples, those who are yet to come to believe in him. The present participle πιστευόντων is therefore proleptic, having the force of a future.⁵⁵ There is a positive note here which strongly

⁵⁴ R. Schnackenburg, *Gospel*, 187.

⁵⁵ See R. Brown, *Gospel*, 769.

evokes *pathos*: the mission work of Jesus' followers will not be in vain. Others will join the ranks of believers. How will this be accomplished? The disciples' word, the word given to them (v. 8) which is sanctifying truth (v. 17), will be the means through which faith is produced in others. This is the proclamation which will be enabled by the Paraclete (14:26; 15:26-27; 16:13-15).

The evangelist's readers would thus recognize themselves included in this petition as those who have believed "through their word". And they would be similarly moved to continue the Christian mission to the world: as Jesus glorified the Father on earth by accomplishing his mission, manifesting him to men as the one who sent him, and manifesting him through his works, so Christians who listen responsively to John's rhetoric in any time and place are called to manifest Jesus in the world by continuing his mission, manifesting him as the one who called and sent them, and making him known through their words and actions.⁵⁶

The purpose of Jesus' petition is brought forth clearly in vv. 21-23: the unity or oneness of all present and future disciples and, beyond that, the possibility of faith in the world which is still the object of God's love (3:16; 8:12; 12:46). But what kind of unity is being spoken of here? J. Randall⁵⁷ gives a brief summary of the divergent (and sometimes extreme) interpretations given to these verses and raises a note of caution about the "ecumenical use" of this prayer. He observes that the perspective of unity here is that of keeping the church one, not making it one.⁵⁸ This unity, then, is the unity of those who believe and are one with the Father and the Son and with one another. It is an invisible

⁵⁶ See J.S. Ukpong, "Jesus' Prayer", 55.

⁵⁷ J. Randall, "The Theme of Unity in John 17:20-23", 373-374, 393.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 394. This, says Randall, is accented very strongly in the Epistles of John as well. This note of caution on the application of these verses is also raised by H.P. Hamann ("The New Testament Concept of the 'Church'", 124-28). He cites 17:21-23 as "the great modern ecumenical text," used by many to promote the visible unity of christendom. However, he lists six errors in understanding the text in this fashion and then gives two different textual interpretations. The first understands "that they may be one" as an eschatological reality which only happens at the end, the time of our Lord's return (more on this in my comments on v. 23). The second interpretation sees in these verses the outcome of the disciples' mission work in the world: the possibility that exists for the world to come to believe in Jesus who reveals God to them.

unity of faith, a unity in the truth that is believed.⁵⁹

In surveying Jewish farewell discourse material, J. Randall⁶⁰ found appeals to brotherly unity to be characteristic of late Jewish writings. Particularly striking was that “Johannine expressions” (themes and vocabulary such as love, the demon, truth-falsehood, light-darkness, hatred-love, and so forth) are found right alongside these texts on unity.⁶¹

Several things are apparent with these examples and their counterparts in the Gospel: John is completely at home in this Jewish milieu, John’s major motifs are consistent with first century Jewish concerns (especially as found in farewell addresses), the theme of unity which is quite characteristic of late Jewish writings) is also a significant topic for John, and just as these examples of late Jewish writings show a rhetorically persuasive intent, so also John.

Indeed, in John’s Gospel, the oneness motif is found in the oneness between the Father and the Son and in the oneness of the believing community.⁶² The explicit oneness of the Father and the Son stated in 10:30 (ἐγὼ καὶ ὁ πατήρ ἐν ἐσμὲν) is echoed in 17:11, 20-23 (καθὼς ἡμεῖς ἐν). The oneness of the believing community, as portrayed by the “one flock, one shepherd” motif of 10:1-18, is found in these same verses of Jesus’ prayer. Elsewhere in the Farewell Discourse, the oneness of the Father and the Son is seen at 14:9-14 and the oneness of the believing community is found in 15:12-17 in

⁵⁹ See R. Bultmann, *Gospel*, 513-514; R. Schnackenburg, *Gospel*, 191-192; M. Pamment, “John 17:20-23”, 384; J. Ukpong, “Jesus’ Prayer”, 58.

⁶⁰ J. Randall, “The Theme of Unity of John 17:20-23”, 376-78. He cites as examples words put into the mouths of Noah, Rebecca, Jacob, Baruch, Zebulun, and Joseph in *The Book of Jubilees*, *The Syrian Apocalypse of Baruch*, *The Testament of Zebulun*, and *The Testament of Joseph*.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 378-79. Consider these examples: “. . . to do the truth and to entertain love each one for his brother” (*Testament of Reuben*, 6:9; cf. John 3:21); “Prince of deceit . . . Beliar . . . The devil shall make him as his own peculiar instrument” (*Testaments of Simeon*, 2:7; Naphtali, 8:6; Reuben, 2:2; Gad, 25:3; cf. John 8:44); “He is a slave to contrary passions and cannot obey God, because they have blinded his soul, and he walketh in the day as in the night” (*Testament of Judah*, 18:6; cf. John 8:34); “Love the truth and it will preserve you” (*Testament of Reuben*, 3:9; cf. John 8:32); “Will you then leave me an orphan, Father?” (*Testament of Isaac*, 13:5; cf. John 14:18); “Then shall Abraham and Isaac and Jacob exult . . . [at the appearance of the Messiah]” (*Testament of Levi*, 18:14; cf. John 18:56-58); “Whatever things I have heard from my fathers, I have declared unto you” (*Testament of Levi*, 10:1; cf. John 15:15).

