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The Anointing That Teaches: A Socio-Historical and Rhetorical Study of Chrisma in 1 John 2:20 and 27

Jenny Meggison
The University of Western Ontario

Supervisor
Daniel A. Smith, Ph.D.
The University of Western Ontario

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THE ANOINTING THAT TEACHES: A SOCIO-HISTORICAL AND RHETORICAL
STUDY OF *CHRISMA* IN 1 JOHN 2:20 AND 27

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by

Jenny <u>Meggison</u>

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London, Ontario, Canada

Abstract

Definitions of χρῖσμα in 1 John 2:20 and 27 have inadequately explained the term as physical ointment, rhetorical symbol, or simple alias for the Holy Spirit or Paraclete figure from the Fourth Gospel. This thesis employs a variety of exegetical methods, including rhetorical-critical, socio-historical and grammatical analysis in order to respond to the need for a historically contextualized definition. Specifically, the models of limited good, patronage and brokerage are applied to the text, along with insights from group formation theory and memory studies. Comparisons with Philo, Xenophon, and other ancient authors lead to a rhetorically and culturally informed interpretation of *chrisma*, significant for understanding the community addressed in the text historically and theologically. The thesis contends that χρῖσμα is 1 John's culturally symbolized term for a communally experienced instructive reality that establishes group ethos and enables a communal lifestyle in conformity to correct christology.

Keywords

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Chapter 1

1   Introduction, Purpose, and Methods

1.1   Introduction to the Problem

The Johannine literature amidst the other writings in the Christian New Testament provides scholars with a unique glimpse into a particular brand of Christianity in the first century. The Johannine Community, as it is frequently labeled, offers an expression of some of the standard issues and questions being navigated by other Christian communities from the late first and early second centuries. Yet, the self-identification within the Gospel of John and the epistles bearing the same name indicates a distinctive perspective of the community members concerning themselves.[1] The terminology employed in identification is not merely referential, but additionally functions to construct group identity through the establishment and maintenance of social boundaries.

First John, evidently written in the wake of the secession of a group from the Johannine Community, contains some remarkable claims concerning the identity of both the seceders and those from whom they seceded. 1 John 2:18-20 illustrates this:

> [18]Little children, it is the last hour and just as you heard that antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have appeared. By this we know that it is the last hour. [19]They went out from us, but they were not from us. For, if they had been from us they would have remained with us. But [this happened] in order that they might be revealed that all of them were not from us. [20]And you, you have a *chrisma* from the holy one, and you all know. (1 John 2:18-20)[2]

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1. This claim to distinctiveness ought not to be perceived as a claim to ontological uniqueness, despite the terminology discussed in this study being unique to the New Testament. See Jonathan Z. Smith, *Drudgery Divine* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 36-39.

2. All biblical quotations in this thesis are original translations unless otherwise indicated. For all abbreviations used in this thesis see the list of standard abbreviations in Patrick H. Alexander et al., eds., *SBL Handbook of Style: for Ancient Near Eastern, Biblical, and early Christian Studies* (Peabody, MS: Hendrickson Publishers, 1999).

In this passage, those who seceded are labeled as ἀντίχριστοι, or "antichrists" (vv.18-19) and those who remain are identified as having χρῖσμα, or "(an) anointing" (v.20). This χρῖσμα is explained further a few verses later:

> [26]I have written these things to you concerning those leading you astray. [27]And you, the *chrisma* that you received from him remains in you and you have no need that anyone should teach you. Instead, as the same *chrisma* teaches you concerning all things, and is true and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, remain in him. (1 John 2:26-27)

The placement of the positive ascription (having "[an] anointing") in juxtaposition to the dysphemism of "antichrist" in this passage is surely intended both to bolster the loyalty and affirm the identity of the adherents in contrast to those who left the community. The author uses highly polemical language to do so, establishing the centrality of the teaching concerning χρῖσμα to the maintenance of the community in what he prescribes as the correct way of living. With ostensible redundancy, the author states the χρῖσμα is both "true" and "not a lie," thereby further divulging the atmosphere of contention behind this text. Despite these nearly unequivocal observations, the question remains as to how the author has come to use the term χρῖσμα in this unique way such that it functions to teach the audience (v.27) while simultaneously identifying them over and against their "adversaries."[3] What meaning would the term likely have had for the members of the Johannine Community in their social context?

Though the term χρῖσμα seems to have been well understood in the Johannine Community, its meaning is evidently unclear to the modern interpreter. In fact, "anointing" in this passage and its teaching function have been variously understood by scholars to be a gift of the Spirit,[4] one of several roles of the Holy Spirit in Johannine

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3. Raymond E. Brown describes the split of the community members into two groups he calls "adherents" and "adversaries": Raymond Edward Brown, *The Epistles of John*, AB 30 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1982), 812. Elsewhere, he refers to the two groups as "adherents" and "secessionists", softening the rhetorical force assigned by the author to his opponents: Raymond E. Brown, *The Community of the Beloved Disciple: The Life, Loves, and Hates of An Individual Church in New Testament Times* (New York: Paulist Press, 1979), 23.

4. Marianne Meye Thompson, *1-3 John,* InterVarsity Press New Testament Commentary (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1992), 100.

pneumatology,[5] and as an endowment of the "believer with a power of insight that makes any teaching by others unnecessary."[6] Some have also advocated for a ritual understanding of this "anointing" as a literal chrism and part of an initiation rite for the community.[7] However, it could be argued that the methods used to approach the question have often tended to be too linear, reductionist, or indirect. This is because many χρῖσμα discussions take place within the context of general commentary on the epistles and therefore lack the singularity of focus on χρῖσμα itself. Reconstructions of the social history of the Johannine Community inevitably reduce the community's experiences into simplified narratives, which are speculative at best, and may or may not accurately reflect their historical reality. Furthermore, attempts to identify social background information concerning the community and to indicate lines of direct influence are often unfounded.[8] In light of these observed pitfalls, this study seeks to articulate a historically contextualized understanding of the meaning of the term χρῖσμα in 1 John using a variety of methods, including grammatical analysis, social-scientific study, and comparison with other ancient materials. This study will demonstrate that *chrisma* is the term given to an invisible reality communally experienced as an instructive force that establishes group identity and promotes communal ethos in an ongoing way.

1.2   Defining Terms Operationally

It is important to begin by defining the terms "anointing" and "*chrisma*" as this will clarify the topic being discussed in various sections of this thesis in order to articulate a better understanding of the term χρῖσμα in its ancient setting. In English, the term

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5. Jan Gabriël van der Watt, *An Introduction to the Johannine Gospel and Letters,* T & T Clark Approaches to Biblical Studies (New York: T & T Clark, 2007), 72.

6. Urban C. von Wahlde, *The Gospel and Letters of John,* Eerdmans Critical Commentary (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2010), 3:84.

7. Martin F. Connell, "On 'Chrism' and 'Anti-Christs' in 1 John 2:18-27: A Hypothesis," *Worship* 83, no. 3 (May 2009): 213.

8. Many attempts at understanding New Testament backgrounds are explanations of observed similarities and differences in terms indicative of a "genealogy" when all that is supported by the evidence is "analogy." Therefore, the adage "correlation does not imply causation" should be kept in mind when analyzing data, including that relating to early Christianity. Comparisons ought to be made with the understanding that observed similarities serve to open up a variety of analogical possibilities for understanding different dimensions of the subject at hand. See Smith, *Drudgery Divine*, 36-53.

"anointing" is ambiguous; it could be used as a noun to refer to the material with which someone is anointed (as in 1 John 2:20, 27), or verbally to reflect the action of smearing someone with such a material (Hebrews 1:9). Possible glosses for the noun include "anointing oil," "chrism," or "ointment." However, each of these terms has unique connotations and risk anachronistic interpretations for various reasons (i.e. "chrism" may connote sacrament for some and "ointment" may be taken medicinally). In light of these ambiguities, and in order to reinforce the linguistic connection of χρῖσμα to ἀντίχριστοι in this passage, the transliteration of the term (*chrisma*) will be used throughout this discussion to refer to that with which a recipient is anointed. The English "anointing" will be used in reference to the action, ritual or otherwise.

The methods employed in this thesis have been selected for their capacity to overcome the gap between the modern and ancient contexts of anointing and *chrisma*. Despite having some familiar referents for the majority of people today, the extent and multifariousness of the practice of anointing in antiquity and thus the background necessary to understanding *chrisma* can be difficult to apprehend due to modern lenses of interpretation, geographical separation, temporal distance, and fragmentary evidence. For example, it is perhaps well known that there were practices of anointing that could have either religious (e.g. for a coronation ritual or cultic celebration) or non-religious uses (i.e. for bathing or after exercise). However, there is even some danger implicit in the classification of practices in this way because such demarcations (religious and non-religious) are modern categories nonexistent in antiquity. Therefore it is the hope that this project's methodology can heed these cautions, thus providing more plausible ways of accurately imagining the ancient setting of *chrisma*.

1.3   Methods

The original Greek text of 1 John 2:18-27 will be examined first, utilizing exegetical methods, which will include discussion of text-critical and other translational considerations. This section of the thesis will also address the basic critical issues pertinent to 1 John as well as notes regarding the Greek noun *chrisma*, related words and their use in other ancient documents. The grammar of 1 John 2:18-27 will be analyzed in

order to explicate the main tenets of the author's viewpoint and rhetoric. This analysis will focus on the main issues of the relationship of the *chrisma* to the community's history, future, and to the teaching of the truth.

The second methodological perspective used in this study is that of rhetorical criticism. This approach, according to Stanley E. Porter and Dennis L. Stamps, has been expanding its scope in New Testament scholarship to include not only the forms and blueprints discussed in the ancient rhetorical handbooks and how those patterns are used in persuasion, but also to discover how discursive writing "constructs new sociological understanding and identity, even new patterns of behaviour which follow from such understanding and identity."[9] In this vein, recent scholarship suggests that 1 John is an example of epideictic rhetoric that does not aim merely to prove a particular position formally, but to bolster adhesion to already accepted principles and therefore also reinforce group cohesiveness.[10] Looking at *chrisma* through this rhetorical lens suggests the author's focus is twofold. First, he seeks to discredit the seceders in the eyes of those who remain. Second, his aim is to strengthen the adherents in their commitment to continue embracing the particular teaching and lifestyle (i.e. of the "truth") he prescribes.[11]

Just as the scope of rhetorical approaches has expanded, so social and historical approaches have also shifted in recent years with the application of knowledge gleaned from anthropological and cultural studies of the Mediterranean to New Testament social contexts. The shift has corrected for what Suzanne Dixon has described as an "almost obsessive need of historians to locate and explain change, to force history into a narrative

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9. Stanley E. Porter and Dennis L. Stamps, "Introduction: Rhetorical Criticism and the Florence Conference," in *Rhetorical Criticism and the Bible*, ed. Stanley E. Porter and Dennis L. Stamps (New York: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 17.

10. Ben Witherington III, *New Testament Rhetoric: An Introductory Guide to the Art of Persuasion in and of the New Testament* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2009), 191.

11. Ibid., 190.

of some kind."[12] Golden and Toohey suggest that most historical approaches since the mid-1980s have tended to privilege formulations of experience into a discrete sequence (periodization) and overemphasize the importance of change.[13] Therefore, Dixon calls for a social-scientific approach that is more accepting of continuity in culture and exploring discrepancies as part of "usual inconsistencies found in any culture", rather than interpreting them as "historical shifts".[14] Social history reflects such a mandate by becoming more focused on providing a picture of a community within its richly textured context rather than a linear discussion of its development over time. It is this mandate that will shape the discussion of the socio-historical context of the community behind the text of 1 John 2:20 and 27.

Social scientists have developed models through observation of modern Mediterranean society and study of ancient Mediterranean culture, and these have helped scholars access the complex social setting of the New Testament by providing an analogical framework within which to interpret the language and social cues contained within the text. Social-scientific models are certainly not exempt from inherent temporal and geographical constraints common to all historical work. However, if one bears the methodological criticisms in mind, cautious analogies prove fruitful for approaching ancient groups, when carefully evaluated.[15] For example, the social model of limited good[16] helps to explain the way the acquisition of a good in the ancient context means the simultaneous

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12. Suzanne Dixon, "Continuity and Change in Roman Social History: Retrieving 'Family Feeling(s)' From Roman Law and Literature," in *Inventing Ancient Culture: Historicism, Periodization, and the Ancient World*, ed. Mark Golden and Peter Toohey (New York: Routledge, 1997), 84-85.

13. Golden and Toohey, introduction to Golden and Toohey, *Inventing Ancient Culture*, 3.

14. Dixon, "Continuity and Change," in Golden and Toohey, *Inventing Ancient Culture*, 87.

15. James G. Crossley, "Reading Historical Documents Historically," in *Reading the New Testament: Contemporary Approaches*, Reading Religious Texts (New York: Routledge, 2010), 25-31.

16. Carolyn Osiek, *What are they Saying About the Social Setting of the New Testament?* (New York: Paulist Press, 1992), 32; Philip F. Esler, *The First Christians in their Social Worlds: Social Scientific Approaches to New Testament Interpretation* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 25; Jerome H. Neyrey, *The Gospel of John in Cultural and Rhetorical Perspective* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2009), 126-130.

loss of good for another person or group of people,[17] thus introducing a continual struggle for goods among individuals and their social groups. The patron-client model is also useful for understanding the exchange of limited goods across social strata. Both these models will be employed in this thesis to provide insight into the social dynamic of the community behind 1 John.

1.4   Social Context

1.4.1   Greco-Roman Culture

The setting of 1 John in the Greco-Roman world provides a complex and dynamic social backdrop against which to view the questions at hand. Cultural anthropology defines culture as "a system of symbols relating to and embracing people, things, and events that are socially symboled."[18] The set of symbols shared by early Christian communities is extremely diverse, and although the common nomenclature for the cultural milieu of the New Testament writings is "Greco-Roman," it is important to heed warnings against the problematic oversimplification of this two-part term; instead, the ancient Mediterranean culture[19] is a conglomeration of many influences.[20] In this particular historical moment, the superimposition of one culture over another produces, not just assimilation or acculturation, terms that may imply a loss of one culture's set of defining features, but a

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17. Richard L. Rohrbaugh, "Honor: Core Value in the Biblical World," in *Understanding the Social World of the New Testament,* ed. Dietmar Neufeld and Richard E. DeMaris (New York: Routledge, 2010), 112.

18. Bruce J. Malina, *The New Testament World: Insights from Cultural Anthropology* (Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 1993), 12.

19. It is essential to caveat the reference to Mediterranean culture at the outset of this thesis. The application of anthropological and social scientific models can be a fruitful means of asking questions about the groups reflected in 1 John. However, it is important to acknowledge that such models can also over-generalize and overlook the diversity in what is labeled "Mediterranean culture." For the purposes of this paper, this terminology will continue to be employed as part of an interpretive lens with the acknowledgement of its susceptibility to critique. Cf. T. M. Lemos, "Cultural Anthropology," in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Biblical Interpretation*, ed. Steven L. McKenzie (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 1:157-173.

20. Lucien Legrand, *The Bible on Culture: Belonging or Dissenting* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2000), 72.

"multi-dimensional" process of "blending and two-way interchanges."[21] One can find a range of influences from those described broadly as Hellenistic, Roman and Judean, to the specific influence based on membership in various sects, schools, and groups, such as mystery religions, ascetic movements, and philosophical schools. Several of the suggested specific influences on 1 John will be discussed in this thesis.

1.4.2   Honour, Shame, and Agonistic Culture

Known for its hierarchical structure and agonistic nature, Greco-Roman culture is centered on the acquisition, ascription, and preservation of honour and status, as goods in short supply. The prevalent ancient Mediterranean understanding that all goods exist in limited supply results inevitably in a continual vying of people and groups for whatever good is desired, not only material, but moral or otherwise. This central endeavour leads to a culture in flux, with allegiances and associations between various groups becoming of primary importance regardless of one's social strata (described as "urban elites, urban non-elites, villagers, and a marginal class composed of beggars and slaves").[22] With an economic system existing to supply the demands of the urban elite minority,[23] those living outside the centralized conurbations are fundamentally focused on their loyalties to kin and on meeting the demands of rural community life.[24] In this milieu, then, the contingency for any form of social movement lies mostly in social networks and the formation of strategic alliances. Those in the upper social strata can build connections with those in the lower in order to collect allies and honour for themselves in return for offering the less powerful support in more practical ways.[25] As a result of such a highly competitive milieu, social interactions tend to be agonistic, and public challenge and riposte emerges an important component in the constant defense and pursuit of honour. This can apply to groups as well as individuals, based on the ancient understanding of

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21. Philip A. Harland, *Dynamics of Identity in the World of the Early Christians: Associations, Judeans, and Cultural Minorities* (New York: T & T Clark, 2009), 13-14.

22. Osiek, *Social Setting*, 31.

23. Ibid., 39.

24. Ibid.

25. Ibid., 32.

self, discussed below. Contentions for goods and status have their own social rules and boundaries, which are reflected in the writings of the day.

1.5   Group Formation and Identity

It is important for the modern reader to acknowledge cultural differences in the way that identity is understood. In general, one of the ways to understand identity in the ancient context includes its definition on the basis of membership and "embeddedness" in groups; thus, it is groups that have characteristics and distinctive qualities and not individuals.[26] In a recent article, Bruce J. Malina defines this ancient understanding of self as "collectivistic."[27] Membership in groups determines the identity of the individual such that persons "realize their values and attitudes are defined by their unique and distinct primary ingroup."[28] This stands in contradiction to modern societies typically understood as individualistic. Indeed, most memberships in ancient ingroups are related to social categories ascribed to a person at birth, such as those based on kinship or geographical location. In response to John H. Elliott's work (1993) on early Christian groups, Malina wrote another essay about Christian organizations from the viewpoint of small group formation theory. From within the complex ancient Mediterranean matrix of competition emerge groups formed around commonality of values and interests, usually social or political. These groups could evolve into movements, sects, or communities depending on their motivations and interactions within their group and in relation to the society around them. Classifying early Christian groups using group formation theory, Malina prefers the term "elective associations" as a nuance to the more familiar "voluntary association," seeking to clarify that membership in such groups was often necessitated or obligated on the basis of social pressures and constraints.[29] Barclay

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26. Malina, *Insights from Cultural Anthropology*, 68.

27. Bruce J. Malina, "Collectivism in Mediterranean Culture," in Neufeld and DeMaris, *Understanding the Social World*, 19.

28. Ibid., 20.

29. Bruce J. Malina, "Early Christian Groups: Using Small Group Formation Theory to Explain Christian Organizations" in *Modelling Early Christianity: Social-Scientific Studies of the New Testament in its Context*, ed. Philip F. Esler (London: Routledge, 1995), 108.

affirms that early Christian groups ought not to be labeled "sects" as they lack the distinctive sectarian focus on advocating reformative changes in society as a whole; rather, they are focused on the concerns and maintenance of group honour and shared values.[30]

1.6   Polemics and Labelling

The use of polemics and labelling in oral and written address is an important part of the social and linguistic habits of the ancient Mediterranean, operating on a system consisting of an ongoing exchange of accusations and counter-accusations.[31] The goal of this system is the definition of group boundaries and the subsequent maintenance of those social perimeters.[32] In his work on identity, Philip A. Harland discusses how "the act of describing those outside one's own cultural group is, in part, a process of describing one's own communal identity. It is by defining 'them' that the sense of 'us' is reinforced."[33] He goes on to cite instances of certain associations recounting actions of other groups in terms indicative of infraction, when those actions are known from other sources to be much less impious than described.[34] He describes these groups as "anti-associations."[35] Such anti-associations tend to develop their own terminology known to the ingroup but unfamiliar to those on the outside, or in broader society; this, Rohrbaugh describes as "anti-language."[36] John M. G. Barclay points out that to varying extents labels can affect the identity of the person or group involved in a given action.[37] These

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30. Malina, "Early Christian Groups," in Esler, *Modelling Early Christianity,* 109.

31. This system is reflected in the conflict addressed by Paul's letter to the Galatians. See John H. Elliot, "Paul, Galatians, and the Evil Eye" in Jerome H. Neyrey and Eric C. Stewart, eds., *The Social World of the New Testament: Insights and Models* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2008), 223-234.

32. Ibid., 226. See also John M. G. Barclay, "Deviance and Apostasy: Some Applications of Deviance Theory to First-Century Judaism and Christianity," in Esler, *Modelling Early Christianity,* 114-127.

33. Harland, *Dynamics of Identity*, 162.

34. Ibid.

35. Ibid., 163.

36. Rohrbaugh, *The New Testament in Cross-Cultural Perspective,* Matrix: The Bible in Mediterranean Context (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2007), 177.