⁶² See S. Theron, “ΙΝΑ ΩΣΙΝ ΕΝ”, 78-79.

their love for one another (see also 11:51-52-- “that he might also gather together into one”). Thus, the motif of “oneness” in the Gospel reaches its pinnacle here in Jesus’ prayer as the καθὼς clause defines this unity precisely: believers are to be one as the Father and the Son are one; and they are to be one by being received into the unity of the Father and the Son.

How does this happen? The means whereby this oneness comes into being is the word they were given. Note the emphasis given in the ἵνα clause (v. 21) with πάντες and ἐν side-by-side: they will “all” be as much “one” with each other and with the Father and the Son as they are believers in the word (v. 20).

S. Theron⁶³ observes that vv. 20-23 are reminiscent of Hebrew poetry with its intricate parallelism (and rhetorical intent!). A clear parallelism of structure does exist between two sub-units here: vv. 20-21 and vv. 22-23. Each sub-unit of two verses has a brief introductory statement followed by a parallel series of clauses introduced by conjunctions: a ἵνα clause in each sub-unit is followed by a καθὼς clause which in turn is followed by two ἵνα clauses. The first and second ἵνα clauses in each sub-unit speak of the oneness of believers. The καθὼς clause gives the model and source for this unity: that of the Father and the Son. The final ἵνα clauses describe the desired effect upon the world: that it might believe (v. 21) and know (v. 23) the Son’s unique apostleship. Such repetition is an important rhetorical device. It impresses the point being made upon the hearer, yet with a freshness and an accumulation of thought (believers, word, unity / glory, oneness, love).

Verse 21 is a rhetorical amplification of the oneness described at the end of v. 11. Here we have a progression and clarification of thought with the oneness seen as dependent on Jesus’ asking (v. 20). The divine unity is the model and basis for making the believers’ unity possible. The “you . . . in me and I in you” statement of the Father’s and Son’s mutual indwelling develops and explains this. Again, the goal is that the world believe that the Father sent the Son and in this believing grasp that Jesus is the Christ (4:25-26).

While the oneness of v. 21 followed the asking of Jesus (v. 20), the thought is further developed in v. 22 with the oneness arising from the glory that is given. Here vv.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 88. Theron observes that this may point to a Palestinian origin for the Gospel. On the structural parallelism of these verses see also R. Brown, *Gospel*, 769, and J. Randall, “The Theme of Unity in John 17:20-23”, 388.

11 and 21 are combined and presuppose the answer to Christ's prayer for glorification in vv. 1, 5. Here we also see John's rhetorical style of repetition and amplification as earlier motifs are enlarged upon and the thought is given progression. The perfect tense (δέδωκάς μοι δέδωκα αὐτοῖς) indicates that both Jesus and the disciples continue to possess the glory given them.⁶⁴ This is the glory of the Father's name (vv. 6, 11-12), the Father's word (vv. 8, 14), Jesus' sending of them as his own envoys (v. 18), and his sanctifying of himself for them (v. 19). The word received (v. 20) mediates the indwelling of the Father and the Son (v. 21; 14:23) and thus the reception of the Son's glory (v. 22), which in turn yields the oneness of the believers.

A restatement of the nature of the glory given is made in v. 23: "I in them and you in me." Insofar as both the Father and the Son indwell believers and they are sanctified in the truth and enjoy a oneness, their unity is complete (τετελειωμένοι). That this unity takes place in this life is seen in the fact that it is to have an effect upon the world that it is "in", but not "of". Thus, it is not to be limited to an eschatological unity which is established at Jesus' parousia.⁶⁵ Also, as noted with v. 11 concerning this unity, the present tense, ὄσιν, has a durative sense and can be translated "may continue to be" or "may go on being", thus indicating that this oneness is already a reality among Jesus' disciples. It does indeed appear that this is a petition for *keeping* the community of believers in the oneness they do possess rather than trying to establish a oneness that does not yet exist.⁶⁶

The purpose of this unity is stated as a rhetorical repetition and parallel to v. 21, but with a progression: that the world may "know" that Jesus is the sent one of God. Bultmann denies that the change from "believe" (v. 21) to "know" (v. 23) carries any difference in meaning.⁶⁷ However, there may well be an important contextual difference with γινώσκη being so closely associated with τετελειωμένοι. As J. Randall observes, with the change from "believe" to "know" we have "another typical Johannine progression."⁶⁸ He believes it indicates greater strength with the knowing coming from a

⁶⁴ R. Brown, *Gospel*, 770-771.

⁶⁵ See H.P. Hamann, "The New Testament Concept of the 'Church' ", 125-126.

⁶⁶ J. Randall, "The Theme of Unity in John 17:20-23", 394.

⁶⁷ R. Bultmann, *Gospel*, 517-518.

⁶⁸ J. Randall, "The Theme of Unity in John 17:20-23", 391.

consummated (or perfected) unity.

The final ἵνα clause is further elaborated and amplified: the world is to know that the Father sent Jesus and loves believers as he loves his Son: the latter defining the depth of his love for the former. Here is truly an appeal to *pathos*: the evangelist's readers hear what love is theirs. The love of God is thus manifested in the unity that is established. For their part, believers will make the mystery of divine unity visible in brotherly love (13:34-35; 15:12-17) and audible in the word they proclaim about Jesus as the one sent by God (15:26-27).