37. Barclay, "Applications of Deviance Theory" in Esler, *Modelling Early Christianity,* 116.

labels, as part of anti-language, have a social function that is "at least as important as its "meaning"….[and] to press for the meaning…before recognizing its social function…is emphatically to miss the point."[38] Understanding this polemical context and the social function of labeling will be useful in understanding *chrisma* and its use in 1 John 2:20 and 27, as not only bearing a socially-constructed meaning but as contributing functionally to the identity of this particular group.

1.7   Main Issues in 1 John 2:18-27

There are several particular issues presented in 1 John 2:18-27 that will be illuminated by different aspects of the text's social setting. First, there is the problem of defining the term *chrisma* as it would have been heard and understood by a member of the Johannine community in their particular geographical and social situation. Second, there is the issue of the content and method of the teaching that *chrisma* is purported to do. Third, there is the problem of the history of the community and its divisions as reflected in the Gospel of John, the seeming culmination of which is manifested by the secession described in 1 John 2:19. What light does reconstructing this community's experiences shed on the meaning of *chrisma* for these two groups? Finally, there is the question of the potential result for the community of either heeding or disregarding the teaching, in the eyes of the author. This thesis intends to address each of these problems through exploring relevant information from rhetorical, social and historical study. The conclusion is that *chrisma* is best understood as an invisible reality that is experienced communally as an instructive force that functions in the formulation and maintenance of group identity, the establishment of collective ethos, and the preservation of unity in the community.

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38. Rohrbaugh, *Cross-Cultural Perspective*, 177.

Chapter 2

2 Literature Survey

The path of Johannine scholarship is well traversed. What follows is an overview of some of the basic issues pertinent to answering the proposed questions concerning *chrisma* in 1 John 2:20 and 27. It is beyond the scope of this project to explore the plethora of theories and discussions on each aspect of the introductory issues to the text. Therefore, the primary dialogue partners are authors chosen for their major contributions to the field or for being representative of a consensus position.

Though becoming increasingly limited by its age, Raymond E. Brown's commentary, *The Epistles of John* (1982*)*, has remained thorough and thought provoking. This, and his well known *The Community of the Beloved Discipl*e (1979) are two important conversation pieces for any study of the Johannine literature. Based on similarities between 1 John and the Fourth Gospel, Brown works with the final form of the Gospel of John in order to reconstruct a history of the community he sees behind both texts and to analyze their messages. Rudolf Schnackenburg (1992) presents the state of the text-critical discussion well, and raises important questions and problems concerning older scholarship.[39] John Painter's commentary, *1, 2, 3 John* (2002), also provides a systematic discussion of the text's critical issues, as well as a comprehensive historical overview of the field of Johannine studies.[40] Most recently, Urban C. von Wahlde's commentary, *The Gospel and Letters of John* (2010)*,* is both comprehensive and helpful in that it takes into account more recent lines of research and utilizes rhetorical and socio-historical methodologies more than older commentaries.

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39. Rudolf Schnackenburg, *The Johannine Epistles: Introduction and Commentary*, trans. Reginald Fuller and Ilse Fuller (New York: Crossroad, 1992).

40. John Painter, *1, 2 and 3 John*, Sacra Pagina 18 (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2002).

2.1   Genre

The oddity of the form of 1 John makes it a good place to begin this survey. 1 John
cannot be classified as a true letter because it lacks explicit address and authorship
identifications.[41] Some suggest that 1 John should be termed a "catholic epistle."[42]
However, the text uses personal pronouns that seem to assume a mutual understanding of
the referent as a specific entity writing to a specific group. For example, the author's
inclusion in the "us" from whom the seceders departed (2:19), and with whom the author
hopes the audience ("you") will have κοινωνία (1:3). In his 1992 commentary,
Schnackenburg highlights the difficulty of classing this work as a letter, formally, while
demonstrating the text also lacks indicators of being strictly homiletic or paraenetic.[43] For
Brown, 1 John is to be considered as an exposition on the Gospel of John, written with
the preservation of the author's particular interpretation of that gospel in mind.[44] He calls
it an apologetic discourse authored to protect the belief that God's son had come in the
flesh (1 John 4:2).[45] John Painter maintains that 1 John was intended instead to
accompany the circulation of 2 John (and perhaps 3 John) to various Johannine
churches.[46] This explains the lack of standard features, as these would have been covered
by the accompanying letter or letters.[47] However, as von Wahlde points out, 1 John
remains personal and is clearly intended for a community with which he identifies
himself,[48] and 2 and 3 John each have independent goals and content. Despite its clear
nonconformity to the conventions of first century letter writing, 1 John will continue to

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41. For an overview of the features of a letter in antiquity, see von Wahlde, appendix 6 "Formal Elements
in Greek Letter Writing and in 2 and 3 John," in *Gospel and Letters*, 3:402-408.

42. Schnackenburg, *Johannine Epistles*, 4.

43. Ibid.

44. Brown, *Epistles*, 91.

45. Ibid., 109.

46. Painter, *1, 2, and 3 John*, 356.

47. Von Wahlde, *Gospel and Letters*, 3:220.

48. Ibid., 3:18. Note the author's inclusion of himself in the first person plural "we" in 1 John 3:2 and "us"
in 1 John 2:19.

be referred to as an "epistle" throughout this study for ease of communication, but not for lack of recognition that the title is misleading to an extent.

2.2　　Structure

First John has several literary features that make divisions of the text difficult, yet are important factors in constructing a working outline of the text. First, there are thematic elements, such as "light" (1 John 1:5-7; 2:8-11) and "love" (1 John 3:1, 11-18; 4:7-21) that recur throughout the Epistle. Second, there are six "claims" found in the text that must be accounted for:

1. "if we claim to have fellowship with him" (1:6)

2. "if we claim to be without sin (1:8)

3. "if we claim we have not sinned (1:10)

4. "whoever says 'I know him'" (2:4)

5. "whoever claims to live in him" (2:8)

6. "anyone who claims to be in the light" (2:9)

The distribution of these claims contributes to the argument for treating the text as a unified whole. Third, there are the requisite confessional statements: "Jesus is the Christ (2:22); "Jesus Christ come in the flesh" (4:2); "Jesus is the Son of God" (4:14; cf. 5:5). Several scholars have suggested complex outlines for 1 John, including Schnackenburg, Culpepper, Painter, Grayston and Strecker; however, von Wahlde finds the simpler outlines of Brown and Smalley generally more helpful. He sees a loose organization in the text by which "one important thought leads to another, and so the units are chained together rather than organized by some larger principle."[49] This characteristic chaining is clear in the connection of 1 John 2:18-27 to the passages that enclose it; the prior section links the theme of "the world passing away" (2:17, 18a) to the indication that "it is the last

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49. Von Wahlde, *Gospel and Letters*, 3:23.

hour" (2:19) and the following section is chained by the repetition of the phrase μένετε ἐν αὐτῷ (2:27f and 2:28a).[50] The structure is such that it frames *chrisma* in an eschatological context and emphasizes its contrast to "the world."

2.3   Authorship

One of the only clues to authorship given in the text of 1 John itself is found in the prologue where the author uses the first person plural to include himself[51] among those who "have seen….and touched" the ministry of Jesus (1 John 1:1). Schnackenburg suggests membership of the author in a group of true eyewitnesses, or the discipleship relationship of the author to a disciple of Jesus, either of which explanation would qualify the author to speak so representatively.[52] Brown suggests the author's membership in what he calls the "Johannine School" which is a group of authors who played a role both in editing later redactions of the Fourth Gospel and in preparing the three epistles of John.[53] The "school" would allow for the loss of the entire generation of eyewitnesses without the loss of the authority to claim such witness. Contrastingly, von Wahlde takes the claim to witness at face value, theorizing that the groups to which the documents were written would have rejected this claim if it were not in line with reality.[54]

The identity of the author is ambiguous. The traditional view is that the author of the Epistles is John, the brother of James, the son of Zebedee, and a known disciple of Jesus. This tradition goes back to Irenaeus (*Adv. haer.* 3.3.4). Eusebius attests to this (*Hist. eccl.* 3.23.4), maintaining the identity of the apostle with the author of the Fourth Gospel, and that this is the same person labeled as the Beloved Disciple (John 21) and "the Elder" identified in 2 and 3 John (*Hist. eccl.* 3.23.1; 2.29.6). Von Wahlde maintains this theory

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50. Von Wahlde, *Gospel and Letters*, 3:90.

51. The assumption of gender is based on social practice at the time. It is more likely the author is male, although possible that it was a woman. This paper will use the gendered pronouns to refer to the author despite this possibility.

52. Schnackenburg, *Johannine Epistles*, 55.

53. Brown, *Epistles*, 158.

54. Von Wahlde, *Gospel and Letters*, 3:10.

today. Marianne Meye Thompson briefly summarizes the debate, aptly concluding "there is no reason not to designate the author of the epistles by his traditional name 'John.'"[55]

Brown holds that all three epistles were written by "the presbyter" (2 John 1:1; 3 John 1:1) and bases this conclusion on the commonality of issues addressed in the first and second epistles, and the common occasion underlying the second and third.[56] Brown identifies the presbyter as neither the "beloved disciple" (John 21:20) nor the redactor of the Gospel.[57] He highlights the author's preference for speaking of Christ's preexistence as a demonstration of a shared Christology with the Gospel of John, while also indicating that the manner of Christ's coming lies at the center of the debate in 1 John.[58] Von Wahlde, more recently, agrees with Brown in identifying the author of all three epistles as "the Elder." However, he maintains that this person is one and the same as "the Beloved Disciple."[59] Brown would argue that such an opinion precludes the likelihood of the secessionists seceding from their community's founding father.[60]

This presbyter, for Brown, is unlikely to be merely one of many with such a title, but rather may have been part of the generation that came after those considered eyewitnesses and therefore taught as the next link in the "chain of authority."[61] In Brown's opinion, he is most likely a disciple of the Beloved Disciple. Through him, and through any subsequent disciples of his, "the Paraclete" (John 14:16) works to carry on the tradition, thereby explaining the collective "we" in 1 John 1:1-2 as the "Johannine school."[62] Occasionally in 1 John there are first and second person plural pronouns utilized with the former referencing what Brown calls the "tradition bearers" of the community ("we"), those who were close with the Beloved Disciple, as distinguished

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55. Thompson, *1-3 John*, 20.

56. Brown, *Community*, 94.

57. Ibid., 95.

58. Brown, *Epistles*, 76.

59. Von Wahlde, *Gospel and Letters*, 3:7.

60. Brown, *Community*, 95.

61. Ibid., 100.

62. Ibid., 101.

from the rest of the community.[63] If the author was an eyewitness to the ministry of the Beloved Disciple, then his self-identification as "Elder" may have as much or more to do with his age than with his title or position[64] in that community (although the fact that he is authoring an instructive piece like this indicates that he had some standing of honour within the community as well).[65] For the purposes of this paper, it will be assumed that all three epistles have the same author, or at least the authors are so closely affiliated as to reflect the same understanding of the message of Jesus Christ and the true community standards. This author is also closely affiliated with that of the Fourth Gospel, if not having an involvement in at least its redaction. Therefore, the other Epistles and the Gospel of John illuminate the use of the term *chrisma* in 1 John.

2.4   Date

Raymond E. Brown claims the priority of the Gospel of John with respect to the letters based on the representation of the "opponents" in each document. That the opponents are characterized as outsiders ("the Jews") in the Gospel and as insiders (those who "went out from us") in the Epistles is sufficient evidence for him that the letters represent a later progression in the social history of the community.[66] Von Wahlde upholds an earlier date assignment for 1 John than most commentators, at his own admission.[67] Based on linguistic features and the social situations of the three epistles, von Wahlde concludes that the canonical order for these documents is chronological.[68] However, he sets their composition prior to the third edition of the Fourth Gospel, explaining the lack of

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63. Brown, *Community*, 102.

64. BDAG, s.v., "πρεσβύτερος." The first definition listed is related to age, and the second to leadership. See also Bornkamm, "πρέσβυς," TDNT, 6.662-80.

65. Von Wahlde, *Gospel and Letters*, 3:8.

66. Brown, *Community*, 97.

67. Von Wahlde, *Gospel and Letters*, 3:14.

68. Ibid., 3:12. Specifically, he points out that some of the terminology of 2 and 3 John represents a later linguistic stage than 1 John, and that the social situation of 3 John indicates a later stage of community development than 2 John.

reference in them to their author as the "Beloved Disciple."[69] His logic leads him to five internal indicators of date: 1) sequence of the three editions of Gospel; 2) dating 1 John between the 2nd and 3rd editions of the Fourth Gospel; 3) time between 2nd edition and 1 John; and 4) time between 1 John and 3rd edition is relatively short. Why would the authors wait to make the necessary changes or address the issues the community was facing?; 5) assuming the author of 1 John died before the completion of the 3rd edition of the Fourth Gospel and therefore died sometime before 90 CE.[70]

The earliest external attestation of 1 John comes from Polycarp (*Phil*. 13.2) which von Wahlde dates ca. 100-105.[71] Reasoning that before Polycarp attested to 1 John, he knew of it for a few years and that 1 John was extant a few years before Polycarp became aware of it, von Wahlde assigns a date for 1 John to approximately 85-90 CE.[72] The cogency of his logic is acknowledged here. This 'early' date assignment may impinge on the question of the meaning of the term *chrisma* in that the term is likely less developed than some commentators might maintain and its meaning may therefore reflect an earlier stage in community development.

2.5   Provenance

The specific geographical setting of 1 John is even more difficult to pinpoint than its chronological placement due to even less availability of internal evidence regarding this question. Brown discusses the geographical spread implied by the occasion of the letters, and what that indicates concerning the churches referenced in the Johannine letters (3 John 1:6, 9, 10; 2 John 1:1, 10, 13); specifically, they are quite possibly part of a large city center or metropolis.[73] Von Wahlde gives two reasons for guessing Ephesus in particular as this city centre. First of all, Polycarp is known to have been from Smyrna,

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69. Von Wahlde, *Gospel and Letters*, 3:12.

70. Ibid., 3:13-14.

71. Ibid., 3:14.

72. Ibid.

73. Brown, *Community*, 98.

which is located very close to Ephesus.[74] Secondly, the secessionists of 1 John appear to have held similar viewpoints to those Polycarp opposed in his own writings.[75] Therefore, based on Polycarp's location, it could be guessed that 1 John hails from the same region. Eusebius cites Papias as referencing a "presbyter John" (*Hist. eccl.* 3.39.4) whom he also linked with a grave in Ephesus (*Hist. eccl.* 3.39.6), so if this were the same "presbyter" or "elder" then that would support the theory even further.[76] The geographical context helps situate discussions of intertextuality and cultural influence on the text and the audience for which it was intended. For example, the setting of Ephesus may have implications for the rhetorical and cultural context of the epistle such as the presence of *gymnasia* and bathhouses in the city.

2.6 Relation of 1, 2, and 3 John to Each Other

Von Wahlde states clearly that the author of all three epistles is one person, "the Elder" and "the Beloved Disciple." His primary reason is the percentage of similar key words between all four documents,[77] and he explains the features that are sometimes taken as indicators that there were different authors. For example, the author's lack of self-identification in 1 John (despite its presence in 2 and 3 John) is due to the difference in genre. The use of the title "Elect Lady" only in 2 John is due to this document's address to a group, rather than to an individual (as in 3 John) or to no recipient in particular (as in 1 John).[78] This is because von Wahlde takes "Elect Lady" as a reference to a congregation rather than a person. Phrases unique to each of the texts are identified as "grammatical peculiarities" which can be shown to be in line with the other texts theologically or ideologically.[79] This thesis favours von Wahlde's conclusions concerning

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74. Von Wahlde, *Gospel and Letters*, 3:14.

75. Ibid.

76. Ibid., 3:15.

77. The four documents referred to are the three epistles and the "third edition" of the Gospel.

78. Von Wahlde, *Gospel and Letters*, 3:7.

79. For example, the phrase "Jesus Christ, Son of the Father" is only found in 2 John 3. However, "Jesus Christ" is found in both the Gospel and 1 John and those documents clearly indicate Jesus as the Son with God portrayed as the Father. See von Wahlde, *Gospel and Letters*, 3:8.

common authorship. Recall from section 2.1 that Painter has suggested the possibility that all three Epistles were originally circulated together, so that 2-3 John were intended as cover letters for the general letter 1 John.[80] Whether the letters were circulated together or not does not necessarily impinge upon the question of the *chrisma* in 1 John, however it is significant that the letters are closely affiliated with one another and that they share common authorship because this will allow the author's ideas in 2 and 3 John to inform the reading of 1 John.

2.7   Relationship of 1-3 John to the Fourth Gospel

Despite containing no direct citations from the Fourth Gospel and clear differences in content between the two writings, Brown states "while I think the epistolary author knew a written form of [the Gospel of John], albeit perhaps not the finally redacted form, the most that can be *shown* [sic] is dependence on the kind of tradition found in [the Gospel of John] – a tradition that antedated the written Gospel."[81] Notably, the prologue to 1 John bears striking similarity to that of the Gospel of John, suggesting their authors at least come from a similar stream in early Christianity, even if they are not assumed to be the same person.[82] Schnackenburg also argues for a shared tradition with the Gospel of John, but a distinct author. [83] Von Wahlde, working with his three-edition theory of the Gospel's composition, believes that the author of the letters is the author of the third edition of the gospel; namely, the Beloved Disciple.[84] What is agreed upon is the significant commonality between the Gospel and the Letters of John, regardless of one's explanations for it. This is significant for establishing the broader context of 1 John's theology and social history, and therefore *chrisma*.

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80. Painter, *1, 2, and 3 John*, 356.

81. Brown, *Epistles*, 101.

82. Painter, *1, 2, and 3 John,* 127; Brown, *Epistles*, 32-35.

83. Schnackenburg, *Johannine Epistles*, 16.

84. Von Wahlde, *Gospel and Letters*, 3:11.

2.8   The Johannine Community

The Gospel of John and the Johannine Epistles share enough similarities to be considered reflective of the same community, although different enough to cast some doubt as to the timing of the writing of each document. Brown has discussed the history of this Johannine community, as it has come to be called, by analyzing the Fourth Gospel and the Johannine Letters and conducting research into the social history of these documents in order to reconstruct a theoretical historical narrative and approximate timeline of this community's formation and experiences. Brown then uses this historical reconstruction to provide further insight into each of the documents included in the Johannine corpus. His work in this area is still heavily relied upon, but not without critique. For instance, a recent article by Stanley Stowers presents an important counterpoint to what he terms a "promiscuous use of the term [community] in the field of early Christianity."[85] He identifies a trend in the 70s and 80s for reading a "coherent congregation" into the communities behind texts.[86] He calls for a sparing and critical use of the term, warning against the folly of treating early Christian literature as "unique" to other ancient literature, thereby (among other things) confining understanding to the limits of the community.[87] He is concerned about the way processes and results of social formation are portrayed and about the tendency to imagine that every text has a "community" of common thought and belief standing behind it, that has materialized with little or no connection to its past or to other communities and social contexts. With this critique in mind, Brown's construction may still prove helpful as an analytical tool to employ in the project of historical inquiry, an approach Stowers allows.[88]

Brown has established a chronological narrative for the Johannine community that he divides into sections: pre-gospel, gospel, epistles, and post-epistles. Although he does

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85. Stanley Stowers, "The Concept of 'Community' and the History of Early Christianity," *MTSR,* 23 (2011), 239.

86. Ibid., 241.

87. Ibid., 247.

88. Stowers, "The Concept of 'Community'," 244.

caution against viewing these as distinct or static, the stage-framework serves the purpose of imagining how a multitude of contributing factors might conceivably have interacted to form a community such as that reflected in the Johannine writings. Despite some concerns about reductionism, much of Brown's general framework is helpful as a working hypothesis in order to situate *chrisma* in this community's shared experience.

Brown's stage one (*ca*. 50-80 CE) begins with a group of Jewish-born[89] believers in Jesus, some of whom had likely been disciples of John the Baptist (John 1:35) before joining the ranks of those others who accepted Jesus as a Davidic Messianic figure.[90] At some point during this stage, Brown suggests that a second Jewish-believer group, who viewed Jesus in a Mosaic Messianic light, joined the original group.[91] The second group likely had Samaritan connections and was not committed to the necessity of the temple for worship (cf. John 4:25-26, 39-41); this resulted in an emergence of a distinctly high-christological belief system, which sparked controversy in the greater Jewish community and subsequently expulsion from the synagogue (John 9:22) on the basis of a perceived rejection of monotheistic belief.[92] He theorizes that one disciple in particular emerged a leader in assisting the expelled community to move forward in the wake of their displacement and it is this disciple that came to be known as the Beloved Disciple referenced in John 21:20.[93]

Stage two in Brown's model (90 CE) occurs during a time where the community, having transitioned together and navigated expulsion from the synagogues, have identified the expellers as "the Jews" and this explains why this designation appears in the Gospel as a

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89. Brown, *Community*, 26. The titles the disciples used for Jesus, including Rabbi (1:38), Messiah (1:42), the one written about in the Law and the Prophets (1:45), Son of God and King of Israel (1:49), even at the earliest stages of the narrative in the Gospel of John, suggest their background as Jewish.

90. Ibid., 44.

91. Ibid., 166. As opposed to understanding Messiah in light of the claims of the royal line of David and of his city, Jerusalem, the Mosaic understanding refers to the belief that the Messiah would hear from God and reveal that knowledge to humanity. The Gospel of John portrays Jesus in this light, such that he speaks what he hears from above (3:13, 31; 5:20; 6:46; 7:16): Brown, *Community*, 44-45.

92. Ibid., 44; 166.

93. Ibid., 82; 166.

strongly polemicizing term ("the Jews" wanted to kill Jesus in John 11:53 and were essentially portrayed as "the devil's spawn" in John 8:44).[94] It is during this stage that Brown suggests the Gospel was written. Part of moving forward had been an embrace during stage two of Greek culture, including perhaps a geographical relocation to the Diaspora, thus explaining the situation of the community at the time of the letters.[95]

After relocating, the integration of the group with Greek ways of thinking and living drew out certain "universalistic possibilities in Johannine thought."[96] The high Christology of the group began to create controversy with some Jewish Christians, but only served to further reinforce the withdrawal of the Johannine Christians from broader society, especially under the pressures of persecutions at the hands of "the Jews" leading to a split with other Christian communities.[97] An apologetic focus developed, which ultimately created a division within the Johannine Community itself,[98] reflected clearly in 1 John 2:18-27.

This brings the history to the point at which the epistles were authored (*ca*. 100 CE) and it is at this stage that two distinct groups become clear.[99] These are the groups designated in 1 John 2:19 as "they" and "us," and identified by Brown as "the adherents" and "the secessionists" with respect to their acceptance of the teachings of the author of the epistles. The split was over doctrine, the adherents maintaining that Jesus had come in the flesh and that the true follower must adhere to his commandments (1 John 2:3-4; 3:22, 24; 5:2-3). The secessionists appear to have purported that the Christ was not fully human

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94. Brown, *Community*, 66; 166.

95. Ibid., 166. It should be noted that this part of Brown's theory might presume an older model that falsely dichotomizes Palestinian and Hellenistic Christianity as reflecting early and late stages in Christianity.

96. Ibid.

97. Ibid., 167.

98. Ibid.

99. Ibid.

(1 John 4:2), and that actions or obedience to commands are of no significance to salvation or discipleship (1 John 1:6, 8, 10).[100]

In stage four, Brown suggests that the group of adherents eventually united with what he calls "the Great Church," after unsuccessfully attempting to defend themselves to the secessionists and realizing a need for "authoritative official teachers."[101] Meanwhile, the secessionists, Brown theorizes, are the bigger group who progressed further into docetic thinking (that Jesus only appeared to be human), and became a proto-gnostic movement.[102] Their use of the Fourth Gospel was ultimately accepted by gnostics.

As stated earlier, Brown's stages have been generally accepted in this project for the purpose of imagining the history of the community reflected in 1 John in order to adequately access the milieu surrounding the use of the unique terminology in the "letter." However, there are several issues that should be briefly highlighted. First, as other scholars are also wont to do, Brown uses his own conclusion concerning the history of the community and his understanding of the timeline of their experiences to support his other claims, especially those concerning authorship and date of the document. This inevitably results in circular reasoning regarding these key questions. Second, there is a tendency to treat Gnosticism and Docetism as unified and definable sects. Instead, recent work on Docetism necessitates it being considered as one "theological option" among several within early Christianity;[103] it is not one coherent viewpoint or teaching, but a broad range of ideas that may not originate from the same source at all.[104] These insights make Brown's "post-epistle" stage the least plausible as it is the most speculative and reductionist. Even if the groups shared certain theological standpoints with other early Christian groups, it does not mean there was an assimilation that took place. Despite these issues, Brown's depiction of the community remains the most comprehensive to

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100. Brown, *Community*, 167.

101. Ibid.

102. Ibid.

103. Guy G. Stroumsa, "Christ's Laughter: Docetic Origins Reconsidered," *JECS* 12, no. 3 (2004): 269.

104. Michael Slusser, "Docetism: A Historical Definition," *SecCent* 1 (1981): 172.

date and should be a primary conversation partner of anyone seeking to study this group of early Christians.

2.9   Divisions in the Johannine Community

Brown purports that the author uses the statements of his opponents as "slogans."[105] He thinks the best suggestion is that both groups were familiar with the Fourth Gospel but interpreted it in different ways.[106] Von Wahlde supports this idea about the secessionists' interpretation of the gospel, suggesting their claims were emphasizing the work of the Holy Spirit as taught by Jesus.[107] He says the opponents believed the Holy Spirit would direct behaviour such that the historical words of Jesus were unnecessary and in fact his death was more significant with respect to the sending of the Spirit than concerning soteriology.[108] For the opponents, their receipt of the Spirit was enough to make them into sons of God and anoint them and prepare them for the possession of eternal life and make them not sinners.[109] The author writes to correct what he deems to be errors and his corrections come more as checks and balances to similar standpoints, i.e. for him, Jesus' sonship is special and necessary for his death to serve as atonement for the sins of the world.[110] The nuance to this is that sin is still a distinct possibility even for the believer and therefore the historical words of Jesus are still necessary as guides to correction of action and belief.[111] This explains the author of 1 John's recall of what was "from the beginning."[112]

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105. Brown, *Community*, 104.

106. Ibid., 106.

107. Von Wahlde, *Gospel and Letters*, 3:4.

108. Ibid.

109. Ibid.

110. Ibid., 3:5.

111. Von Wahlde, *Gospel and Letters*, 3:5.

112. Ibid., 3:6.

2.10 Positions on Key *Chrisma* texts

Scholars tend to treat *chrisma* in one of three ways: 1) as an alias of the Holy Spirit; 2) as rhetorical or conceptual; 3) as a literal ointment. The passage of interest (1 John 2:18-27) is especially peculiar in that *chrisma* is personified such that it functions to teach the audience. Van der Watt identifies *chrisma* with the Paraclete of John's gospel, calling it the community's "tutor" which carries on the education of the Spirit discussed in John 14:26. For him, the term is indicative of the two functions of 1) guiding the believers, and 2) guaranteeing the truth among them (John 14:25-26; 16:13-14).[113] He states that "Paraclete" and "Anointing" are simply role-based titles for the Holy Spirit.[114] Similarly, John Breck maintains the *chrisma* in 1 John is the fulfillment of the teaching function of the Fourth Gospel's Paraclete.[115] (Christological) Truth is therefore imparted by *chrisma* to the church.[116] However, this does not suffice in the case of 1 John, where "Paraclete" is used as a title for Jesus in 2:1 (παράκλητον) and not as a title for the Holy Spirit. Von Wahlde describes *chrisma* as a witness that enables the audience to know all; for him, it is given by the Spirit (who is given by Jesus) and reflects an association of *chrisma* in the Old Testament with the giving of the Spirit.[117] Further, he suggests the author, to distinguish from the teachings of the seceders, was avoiding using "Spirit" explicitly.[118] However, the term "Spirit" is used elsewhere in 1 John (4:2-3, 6, 13). Therefore, the *chrisma* cannot simply be identified with the Spirit or the author could have easily said so. As Thompson notes, the Spirit as *chrisma* still does not explain how the Spirit enables discernment.[119] Rather than attempting to answer this question, many commentators simply assign *chrisma* a "personality" and identify this with the Paraclete or the Holy Spirit. However, personification does not necessitate personality.

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113. Van der Watt, *Gospel and Letters*, 71.

114. Ibid., 72.

115. John Breck, "The Function of Πᾶς in 1 John 2:20," *SVTQ* 35 (1991): 203.

116. Ibid.

117. Von Wahlde, *Gospel and Letters*, 3:352.

118. Ibid., 3:100.

119. Thompson, *1-3 John*, 77.

Other authors have researched *chrisma* and maintained it was part of an argument only, focusing on the wordplay and juxtaposition to "antichrist." Such authors refer to the relation of *chrisma* to Jesus' titular "Christ" and amalgamate the anointing of the believers in this community with Jesus' anointing. The believers are viewed metaphorically as the body of Christ, and as the head is anointed, so the body shares in the same anointing. This type of interpretation dates back to the early Christians (cf. Tertullian *Apol* 3*, Marc*. 3.15*;* Irenaeus *Adv*. *haer*. 1.18). Though this is not evidence that the Johannine community itself understood *chrisma* metaphorically, it does make such an interpretation a possibility during that time and cultural milieu, especially when one considers the popularity of allegorical methods of interpretation at the time.

Some scholars have looked at the anointing and compared its Greek term *chrisma* with other terms for oil and other instances of anointing in the New Testament, which all contain the verb χρίω (the verbal root of the noun *chrisma*). They assume the anointing is a literal, tangible thing and conclude that it must be linked with some sort of initiation ritual. In this vein, Martin F. Connell wrote an article in 2009 on "chrism" in 1 John in which he argued for its interpretation as part of an initiation ritual for the community.[120] This article is given significant attention here for its recent date, because it addresses *chrisma* in 1 John 2:18-27 directly, and because it allows for a historical and social understanding of the term. For Connell, the *chrisma* is literal oil, a "chrism."[121] His hypothesis is based on the relationship between early Christian rituals and christological ideas, the close tie of the title of "Christ" to the word "chrism," and the historical narratives regarding foot-washing and baptism rituals.[122] However, there is no such historical narrative for the "rite" of anointing, and there is no mention of baptism in 1 John at all. There is also no record of a command to "anoint" or "be anointed" as there is for baptism (Matt 28:19; Acts 2:38) and for foot-washing (John 13:14-15). Von Wahlde

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120. Connell, "On Chrism," 213.

121. Ibid.

122. Ibid., 225.

agrees that the evidence for *chrisma* as a rite of initiation is lacking.[123] There is also not enough evidence that this is directly related to Jesus' anointing at baptism, since the Gospel of John does not refer explicitly to the baptism of Jesus.[124] It would be a mistake to assume a Lukan understanding of the anointing of Jesus.[125] Although one could concede such an understanding may have been there, the text itself does not provide sufficient support for that theory.

Though it is certain that the use of *chrisma* holds a ritual connotation, one does not need to concede to the necessity of its physicality. Ancient people were physically anointed frequently and in various settings. If a literal, physical *chrisma* were meant, why was no specific detail given as to the physical action, such as the use of the verb χρίω or ἀλείφω ("to anoint" or "to anoint with oil")? Connell critiques any discussion of anointing as an "idea," spurning the implication that it is merely conceptual.[126] This thesis contends that the Johannine *chrisma* is not merely an idea, nor is it a reference to a literal ritual action. Rather, it is an invisible reality known by means of its efficacy and function in the life of the community addressed in the text. For the author it is about both practice and knowledge because the two go hand in hand.

Explanations of *chrisma* have limited it to the physical, relegated it to the conceptual or rhetorical, or sought to identify it with similar theological players, namely the Holy Spirit and Paraclete. However, few scholars have attempted to explain the importance of χρῖσμα in 1 John in the context of the community's history, its acquisition of truth, and the author's viewpoint of the community's prognosis. If we understood what the *chrisma* represented or meant in the ancient context, we could understand the author's use of it in juxtaposition to antichrist and therefore better comprehend his theology. It might also

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123. Von Wahlde, *Gospel and Letters,* 3:100.

124. Jesus' baptism is not narrated in the Fourth Gospel although one could argue for an allusion to (and awareness of) it based a linguistic connection (the descent of the spirit onto Jesus) between John 1:32 and the baptism narrative in Mark 1:10-11.

125. The anointing in Luke-Acts seems to bear a focus on the empowerment of Christ's ministry and miraculous works with no indication of a relationship to community or ethics, as in the Johannine usage.

126. Connell, "On Chrism," 229.

help explain the seemingly contradictory statement (ironically, *teaching*) that this community does not need a (human) teacher.

Chapter 3

3   Textual Features and Exegesis

3.1   Translation

The following is an original translation of 1 John 2:18-27 based on the Greek text of NA28[127]:

> [18] Little children, it is the last hour and just as you have heard that antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have appeared. By this we know that it is the last hour. [19] They went out from us but they were not from us. For if they had been from us, they would have remained with us. But [this happened] in order that they might be revealed that all of them were not from us. [20] And you, you have a *chrisma* from the holy one and you all know. [21] I have not written to you because you do not know the truth, but because you know it and that any lie is not from the truth. [22] Who is the liar if not the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist – the one who denies the Father and the Son. [23] Everyone who denies the Son does not have the Father either. The one who confesses the Son also has the Father. [24] That which you heard from the beginning, let it remain in you! If that which you heard from the beginning remains in you, you also will remain in the Son and in the Father. [25] And this is the promise that he promised us – eternal life. [26] I have written these things to you concerning those leading you astray. [27] And you, the *chrisma* that you received from him remains in you and you have no need that anyone should teach you. Instead, as the same *chrisma* teaches you concerning all things, and is true and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, remain in him.

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127. Barbara Aland, et al., eds., *Novum Testamentum Graecum: Editio Critica Maior*, vol. 4, *Catholic Letters*, 2nd rev. ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2013). This edition contains the changes adopted by NA28.

3.2   Analysis of Textual Features and Exegesis

In this passage, the author addresses his audience first relationally as "little children" (1 John 2:18).[128] This establishes a measure of distance between him and them, which may be indicative of a perception of authority or reference to maturity or age (cf. "Elder" in 2 John 1:1 and 3 John 1:1). It may also reflect a relationship of some affection.[129] Next, the author situates them temporally in the eschaton (v. 18), which he maintains is indicated by the appearance of "many antichrists" (v. 18).[130] The audience seems to have been expecting "antichrist" or "an antichrist," (the lack of article in the Greek leaves the specificity of the noun open to interpretation).[131] However, the author is claiming there is already a plurality of such entities. Elsewhere in the New Testament one finds ideas of a false or counter-christ figure (cf. Rev 13; 2 Thess. 2:3-10; Mark 13:14-27). However, the Johannine literature is the only place where this term, ἀντίχριστος, is used (1 John 2:22; 4:1-3; 2 John 7). The first part of the term (ἀντί) is the preposition meaning "over and against" in Hellenistic Greek, but more often denoting replacement (actual, intended, or estimated) in the New Testament.[132] The second part of the term (χριστός) is the title "Christ," meaning, "anointed one." The term appears again in 1 John 4:2-3. Here, the

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128. According to Schnackenburg, this title for the reader expresses a "friendly word of paternal assurance and admonition": Schnackenburg, *Johannine Epistles,* 115. Likewise, Smalley notes "the relationship implied is that of a fatherly teacher to pupils who are childlike in their understanding and in need of instruction": Smalley, *1, 2, 3 John,* rev. ed., WBC 51 (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, Inc., 2007), 90. Cf. Brown, who understands "children" to be reflective of the audience's theological standing as "children of light" as opposed to the seceders, the "children of darkness": Brown, *Epistles,* 364.

129. That the term expresses affection is quite possible, although it should be noted that modern definitions of affection are quite different than those in antiquity. Studies of commemorative practices reveal that children were often commemorated in special ways, at least for Romans. It was seen as especially grieving to lose a child, and even more so one who had particular virtue or honour and propriety. See Richard P. Saller and Brent D. Shaw, "Tombstones and Roman Family Relations in the Principate: Civilians, Soldiers, and Slaves," *JRS* 74 (1984), 124-156; Elizabeth A. Meyer, "Explaining the Epigraphic Habit in the Roman Empire: The Evidence of Epitaphs," *JRS* 80 (1990), 74-96; Keith R. Bradley, "The Roman Family at Dinner," in I. Nielsen and H. S. Nielsen (eds.) *Meals in a Social Context: Aspects of the Communal Meal in the Hellenistic and Roman World* (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 1998), 36-55.

130. See discussion in Section 6.3.

131. Indeed, the phrase ὁ ἀντίχριστος commonly appears in minuscules, a likely correction by copyists based on the use of the direct article with ἀντίχριστος in v. 22. Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1994), 505.

132. Hermann Martin Friedrich Büschel, "ἀντί," TDNT 1.372-373.

antichrist the audience has been expecting (and is already in the world), is attributed to being the source of a spirit that "does not confess Jesus" (vs. 3).[133] This spirit is labeled "deceptive" and is contrasted to a spirit from God, the "true spirit" (vs.6). A spirit that comes from God is to be discerned on the basis of its confession that "Jesus Christ has come in the flesh" (vs.2). In 2 John 7 the term appears yet again in the context of a group of deceivers that has "gone out" from the audience. These discussions of antichrist reveal the issue as relating to the unity and belief of the community. These antichrists subvert the true spirit, the true message of Christ by false claims and wrong action.[134]

At this point, the author transitions to the identification of the group that seceded from the community and goes on to identify the group that remained in contradistinction to them.[135] The phrase "from us" (ἐξ ἡμῶν) occurs four times in verse 19 to describe the relationship of the seceders with respect to the audience, using the preposition ἐκ to indicate first separation and then source or origin. The first expression, "they went out from us" could merely represent a break of social relationship, but also likely indicates a situational and spatial separation, because of its combination with the phrase "went out." By saying "they went out," the author highlights the action of leaving.[136] The second expression, "but were not of us" is likely utilizing the ἐκ of source, specifically referring

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133. Von Wahlde highlights that the introduction of the term *antichristos* sets up an expectation for the views and statements of the seceders to be erroneous, false, and deceptive: von Wahlde, *Gospel and Letters*, 3:93. The concept of the emergence of false teachers, and a liar or deceiver figure in the end times comes from Jewish apocalyptic and Christian apocalyptic traditions. See Brown *Epistles*, 364 and Georg Strecker, *The Johannine Letters: A Commentary on 1, 2, and 3 John*, trans. Linda M. Maloney, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1996), 63. The expected mythological figure from these traditions has been demythologized by the author through its application to the circumstances facing the Johannine community at the stage in which the letter was written: Brown, *Epistles,* 364; Strecker *The Johannine Letters*, 63.

134. For a good discussion of *antichristos*, see Smalley, *1, 2, 3 John*, 93-96. Smalley demonstrates that the author's use of this term has to do with a general opposition but also bears the sense of deception, such that their "inadequate estimate of [Christ's] person amounts to an anti-Christian attitude and a perversion of Christianity": Smalley, *1, 2, 3 John*, 94.

135. Von Wahlde points out the dualism that is set up by this phrase between the two groups: von Wahlde, *Gospel and Letters*, 3:84.

136. Brown makes the distinction clear by saying it this way, "we did not go out from them": Brown, *Epistles*, 338; Schnackenburg, *Johannine Epistles*, 140; Smalley, *1, 2, 3 John*, 97.

to the group's origin in the community.[137] Thus, they removed themselves from relationship to the community situationally, and according to the author they were never genuinely part of the ingroup. Note the way the author draws a contrast in his next expression, that if the seceders truly were "of us" they would have remained[138] "with us." The preposition "with" (μετά) gives the sense of association or positive engagement, but it may also be a spatial reference.[139] Perhaps both are intended here.[140] The author's fourth expression of ἐξ ἡμῶν is an attempt to assign a purpose to the secession: "in order that it might be revealed that all of them were not of us." The author views the secession as an exposure of a previously obscured fact – that those who left had all along not been in true relationship with those who remained.[141] Six verbs in this verse (2:19) alone are third person, emphasizing their subjects as "they" and therefore creating even more of a distance from the already ostracized group.[142] Whether there was a geographical or physical move is not clear.

The distinction between the two groups is delineated further in verse 20, which begins with "καὶ ὑμεῖς χρῖσμα ἔχετε." The personal pronoun is included implicitly in the verb in this phrase, but also indicated explicitly at the outset of the verse. This priority in word order and the twofold reference to "you" emphasizes the author's focus on contrasting the

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137. Brown states, "They destroyed their origins by the act of secession . . . their visible enrollment did not correspond to their real being": Brown, *Epistles,* 339. Similarly, von Wahlde, *Gospel and Letters,* 3:84.

138. The verb "to remain" (μένω) is a key term in the Johannine literature often used to denote "inward, enduring personal communion": God with Christ (John 14:10); Christians with Christ (John 6:46; 15:4, 5-7; 1 John 2:6, 24); God with Christians (1 John 3:24; 4:12, 15); the word of God (1 John 2:14); the words of Christ (John 15:7; 1 John 2:24); truth (2 John 2); the Spirit of truth (John 14:17). BDAG, s.v. "μένω."