The two sub-units of vv. 20-23, with the second giving a repeated and amplified parallel to the first, are thus complete. The motifs of love and sending will be repeated in the final verses as the prayer majestically closes with a statement of the disciples abiding in Jesus' and the Father's love.

17:24-26

As Jesus' intercession for the disciples draws to a close, he no longer asks (ἑρωτάω) the Father, but "majestically expresses his will"⁶⁹ (θέλω) and his will is the Father's will (cf. 4:34; 5:21, 30; 6:38-40). This is a clear expression of Jesus' *ethos*: he has a reciprocal relationship with the Father and simply states his will with regard to those who are his own. He and the Father are, after all, ἕν (5:18; 10:30; 17:11, 21-23). The one who goes to the Father in their behalf is one with the Father. To those who hear this prayer, this is a powerful incentive and encouragement as they face the challenges ahead with his departure and the hostility of the world.

Up to this point, Jesus' petitions have dealt with his disciples' existence in the world, their confrontation with the world, and their mission to the world. Now he speaks of his will towards them with regard to their future presence with him and the full revelation of his glory to them. These verses (24-26) are reminiscent of vv. 1-5 (those given to Jesus, the glory given to Jesus, his relation to the Father before the world was) and form an *inclusio* with them as the prayer reaches its conclusion.

This statement of Jesus (v. 24) reaches back before the foundation of the world to the eternal love of the Father (which is the basis of the glory possessed by Jesus from before the foundation of the world) and reaches forward eternally to the believers' presence

⁶⁹ R. Brown, *Gospel*, 772.

with Jesus in heaven. It recalls Jesus' earlier statement: ἵνα ὅπου εἰμι ἐγὼ καὶ ὑμεῖς ἦτε (14:3). Verse 24 contains an enthymeme (the strongest of the rhetorical proofs), with the explanatory statement "for Thou didst love me . . ." giving the basis for the believers' future hope. Those not believing in Jesus cannot be where he is (7:34), but those who are his will be with him and behold his glory. This glory was seen by the disciples during Jesus' earthly ministry (2:11), but is more fully manifested in connection with his "hour" (17:1), and will be fully realized when they are with him where he is.

For the fifth time in the prayer, Jesus directly addresses the Father, *πάτερ*.⁷⁰ The adjective *δίκαιε* is appropriate here since not knowing the Father means that the world will fall under judgment for unbelief. Jesus knows the Father, the disciples know that the Father sent him, and all this is set in contrast to the world which does not know the Father. All this is seen by a righteous God, a fact which gives the assurance of vindication to believers. Jesus' intercession thus ends positively and with a note of confidence. To know that the Father sent Jesus is to believe it (v. 8) and believing this is eternal life (v. 3). This is a forceful appeal to *pathos*: the evangelist's audience hears that with Jesus they stand in right relationship to the Father for in their "knowing" they stand in right relationship to the Son. And all depends on their faith-connection to him (8:24; 12:44-48).

With v. 26, there is an amplification of the topic of the giving of the Father's name from v. 6. Not only has Jesus made the Father's name known to the disciples (everything by which God is known and therefore apprehended by faith), he declares that he will continue to make it known. This revelation will continue to take place even after Jesus' departure as those who are sent (v. 18) continue his work in the world. Schnackenburg observes that while the Paraclete is not explicitly mentioned in this prayer, references to the Spirit's presence are probably found in the continuing revelation of God's name and the mediation of God's love.⁷¹

The emphasis in v. 26 is on the purpose of making known the Father's name: that the disciples will be indwelt by the Father's love and the Son. These are not requests now, they are statements of confidence in the way it is and will be. Here again is a persuasive appeal to *pathos*. The readers are assured that Jesus, while departing from them in one sense, will continue to be with them in another: his indwelling. And in being indwelt by

⁷⁰ The other occurrences are at vv. 1, 5, 11, and 24.

⁷¹ R. Schnackenburg, *Gospel*, 197. See also R. Brown, *Gospel*, 781.

the same love that the Father has for the Son, they are indwelt by his favor. This is an amplification of the description of believers as those who “know”. They stand in right relationship to the Father and the Son and lack nothing for this life (for they have been given all they need for their continuation of Jesus’ mission) or for eternity (for as believers they have eternal life).

As closure is brought to Jesus’ intercession (vv. 25-26), an *inclusio* is made with the *Exordium* of the Farewell Discourse, 13:1. With the topics of knowing, love, Jesus’ relationship to the Father, and Jesus’ intimate relationship with the disciples, the prayer reaches its completion where the Farewell Discourse began. Indeed, the prayer itself begins (17:1) with a recapitulation of the *Exordium* with reference to Jesus’ “hour” and his glorification (which takes place at his departure, 12:23-24; 13:31-33). Thus, in good rhetorical style, the arrangement of the entire rhetorical unit (13:1 - 17:26) is brought to closure with this prayer, the *Epilogos* of the Farewell Discourse.

Does this conclusion to the Farewell Discourse truly follow rhetorical convention? As indicated earlier, Aristotle identified four aims of the epilogue: disposing the hearer favorably toward the speaker (and unfavorably toward the opponent); amplifying and minimizing various propositions; moving the audience with *pathos*; and giving a reminder of the chief points made in the speech.⁷² Let us take up each of these points briefly.

(1) Favorably disposing the hearer to the speaker: throughout the prayer, Jesus’ *ethos* stands out in bold relief as he is seen and heard as the one who stands in unique relationship to the Father as the “sent one”. He is the one who gives to the disciples all that the Father has given him. Also, the world (as their opponent) is clearly defined in relationship to the Father and Son and ample reason is given to warn the disciples from falling under the world’s influence. Of the three rhetorical proofs (*ethos*, *pathos*, *logos*), the appeal to *ethos* is for Aristotle the most effective mode of persuasion since the strength of the argument or reasoning rests to a great degree on the credibility the author or speaker establishes with the audience (see *Ethos*, Chapter Four). Jesus’ character as the disciples’ motivation for trust and confidence permeates the entire discourse and especially this prayer.

(2) Amplifying and/or minimizing various propositions: all the way through the prayer, it has been pointed out where different motifs have been amplified to intensify and

⁷² Aristotle, *On Rhetoric*, III. 19. 1, 280.

heighten the effect of Jesus' words. In John's style, a motif is amplified and that amplification then becomes the basis for yet another amplified topic. To give but one example: "all whom Thou hast given him" (v. 2) . . . "the men whom Thou gavest me *out of the world*" (v. 6) . . . "*Thine they were, and Thou gavest them to me*" (v. 6) . . . "*and they have kept Thy word*" (v. 6) . . . "for the *words* Thou gavest me *I have given to them*" (v. 8) . . . "and they *received* . . . and truly *understood* . . . and they *believed* . . ." (v. 8). This example demonstrates how a single topic ("all whom Thou hast given him") is amplified by further description. During the course of this amplification, the topic of the Father's word is introduced and itself is amplified, but still in reference to "all whom Thou hast given him." Here one sees the progressive, over-lapping nature of rhetorical amplification which, with repetition, expands and intensifies a topic, holding the reader's interest and building to a persuasive climax.

(3) Moving the audience with *pathos*: Jesus constantly attempts to evoke the *pathos* of the disciples as he sets them in contrast to "the world", identifies himself as a worthy object of their faith, speaks of all that he gives them to prepare them for their imminent mission of continuing his work, makes reference to the success of their labors in proclaiming the Father's word to the world, and speaks of their already-established and future relationship to the Father and the Son. The disciples of the evangelist's time are thus encouraged, comforted, given a vision of what lies beyond Jesus' departure, and imbued with a sense of confidence in spite of the challenges that will threaten them both from within and without. They might not understand now how all that will happen fits into God's plan as it is carried out in Jesus, but the promise is given them that they, too, will understand "hereafter" (13:7).⁷³ The appeal to elicit *pathos*, then, is always made in view of Jesus' time-frame and they will eventually become fully comprehending of this.

(4) A reminder of the chief points of the speech: since the *Epilogos* is the conclusion of the whole speech and has the potential of being powerfully climactic, Aristotle believed that in the epilogue, "one should speak in recapitulation of what has been shown."⁷⁴ In the prayer of John 17, that is precisely what we find. Following the amplification of the first topic in vv. 1-5, all the main topics of the *Exordium* and *Partitio* are re-stated in vv. 6-26 with amplification: Jesus' knowledge of the arrival of his "hour";

⁷³ See also John 2:22; 7:39; 12:16; and 20:9.

⁷⁴ Aristotle, *On Rhetoric*, III. 19. 1, 281.

his unique and reciprocal relationship to the Father; his imminent departure; both his and his disciples' relationship to "the world"; his relationship to his disciples; and love as the defining quality of the relationship between the Father, the Son, and the disciples.

Jesus' intercession in John 17 is truly climactic, being an integral part of the theological development of the previous chapters (13-16) and a majestic introduction to both the passion finale, where Jesus' departure is accomplished (18-19), and the resurrection narratives (20-21) where the hope is given that "farewell" is not "good-bye"!⁷⁵

⁷⁵ cf. 14:3, 18, 28; 16:16, 22; 17:24; 20:19; 21:14, 22.

CHAPTER EIGHT

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

It now remains to summarize the various threads of this investigation and draw appropriate conclusions.

Issues addressed in this study

Three basic areas of concern have been addressed in this rhetorical investigation of John 13-17. First, in biblical studies, there has been a lack of attention paid to the rhetorical dimension of the text. Only recently have the rhetorical background of the biblical text and the use of rhetoric as an interpretive tool to interpret the text been receiving much attention. Among those making use of rhetorical principles, few utilize a comprehensive rhetorical approach.¹ In this study, the attempt has been made to apply a more rigorous rhetorical approach to the Farewell Discourse of John 13-17. This unit lends itself well to such an investigation because of its dialogue character.

Second, it is not uncommon to find rather shallow readings of the text. In a review of literature on John 13-17, both scholarly and devotional, it was shown that many interpreters merely see the Farewell Discourse as Jesus' expression of "good-bye" (announcement of his departure) and his giving of comfort to the disciples--they ignore or pass over any deeper significance. This study has demonstrated that the evangelist has given center stage to the identity of Jesus in this portrayal of Jesus' discourse with his disciples. In so doing, he intends not only to comfort his readers in their own time of testing by having them place their trust in Jesus, but to instruct, motivate, and encourage them in the mission which lies ahead of them--that of continuing Jesus' mission to the world.

Third, this rhetorical reading of the text is a corrective to that often done by the history of traditions school of interpretation. Most form/tradition/source critics see the text of the Johannine Farewell Discourse as quite disarranged. They point to the ending of

¹ Notable exceptions would be M. Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation*, 1991, and P. Trible, *Rhetorical Criticism*, 1994.