139. For uses of μετά see Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 377-378. Smalley states that it expresses the concept of personal fellowship as opposed to "absolute unity in one body": Smalley, *1, 2, 3 John*, 98.

140. This carries a similar sense as 1 John 1:3 in the context of the establishment of the fellowship (κοινωνία) that the author states is his intention for proclaiming his message. This relationship is especially significant with respect to 1 John 2:24 and the discussion of remaining in the Father and Son. Brown also sees a connection to John 8:35, where sons are contrasted with slaves on the basis of their remaining in the household: Brown, *Epistles,* 339.

141. Von Wahlde points out that this is the first time the author demonstrates how one's identity can be revealed by one's actions: von Wahlde, *Gospel and Letters,* 3:92.

142. Judith M. Lieu, "Us or You? Persuasion and Identity in 1 John," *JBL* 127 no. 4 (2008), 811.

two groups. The emphatic and plural referent "you" are said to have "a *chrisma* from the holy one," leaving the reader to ask what is meant by *chrisma* and who is meant by the "holy one." With the exception of the magical papyri and 1 John, the noun χρῖσμα is associated in early Christian literature with the ointment or oil used for anointing, often referring to the special oil used by Moses for the consecration of the priests and objects for worship in Exodus (cf. Exod 29:7, 30:22-33) or to the oil Jacob used to anoint the stone at Bethel (cf. Gen 28:18). The noun is derived from the verb χρίω, meaning "to anoint", which is most often used figuratively of God "setting a person apart for special service under divine direction."[143] This verb in the New Testament depicts the setting apart of Jesus for his ministry (Acts 4:27, Luke 4:18, Acts 10:38) and describes the consecration of Christians (2 Cor 1:21). However, the term only occurs in its substantival (noun) form here in verses 20 and 27, but nowhere else in the New Testament. In Chapter Two the different approaches to the question of *chrisma* were discussed. It was concluded there that in 1 John 2:20, 27, *chrisma* should be understood as an "invisible reality" which has a social function in the community that relates to knowledge and practice in tandem. This understanding should not be assumed to be the same as that in Luke-Acts or the Pauline corpus.

As for the ambiguous "holy one" (v. 20), there is no scholarly consensus. Von Wahlde equates this figure with the Spirit, claiming this title as "the author's distinctive way of referring to the Father's gift of the Spirit to those who believed."[144] As was argued in Chapter Two, this is insufficient since the author is content to use the title of Spirit elsewhere (1 John 5:6). Alternatively, Martin M. Culy supports the identity of the Holy One with Jesus, based on the use of the substantival form in a Messianic sense throughout

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143. BDAG s.v. "χρίω."

144. Von Wahlde, *Gospel and Letters,* 3:93.

the New Testament, including the Johannine writings (Mark 1:24; Luke 4:24; John 6:69; Acts 3:14; Rev 3:7).[145]

At this point, there is a text-critical issue to address. The reading in 2:20, καὶ οἴδατε πάντες, has the exegetically significant variant, καὶ οἴδατε πάντα, in some manuscripts. The first reading (*pantes*) has been assigned the rating {B} in GNT5.[146] Those with *chrisma* are said either to "all know (*pantes*)" or to "know all [things] (*panta*)." The decision of the UBS committee (and commentators that follow them) in favour of *pantes* is partially based on the theory that *panta* would be a logical correction for copyists because of this reading's provision of an object for the verb.[147]

John Breck wrote about this issue (1991), analyzing the reliability of the specific witnesses to 1 John.[148] He challenges the first reading (*pantes*) despite the strong geographical and early support in Codices Sinaiticus and Vaticanus by theorizing explanations to substitutions in the same witness, both ideological and unintentional.[149] The support for reading two (*panta*) is also largely Alexandrian, but with a wider geographical spread.[150] The reading, *pantes*, provides a nominative subject for *oidate*, but leaves out a direct object, presenting the harder reading in Culy's opinion.[151] This, along with the context of schism and early attestation of the reading, leads Culy to favour

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145. Martin Culy, *I, II, III John: A Handbook on the Greek Text*, Baylor Handbook on the Greek New Testament (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2004), 52. Smalley discusses the ambiguity of the phrase and concludes that it is a reference to Jesus as the Son of God: Smalley, *1, 2, 3 John*, 102. See also Schnackenburg, *Johannine Epistles*, 142.

146. The precise manuscript support from the GNT5 critical apparatus is as follows. For *pantes*: ℵ B P Ψ 1852 syr[p, h] cop[sa] arm geo Hesychius[lat]; for *panta*: A C 5 33 81 307 436 442 642 1175 1243 1448 1611 1735 1739 1881 2344 2492 *Byz* [K L] *Lect* it[ar, h, z] vg cop[bo] eth slav Cyril-Jerusalem Didymus BTI

147. Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, 709. Cf. Smalley, *1, 2, 3 John*, 87; Schnackenburg, *Johannine Epistles*, 143; Brown, *Epistles*, 348-349.

148. Breck, "Function of Πᾶς," 195.

149. Ibid.

150. Neal Windham, *New Testament Greek for Preachers and Teachers* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1991), 53.

151. Culy, *Handbook*, 52 (along with Smalley, Schnackenburg, and Brown as in note 145).

pantes, following the UBS committee.[152] In contrast, Breck attempts supports the second reading, *panta*, by pointing out that the unstated object of "you know" is explained in 2:21 as "the truth" and "every lie," and concluding that the knowledge discussed here is concerned not with "extent, but content."[153] He also points out that the Johannine writings most often connect this verb for knowledge with truth.[154] However this is insufficient evidence to warrant going against the axiom that the original reading is likely the most difficult. Breck is certainly correct in asserting that the content of knowledge in this context is meant to be "the truth," and this remains true even when one accepts *pantes* as the autograph, following the general scholarly consensus.[155] Thus, the likely original reading is "you all know" with the unstated object of that knowledge being "the truth."[156] This leads naturally to the question of the author's understanding of truth.

In Chapter Four, the concept of "truth" will be discussed further, but here it will be defined. The early Greek use of ἀλήθεια, according to Hans Hübner, concerned a representation of "things as they are – but always that which is expressed. "[157] That is, in classical Greek it represented what was unhidden or what had been disclosed.[158] In Bultmann's terms, the Greek use of ἀλήθεια "…indicates a matter or state to the extent that it is seen, indicated or expressed, and that in such seeing, indication or expression it

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152. Culy, *Handbook,* 52.

153. Breck, "Function of Πᾶς,"198. Cf. von Wahlde who says that it is the "thoroughness of the knowledge" the author is concerned with rather than the "numerical extent": von Wahlde, *Gospel and Letters*, 3:85.

154. Breck, "Function of Πᾶς," 199.

155. For Smalley, the knowledge is that of God through Jesus: Smalley, *1, 2, 3 John,* 103. But cf. von Wahlde who takes *pantes* to be the object of knowledge such that the author is saying "you know all persons": von Wahlde, *Gospel and Letters*, 3:85.

156. Smalley, *1, 2, 3 John*, 87.

157. Hans Hübner, "ἀλήθεια," EDNT 1.58.

158. Ibid.

is disclosed, or discloses itself, as it really is…"[159] The use tends to contrast truth with concealment, falsification, and diminishment of fact or reality.[160]

In the Hebrew writings one finds the concept of truth as accomplishment (cf. 1QS 1:5) where the content of truth can take on the meaning of "uprightness."[161] In LXX, this is reflected when ἀλήθεια is selected to represent Hebrew terms for faithfulness or firmness.[162] Battalige Jackayya describes truth in the Hebrew Bible as being related to God's reliability, to the quality of God's action, and to God's desire to find the same reliability and quality of action in humanity.[163] In terms of the truth sought in humans, he says it "means unwavering conformity with God's will as made known in the Law."[164] In Hellenistic use truth eventually comes to signify divine reality and in the New Testament the LXX usage combines with this such that truth becomes "transcendent revelation."[165]

The word ἀλήθεια occurs 20 times in the letters and 25 times in the Fourth Gospel.[166] Hübner points out that in both John and Paul ἀλήθεια represents both what is noetically and ontologically disclosed.[167] Therefore, in the Johannine literature, one can "do the truth" (John 3:21; 1 John 1:16); to be "of the truth" is to be "of God" (1 John 2:21) and to "know truth" means to be free of sin (John 8:31).[168] Jesus is the truth and he also speaks the truth (John 1:14, 17; 14:6; 8:40; 16:7; 18:37).[169] For John, truth is something both moral and intellectual, something both veritable and veracious; it is something to be

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159. Rudolf Bultmann, "ἀλήθεια," TDNT 1.238-47 (esp. 238-39).

160. Battalige H. Jackayya, "Alētheia in the Johannine Corpus," *CTM* 41, no. 3 (1970): 172.

161. Hübner, "ἀλήθεια," EDNT 1.58.

162. Ibid.

163. Jackayya, "Alētheia," 172.

164. Ibid.

165. Ibid.

166. Ibid., 171.

167. Hübner, "ἀλήθεια," EDNT 1.58.

168. Ibid.

169. Ibid., 1.60.

received or revealed, especially in Jesus as the Christ.[170] Jackayya thus contends that the Johannine understanding of "truth" is that truth is something one "does" and "lives"; it is "followed" and "obeyed" and not just something to think about or strive to attain.[171] Indeed, for Hübner, the letters of the New Testament reflect the transition from truth as "reality of God" to "behaviour of the believer" and 1 John 2:4 specifically demonstrates a convergence of both "divine reality" and "Christian behaviour" where the one who disobeys the commands of God yet claims to know God is called a liar and "does not have the truth in him. "[172]

The preposition used to describe the separation of the seceding group is used again (ἐκ) in vs. 21, except this time "us" is replaced by "the truth" and "them" is replaced by "lie." The construction clearly parallels the previous discussion of the relationships between the two groups of people (v. 19), indicating the author's association between the seceders and mendacity, and the adherents and truth. Based on his observations concerning truth and lies, the author concludes that any person who denies that Jesus is "the Christ", that is, "the anointed one," is a liar (v. 22).[173] In fact, he or she is "the antichrist" and their denial is not only of "the Son" but also of "the Father" simultaneously (v. 23).

This return to ἀντίχριστος demonstrates the author's label as representing those who lie and deny Jesus as "the Christ" (v. 22). The sense of the term seems one of subversion or replacement of truth with a lie. Anyone who contradicts Christ, either through claim or

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170. Jackayya, "Alētheia," 173. Smalley states that, in the Johannine Epistles, truth "denotes the revelation of God's nature and salvific purposes in Jesus his Son": Smalley, *1, 2, 3 John*, 21.

171. Jackayya, "Alētheia,"174. Smalley calls it "neither philosophical or abstract, but rather practical and concrete": Smalley, *1, 2, 3 John*, 45. Cf. Schnackenburg, for whom Johannine truth is "a divine reality" that is embodied in a person: Schnackenburg, *Johannine Epistles*, 144.

172. Hübner, "ἀλήθεια," EDNT 1.60. Cf. Smalley, *1, 2, 3 John*, 28.

173. The adherents know that truth is more than an intellectual concept but is concerned with true claims concerning Jesus as Christ and mediator of relationship between God and humanity: Smalley, *1, 2, 3 John*, 104. This is why the author can say that denial of Son is denial of Father. See Schnackenburg, *Johannine Epistles*, 146.

behaviour, is essentially replacing the truth of Christ with something else.[174] The author states that someone who "confesses"[175] the Son (acknowledges or unites himself with the word of truth concerning Jesus) also "has" the Father. This confession should be interpreted in the light of 1 John 4:2-3, where the issue is confessing that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh. Therefore, the confession has to do with both intellectual and behavioural truth.[176] The concern is relationship and identity, relating back to the stated purpose for writing in 1 John 1:3, "so that you might also have fellowship with us… and with the Father and with his Son."[177] Remaining in that relationship with the Father and Son comes by holding on to that which they have heard from the beginning: the tradition on which the community was founded, their doctrine which is the "truth" concerning Jesus. It must be "in them" and they will then be "in" the Father and the Son. The author states his reason for writing is a concern that the "antichrists" are leading, or attempting to lead, more community members astray. The present tense participle πλανώντων indicates a process.[178] Therefore, it is an ongoing concern.[179] He is writing to press his audience to "remain" despite whatever they may hear or see others saying or doing.[180]

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174. Just as truth has to do with one's character, so lying is characterized by the person who denies that Jesus is the Christ: Smalley, *1, 2, 3 John*, 105. Schnackenburg writes, " . . . what the heretical teachers defend does not come from [the Spirit of truth, from the divine realm]," and he also notes that these seceders are represented as those who both "champion a lie and embody it in themselves": Schnackenburg, *Johannine Epistles*, 144.

175. The word for "the one who confesses" is ὁ ὁμολογῶν, and ὁμολογέω is a compound word meaning literally "to say the same [thing]." The sense of "confess" is to be the same in word or to agree or match in proclamation.

176. Smalley demonstrates that the author of 1 John is continually focused on "orthopraxis" not only orthodoxy: Smalley, *1, 2, 3 John*, 114.

177. So Schnackenburg, *Johannine Epistles*, 147. Smalley highlights the importance of the corporate in this passage, such that it is the communal remaining that is being emphasized by the author: Smalley, *1, 2, 3 John*, 114.

178. Culy, *Handbook*, 59.

179. Schnackenburg highlights the potential danger of the seceders' influence: Schnackenburg, *Johannine Epistles*, 149.

180. Recall the relational nature of μένω in the Johannine literature. See above, note 136. Also note that remaining is not automatic, but "rests exclusively upon the continuous appropriation of the blessings and responsibilities of the Christian gospel": Smalley, *1, 2, 3 John*, 111.

The adherents are enjoined to hold to their original teachings and ways of living because eternal life is at stake (v. 25).[181] In verse 27, as in verse 20, the plural "you" is placed emphatically at the beginning of the sentence.[182] This emphatic "you" have received a *chrisma* that remains in them, and they are charged to remain in it reciprocally.[183] This *chrisma* is true and teaches them about all things. It has already taught them to remain.

In this verse there is a textual variant to consider that replaces χρῖσμα (*chrisma)* with χάρισμα (gift). The best attestation for the alternate reading χάρισμα comes from Codex Vaticanus. This one-letter change could be attributed to an unintentional scribal error. However, as Connell points out, this manuscript may demonstrate an avoidance of *chrisma* elsewhere by choosing "put on" instead of "put chrism on" in John 9:6.[184] It is conceivable that a scribe thought that "gift" was a correction because of the gift of the Spirit discussed in Johannine tradition (John 3:34; 7:39; 14:17, 26; 15:26; 16:13, 15). The more difficult and better-attested reading is undoubtedly *chrisma*; however, the variation does demonstrate the long-standing difficulty in interpreting *chrisma*. Martin F. Culy supports an association of the *chrisma* with the Spirit of the Fourth Gospel by highlighting the similarity of the teaching function of the Spirit of Truth in John 14:26 and 16:13 to that of the *chrisma* in 1 John 2:27.[185]

The *chrisma* is said to be "ἀληθής" which in this verse can mean real or true.[186] The implication is that other claims to *chrisma* are not real or actual despite what they appear

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181. Von Wahlde, *Gospel and Letters*, 3:97. For Smalley, eternal life is "The promise in question": Smalley, *1, 2, 3 John*, 115.

182. For Schnackenburg, "a pointed antithesis": Schnackenburg, *Johannine Epistles*, 149. So also Smalley, *1, 2, 3 John*, 117.

183 Cf. Brown who highlights the divine agency in this phrase, so that the audience is being encouraged to allow "the revelation to be active in them": Brown, *Epistles*, 355. Smalley thinks there is an emphasis on the "enduring presence" of *chrisma* in the community: Smalley, *1, 2, 3 John*, 118.

184. Connell, "On Chrism," 226.

185. Culy, *Handbook*, 51.

186. Rudolf Bultmann, "ἀληθής," TDNT 1.247-249 (esp. 248).

to be.[187] It also highlights further the close relationship between the *chrisma* and what is true, in stark contrast to the liar and all lies (1 John 2:21-22). However, as discussed in Chapter Two, the relationship between the Paraclete in John (the Spirit of truth in John 16:13-14) and the *chrisma* in 1 John is not necessarily that of identity.[188] Instead, *chrisma* may be understood as its own reality. The author says the *chrisma* remains in the audience and exhorts them to remain in it. If they remain, this will assure their confidence and lack of shame at the *parousia* (v. 28). The author connects the relationship of knowing and living the truth to Christ's own knowledge and living of the truth.[189] Jesus is the Son of "the one who is true" (5:20), and the believer is enjoined to live as he did. The *chrisma* functions to teach them to know how to live the way Jesus did (2:6). Truth in philosophy can have the sense of "true and genuine reality" and therefore the only thing that truly is, is the divine or eternal.[190] Truth is also understood as ἀρετή, that is, excellence or virtue.[191] In this way, Jesus truly is, and the way of living that consistently maintains communion with him is the way of truth. It is the function of *chrisma* in the life of the community to maintain this lifestyle.

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187. Smalley notes a contrast between the *chrisma*'s nature as a reality versus an illusion and as reliable instead of misleading: Smalley, *1, 2, 3 John*, 120.

188. Cf. Brown, who states, " . . . the reality which abides (anointing) is really a divine presence (the Paraclete/Spirit)": Brown, *Epistles*, 359.

189. Smalley, *1, 2, 3 John*, 124.

190. Bultmann, "ἀληθής," 1.239.

191. Ibid.

Chapter 4

4   *Chrisma* and the Teaching of Truth

At this point it becomes important to discuss the issue of what and how the *chrisma* in 1 John 2:20 and 27 is said to teach. The object of the knowledge associated with the *chrisma* has been determined as ἀλήθεια. In the Johannine literature, as explained in Chapter Three above, ἀλήθεια ("truth") has a practicable connotation as something to be done or lived and not merely to be known. It is also, especially in the Gospel, a revelation and expression of God's reality.[192] Moreover, the Gospel of John identifies the truth with Jesus himself (John 14:6), with echoes of this in 1 John's call to "live as Jesus did" (1 John 2:6). This exhortation is issued in response to the claim of the one of whom the author says, "the truth is not in that person" (1 John 2:4). Therefore, for the author of 1 John, living as Jesus lived is evidence of the truth being "in" a person. Truth, then, is seen to be both living and lived-in (continually practiced). The *chrisma* (1 John 2:20; 27) from the Holy One is given to teach the Johannine Christians to remain living in the one who is truth, that is to live out his teachings and actions, thus carrying out the will of God on earth (cf. 1 John 5:20).

4.1   Rhetorical Context of *Chrisma* and the Teaching of Truth

The rhetorical force of *chrisma* in 1 John 2:20 and 27 goes beyond the way this term is used in the argument of the author in this particular text, and extends to the illumination of the possible connotations of the idea of anointing from other texts and to more direct intertextuality. As mentioned in the introductory chapter, oil had several uses in the ancient setting that are relatively well-known: cooking, bathing, exercising, coronation, perfuming, cleaning, etc. It was thought to make one's joints and limbs suppler (Livy, *Hist. Rome* 21.55). In the *gymnasia*, olive oil was smeared or rubbed onto the body prior

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192. Rudolf Bultmann, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary*, trans. by G.R. Beasley-Murray (Oxford: Blackwell, 1971), 321.

to bouts of exercise and scraped off afterward with a strigil.[193] The purpose of this practice is unknown, but may relate to loosening the musculature, protecting the skin from the elements, for aesthetic purposes, as a preventative measure against dehydration, or as symbolic of religious devotion.[194] It is against a diverse milieu of symbolic and practical implications that *chrisma* in 1 John must be understood.

4.2   Rhetorical Context of Teaching

It is necessary to establish what is meant by διδάσκω in its rhetorical context. The concept contains the aspects of the role of both the teacher and the student; the teacher's knowledge and the student's insight are two sides of the same coin.[195] In Homer, teaching can relate to informational impartation, knowledge transfer, or skill acquisition.[196] For the latter, teaching implies the exemplification of the skill by the teacher in order to bridge the knowledge and skill gap between teacher and student.[197] The concept of teaching in this case is not a view to a moment in time, but rather to an ongoing increase in the knowledge and ability of the student such that they assimilate the desired knowledge (whether theoretical or practical).[198] In the LXX, the term is related to a concern for "the whole man and his education in the deepest sense."[199] In Greek outside the New Testament, the goal is the development of "talents and potentialities."[200]

In the Gospel of John, the teaching function of Jesus was given significant prominence (John 18:20; John 7:14; 8:20) and in the Johannine writings (John 8:28; 14:26; 1 John

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193. Stephen G. Miller, *Ancient Greek Athletics* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 14-15.