14:31, the statements of 13:36 and 16:5, the whole of chapter 17, and several other points within the unit as evidence of an out-of-order text in need of rearrangement in order to be properly understood. In addition, the frequency of repetitions in the text causes many of these interpreters to conclude that the text has been cobbled together over time since a cohesive, flowing text would not (in their estimation) contain such repetition. This study has demonstrated that a rhetorical reading of the text makes it possible to understand it as a coherent whole whose amplifications and repetitions do not detract from, but instead enhance the ability of the text to move and persuade.

Furthermore, the rhetorical arrangement of the whole Discourse has been shown to give a literary explanation for what others have seen as form or historical critical “problems” in the text (as noted above). Indeed, the literary design in which closure is brought to each of the four major topics of the Farewell Discourse answers the concerns of critics who see major dislocations and disarrangements in the text. As Jeffrey Staley observes, “the student of the New Testament narrative can no longer presume that the divisions in the text arrived at by previous scholarship on the basis of source critical or redaction critical studies necessarily follow the plot structure, theological structure, or rhetorical structure of the Fourth Gospel.”²

For example, instead of being an historical or form-critical problem, the ending in 14:31 is evidence of literary design with a purpose (when seen in the context of the whole discourse): the movement from one topic to another with appropriate closure and transition. This rhetorical motif is seen repeated at the end of each major topic.

The influence of rhetoric

A survey of approaches to the biblical text that have used rhetorical categories has shown that Hellenistic and/or rhetorical influences can be found in Old Testament texts³, early Jewish texts (including apocryphal⁴ and rabbinical sources⁵), and New

² J. Staley, *The Print's First Kiss*, 71.

³ For a discussion of rhetorical elements and categories in the Old Testament (especially in Job and Proverbs) see James Crenshaw, *Education in Ancient Israel*, 130-137; and J. Crenshaw, “Wisdom and Authority”, 10-28. Also see P. Tribble, *Rhetorical Criticism*, for a rhetorical analysis of Jonah.

⁴ J. Crenshaw, *Education in Ancient Israel*, 14, 61, 270.

Testament texts⁶. My study has demonstrated that this holds true within the Gospel of John as well. Thus, not only in the public realm of civic discourse, but also in the realm of the biblical discourse, rhetoric has been influential and the use of a rigorous rhetorical analysis is capable of giving insights into the text that otherwise might be overlooked or ignored. It is an appropriate interpretive tool.

The use of rhetorical analysis on the biblical text is justified from several perspectives. First of all, as noted by George Kennedy⁷, its use can be justified by appeal to philosophical anthropology. While a Greek, Roman, or Palestinian context will give a text its own distinctive coloring, rhetoric is nonetheless “a universal phenomenon which is conditioned by basic workings of the human mind and heart and by the nature of all human society.”⁸ It is a universal facet of human communication. Indeed, the categories of Aristotelian rhetoric can be used to study speech in widely separated areas of the world--in cultures far different from the Greek than was Palestine in the time of the Roman empire.⁹

Second, rhetorical analysis is, as shown by the survey of sources on the rhetorical background of the New Testament, historically justified. By the time of the New Testament, the Near East had been undergoing a process of Hellenization for three centuries. The books of the New Testament were written for people who could speak and understand Greek. And, of course, rhetoric was the systematic academic discipline universally taught throughout the Roman empire. Its use in funeral orations, celebrations, political debate, courts of law, and any other important civic interchange, ensured that rhetoric would constitute the communicative “atmosphere” (spoken and written) of the first century.

Finally, a rhetorical approach to the biblical text is also, I believe, theologically justified. Aristotle defined rhetoric as “an ability, in each particular case, to see the available means of persuasion.”¹⁰ Several aspects of the biblical text demonstrate that the

⁵ D. Daube, “Rabbinic Methods”, 239-264.

⁶ See P.J. Botha, “Greco-Roman Literacy As Setting for New Testament Writings,” 195-212; M. Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation*; and H.D. Betz, *Galatians*, for representative examples of a rhetorical approach to the New Testament.

⁷ G. Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation*, 10.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *Ibid.*

persuasive nature of rhetoric is integral to the fabric of the text and can appropriately be used to “unpack” the text for understanding. First, the elements of rhetoric are indeed found in the biblical text, as shown in my study of John 13-17. Second, Christianity deals with contingent matters, things that could be otherwise (as opposed to logical validity), just as does rhetoric. Finally, the New Testament competes with other worldviews and philosophies for the hearts and minds of people. It seeks to persuade others to embrace its tenets (in the Gospel of John, Jesus’ purpose is stated in 17:20-21 and the author’s purpose in 20:31). All these characteristics combine to make a rhetorical reading of the text theologically justified. This conclusion is also articulated by David Cunningham¹¹ in his assessment of God’s rhetorical activity (revelation) and human rhetorical activity (proclamation). He points out that they intersect at one profound point: “In one particular instance, the human word of proclamation and the divine word of revelation become one. Thus, the ultimate rhetorical event in Christian theology, the ultimate word which theology speaks, is called, quite properly, the *Word*--who became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth.”

So, being philosophically, historically, and theologically justified, a rhetorical reading of the text serves not only as an alternative to the history of traditions approaches (as discussed above), but also provides a bridge between literary approaches on the one hand, and historical critical approaches on the other. There is currently, for example, an impasse between forms of narrative criticism which deal only with the final form of the text, and historical criticism which is concerned with the development of the text, the background history of a Johannine community, and the author’s intentions.¹² The danger is that fully synchronic methods proceed at the expense of seeing and accounting for a text that is situated in an historical context, while a fully diachronic approach can proceed only at the expense of hearing the text speak as text, as the focus of the reader’s attention shifts to redactors, sources, and traditions.¹³

A rhetorical reading is able to account for both literary and historical dimensions of the text by hearing the concerns and contributions of each. This has been demonstrated in

¹⁰ Aristotle, *On Rhetoric*, 1.2.1, 36.