194. Ibid., 15.

195. Karl Heinrich Rengstorf, "διδάσκω," TDNT 2.135-165 (esp. 135). cf. Hom. Od., 8, 488; Plat. Men., 95b; Hom. Il., 9. 442f.

196. Ibid.

197. Ibid.

198. Rengstorf, "διδάσκω," TDNT 2.138.

199. Ibid.

200. Ibid.

2:27) one finds suggestions of some teaching as "direct inspiration or revelation."[201] The content of teaching in John is generally the words of Jesus to his disciples (John 8:28) and this is likely related to the teaching of the *chrisma* in 1 John 2:27.[202] For John, keeping the teaching of Jesus is related to the acquisition of truth and subsequently freedom from sin (John 8:31-36). Therefore, teaching related not only to knowledge, but also to practical behaviour. Thus, in the social context of 1 John, teaching had to do with an ongoing transfer of theoretical and/or practical knowledge (truth) that is dependent on the insight of the student, the knowledge and example of the teacher, and the relationship between the two. Therefore, for John, continuing in the teaching of Christ is indicative of fellowship with the Father and Son (2 John 9).

One common setting for education (especially for the elite) was the *gymnasium* where both mind and body received training.[203] Bath-houses and *gymnasia* were prevalent in all the major city-centres.[204] Although training in this context was more part of the lifestyle of the minority elite, it does supply a good representation of the ideology prevalent at the time. Training had to do with virtue just as much as physicality.[205] Physicality, mentality and spirituality were not distinct concepts; rather, their distinctions are blurred in antiquity and the body, soul, and mind are all a part of virtue (Aristotle, *Politics* 1337a-1339a; A189).[206] In fact, Greek athletics were tied to the religious environment and the competitions often bore temple-affiliations.[207] Athletes were connected with the gods in that the gods were considered the ones who would motivate and inspire the athletes and also provide counsel for them (Pindar, *Pyth*. 10.10-12).[208] In this complex context, the

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201. Rengstorf, "διδάσκω," TDNT 2.143.

202. H.-F. Weiss, "διδασκαλος," EDNT, 1.319.

203. Miller, *Ancient Greek Athletics*, 13.

204. Zahra Newby, *Greek Athletics in the Roman World: Victory and Virtue* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 13. In Ephesus, there were "bath-gymnasia" in four different locations, decorated with symbols of classical Greek ideals.

205. Miller, *Ancient Greek Athletics*, 240.

206. Ibid., 239.

207. Ibid., 6, 118.

208. Thomas F. Scanlon, *Eros and Greek Athletics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 27.

practice of anointing played a regular part, such that even the symbol of athletic training became a common metaphor for philosophical virtue.[209]

4.2.1   Comparison with Xenophon

Xenophon's famous *Symposium* contains a dramatization of a fictional dinner-dialogue between several men and Socrates, during which the character Socrates praises the smell of the ointment used in the *gymnasia* as being more pleasant than perfume (Xenophon, *Symp*. 2.3). The Socrates character claims that it would not be pleasant if one were to apply it just once, but only after many years of engaging in "noble pursuits" (2.4 [Todd, LCL]). Only after such consistent effort and demonstration of nobility is the oil's odour able to be considered "sweet and suggestive of freedom" (2.4 [Todd, LCL]).[210] Another character, Lycon, asks what one could do to achieve the effect when too old for gymnastic activities and Socrates replies with "nobility of soul," indicating that such can be acquired through good company, if one hears the teaching and puts it into practice (2.5 [Todd, LCL]). He recommends that learning the "ways of virtue" is done by associating with whomever is most proficient in such a lifestyle (2.5 [Todd, LCL]). This reflects the definition of teaching discussed at the outset of this chapter, as an ongoing exchange involving a relationship between student and teacher.

It is significant that in this narrative the smell of the oil is said to be different depending on who was anointed with it and whether that person had exhibited the consistent practice of virtue over a long period of time or not. The emphasis here is on the character of the person as being noble or virtuous. The anointing is in one sense compromised where there is a lack of nobility. There is also a distinction between the young and old in the room. Both young and old are capable of achieving the same end, the young one through engaging in feats of strength with nobility and virtue. The older achieves it by holding to

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209. Jason König, *Athletics and Literature in the Roman Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 133.

210. The freedom here referred to is that in opposition to slavery. The gymnasia and athletic, moral, and intellectual pursuits associated with it were generally more for the socially elite who had leisure time.

the standard of nobility, not through feats of physical strength, but through strength of soul.

The author of 1 John makes a similar distinction between old and young in addition to utilizing the language of athleticism in his discussion of anointing. First, he writes to the categories of children, young men, and fathers; the younger men are written to because they are "strong and have overcome the evil one" (1 John 2:13) and the older men are written to because they "know him who is from the beginning" (1 John 2:14). In both texts, the younger are commended for strength, and the older described in relationship with a proficient teacher. The "most proficient" in the knowledge valued by the author of 1 John is indeed "him who is from the beginning" (2:14).[211]

In both texts, association with the right people is the key to the acquisition of the desired knowledge. Xenophon's depiction portrays Socrates as saying the way to acquire this pleasant smelling ointment is by association with good men (*Symp* 2.5). Similarly, the writer of 1 John is concerned with the association (fellowship) of his readership with good people, i.e. with other anointed people and ultimately with the Father and Son. For Xenophon, the focus on anointing as indicative of the soul's nobility relates to unity and association with the right people, and this is comparable to 1 John's focus on *chrisma* as aiming to distinguish those who remain from those who seceded from the community in the sense of a concern for the established ethos of the group.

4.2.2   Comparison With Philo

A second use of an athletic metaphor of interest to the rhetorical context of 1 John is found in the work of Philo of Alexandria, generally helpful for understanding Early

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211. This discussion generally departs from that of the commentators used in this thesis because of a lack of attention given to the concept of victorious strength referenced by the author. Smalley mentions the importance of the verb νικάω in the Johannine literature as part of a victory motif, but he does not connect this with athletics: Smalley, *1, 2, 3 John*, 71. For Schnackenburg, the fathers should be understood to "have come to know him" and the younger to have conquered the "counterpart" of this from-the-beginning one: Schnackenburg, *Johannine Epistles,* 117. Von Wahlde suggests that the divisions do not have to do with age specifically, but concern the length of membership in the community so that the younger are to be understood as the newer members, whose victory is still new and at the forefront of their experience: von Wahlde, *Gospel and Letters*, 3:80.

Christianity because of the admixture of Jewish and Greek philosophical thought in his writings. Philo presents the analogy of "the athlete-soul" (*Names* 13.82 [Colson and Whitaker, LCL]), stating that virtue can be acquired through teaching or through practice. There are some who are taught and remember what they have learned and therefore remain constant and unswerving because he has "another for his teacher" (13.82, 84 [Colson and Whitaker, LCL]). There are others who do not have another as their teacher but who resemble the athletes that anoint themselves when they fatigue in order to recover and keep practicing intensely (13.85). They work continually with their own self-will to defeat their natural passions and attain excellence (13.85). There is a third means of gaining virtue for Philo in which knowledge is gained by nature (*Dreams* 1.167). The person in this category is considered self-taught (*Dreams* 1.160). Each of these three means is allegorically related to one of the patriarchs: Abraham (learning), Isaac (nature), and Jacob (practice; *Dreams* 1.167). Through this analogy, Philo interprets the narratives of the lives of these men and other biblical figures, indicating that understanding beyond the literal sense requires the anointing of the soul's eyes by the "Sacred Guide" (*Dreams* 1.164 [Colson and Whitaker, LCL]; cf. Rev. 3:18).

The terminology used in Philo's analogies reflects the athletic context, teaching, and anointing in an interestingly similar way to 1 John. The anointing the audience of the Epistle has means they do not need a teacher (2:27). For Philo, a teacher helps the learner to remain constant because of his memory of what he was taught (*Names* 13.82). This parallels 1 John's concern for "that which you have heard from the beginning" remaining in his audience so that they can reciprocally remain in the Father and the Son (2:24). For Philo, the learner through practice must keep overcoming the passionate nature (*Names* 13.85), which is also a concern for the author of 1 John, that the audience renounce the desires of the temporal world for love of God and obedience to God's will (1 John 2:15-17). In Philo, it is either an anointing with oil that rejuvenates the athlete-soul to allow them to continue in their path to virtue, or the guiding voice of a teacher that prevents them from getting off track. In 1 John, the two functions are tied together, such that the anointing functions as the teacher, ensuring the maintenance of correct knowledge and action. The anointing from the Holy One, that teaches knowledge of the truth, could be

compared with the anointing, by the Sacred Guide, of the soul's eyes such that it can see the divine word (Philo, *Dreams* 1.164; 1 John 2:20).

The religious philosophy in the writings of John has been shown to be similar to that of Philo.[212] The common metaphor of God as light is one important example (1 John 1:5; *Somn* 1.75).[213] For Philo, virtue prepares the way for immortality, but does not ensure its acquisition.[214] The "truly authentic life consists in practicing of virtue and in being in communion with God."[215] It is the analogy of Isaac that reflects this naturally, his knowledge is self-taught, and he is associated with the divine (*Flight* 168; cf. *Dreams* 1.160).

4.3 Truth in the Linguistic Climate of 1 John

The ways in which truth was conceived of in antiquity is an important discussion piece. It is helpful to recall from the introduction that cultures are defined by their symbols, and that groups emerging within a given society form around their own commonly shared meanings and interpretations of those symbols. In this way, cultures contain sub-cultures of commonalities of language and symbol. These systems have been labeled a social script.[216] The ancient social script and the modern are so divorced from one another that only through casting a wide net may the modern scholar yield even a fraction of its meaning. The social script is carried out in writing, in art, in oral speech and creates a particular linguistic climate. The linguistic climate in which 1 John was formed was one with a deep focus on the contrast between truth and falsehood.

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212. Folker Siegert, "Philo and the New Testament," in *The Cambridge Companion to Philo*, ed. Adam Kamesar (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 196; David T. Runia, *Philo in Early Christian Literature: A Survey*, CRINT (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 78-83.

213. Siegert, "Philo and the New Testament," in Kamesar, *Companion to Philo*, 197.

214. Cristina Termini, "Philo's Thought within the Context of Middle Judaism," in Kamesar, *Companion to Philo*, 109.

215. Ibid., 108.

216. Malina, *Insights from Cultural Anthropology*, 14; Esler, *First Christians in their Social Worlds*, 11.

4.3.1   Truth-telling and Lying

The ancient authors thought about truth not in a strict duality of fact vs. fiction, but as falling somewhere on a spectrum.[217] In antiquity, truth was not understood as a portrayal of accurate detail. Instead, to tell the truth was to convey a message that demanded an ethical response.[218] Truth had to do with character, truthfulness and veracity in all aspects of life. It follows that falsehood could also be expressed through many different means, including bad ethics or false claims. Through analysis of ancient documents, Timothy Wiseman concludes that the observable types of mendacity in ancient literature are as follows: tendentiousness, promotion of credulity, confabulation, verbal chicanery, falsehood perpetuation, and incomplete truths.[219] These however, do not preclude the rearrangement or even invention of material as legitimate means of telling the truth. In fact, "the fabrication of circumstantial detail was a way to reach the truth."[220] This means that at times the details added to the story did not necessarily take away from that narrative's expression of truth, and that truth is more of a direction or way of living a virtuous ethical life. Accusations and ripostes concerning falsehood often carried the purposes of better delineating the truth (through correction or exposition of false claims or immoral action), establishing moral credibility, and defining communal ethos.[221]

First John is an example of a text that expresses the truth partially through its exposition and rejection of falsehood. Neufeld purports that the author should be considered as "not referring to a concrete, finalized 'truth,' but as an attempt to formulate truth that is able to

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217. Dietmar Neufeld, "The Socio-Rhetorical Force of 'Truth Talk' and Lies: The Case of 1 John," HTS 67, no. 1 (June 2011), 3; Timothy P. Wiseman, "Lying Historians: Seven Types of Mendacity," in Christopher Gill and T. P. Wiseman, *Lies and Fiction in the Ancient World* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2003), 122-146.

218. Neufeld, "Truth Talk," 3. Cf. Louise H. Pratt, *Lying and Poetry from Homer to Pindar: Falsehood and Deception in Archaic Greek Poetics,* Michigan Monographs in Classical Antiquity 8 (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1993).

219. Neufeld, "Truth Talk," 3-5.

220. Ibid., 5.

221. Ibid.

"create and sustain community."[222] This concept of truth incorporates not only thought and belief, but also action, such that the truth is something constantly being formulated in its ever-changing context.

This is significant with respect to the teaching function of the *chrisma,* implying that it teaches this type of dynamic truth. Within this framework, the truth can be described as "in him" and "in you" (1 John 2:8), "in us" (1 John 1:8) and as something to be lived out (1 John 1:6). Therefore, the *chrisma* teaches to "remain" (1 John 2:27) in that ongoing formulation and articulation (in both word and deed) of the truth.

4.3.2   Antilanguage and Antisociety

The Gospel and Letters of John demonstrate antilanguage expressing antisociety.[223] Antisociety refers to the ways in which a group that withdraws from broader society develops its own system of meanings that are formed with respect to those on the outside.[224] Such groups use familiar terms in new ways to create a common distinctive linguistic space, termed antilanguage.[225] Antilanguage tends to use "lexical structures and lexical collocations that are self-consciously opposed to the norms of established language."[226] The author himself suggests that he is doing this in 1 John 2:18 where he intentionally expands what he claims is a previously recognized term, "antichrist," to

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222. Neufeld, "Truth Talk," 9.

223. Ibid., 6; Bruce J. Malina and Richard L. Rohrbaugh, *Social-Science Commentary on the Gospel of John* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998), 7-14; Warren Carter, *John and Empire: Initial Explorations* (New York: T & T Clark, 2008), 74-75.

224. Malina and Rohrbaugh, *Social-Science Commentary*, 7 and 11.

225. Ibid., 46.

226. Ibid., 14.

mean multiple entities.[227] This term is then re-lexicalized as representative of specific individuals and groups, and subsequently reinforced in its new meaning throughout the text (2:18; 2:22; 2:26; 4:2-3). Antilanguage is often utilized in order to strengthen and maintain relationships between the authority figure of the group as well as amongst the group members.[228] The way the audience is addressed in 1 John 2:18-27 emphasizes this interpersonal aspect especially through the use of the second person pronoun in addition to the second person verb (cf. discussion of the textual features on 1 John 2:20, 24, and 27 in Chapter Three).[229]

Neufeld describes how ancient authors' reputations were upheld through the use of a variety of strategies, which aimed to "supplement deficient material, correct factual distortion and pass judgment on moral failure or its potential as so perceived by the author."[230] The polemical language in 1 John adds rhetorical force with the purpose of exposing and correcting the errors of those who left, as a preventative measure in case more community members begin to act on incorrect facts or belief, for example, that Jesus had not come in the flesh (1 John 4:2) or was not the anointed one (2:22), the Son of God (5:20). Therefore, the author explicitly states the following as his purpose: "I am writing these things to you concerning those who are trying to lead you astray" (2:26). In this competitive setting, it is important to the author to be perceived as truthful, explaining the forceful opposition to falsehood expressed in the phrase, "make him out to be a liar" (1 John 1:10). The author attempts to bolster his reputation at the outset of the Epistle by utilizing the saying, "That…which we have heard…seen…touched" (1 John

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227. This term only appears in 1 John in the New Testament as a "polemical cipher in the christological controversies": Ernst, "ἀντίχριστος," EDNT, 111. Its antecedents are obvious in Jewish apocalyptic and Old Testament literature (Dan 11:36; Ezek 28:2; *2 Bar* 36-40; *4 Ezra* 5:6; *T. Mos.* 8): Ernst, "ἀντίχριστος," EDNT, 111; Smalley suggests the term without the article may indicate its usage as a proper name, but the statement that the audience had heard about *antichrist* reflects the general antecedents already mentioned, in an impersonal sense (as generic opposition to the kingdom of God): Smalley, *1, 2, 3 John*, 93; Schnackenburg highlights the collective nature of the term in the Johannine epistles and its relative ambiguity in the New Testament context, compared to its specificity in later contexts: Schnackenburg, *Johannine Epistles*, 135.

228. Malina and Rohrbaugh, *Social-Science Commentary*, 12.

229. Ibid.

230. Neufeld, "Truth Talk," 5.

1:1).[231] This is in stark contrast to Lucian's discussion of a subject (travel narratives) which he had "neither seen, experienced, nor been told, what neither exists nor could conceivably do so. I humbly solicit my readers' incredulity" (Lucian, *A True Story*, 1.2). Lucian apparently hoped to refute accusations of lying with this line.[232] This contrast betrays the author of 1 John's idea of truth as being grounded in reality and experience, not in the incredible. He is concerned to establish himself as credible, while emphasizing the importance of articulating in word and deed the dynamic ongoing truth described above.

4.4 A Socio-Historical Perspective Concerning the *Chrisma* and the Teaching of Truth

4.4.1 Limited Good

The model of limited good[233] provides the necessary framework of understanding and explaining the way the author in 1 John dishonours the secessionists. This model expresses the pervading principle in Mediterranean culture that all goods, both material and immaterial, exist in limited quantity and therefore the acquisition of a good (money, property, honour, etc.) means the simultaneous loss of good for another person or group of people.[234] Thus a continual struggle for goods is introduced. Furthermore, honour is crucial to ancient Mediterranean culture.[235] The continual struggle for honour, then, is expectedly a common theme throughout the New Testament, including the Johannine literature. In addition to his explicit honour of the adherents, it is clear that by

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231. Schnackenburg highlights the significance of the verbs used in this verse as being affirmative of the tangibility and reality of the eternal word of life in human form: Schnackenburg, *Johannine Epistles*, 52, 58. Von Wahlde comments that the sensory language links the message to Jesus' ministry, and to his embodiment of life: von Wahlde, *Gospel and Letters*, 3:33.

232. Neufeld, "Truth Talk," 4.

233. Osiek, *Social Setting*, 32; Esler, *First Christians in their Social Worlds*, 25; Neyrey, *Cultural and Rhetorical Perspective*, 126-130; Jerome H. Neyrey and Richard L. Rohrbaugh, "He Must Increase, I Must Decrease: A Cultural and Social Interpretation," in Neyrey and Stewart, *Insights and Models*, 237-251.

234. Richard L. Rohrbaugh, "Honor," in Neufeld and DeMaris, *Understanding the Social World*, 112.

235. Ibid., 109; Neyrey, *Cultural and Rhetorical Perspective*, 436.

dishonouring the secessionists, the author of 1 John is also effectually ascribing honour to the adherents that in turn reinforces his message.

4.4.2   Patron-Client Model

The agonistic nature of the social system described above is reflected in the patron-client model. This model gives a framework for understanding the system by which resources are exchanged for honour, loyalty and other social goods.[236] The patron possesses some material good needed by the client and the client then gives some social good in turn. There is often a third party involved, the "broker", whose role is to mediate the exchanges, serving the interest of both the patron and the client (and also themselves).[237] Occasionally, this model could be applied to a god and its worshippers.[238] Philo presents the *Logos* in this way, assigning the *Logos* the mediatory role of "ambassador" and "suppliant" (*Heir* 205-6).[239] There is a conceptual similarity between the *Logos* described by Philo and that described in the Prologue to John's Gospel. In the latter, the *Logos* is identified as the Son of God (John 1:14, 18) who is Jesus (John 8:18, 54). Indeed, Alicia Batten suggests that in John Jesus does play the role of broker in the exchange between God and humans inasmuch as he is sent (10:36), given authority by God (6:27) and successfully mediates an ongoing relationship between the disciples and God (John 14:10; 2:10; 4:40).[240] However, she points out that in the characteristically high Christology of John the brokerage of Jesus of the divine benefactions is different because John's Jesus mediates first order goods, and eventually becomes the patron himself.[241]

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236. Alicia Batten, "Brokerage: Jesus as Social Entrepreneur," in Neufeld and DeMaris, *Understanding the Social World*, 168.

237. Ibid., 168.

238. Ibid., 171.

239. Neyrey, *Cultural and Rhetorical Perspective*, 454-476. Cf. Alicia Batten, "God in the Letter of James: Patron or Benefactor?" in Neyrey and Stewart, *Insights and Models*, 49-61.

240. Batten, "Brokerage," in Neufeld and DeMaris, *Understanding the Social World*, 172; cf. Neyrey, *Cultural and Rhetorical Perspective*, 272; 283-285.

241. Batten, "Brokerage," in Neufeld and DeMaris, *Understanding the Social World*, 172.

The Holy Spirit has also been seen to function in the broker role.[242] Recall the debate over the identity of "the Holy One" in 1 John 2:20 from whom the group are said to have received the *chrisma*. The ambiguity of this figure's identity has been discussed in Chapter 3, and it was concluded there that the Holy One should be understood to be Jesus. This figure is portrayed as the supplier of *chrisma* and title "Paraclete" used in John for the Holy Spirit is also used of Jesus in 1 John 2:1. In light of these observations, one can say that to some degree it is also fitting to conceive of 1 John's "Holy One" as broker of *chrisma*, or even *chrisma* as broker of truth, thus revealing another way to understand the relationship of *chrisma* to the teaching of truth in 1 John.

4.5   A Theological Perspective on *Chrisma* as Teacher of Truth

The issue of the relationship of *chrisma* to the teaching of truth ought to be explored in light of evidence that for the ancient person "truth" was not only something one "knows," believes, or learns, but also something one "does," or acts upon: it was lived.[243] In Johannine literature, truth was understood "as an event."[244] Therefore, the teaching of truth by means of the *chrisma* is not only related to gaining insight into right belief, but is simultaneously concerned with what the author deems right action. The themes of "right belief" and "right action" are indeed addressed by scholars in discussion of the theological themes in 1 John.[245] The author can say that the liar is the one who claims to be "in the light" but does not love his brother is "in the darkness and walks in the darkness" (1 John 2:9-11). In this way, "knowing" and "doing" of the truth are so inextricably connected that any claim of one without the other, for the author, is anathema.

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242. Batten, "Brokerage," in Neufeld and DeMaris, *Understanding the Social World*, 176.

243. Jackayya, "Alētheia," 171-175.

244. Hübner, "ἀλήθεια," EDNT 1.60.

245. Von Wahlde, *Gospel and Letters,* 3:152; David Rensberger, "Conflict and Community in the Johannine Letters," *Int* 60, no. 3 (July 2006): 285.

The claims addressed concerning the themes of "light" and "love" correspond to the "knowledge" and "practice" of the truth, the content of which is Christological for the author; it is a reaffirmation of both knowledge about Jesus Christ and the action such knowledge should produce. The one who speaks or acts inconsistently with what the author teaches concerning Jesus Christ is therefore anti-Christ (1 John 2:22). The liar is the one who denies that Jesus is "the Christ" (1 John 2:21). If the expected Christ is Jesus, then remaining "in him" necessitates living as he did (1 John 2:6). The *chrisma* that teaches to "remain in him" then also concerns the maintenance of the teachings, commandments, and ethics of Jesus in daily life. This is, for the author, "truth."

Ultimately, truth points to the "one who is true" (1 John 5:20), i.e. the Father. The truth is something articulated in Jesus' life, but that can also be similarly articulated through the life of a true believer. This is why it has long been recognized that for 1 John correct action and correct belief are part of the process of becoming a child of God.[246] The ultimate *telos* is relationship and community with God. He is "light" (1 John 1:5) and knows everything (3:20), and he is also "love" (4:16) demonstrated through the action of sending his Son into the world (4:9-10).

For the author of 1 John, then, the *chrisma* teaches those who receive it to articulate the truth expressed in Jesus' life in their own thoughts, claims, and actions. Each of the christological claims and corresponding failures to act accordingly listed in the opening of the Epistle (1:6-10; 2:4-9) are respectively maintained and prevented by continuance in the state of receipt of *chrisma*. In this way, *chrisma* counters contradiction and ultimately assures relationship to God and community.

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246. Von Wahlde, *Gospel and Letters*, 3:152.

Chapter 5

5 *Chrisma* and the History of the Community

The issue of the relationship of *chrisma* to the history of the community will be addressed from two perspectives. First, the use of the term may provide clues to the community's history with respect to greater society and other early religious groups. Second, the term is described in such a way as to imply a shared experience of *chrisma* in the community's common past and development. Therefore, it is now important to discuss related texts and to explore how the term is used rhetorically to reinforce a sense of the community's origin and development. It will be helpful to explore the ways in which *chrisma* is related to the formation of this particular community's sense of identity from a socio-historical perspective. There is an important theological dimension to the author's use of the term *chrisma* and that is the connection he is making to the anthropological beliefs, christological debates and eschatological viewpoints in this community's history.

5.1 Sociological Approach to the Formation of the Johannine Group

The study of the ways in which groups form and organize themselves under different circumstances helps to shed light on the identity, interests, and concerns of the Johannine Community. In his work on identity, Philip Harland states that "[t]heories of assimilation and acculturation deal with processes that take place when two groups come into contact with each other, with resulting changes in the boundaries and cultural ways of either or both groups"[247] This is especially important in environments where one group overpowers another, as in the case of imperial negotiation in the Greco-Roman era.

Philip Esler (1994) discusses the formation of the Johannine Community through the use of models relating to the formation of religious movements in pre-industrial society and studies on sect. He draws attention to the general idea (attributed to Bryan Wilson) that a

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247. Harland, *Dynamics of Identity*, 13.

sect formulates identity through both a divergence from a precursory community and relative to broader society.[248] Wilson has categorized the tension between the sect and the dominant religion to which the sect is responding, and Esler's application of this typology to the Johannine community indicates an "introversionist" response.[249] This type of response is characterized by a soteriology involving withdrawal from the world, which is deemed evil in nature.[250] This is reflected in the Gospel (John 15:19; 17:16) where the world is clearly contrasted to the place of origin of the disciples. The world is deemed explicitly evil in 1 John in direct opposition to the Father (2:15-17). In light of its withdrawal from the world, a community forms that is removed from society at large (and in this case the dominant religious tradition, cf. John 7:28; 8:38) and focused on the maintenance of this distance in order to preserve the salvific work of belonging to this community.[251] There is a similar sort of response reflected in the community at Qumran, but for Esler, this second community also includes a tendency toward a revolutionist (millenarian) response characterized by the belief in the necessity of supernatural destruction of societal systems, a soteriology of imminence, and the requirement of resolute action on the part of the group members.[252] The application of this model helps to understand some of the elements in the Gospel of John, however it does not account for the love of God for the world expressed by the sending of the Son (John 3:16). Though the formation of the community bears similarities to introversionist sects, it is not perfectly an example of that typology.

Essentially, groups form when an individual identifies a need for transformation and discusses that need with other individuals who come in alignment with the same focus.[253]

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248. Esler, *First Christians in their Social Worlds,* 71; cf. Bryan R. Wilson, *Magic and the Millennium: A Sociological Study of Religious Movements of Protest among Tribal and Third-World Peoples* (London: Heinemann, 1973).

249. Esler, *First Christians in their Social Worlds*, 72; cf. Wilson, *Magic and the Millennium*, 23-24.

250. Esler, *First Christians in their Social Worlds*, 73; cf. Vernon K. Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts: A Guide to Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation* (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, 1996), 73.

251. Esler, *First Christians in their Social Worlds*, 73.

252. Ibid., 84; cf. 72.

253. Malina, "Early Christian Groups," in Esler, *Modelling Early Christianity*, 99.

Three components involved include: circumstances ripe for change, an idea of how things could look different, and hope for success in transition.[254] Once a group formed, then the members develop a vested interest in the maintenance of that group.[255] The group's parameters were identified and defined in contrast to societal norms and by reacting to other groups.[256] In the case of 1 John 2:18-20, the boundaries of the group were not clearly defined until the secession exposed a previously obscured intragroup division of belief. Barclay identifies early Christian groups as "elective associations" which were 1) expressive (focused on meeting the needs of the members rather than reforming society) 2) evasive of group dishonour and 3) rejecting of dissentors.[257] These principles motivate the writing of 1 John once the Johannine group had formed.[258] The members are focused on maintaining the boundaries of the group that are being identified and defined by the author in contrast to the world (1 John 2:17) and to the seceders (1 John 2:26). The author's goal is adherence of the community to the truth, and not any kind of societal revolution. He seeks the group's honour and unashamedness (1 John 2:28) at the *parousia* and rejects the seceders rigorously, assigning the labels of liars and antichrists (1 John 2:22).

5.2   Intertextuality and the Johannine Group with respect to Broader Society

It is important to acknowledge the ways in which echoes and allusions can evoke concepts without necessitating the certainty of one specific text lying behind another.[259] Similarities in theme or textual parallels must be similar contextually in order to bear significant meaning, and these do not necessitate literary dependence.[260] Vernon Robbins

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254. Malina, "Early Christian Groups," in Esler, *Modelling Early Christianity*, 100.

255. Ibid., 99.

256. Ibid., 114, 116.

257. Ibid., 109.

258. This relates to Stage Three in Brown's model. cf. Section 2.8 of this paper and Brown, *Community*, 167.

259. Robbins, *Texture of Texts*, 59-60.

260. Van der Watt, *Gospel and Letters*, 132.

helpfully discusses how geographically based common knowledge and specific regional and temporal knowledge can contribute to a type of social or historical intertexture.[261] Van der Watt picks up on this idea and even suggests that shared terminologies do not demand shared meanings because they may simply reflect what he terms a shared "religious ecology".[262] By this he means a generally shared cultural knowledge and terminology. For example, the community at Qumran demonstrates a shared religious ecology with the Johannine Community.[263] The Qumran community integrates Persian and Hellenistic ideas with conservative Judaism.[264] However, there is no one, singular "Judaism" in the first century, because of the widespread nature of the religion, the variance in negotiation of empire group to group, and different levels of assimilation across the board.[265]

There are several theories of the development of Johannine theology, including those that allow for influences from both apocalyptic and its relative, wisdom traditions.[266] However, though these are good backgrounds against which to understand the language and ideas of the Gospel of John, it is important to acknowledge the impossibility of divorcing the religious realm from its socio-political contexts.[267] Therefore, one must also take into account the influence of imperial theology and civic cultic observations.[268] Thus, it is imperative to recognize a variety of affective linguistic streams prevalent in the vicinity of the Johannine community.[269]

The theological and religious terminology underlying the Johannine writings should take into account the question of how the Gospel of John negotiates Roman imperial power

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261. Robbins, *Texture of Texts*, 62-63.

262. Van der Watt, *Gospel and Letters*, 135.

263. Ibid., 142.

264. Ibid.

265. Ibid., 140.

266. Ibid., 350.

267. Ibid., 351.

268. Ibid., 352.

269. Strecker, *The Johannine Letters*, 18.

and the answer begins with the recognition that the text maintains a rhetoric of distance.[270] Typical of texts produced in groups negotiating imperial power, the Fourth Gospel both imitates and critiques its ruling power.[271] How has this affected the theology of the Johannine community? The destruction of the temple in 70CE has often been assumed to be the formative point behind the rhetoric of distance in the text. However, Warren Carter suggests that it is possible that even before this took place, other events may have contributed to the need for negotiation by Jewish groups at the formative stages of the Gospel.

The main example Carter cites is Gaius Caligula's attempts to erect a statue of himself in the temple *ca*. 40 CE as attested to by both Philo (*Embassy* 184-367) and Josephus (*Jewish War* 2.178-203; *Jewish Antiquities* 18.257-309).[272] First, the incident with Gaius introduces competing claims to sovereignty, which may be reflected in the Gospel of John.[273] For example, the emphasis in the Gospel on titling Jesus as "Son of God" (John 19:7) and "King of Israel" (John 1:49) may be a competitive response to this event.[274] Next, the Gaius accounts parallel the dualistic tendencies in the Gospel. For example, Gaius' immaturity is contrasted with manhood (Philo, *Embassy,* 190) and his folly with sound judgment (Josephus, *Ant*. 18.177-178). Further, Gaius' actions are described using the language of ascent in these accounts (although delegitimized by the authors) while the Gospel utilizes similar language to emphasize both Jesus' sending (as being from God) and his apotheosis, which could be seen as a response to the "ascent" of Gaius.[275] Moreover, the treatment of issues of divinity in the Gospel could be viewed imperially, rather than theologically, on the basis of the centrality of such political themes as honour, power, benefaction, imitation, and agency.[276] Other parallels can be observed between the

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270. Carter, *John and Empire*, 335.

271. Ibid.

272. Ibid.

273. Ibid., 362.

274. Ibid., 363-364.

275. Ibid., 373.

276. Ibid., 370-372.

accounts of the Gaius' incident and the Gospel of John, which may indicate intertexture, including the notion of one person being sacrificed on behalf of a nation,[277] and the prevalence of the concept of agency.[278] The centrality of the temple in the Gospel of John has been attributed to the events of 70 CE but perhaps it also reflects events such as this widely known and controversial attempt by Gaius, described as zeal for the house of God (a phrase used in John 2:17 cf. Psalm 69:9).[279]

At the formative stages for this community (and other religious groups in the same geographical location) the socio-political pressures were great and this is reflected in the terminology and theology in the Gospel of John. This, in turn, informs the theology of 1 John and the terminology employed by that community. For example, if many of the christological titles were emphasized in competitive reaction to outside pressure, perhaps the emphasis is part of what had been interpreted incorrectly and one of the reasons why 1 John is concerned to remind the audience that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh (1 John 4:2). Another example may be the prevalence of the concept of agency seen in the Gospel of John. This is still reflected in the Epistle and will be discussed in terms of brokerage in Section 5.6.

5.3   *Chrisma* as Antilanguage

Based on the conflicts that appear in the Gospel regarding the polemicized οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι (9:22; 10:31), and in the First Epistle concerning ἀντίχριστοι, the Johannine community's history has been described as "first pressure from outside then of schism within."[280] From within this highly pressurized milieu, the community developed a certain way of speaking unique to the ingroup and in contradistinction to those considered to be in opposition. This language functions to "protect a particular social

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277. Carter, *John and Empire*, 377.

278. Ibid., 379.

279. Ibid., 374.

280. Rensberger, "Conflict and Community," 288.

reality and…to resist prevailing norms and to register protest."[281] In the Johannine writings, this language establishes the foundation for encouraging solidarity with group doctrine and therefore the perpetuation of the social group in faithfulness to its beliefs despite outgroup pressures. Neufeld recapitulates the patterns of anti-language that evolve in a group developing in a polemical environment, identified by Malina and Rohrbaugh (1998) as: 1) emphasizing "the interpersonal dimensions of language"; 2) depending heavily on "abstraction for terms and phrases"; 3) depending "preponderantly on metaphor"; and, 4) utilizing "the conversational mode to sustain the resocialising process."[282] These patterns are clearly expressed in the Gospel of John in the prevalent use of metaphor (John 6:35; 8:12; 10:9; 15:1) and constructions that reinforce the author's interpretation of the significance of the facts contained therein (cf. John 7:39). In fact, antilanguage more than relies on metaphor, but is itself "a metaphor for the regular language of society at large."[283]

The use of *chrisma* as part of the antilanguage of the audience of 1 John is implied by the short explanation of it in verses 20 and 27. The explanation is presumably brief because of the assumption that both the author and his audience know precisely what is meant by it. Indeed, all the patterns of antilanguage for groups that evolve in highly pressurized environments can be seen in 1 John. First, the people are addressed interpersonally as dear children (2:1; 2:18), and as dear friends (2:7), reflecting an interpersonal emphasis. Secondly, the removal of the article for *antichristos* and *chrisma* evidence their abstraction. Next, metaphors run strong throughout, but especially conspicuous are the statements that "God is light" (1:5) and "God is love" (1 John 4:8). Finally, the author writes conversationally which may indicate an attempt to re-socialize and orient the audience toward the specific goal of fellowship and adhesion to the communal ethos.[284] In fact, conversation has been the mode identified by Malina and Rohrbaugh that most

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281. Neufeld, "Truth Talk," 6.

282. Ibid.; Malina and Rohrbaugh, *Social-Science Commentary*, 4-14.

283. Malina and Rohrbaugh, *Social-Science Commentary*, 13.

284. This is because "[t]he reality-generating and –maintaining power of language lies in conversation.": Malina and Rohrbaugh, *Social-Science Commentary*, 14.

effectively utilizes language (and anti-language) to interpret reality (and alternate realities).[285] According to these scholars, the use of this type of metaphorized discursive has the capacity to construct and preserve a social reality.[286] The shared experience and articulation of *chrisma* and of the secession of the group from the community has been interpreted a specific way by the author of 1 John and it is his concern that the others in his community continue to share his standpoint; this drives him to write to them. Thus, he utilizes written language in a conversational way in order to construct and maintain the group's interpretation of reality.

The aim of the author to define and maintain the identity of his community raises the question of the identity of the seceding group. The *chrisma* was a shared experience for the Johannine Community. The way the author emphasizes the "true" or "real" nature of the *chrisma* received by his adherents, explicitly contrasting it to "a lie," combined with an especially heavy emphasis on "you," would imply that the seceders at least appeared to have shared the experience of anointing.[287] Since the very function of the "true" *chrisma* is apparently to teach to remain or exist in the (practicable) truth, then it might be said that whatever *chrisma* the seceders might claim to possess was "false." It could only at best be considered a counterfeit of the genuine *chrisma* possessed by the adherents.[288] Therefore, the exodus of this group was a betrayal of the *chrisma*. This indicates that the seceders were never really in unity with the adherents in the first place, even if they had appeared to be (1 John 2:19). Thus, their anointing had not been from the

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285. Malina and Rohrbaugh, *Social-Science Commentary*, 10-14.

286. Ibid., 14.

287. For Painter, the *chrisma* may actually have been utilized first by the seceders and then adopted and redefined by the author to include the tradition received by the audience and rejected by the seceders: Painter, *1, 2, and 3 John*, 198. For von Wahlde, the term can be called "theological jargon" familiar to the opponents and adherents: von Wahlde, *Gospel and Letters*, 3:94. Strecker notes the seceders may have been convinced they belonged in the community: Strecker, *The Johannine Letters*, 64.

288. Smalley discusses this theme, choosing to translate "true" as "real" and setting it against the concept of "illusion." This sense is acknowledged in this discussion, but Smalley's discussion was viewed through the lens of an anti-gnostic bent in the text. His interpretation misses the truth/deception dualism in the text and also suffers from the problem of anachronism: Smalley, *1, 2, 3 John*, 120; Painter, *1, 2, and 3 John*, 197. The "you" which opens verse 20 is adversative in that it sets up the opposition against "them" and therefore "you" not "them" also have knowledge.

Holy One. The adherents' *chrisma* is from the Holy One (2:20), as evidenced by their maintenance of a life of truth, and reflected by their choice to remain with the community. If they in any way neglected the truth about Jesus being "the Christ,"[289] or denied this truth through their actions, they could appropriately be labeled "anti-Christs" along with the seceders.[290] To follow the dualism to its logical conclusion, the anointing that the seceders claimed to possess worked to separate them from the truth about Jesus, and ultimately the community with which they were originally associated.

5.4   Reconstruction of a Historical Narrative

The reconstruction of the narrative of the history of the community plays a role in understanding the *chrisma*. The secession from the community in this passage provides some indication of the historical narrative of these early Christians. Long before this split took place, however, there had already been a controversy over christology. Brown aptly maintains that the controversy originated in differing interpretations of the tradition contained in the Fourth Gospel.[291] David Rensberger suggests that a dualism between *Logos* and the world emerged and grew in the fires of conflict between Jewish Christians and Jewish non-Christians in the setting of the synagogue.[292] Over time, the stronger the emphasis of the Christians on Jesus' divinity grew, the greater the negative response from the synagogue (John 9:22; 13:33; 16:2).[293] Ultimately a separation from the synagogue took place (John 9:22), based on a division over a christological issue (that Jesus was the Christ).[294] Brown correctly proposes that some new non-Jewish members likely joined the

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289. Painter highlights the nature of this rejection as not having to do with the messiahship of Jesus but with the denial that the christological claims of the community could be identified with Jesus: Painter, *1, 2, and 3 John*, 200.

290. cf. 1 John 4 where *antichrist* relates to the denial that Jesus Christ had come in the flesh. Both claim and behavior must line up with this truth as well, or else the one making the claim or acting is appropriately labeled anti-Christ, for the author.

291. Brown, *Community*, 97. Cf. discussion in Chapter Two.

292. Rensberger, "Conflict and Community," 284.

293. Ibid.

294. Significantly, this is the same issue present in 1 John 2:22 and similar to that in 1 John 4:2.

community once the separation from the synagogue had occurred (12:20-23, 42).[295] These people would inevitably not share the same memories of the time before the expulsion. Therefore, they could have interpreted the tradition with an even stricter dualism, according to Rensberger, between the spiritual and the physical, and an even higher christology.[296]

This interpretation of the Gospel tradition is reflected in 1 John. For example, Dirk G. van der Merwe proposes that the seceding group in 1 John felt that "a new and superior insight had been given to them" and that they "had already crossed over from death into life" (1 John 1:8, 10; 3:14).[297] With a greater significance being placed on the spiritual over the material, earthly life could then be imagined to be only a seeming reality and perhaps, therefore, sin was not truly real either.[298] The author rejects this imagination as a disproportionate emphasis on the divinity of Christ, to the neglect of his having come "in the flesh" (1 John 4:2). Indeed, von Wahlde maintains that the opponents in 1 John likely denied "a distinctive, permanent, and effective role for Jesus."[299] If this were the case, the author is combating this ideology by stating the *chrisma* has already taught the community "concerning all things" and also to "remain in him" (2:27). Included in the comprehensive "all things" the *chrisma* teaches, is the christological knowledge the audience had about Jesus. The *chrisma* is significant in that it has taught them to remain in him (Jesus).