¹¹ D. Cunningham, *Faithful Persuasion*, 203.

¹² S. Motyer, “Method in Fourth Gospel Studies”, 27-44.

¹³ S.C. Barton, “Living as Families”, 130-131.

my rhetorical reading of John 13-17.

The method and elements of rhetorical analysis employed

As noted above, the intention of this investigation was to undertake a rigorous rhetorical analysis of the Farewell Discourse in John 13-17. The rhetorical unit, the rhetorical situation of the unit, the *genre* of the discourse (a farewell type-scene), and the rhetorical problem spoken to by the text were all identified.

It was demonstrated that chapters 13-17 form an *inclusio* within the Gospel of John with definite signs of opening and closure. The situation is this: Jesus' "hour" has finally come; his initial public ministry has come to an end; he is gathered with his disciples in a room in Jerusalem during Passover where he eats the Last Supper with them; prior to supper, Jesus washes his disciples' feet, foreshadowing a greater cleansing which is about to take place; his betrayer leaves the group; after supper Jesus announces his "departure" and engages his disciples in a lengthy discourse which is unique to John's Gospel; the discourse is characterized by both monologue and dialogue; and the rhetorical unit ends with Jesus' prayer to the Father just prior to his arrest.

The rhetorical problem presented by the evangelist was found to be the disciples' lack of understanding concerning Jesus' mission. Distress, sorrow, and confusion ensue with his announced departure, the revelation of a betrayer, and the predicted hostility of the world. Jesus must speak not only to the exigence created by his imminent departure, but also to that created by anticipated sources of hostile opposition to his disciples following his departure. Through such a depiction, the author speaks rhetorically to engage his readers and elicit the desired responses from them by the way he portrays Jesus attempting to persuade his disciples.

A further dimension of the rhetorical problem and its solution is brought to light with the identification of the rhetorical species of the unit. Of the three classical species of rhetoric (judicial, deliberative, and epideictic), the Farewell Discourse was seen to be primarily epideictic with shades of deliberative rhetoric present as the evangelist, through his presentation of Jesus' interaction with his disciples, points his readers forward to their own mission to the Christian community and to the world.

The stasis of the rhetorical problem (asking "What is the basic issue to be addressed?") was defined under the categories of fact, definition, and quality. Jesus'

departure through death and ascension did happen (fact); his death would be a return to his Father, it would be a cleansing death, it would not be permanent for he would see them again in a “little while” (definition); and it was to their advantage that he go away--his departure was beneficial (quality).

It was also demonstrated that the Farewell Discourse has a definite rhetorical “shape”, a structure made up of an *exordium* (13:1), *narratio* (13:2-30), *partitio* (13:31-38), *confirmatio* (14:1-16:33), and *epilogos* (17:1-26). Within this arrangement, the four major topics of the *partitio* are taken up in reverse order in the *confirmatio* and *epilogos*.

The rhetorical analysis of the Farewell Discourse proceeded with careful attention paid to identifying and discussing the rhetorical proofs present: the artistic proofs of *ethos*, *pathos*, and *logos* (with its use of enthymemes and paradigms); and the non-artistic proofs which can include the use of scripture quotations, witnesses, miracles, and the like (in the Farewell Discourse, Scripture quotations, or allusions to Old Testament motifs, and the Paraclete as a future witness to Jesus are the major non-artistic proofs). In addition, the rhetorical conventions of amplification and repetition were identified in the text as elements that enhance the persuasive appeal and overall effect of the Discourse. Amplification intensifies a proposition to heighten its effect (through augmentation, comparison, reasoning, and accumulation). Repetition gives life and vigor to a work (see the discussion of these rhetorical devices in Chapter Four).

With this careful attention to identification of unit, situation, problem, arrangement, rhetorical proofs and other rhetorical elements, an analysis of the Farewell Discourse was undertaken which truly tested the hypothesis of this thesis and offers valuable insights to the structure and meaning of the Discourse.

Hypothesis

Simply stated, the goal of this investigation has been to test the hypothesis that the Farewell Discourse is far more than merely an attempt at consolation with a beloved religious leader bidding his followers “farewell.” It is, rather, a time of profound instruction in which Jesus is presented by the evangelist, with his words and actions, defining and modeling what his disciples are to be in their own soon-approaching ministry to the community of believers in Jesus and to the world. He is shown giving persuasive words of comfort, encouragement, instruction, and motivation to his disciples as he

prepares them to continue his mission after his departure.

The evangelist engages his readers rhetorically by means of his portrayal of this interaction between Jesus and his disciples on the night of his betrayal. He skillfully attempts to influence the beliefs, attitudes, and actions of his readers through the reconstructed scene of Jesus' discourse. He speaks through this first level of the text to achieve persuasion at the second level. A rhetorical analysis of the first level thus serves as the means of analyzing the evangelist's persuasive approach to his readers to move them forward in continuing Jesus' mission to the world.

This hypothesis has been tested and shown, I believe, to be valid. Additionally, with the rhetorical method employed, the unity and coherence of the text in its final form has been demonstrated and in the course of the investigation the meaning and purpose of the discourse (and how it accomplishes that purpose) has been elucidated.

Results of the rhetorical analysis

Sensitivity to the rhetorical dimension of the text has yielded a number of significant results:

(1) This study, in addition to others, helps to establish the value of rhetorical analysis as an appropriate interpretive tool in New Testament studies. It offers a bridge, spanning the impasse between strictly diachronic and strictly synchronic approaches by dealing with the text in its extant form and utilizing the very literary (rhetorical) elements that were the basis of education and communication in the Hellenistic world at the time the New Testament texts were written. Being philosophically, historically, and theologically justified (see above), this approach is well-suited to providing an informed interpretation of the New Testament, interpreting it with the very elements that went into its composition and ignoring neither the literary nor the historical dimensions of the text.

(2) Attention paid to the artistic proofs (*ethos*, *pathos*, *logos*) brings to the forefront the character of the speaker (the evangelist) and his relationship to his audience. It also gives insight into his audience: whether they are favorable or unfavorable to him and his message, what their mental/emotional state is, and what problems the speaker must overcome to be persuasive and move his hearers to act appropriately.

In the Farewell Discourse, a rhetorical reading enables Jesus' *ethos* to shine forth.

He is shown to be fully in charge and exhibits the three qualities of rhetorical *ethos*: knowledge, virtue, and good will.¹⁴ A speaker will take these character traits into account to enhance persuasiveness. Jesus is shown having special knowledge of the present and future, his relationship with his own has been virtuous, and his intentions toward them are definitely that of good will. He has a keen awareness of all that will happen to him and this “knowing” is a reflection of an earlier awareness in 10:18 of his future and his connection to the Father. Thus, Jesus is truly a worthy object of faith for he has a unique relation to the Father and he “knows.”

The character of the disciples, their *pathos* as Jesus’ audience, is also clarified through a rhetorical approach to the text. Indeed, Jesus’ disciples are portrayed in a two-fold manner during the discourse. On the one hand, they are shown in a positive light insofar as they are Jesus’ disciples: they are his companions and intimates—they have a privileged status. On the other hand, they are also viewed as those in need of consolation, encouragement, correction, teaching, reassurance, and warning. This is due to both the departure of Jesus from them and the reaction of the world to them. Both of these circumstances will create tensions and conflicts for these disciples.

This two-fold portrayal of the disciples as blessed, yet under pressure from within and without runs throughout the discourse and carries persuasive appeal. The evangelist’s audience, insofar as it perhaps faced similar challenges and severe trials, could see its own situation and identity mirrored in that of these disciples: blessed as believers in Jesus and companions of the evangelist, yet under intense pressure from both within and without. And yet, in spite of it all, being consoled, corrected, instructed, reassured, and encouraged to go forward in their mission.

(3) Furthermore, in elucidating the relationship between *ethos*, *pathos*, and *logos* in the text, one can begin to understand how, or in what manner, the author (the fourth evangelist) is persuasive (i.e. what dynamic is at work within the text which accounts for the persuasiveness). This is a dimension of the text which is rarely discussed by commentators, but is integral to what is happening both at the first (speaker with his audience) and second (author with his readers) levels of the text. Thus, a rhetorical reading provides an important, added depth to the understanding of a text that other readings do not.

¹⁴ Aristotle, *On Rhetoric*, II. 1. 5, 121.

(4) Instead of limiting the understanding of the text to what is occurring at either the first or second level (which is not uncommon among commentators), a rhetorical reading is able to show a sensitivity to both aspects of the text. While the interpreter may focus predominantly on one particular level, the significance of the other level of the text can be recognized and accounted for at appropriate times. In this way, a deeper appreciation of what the author is presenting in the text and the dynamics that account for its persuasiveness at both levels can be gained.

At the first level, Jesus is depicted speaking to his disciples at a time when his public ministry has come to an end. What he has to say reflects his teachings and the events up to this point, but he also exhorts them to persevere both now and into the future. It is clear that he is preparing his disciples for events that are yet to unfold.

At the second level, the author presents Jesus as the Son of the Father whose teachings and truth are to be embraced. The readers themselves may be facing forces both within their community and from outside their community which threaten their unity, safety, and faith. Being reminded and exhorted by the teaching of Jesus to his first disciples will give later disciples a firm foundation and source of consolation in the face of similar threats.

(5) Finally, a rhetorical reading of the Farewell Discourse has clearly demonstrated that Jesus, as the sent one of the Father who came into the world to take away the sins of the world, is here, in a final discourse prior to his departure, preparing his disciples to continue his mission to the world. As Jesus is the sent one of the Father, so they are Jesus' sent ones. They will be further equipped and aided in their mission by another Paraclete, the Spirit of truth, to continue Jesus' ministry to the world. And this ministry will have success (17:20): the "fruit" Jesus had spoken of earlier (15:1-8).

Thus, Jesus' "farewell" is not terminal. He will leave them, yes. But he will return, they will see him again, and he will take them to be where he is. Between "now" and "then", they will take up his mission to the world as his emissaries, reveal him to the world as the one sent by the Father, and in speaking the word which he has given them from the Father bring forth the "fruit" Jesus has promised.

Seeing Jesus for who he is, understanding themselves to be loved by the Father and the Son, being promised that Jesus would not leave them as orphans but would come to them, receiving the divine revelation of the word, and seeing this word bear fruit, their joy

is made complete.