5.5   Remain Where? Spatial Terminology

The term μένειν is used as part of the description of what the *chrisma* does for the audience member. It is said to have already taught them μένειν (to remain). This verb can

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295. Brown, *Community*, 55.

296. Rensberger, "Conflict and Community," 284.

297. Dirk G. van der Merwe, "'Those Who Have Been Born of God Do Not Sin, Because God's Seed Abides in Them' – Soteriology in 1 John," HTS 68 no.1 (July 2012): 2.

298. Rensberger, "Conflict and Community," 284.

299. Von Wahlde, *Gospel and Letters*, 3:95.

also mean to continue to exist or live.[300] As discussed briefly in Chapter Three, the use of this verb is popular within the Johannine corpus, and echoes the Gospel tradition conspicuously. It is particularly reminiscent of the call to continue or remain in the vine (John 15:4-7).[301] The metaphor of Jesus as the vine and his disciples as branches paints a clear picture of the kind of mutuality[302] prescribed throughout the Fourth Gospel and First Epistle. According to Bultmann, the verb has to do with loyalty and it is "not primarily a continued being for, but a being from" that is meant.[303]

John 14-15 expresses relationships using this verb μένω in terms indicative of spatiality. Jesus goes to prepare a place (John 14:2-3), and the Father and Jesus will come to the obedient and make a home with them (John 14:23), these same obeyers are called to remain *in* or dwell *in* Jesus, the vine (John 15:4). The verb most often refers to a location in space, or to a realm or sphere, but often in Johannine literature has the sense of an "inward, personal communion."[304] The concept may be illuminated by utilizing the model of fluid sacred space (as opposed to fixed sacred space). In this model, fixed space refers to an actual space, or a physical location or act of worship, such as an altar, sacrifice, or temple; fluid space refers to the verbal forms of worship, the Scriptures, the place of worship becomes whatever place the group gathers.[305] This model, applied to the Gospel of John, suggests that "the person of Jesus and the persons of the group become the sacred space"[306] rather than the temple or the mountain which are rejected in the narrative in John 4:21. In fact, the new locus of worship is said to be "in the Spirit and in truth" (4:24). Jesus statement in John 14:2 that he is going to prepare a place, and his indication of a location in his Father's house, are not references to fixed spaces but to fluid

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300. BDAG, s.v., "μένω."

301. Smalley calls it a "catchword" for this group and likely other groups close to the Johannine community: Smalley, *1, 2, 3 John*, 121.

302. Painter, *1, 2, and 3 John*, 200; 207.

303. Bultmann, *Gospel of John*, 535.

304. BDAG, s.v., "μένω."

305. Neyrey, *Cultural and Rhetorical Perspective*, 406.

306. Ibid., 410.

relational spaces, such that heaven is wherever God is and earth is wherever the disciples meet.[307] This spatial shift is also reflected in the stage of the community's history represented by 1 John, in which the sacred space or place of worship can now be understood to be the "us" in 1 John 2. In this way, the *chrisma* that teaches "to remain" has helped shape the community's history by re-affirming the fluid sacred space as existing in the unity of the group and in living "in truth."

5.6   Brokerage

The relationships described in John 14-15 expressed in terms of spatiality, "being in" and "dwelling in," fall into two categories: 1) kinship relationships and 2) patron-broker-client relationships.[308] The representations are of relationship and not geographical location. Instead, "[they point] to Jesus as *pontifex*, mediator, broker, and priest, uniting God and the disciples."[309] God is described as Father and acts as patron in sending Jesus as an expression of the Father's love and benefaction (John 3:35; 5:20; 10:17; 15:9) and this sending is founded in the closeness of their relationship.[310] Although the Father sends other agents in John, Jesus is the only one whose role is revelation of the Father (1:18; 6:46; 16:25).[311] In this model, the implication of "remaining" is the sense of loyalty and reliability in relationship.[312] Following this pattern of logic, similar conclusions can be drawn with respect to 1 John, as reflecting a later stage in the community's development. Thus, Jesus, as the Holy One, brokers *chrisma* to the adherents by means of the

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307. Neyrey, *Cultural and Rhetorical Perspective*, 407.

308. Ibid., 409.

309. Ibid., 77.

310. Carter, *John and Empire*, 246.

311. Ibid; Note the locus of the values of 1 John is in the revelation of God in Jesus Christ, cf. Painter, *1, 2, and 3 John*, 202.

312. Neyrey, *Cultural and Rhetorical Perspective*, 469.

maintenance of their relationship with him.[313] It is this exchange that keeps them united to him and therefore to the patron, the Father.

Tricia Gates Brown, in her recent work on Johannine pneumatology, has discussed the application of the patron-broker-client model to the Johannine community and its unique history. She theorizes the existence of a brokerage network, in which both Jesus and the Spirit are "rungs" on a ladder of brokerage.[314] T.G. Brown's proposal is that, at some stage in the life of the community, the concern arose that Jesus would be incapable of maintaining his role as broker post-ascension, and therefore the good he brokers to the believers is in actuality another broker.[315] The goal of this is logically the maintenance of the patronage relationship between God and the believers, his clients.[316] She rightly establishes this model as a helpful tool for comprehending the complexity of Jesus' simultaneous equality and inequality with God, the Father.[317] It also explains the rhetoric of "remaining" in the Gospel and Epistles of John as a call to loyalty.[318] This theory allows a framework within which to understand the history of the community in terms of clientage and patronage. T.G. Brown concludes that the division in the community was over which broker they saw as being more important, Jesus or the Spirit,[319] and this is the likely occasion for the message of 1 John. She proposes that the seceders placed too little emphasis on the necessity of the cross for the receipt of the Spirit, and instead too strongly emphasized Jesus' brokerage of the Spirit.[320] Perhaps this helps to understand why the author of 1 John would want to emphasize the brokerage of the *chrisma* in this

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313. For Smalley, remaining is conditional upon "genuine relationship with God through Christ" which is "guaranteed and confirmed by the indwelling knowledge of the truth imparted through the anointing spirit": Smalley, *1, 2, 3 John*, 121.

314. Tricia Gates Brown, *Spirit in the Writings of John: Johannine Pneumatology in Social-Scientific Perspective*. The Library of New Testament Studies 253 (London: T & T Clark, 2003), 211.

315. Ibid..

316. Ibid., 263.

317. Ibid., 264.

318. Ibid., 266.

319. Ibid., 276.

320. Ibid., 254.

particular passage, in order to weaken the focus of his audience on pneumatology, and reassert their commitment to the tradition concerning the "correct" christology.

5.7   Understanding the Language of Receipt

The author of 1 John states that the audience has *chrisma* that they "received from him [i.e. the holy one]," (1 John 2:27) and this implies a shared experience in the history of this community. The use of the aorist ἐλάβετε to describe the action of receipt (2:27) has been suggested to be indicative of a "one-time, completed action."[321] This understanding of the tense without the nuance of *Aktionsart* – that is, the aspect of the tense as conditioned by the immediate context – is exemplarily problematic.[322] Although the force of an aorist indicative is generally past time, its use is dependent "on its combination with other linguistic features."[323] It could be argued that since the "received" *chrisma* is said to μένει ἐν ὑμῖν ("remain in you") in the following phrase (2:27), the author is not merely seeking to historicize an experience of the past. Rather, he emphasizes the ongoing nature of the *chrisma*'s remaining. It is therefore possible that the use of the aorist in this particular context is ingressive, stressing the "beginning of an action or the entrance into a state."[324] Thus, the lasting effect of having received is being "in" the state of receipt.

Further, the author's choice of the verb "received" highlights the role of the audience in the exchange; the remaining *chrisma* is received from the Holy One rather than rejected or ignored. The author could have emphasized the action of the Holy One by describing the anointing "you have been given" or "you have been anointed with." Instead, he says "you have received." However, the context indicates that individuals must indeed receive and continue in that state in order to benefit from *chrisma*'s brokerage of knowledge. This reflects the ingressive understanding of ἐλάβετε and helps to explain the author of 1

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321. Connell, "On Chrism," 216.

322. See Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 557. Wallace discusses the abuse of the aorist tense and the common mistake of saying "the aorist means once-for-all action." Here, and in the section titled "The Tenses: An Introduction" he uses the term *Aktionsart* to describe the aspect of the tense as conditioned by the linguistic elements of a given text (Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 556; 499-500).

323. Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 556.

324. Ibid., 558.

John's stance that the seceders never really belonged in the first place (2:19). By leaving the community, the seceders "have opposed or betrayed . . . the unifying material of anointing . . ."[325] According to the text, this is the case because they did not receive *chrisma* in an ongoing fashion; they left, rejecting its work, and simultaneously its source, the Holy One.[326] Understood in this manner, the action of receiving the *chrisma* is equally as important as its delivery.

If the Holy One who gives the *chrisma* is identified as Jesus Christ[327] it is logical that the author calls the ones who leave and reject him "anti-Christ."[328] The receipt of the *chrisma,* then, is a shared experience in the history of the community that is more than a moment in time, but an ongoing unifying feature that, if rejected rather than received, negates its authenticity and function of teaching the truth. This begs the question of whether or not the experience of *chrisma*'s receipt is documented outside of the Epistle.

5.8   Receipt of *Chrisma* As Historical Event

There is a question as to whether or not the *chrisma* literally refers to a ritual action of anointing, perhaps as part of an initiation rite for entrance into the community.[329] In support of this, Martin F. Connell suggests there is evidence of baptismal rites and foot-washing rituals in the Johannine community. The rituals of baptism (John 3:23-30; 4:1-3) and foot-washing (John 13:12) have historical narratives attached to them in the Gospel of John. Baptism is also attested to in other early Christian communities such as those

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325. Connell, "On Chrism," 218.

326. Schnackenburg puts it this way: "even if the sacramental rite…is in view…the decisive thing is its continuing power": Schnackenburg, *Johannine Epistles,* 141.

327. The identity of the "Holy One" in 1 John is an ongoing discussion. For identity with Jesus, see Culy, *Handbook*, 52; Painter, *1, 2, and 3 John*, 198; Schnackenburg, *Johannine Epistles,* 142. For identity with God, see BDAG; Thompson, *1-3 John*, 78. For identity with the Spirit, see von Wahlde, *Gospel and Letters,* 3:93.

328. This observation should not be divorced from the discussion in Chapter Three, where the label *antichrist* is explained as relating to a christological issue (cf. 1 John 4:2), in the author's opinion either a too-high or too-low christology on the part of the seceders: Smalley, *1, 2, 3 John*, 94.

329. Smalley translates *chrisma* as "initiation" in order to communicate this: Smalley, *1, 2, 3 John*, 101, 120. Von Wahlde is decidedly against this interpretation, indicating the *chrisma* as a gift of the Spirit not connected to Jesus' baptism, or any ritual action, or to the giving of the Spirit (John 20:22; 20:31): von Wahlde, *Gospel and Letters,* 3:100.

reflected in Luke-Acts (Luke 3:21-22; Acts 8:12-13; 9:18; 16:15) and 1 Corinthians (1 Cor 12:13). Significantly, there is no command in New Testament concerning anointing as there is for baptism (Matt 28:19; Acts 2:38; 10:48) or to wash each other's feet (John 13:14).

There is no indication that the *chrisma* was connected to an actual ritual. Instead, it is indicated to have come from "the Holy One". It is true that the physicality of the earthly Jesus is important to the author of 1 John, but it is still a pre-Easter Jesus to which he bears witness, and whose physical presence is something that occurred in the past and is only indirectly connected to the community at hand. Hence the need of the author to establish his credibility as an eyewitness to the message he proclaims (1 John 1:1-3). If there had been an initiatory anointing ritual why were the circumstances of its receipt neither indicated nor implied? The author could have included a comment such as "which you received at your baptism" or "which you received when you believed" or perhaps "by the hands of the elders (or anyone else)." It is significant that the exact circumstance of anointing is never recounted; the understanding of *chrisma* remains elusive, but not to the insider.

Despite the lack of evidence for a historical event of anointing as part of the community's past, the symbol of ritual action is likely still in view as is implied by the choice of the word *chrisma* rather than *elion* or any other type of oil for daily use. This *chrisma* is a part of the shared experience of the community. Although a physical reality is not attested to, a symbolic reality is clearly portrayed. There is no necessity to assign a time to the act of receipt.

5.9   Possible Pre-Texts for 1 John 2:18-27

There are two possible "pre-texts" in the New Testament identified by Martin F. Connell in his 2009 article: 2 Corinthians 1:12-22 and John 9:1-41.[330] In 2 Corinthians 1:21-22, God is said to have anointed, sealed, and placed his Spirit in "us." The earlier date of 2

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330. Connell, "On Chrism," 219.

Corinthians with respect to 1 John demonstrates "a tradition of anointing from the earliest evidence stratum of Christian worship."[331] Whether this passage refers to a literal anointing or an invisible reality is another matter that cannot be known with absolute certainty. However, it is certain that in at least one other early Christian community, there was a shared history of the experience of having been anointed, although in 1 John 2:27 the recipient of anointing has a role to play in that exchange. In 2 Corinthians 1:21-22, God is the only actor. The Greek χρίσας used in this passage comes from the same verbal root (χρίω) as χρῖσμα in 1 John 2:20 and 27 and therefore bears similar connections to the Messianic title, χριστός and similar evocations of ritual action. The similarities are not necessarily indicative that one text was directly aware of the tradition behind the other, but that similar contexts produced similar claims in both.

A second potential pre-text identified by Connell is John 9:1-41 which contains the narrative in which a man, born blind, is healed when Jesus places a salve on his eyes. The action of Jesus is described as επέχρισεν, which is a verb meaning, literally, "to spread on" or "anoint."[332] The narrative's conclusion reflects a dynamic of separation over a christological issue. Moreover, as a result of Jesus anointing the man,[333] he receives progressively increasing insight into the identity of Jesus. The man born blind gradually comes to acclaim Jesus as "Lord" and worship him as "Son of Man" (John 9:35-38). In John 9:22-23, it is explicitly stated that those who claimed Jesus as the Christ (or the Christ as Jesus) would be banned from the synagogue.[334] In this context of controversy, the verbal form of χρῖσμα has been utilized as part of a narrative in which the human Jesus administers an anointing that allows a blind man to see. The sight given clearly had metaphorical implications for the Johannine Community; indeed, "seeing" and "blind" are representative of the duality of "light" and "darkness" and have soteriological

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331. Connell, "On Chrism," 218-219.

332. BDAG, s.v. "ἐπιχρίω."

333. Note that this passage also does not utilize the language of receipt employed in 1 John 2:27. Jesus does the action here. In fact, the actions of the man have no implication in the story, except as a witness to Jesus' identity after the event.

334. The ban from the synagogue can be understood as a shunning or excommunication (BDAG, s.v. "ἀποσυνάγωγος").

implications in the Johannine literature.[335] John's Jesus proves himself "the light of the world" by giving sight (John 9:5).[336]

This narrative's development reflects an increase of the man's insight with each interrogation concerning the healing, along with a simultaneous diminishing of the insight of the outgroup.[337] This is reflected by Jesus' statement to the Pharisees, that their claim to be able to see is contradicted by their guilt of sin (John 9:41). The sight the Pharisees would have claimed to have is likely metaphorical for christological insight and knowledge. Thus this narrative metaphorically implies an anointing from Jesus resulting in christological insight and freedom from sin. The occasion for writing is apparently rife with controversy surrounding christological interpretations of tradition and in these ways this narrative bears similarity to the setting and understanding of *chrisma* in 1 John. In the Epistle, Jesus, as the Holy One, is the mediator of the *chrisma* that is related to the maintenance of a knowledge and practice of truth.

5.10   Collective Memory

The *chrisma* acts as a clue to the social history of this community. Lying behind the term is a shared experience (either tangible or symbolic) for this particular group of people. The passage itself refers to "what you heard from the beginning" (1 John 2:24) which suggests the author is taking "a retrospective view of a tradition that has been in existence for some time."[338] Later, the *chrisma* is said to have already "taught" the community to remain (1 John 2:27). Studies in memory show that all communities have a shared, or communal, set of memories upon which they found their collective identity.[339] Also, Alan Kirk highlights that the past, while remaining foundational, is represented according to

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335. Bultmann, *Gospel of John*, 340. cf. Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John,* AB (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1970), 369.

336. Brown, *Gospel*, 369.

337. Ibid., 377.

338. Rensberger, "Conflict and Community," 280.

339. See Alan Kirk, "Introduction: Social and Cultural Memory," in *Memory, Tradition, and Text: Uses of the Past in Early Christianity,* ed. Alan Kirk and Tom Thatcher, SemeiaSt 52 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2005), 1-24.

the needs of the present.[340] That is, groups use the normative past to construct the group's identity in the present.[341] The difficulty facing the particular ancient community in this study centers on the loss of connection, or perhaps intentional abandonment, of the communal memory concerning the tradition of Jesus' ministry.[342] Collective memory research shows that beliefs concerning the past are often shaped by a community's present issues, and that times of crisis in a community serve as catalyst for the "semiotizing dynamic of memory."[343] It is therefore common experience and memory that motivates the attachment of meaning and significance to particular words.

Kirk describes how communities function in this way, stating "frameworks of memory are current social and ideological structures through which the past is retrieved and interpreted in a community's incessant activity of self-constitution."[344] In this way, the author's discussion of *chrisma* and choice of the term serves to connect the past to the present, and the present to the past, in the collective memory of the Johannine community. The author of 1 John adapts the memory of the experience of receiving *chrisma* based on the secession of a group such that the seceders would no longer be remembered as having been an authentic part of the community. Thus, the author states that by leaving they proved they never really belonged (1 John 2:19) and thus never had the *chrisma*, but were *antichristoi*.

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340. Kirk, "Social and Cultural Memory," in Kirk and Thatcher, *Memory, Tradition, and Text*, 11. Cf. Kirk, "Memory Theory: Cultural and Cognitive Approaches to the Gospel Tradition," in Neufeld and DeMaris, *Understanding the Social World*, 62.

341. Kirk, "Memory Theory," in Neufeld and DeMaris, *Understanding the Social World*, 61.

342. Not only is there a focus on return to tradition and a reminding of what the audience has already heard, or known, throughout the text (1 John 1:1, 3, 5; 2:7, 18, 24; 3:11; 4:3), but it is also established that cultural memory reaches its limit as time goes on, such that communicative memory (for example, writing) becomes essential to the survival of the community and the maintenance of its connection to its constitutive memories of origin: Kirk, "Social and Cultural Memory," in Kirk and Thatcher, *Memory, Tradition, and Text*, 5-6. Kirk references Jan Assman's works, *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis. Schrift, Erinnerung ud politische Identität in frühen Hochkulturen* (Munich: Beck, 1992) and *Religion und kulturelles Gedächtnis: Zehn Studien* (Munich: Beck, 2000). Therefore, it is likely a destabilization (due both to the passing of time and to the secession) of the connection to the community's founding traditions that necessitates the preservation of tradition in the writing of the letter.

343. Kirk, "Social and Cultural Memory," in Kirk and Thatcher, *Memory, Tradition, and Text*, 20.

344. Ibid., 10-11.

5.11 A Theological Perspective Concerning the *Chrisma* and its Relationship to the History of the Johannine Community

The statement "you have *chrisma*," along with the subsequent description of that *chrisma*'s function of teaching the group, have come to bear several theological implications for the community at the stage of development reflected in 1 John. The ones with the true *chrisma* are those who confess that "Jesus is the Christ" whereas the "antichrists" are defined as those who deny the christological claim or who walk away from the community (2:19). This implies there are some who have done so, rejecting the necessity of Jesus' ongoing role in the life of the community, or rejecting the community itself. Von Wahlde demonstrates this by stating that the opponents denied "a distinctive, permanent, and effective role for Jesus."[345] The receipt of *chrisma* as a shared experience appears to represent an acceptance of the Holy One as the source of that *chrisma*.[346] For the author, such an acceptance is also logically an acknowledgement of Jesus' ongoing necessity, not only for atonement for sin (1 John 2:1-2), but also for the maintenance of the function of *chrisma* in the community.