Truly, in the Discourse of John 13-17, Jesus' "farewell" is not "good-bye"! This positive outlook on Jesus' person and his departure (and all that it means to those who believe in him) is offered by the evangelist to his readers as a means of effecting a rhetorical outcome with them.

Further implications of this study

Beyond demonstrating the appropriateness of using rhetorical analysis to analyze the biblical text, giving a reading that is sensitive to dimensions of the text not plumbed by other approaches, and providing a corrective to some critical readings that reject the coherence of the text, there are several other implications of this investigation.

(1) For some, the time factor in John is problematic. In the Farewell Discourse, for example, Jesus will at one point speak of something as already in effect ("I am no more in the world", 17:11) and then shortly make a statement ("these things I speak in the world", 17:13) which appears to be in conflict with it. Or he will speak as though a time has come ("having accomplished the work", 17:4) when more is to be accomplished before that goal is actually achieved ("it is finished", 19:30). Elsewhere in the Gospel, there are numerous examples of "aporia" (places where the narrative flow of the text appears disjointed) and places where John is out of step with the chronology of the synoptics.¹⁵

But John works creatively with time and uses chronology in a literary fashion to his own advantage. He has a point to make which must be seen in light of the Gospel as a whole. The statements in the Farewell Discourse that seem to be "out of sync" chronologically are no problem for John's Jesus: as he sees it (the one who "knows"), the outcome is such a taken-for-granted certainty that he can speak of things in an apparent fusion of time without confusion. This creative use of time, sequence, and chronology is worth further exploration both in chapters 13-17 and in other parts of the Gospel as well.

(2) The results of this study may also shed some light on exegetical concerns elsewhere in the Gospel which are the basis for such important questions as the purpose of the Gospel of John. Such a concern is found in the translation and then application of John 20:30-31.¹⁶ A question about the tense of the verb "to believe" in v. 31 has led scholars

¹⁵ W. Lewis, *Disarrangements in the Fourth Gospel*.

¹⁶ R. Kysar, *The Fourth Evangelist*, 148.

to line up either on the side that takes it as an aorist subjunctive (πιστεύσητε: “that you may come to believe”) or on that which takes the present subjunctive variant reading (πιστεύητε: “that you might continue to believe”). The former view holds that the Gospel of John has primarily a mission-oriented, evangelistic purpose: the conversion of unbelievers to people who believe in Jesus as the Messiah. The latter position portrays the Gospel as a document whose purpose is to nurture the faith of Christians. But it has been pointed out that the tense of this verb cannot resolve the question concerning the purpose of John.¹⁷ Either tense could be used to indicate an evangelistic or nurturing purpose. The question of purpose, as Robert Kysar observes,¹⁸ must be settled on the basis of the Gospel as a whole.

The Farewell Discourse, I believe, sheds some light here. The purpose of the Farewell Discourse was shown to be primarily concerned with Jesus nurturing his disciples (who believed, 13:10; 14:4; 15:3; 16:1; 17:12). Yet he was nurturing them in preparation for their taking over and continuing his mission to the world. Believers were being nurtured (“that you might continue to believe”) so that they might take Jesus’ word to unbelievers (that they, too, “might come to believe”). Thus, both positions are seen operating in the Farewell Discourse. Jesus acts as a “missionary” to his own (the one sent from the Father); his own are his sent ones who are “missionaries” to others.

Regardless of how the verb is translated in 20:31, the purpose of the Gospel cannot be understood as an either/or. Those who are nurtured, nurture in turn. My rhetorical reading of the text has shown that both evangelistic and nurturing concerns are present as major concerns in the Gospel. This may temper more extreme views that would tend to see the purpose of the Gospel in an either/or light.

(3) There are also a number of directions for further rhetorical readings of the Farewell Discourse. More in-depth attention could be given to Old Testament motifs--not merely identifying them, but discovering how they are used rhetorically in the text to persuade. A possible eucharistic background and understanding of the Discourse, not limited to the vine reference in chapter 15, could be investigated. For example, Aelred Lacomara comments, “in the chapters of the FD we have an extended commentary on the words ‘of the new covenant’.”¹⁹ This seems to me to be a fascinating line of inquiry and

¹⁷ J. Brownson, “John 20:31 and the Purpose of the Fourth Gospel,” 212.

¹⁸ R. Kysar, *The Fourth Evangelist*, 148.

would be worth further study. Also, a development of the Johannine understanding of divine revelation, especially with reference to the transfer of the source of that revelation from Jesus to another Paraclete with his departure, would illuminate a major theme in the Farewell Discourse. Coordinate with this area of inquiry and related to a focus on the second level of the text is the question of how the Christian community to which John addresses his Gospel would have understood this shift of revelatory source.

(4) Finally, beyond further readings of the Farewell Discourse itself, there are implications for a wider application of this study. Other select portions of the Gospel of John, especially the prologue (as an *exordium* to the whole Gospel) and the other discourses, would benefit from a rhetorical reading. Indeed, a rhetorical reading of the entire Gospel would, I believe, demonstrate the presence of a rhetorical structure governing John's Gospel and provide the kind of sensitive insights that were demonstrated in my rhetorical analysis of the Farewell Discourse: the interplay between characters (*ethos*, *pathos*, and *logos*), the persuasive appeal of the text, and how such a movement of the hearers (at both the first and second levels of the text) is effected. And, of course, beyond the Gospel of John, there are the other biblical texts which also seek to communicate and persuade and would therefore certainly be viable subjects for rhetorical analysis.

¹⁹ A. Lacomara, "Deuteronomy and the Farewell Discourse", 83-84.

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