Chrisma symbolizes the initiation (evoking the idea of a ceremony or ritual) into a relational knowledge of God as Father ("him who is true," 1 John 5:20) and Jesus as Son. It is significant for the maintenance of this state of fellowship as demonstrated through right action (especially toward other community members) and right belief. Indeed, faith and action are inseparable for this author.[347] If one's actions do not align with one's

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345. Von Wahlde, *Gospel and Letters*, 3:95.

346. This can be linked to the christological tenets the seceders were denying according to 1 John. They are portrayed as denying Jesus as "the Christ" (or that "the Christ" is Jesus) in 2:22. The similarity between the title "Christ" ("anointed one") and *chrisma* linguistically may be evidence that this is what the author is correcting. For Strecker, the denial is docetic: Strecker, *The Johannine Letters,* 69-76. Alternatively, for von Wahlde (following Brown, *Epistles,* 352, 368-369), the centrality of the truth that "Jesus is the Christ" is part of a correction of the interpretive disagreement that occasions the Epistle: von Wahlde, *Gospel and Letters,* 3:86. Von Wahlde rightly maintains that the *chrisma*, though related to *christos*, is distinct: von Wahlde, *Gospel and Letters*, 3:87.

347. Strecker points out the way knowledge demands deeds in the tradition of the Gospel (12:25-26) as well as the mediation of life by Jesus and its grant of access to truth (14:6) that consists in relationship with God (17:3): Strecker, *The Johannine Letters*, 17.

claims, that person is a liar (2:4; 2:22; 4:20). There are several specific claims identified: the claim to have fellowship (1:6), to be without sin (1:8), that we have not sinned (1:10), to know him (2:4), to be in the light (2:9), to love God (4:20). These claims are likely based on actual expressions of individuals or groups in the past. Each of these claims is negated by something. In 1:6, the claim of fellowship is falsified if the claimer walks "in darkness", the claims concerning sin (1:8; 1:10) are false of their own accord, the claim to know him (2:4) is unauthenticated when one does not do what he commands, and the claims to be in the light (2:9) and to love God (4:20) are nullified by hatred of another member of the community. Therefore, the two main concerns are for the commands of God and mutual love of those in the community of faith. For the author of 1 John, these are the central themes and the appropriate response to the love of God freely given to mankind (4:7-8). Rensberger expresses this by stating, "christological confession and mutual love are…twin responses to God's prior act of sacrificial love for humankind."[348]

As the community continued to develop, the maintenance of this confession became more difficult since some differed on the fundamental christological issue (1 John 4:2; 2:19), and fellowship decreased to the point that they seceded. For others, the confession of the christological tenets became increasingly important, such that the implications of fellowship took on salvific importance, based on the tradition of the Gospel that knowledge of God and Jesus is eternal life itself (John 17:3). The antithesis, for the author, is also true, that a lack of fellowship with the community indicated a lack of fellowship with the Father and Son and therefore a loss of life. This soteriological mutuality of abiding results in an acceptance of the reality of sin, necessitating testing of spirits to make sure they are from God (1 John 4:1).

Thus the focus on the audience's possession of *chrisma* implicates a history of its abandonment. Abandoning the teacher that teaches the true way to believe and act and belong has resulted in a loss of fellowship and ultimately a loss of eternal life. This is not the history of the adherents, according to the author of 1 John, and, as will be discussed in

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348. Rensberger, "Conflict and Community," 285.

the chapter that follows, ought to serve as a warning for the community about the life-and-death importance of fellowship with Jesus and the ongoing acceptance of the *chrisma* that he provides.

Chapter 6

6 *Chrisma* and the Author's Prognosis for the Community

Finally, it is important to consider the future dimension as one aspect of the meaning of *chrisma* in 1 John 2:18-27. The author is not only concerned for the present health or integrity of the community, but is prescriptive and predictive of the possible future outcomes of current behaviour and belief. This chapter will approach the question of the relationship of *chrisma* to the author's prognosis concerning the community first rhetorically, discussing the use of amplification techniques in the text and the epideictic elements of the passage at hand, highlighting the author's prescription for the community members' allegiance to the communal ethos. Adherence to the community's central values leads logically to the socio-historical discussion of familial terminology and the model of fictive kinship, as well as insights from memory studies and specifically the construction of collective identity. Finally, the possibilities of future configurations of group identity predicted by the author relate to the theological issues of truth and deception, life (eternal life) and promise. These issues will be discussed relative to the context of the community's eschatological hopes. *Chrisma's* centrality to this key passage in the text of 1 John is better understood in light of each of these topics and approaches.

6.1 Rhetorical Context of the *Chrisma* and the Community's Future

Recent rhetorical scholarship suggests that 1 John is an example of epideictic rhetoric, which has been concisely defined as "the rhetoric of praise and blame."[349] The author often "celebrates or denounces some person or some quality" as part of his persuasion of the audience.[350] The employment of the language of praise and blame serves the rhetoric

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349. Witherington, *New Testament Rhetoric*, 187. Cf. George A. Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation through Rhetorical Criticism* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1984), 19-20; 73-75.

350. Kennedy, *Interpretation*, 19.

by building up or tearing down specific groups.[351] This indicates to the audience indirectly the behaviour the author prescribes. In this way he seeks continued adherence.[352] Epideictic rhetoric is most often reflected in homiletic materials, or in speeches delivered at celebratory gatherings and special occasions with the aim not merely to prove a particular position formally, but to bolster adhesion to already accepted principles and therefore also reinforce group cohesiveness.[353] Looking at 1 John through this rhetorical lens suggests the author's focus is not solely on polemicizing the seceders, although this is certainly one intention, but also on strengthening the adherents in their commitment to continue embracing a particular teaching and lifestyle (i.e. of the "truth").[354] The author seeks in this way to establish opprobrium toward the seceders in order to enhance the effectiveness of his exhortation and encouragement of the audience in their allegiance to the group's core values. Indeed, the implied audience, for Judith Lieu, is made up of insiders who generally support and identify with the author's statements and do not need to be convinced of the ideological claims therein; however, they will be in a position requiring steps of obedience.[355]

A helpful discussion partner in this rhetorical vein is Duane F. Watson, who has written specifically on the use of common Greco-Roman amplification techniques (typical of epideictic discourse) in 1 John.[356] According to Watson, some of the techniques utilized in the Epistle include strong words, augmentation, comparison, repetition, synonymy, antithesis, personification, hyperbole, and emphasis, among several others.[357] The purpose of the rhetor is to ensure the maintenance of the audience's communal values in

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351. Duane F. Watson, "Amplification Techniques in 1 John: The Interaction of Rhetorical Style and Invention," *JSNT* 16, no. 51 (January 1993), 121.

352. Ibid., 122.

353. Witherington, *New Testament Rhetoric*, 191.

354. Ibid., 190.

355. Lieu, "Persuasion and Identity in 1 John," 817.

356. Watson, "Amplification Techniques in 1 John," 99-123.

357. Ibid., 101-117.

the context of schismatic circumstances.[358] The use of the theologically important
"remain" (2:6, 10, 24, 28; 3:6, 24; 4:13, 16) is augmented by the additional repeated
appeal to obey or keep obeying (2:3-5; 3:22, 24).[359] There is a focus on the present time
in that the seceders are reprimanded for their views in so much as they go beyond the
original interpretation of the tradition (cf. 2 John 9).[360] However, this also implies a
warning for the audience against future transgressions. He is concerned for their
wellbeing and the future outcome of their present life, as it is rooted and grounded in
their shared history.

6.2 A Socio-Historical Approach to the Community Prognosis

In the honour-based milieu of the Johannine community, as discussed in the introduction,
family played a significant role. One's familial connection provided the foundation for
much of one's ascribed honour (as opposed to honour acquired).[361] All individuals were
embedded in this type of group on some level or another. Arranged hierarchically, and
specifically patriarchally, kinship offered a model for other groups as well, including
civic and official organizations, such as the *gymnasia*.[362]

6.2.1 Fictive Kinship and the Concept of Family

The concept of family in the Greco-Roman world is markedly different from that of the
modern western world. Research into the Roman family has demonstrated that the *familia*
did not center on direct kinship alone but more widely on the concept of 'household',
which included slaves and freedpersons.[363] Since social networks and the maintenance of

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358. Watson, "Amplification Techniques in 1 John," 119.

359. Ibid., 120.

360. Ibid., 121.

361. Jerome H. Neyrey, "Loss of Wealth, Loss of Family and Loss of Honour," in Esler, *Modelling Early Christianity*, 140-141.

362. Harland, *Dynamics of Identity*, 89 (cf. 80, 95-96).

363. Paul Weaver, "Reconstructing Lower-Class Roman Families," in *Childhood, Class, and Kin in the Roman World*, ed. Suzanne Dixon (London, Routledge: 2001), 105.

trust therein were key elements to navigating daily life in Greco-Roman culture, the particular loyalties between brothers and sisters were especially invaluable for protection of the honour ascribed to the familial unit.[364] Thus, the associations and groups that emerged outside the family often mimicked the kinship relationship as an exemplar of loyalty, using the terminology of kinship symbolically to refer to one another.[365] Many of the New Testament writings utilize this symbolic family, known as a "fictive kinship" model, calling each other brother and sister or father and child.

In the case of 1 John, the author identifies his audience as his "children" (1 John 2:1), thus positioning himself as being in authority over the church or group of churches to which he is writing. The concept of the seat of authority being held by the father or *paterfamilias* is of great social and legal importance in Greco-Roman households. The Fourth Gospel portrays a contrasting form of the *paterfamilias* in which the power of the Father is freely relinquished to the Son.[366] The Son is portrayed as subordinated to the Father in the Gospel. The Father sends the Son who reveals him, obeys him, and does the work for which he is sent (John 1:18; 4:34; 7:16, 28). However, the Son is also given a strikingly high level of agency so that the Son "has life in himself" the same way the Father does (John 5:26) and John's Jesus can even claim that he and the Father are one (John 10:30). In 1 John, this complex view of the Father-Son relationship is retained. There is a tension between the Son who has been sent by God (1 John 4:9, 14), yet being "in" the Son is equated to being in God (1 John 5:20) and having eternal life (1 John 5:12-13). The familiar understanding of the *paterfamilias* and the Father-Son relationship prevalent in the culture is thus metaphorized in 1 John as part of the anti-language discussed in previous chapters and utilized to establish and maintain the identity of the group over against greater society, and the seceding group particularly.

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364. Osiek, *Social Setting*, 33.

365. Margaret Y. MacDonald, "Kinship and Family in the New Testament World," in Neufeld and DeMaris, *Understanding the Social World*, 31.

366. Mary Coloe, *Dwelling in the Household of God: Johannine Ecclesiology and Spirituality* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2007), 14.

By referring to the audience as his children and as little children at the outset of his writing, and after establishing his own credibility and authority by means of his association with others who have "seen, heard, and touched" the message (1 John 1:1), the author sets his audience in a subordinate position as children in the metaphorical household. In keeping with the importance of the brother-sister relationship reflected in the fictive kinship model, 1 John 2:9-11 identifies this relationship as central to right action, such that if one claims to know the true way to live, yet "hates" one of their metaphorical kin, that person is spiritually deceived. The list of claims negated by lack of mutual love, followed by the argument that leaving the community is a form of christological denial resulting in the loss of salvation, make it nearly impossible for the reader to disagree. If the audience accepts the author's truths and follows his logic, then their conclusions will inevitably match his and their obedience to the author is assured. In this way the author leads or manipulates the readers' actions, just by the force of his rhetoric. This is especially compounded on the basis of the position of authority he claims and seems to hold.

6.2.2   Patronage

Functioning similarly to the familial hierarchy is the type of brokerage network discussed in Chapter 4. In brokerage systems, alliances and allegiance are of central importance to the exchange of goods and acquisition of honour. These key elements are the means of securing the future success of the system in place. In Johannine literature these are reflected in the themes of mutuality and abiding. Just as the goal of these brokerage systems is the maintenance of honour and its natural counterpart, the avoidance of shame, so the goal seems to be shared by the author of 1 John and is expressed in the Epistle as an aim to be unashamed at his coming (1 John 2:28). This relates to the concept of the client or lower-order broker maintaining loyalty to the higher-order broker and ultimately the patron, bringing them honour which in turn results in the good of the client and the bestowal of benefaction. The outcome is dependent on the ongoing nature of these relationships. Thus, the author's prognosis relies on the maintenance of the relationships, not only between the believers as clients and the Father (and Son), but also on the maintenance of the relationships of the believers with one another.

6.2.3   Dyadic personality

The focus on the group instead of the individual befits the employment of another social model. This is the model of the "dyadic personality"[367] or collective soul. In stark contrast to the modern tendency toward a monadic idea of the self, the identity of the Mediterranean self is often dependent on others, and defined by membership and "embeddedness" in groups; thus, it is groups that have characteristics and distinctive qualities and not individuals.[368] In this model, the group is seen as ultimate, and the well-being and integrity of the whole group becomes the goal of each of the members; therefore, the behaviour of the individual is dictated by group practices or by the authority of the leader. In the case of 1 John, the authority of the leader is being exercised in order to dictate the behaviour of the individual members in the future. The *chrisma* is part of the author's descriptive rhetoric, but also part of his prescriptive plan for the future of the group in so much as it functions to teach the community to "remain in him," Jesus (1 John 2:27).

6.2.4   The Future-Orientation of Memory

Memory does not only have to do with the past, but carries a future trajectory as well. Memory, like personality, is collective. In fact, as Kirk states, "social frameworks of memory are indispensable for the very possibility of remembering, for they give coherence and legibility to memories, arranging them within dominant cultural systems of meaning."[369] Memories must be formulated and articulated through practices.[370] Memory serves to connect the events and experiences of the group to meaningful patterns

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367. Malina, *Insights from Cultural Anthropology*, 67.

368. Ibid., 68; Malina, "Collectivism," in Neufeld and DeMaris, *Understanding the Social World*, 19.

369. Kirk, "Social and Cultural Memory," in Kirk and Thatcher, *Memory, Tradition, and Text,* 2. Cf. Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory,* ed. and trans. Lewis A. Coser (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 38-43; Maurice Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory,* trans. Francis J. Ditter Jr. and Vida Yazdi Ditter (New York: Harper & Row, 1980), 54; Assman, *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis,* 35; Assman, *Religion und kulturelles Gedächtnis,* 114.

370. Kirk, "Social and Cultural Memory," in Kirk and Thatcher, *Memory, Tradition, and Text*, 3.

that help shape identity.[371] The locus of collective memory is the individual whose identity is embedded in the group and produced in relation to culture.[372]

Certain components of the past experiences of any community are viewed as being of "constitutive significance."[373] These constitutively significant memories must be continually revitalized and remembered in order to maintain the identity they help to shape.[374] Through the repetition and re-telling of its past, the community is able to reconstitute itself over time.[375] This accounts for the occasion of writing of 1 John. If some of the community members were beginning to lose touch with the foundational tradition of their group, this would necessitate a recapitulation of those memories. More than a reminder, but a remembering in which the past is adapted to the needs of the present (cf. p. 60). Indeed, there is an established pattern of communities experiencing a "crisis of memory" around forty years after their formation and a subsequent turn to written media in attempt to create some stability of the community's connection to memory.[376] This serves to explain the focus of the author on "what you have heard from the beginning" (1 John 1:1-3; 2:24) and the "old command" they are being reminded to follow (2:7).

The "old command" in 1 John 2:7 is explained further as also being a "new command." This illustrates the common bond between commemoration and instruction.[377] The two go hand in hand, with the goal of the mobilization of the community members to action consistent with the communal ethos.[378] Thus it is said that the truth of the command is seen in Jesus and in the community (1 John 2:8). As Jesus lived, so they are called to live in the future (1 John 2:6). This is related to social identity theorists' suggestions that group identity is an ongoing process that occurs over time, such that the group describes

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371. Kirk, "Social and Cultural Memory," in Kirk and Thatcher, *Memory, Tradition, and Text*, 4.

372. Ibid.

373. Ibid., 5.

374. Ibid.

375. Ibid.

376. Ibid., 6.

itself in relation to its past but with a view to the possibilities of future identities.[379] The future possible identities prognosticated by the author of 1 John are presented as a group in fellowship with Christ, or as one deceived.

6.3 The Prognosis of the Community in Theological Perspective

The anchoring of the community to the past and simultaneous aiming for ongoing reconstitution of its identity is clear theologically as well. The christology in 1 John is simultaneously "weighted to the past" (1:5; 2:7-10; 3:11; 4:2; 4:21) yet also "presupposes the *parousia*" (2:28; 4:17).[380] The orientation of 1 John is to "the coming of Jesus and the day of judgment for a final resolution of the struggle with evil."[381] Van der Watt describes the eschatology of 1 John as "progressively realizing."[382] This is because the author appeals to future eschatology and realized eschatology simultaneously; Raymond E. Brown suggests that the future eschatological content has been included in order to counter the "eschatological implications in the claims of the opponents to perfection."[383]

The discussion surrounding being taught by the *chrisma* is placed in this eschatological context. It is the means by which the community is protected from being deceived in "the

377. Kirk, "Social and Cultural Memory," in Kirk and Thatcher, *Memory, Tradition, and Text*, 19.

378. Ibid.

379. Philip F. Esler, "Collective Memory and Hebrews 11: Outlining a New Investigative Framework," in Kirk and Thatcher, *Memory, Tradition, and Text*, 158; Susan Condor, "Social Identity and Time," in *Social Groups and Identities: Developing the Legacy of Henri Taifel*, ed. Peter Robinson (Oxford: Heinemann, 1996), 285-315; Marco Cinnirella, "Exploring Temporal Aspects of Social Identity: The Concept of Possible Social Identities," *JSP* 28 (1998): 227-48.

380. Painter, *1, 2, and 3 John*, 98; For the *parousia* as reference to Christ's Second Coming on the day of judgment, at the end of time, see von Wahlde, *Gospel and Letters*, 3:103.

381. Painter, *1, 2, and 3 John*, 99.

382. Van der Watt, *Gospel and Letters*, 73.

383. Brown, *Community*, 136.

last hour" (1 John 2:18).[384] John Painter points out that the reference to the last hour is undoubtedly eschatological but that it is not to be understood as equivalent to "the last day" in the Fourth Gospel (John 6:39, 40, 44, 54; 11:24; 12:48), but perhaps a precursory element of that day, which is related to resurrection.[385] Similarly, Georg Strecker says the phrase "the last hour" is to be understood in an apocalyptic sense with a future aspect, as something leading up to the resurrection or final judgment.[386] According to the author, the ability to achieve confidence on that day is dependent on the ongoing avoidance of being "led astray" or "deceived" (1 John 2:26-28), that is, away from the path of truth. In this way, *chrisma* is the theological key to the receipt of eternal life as the fulfillment of the promise (2:25).[387]

The development of the Johannine concept of eternal life might be understood as a spiritualized version of the connection reflected in the Hebrew Bible between a natural spirit and natural life (Isa 42:5; Job 34:14-15; Ps 103:29-30), such that God's Spirit is believed to be connected with true or eternal life.[388] The author is convinced that remaining in the Father and Son will be perfected; yet the receipt of *chrisma* has already deposited the believer into this eschatological reality, which is to come fully later. Remaining is thus described as "a challenge to realize, anew, at all times, the truth that is the gift of the Spirit."[389] Sin is included in the realm of possibility for the author (1 John 2:1) and the Spirit could potentially be lost through sin.[390]

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384. Recall discussion of *antichristos* in Chapter Three and Chapter Four, where deception can be both inadequate christological confession and ethics inconsistent with the confession. cf. Smalley, *1, 2, 3 John*, 94-96.

385. Painter, *1, 2, and 3 John*, 197.

386. Strecker, *The Johannine Letters*, 62.

387. For promised "eternal life" as consummated at Jesus' second coming, yet experienced in the present, see Smalley, *1, 2, 3 John*, 123.

388. Von Wahlde, *Gospel and Letters*, 1:463-466.

389. Strecker, *The Johannine Letters*, 77.

390. Von Wahlde, *Gospel and Letters*, 1:453.

In 1 John, the promise of Jesus is true life (2:25).[391] The presence of Jesus is experienced in an ongoing fashion after his ascension through both cognitive and functional means, through Jesus' words and actions and similarly through the words and actions of his followers.[392] Eternal life had both present and future implications (2:17) for the community.[393] Life in this context is brokered by means of the word (1:1) and therefore salvation continues in the proclamation of the word (1:3; 2:1, 7-8).[394] In fact, John 14:12 refers to the believers doing the work Jesus did. There is also a connection between what they heard from the beginning (the word) and the *chrisma* (2:24).[395] Von Wahlde calls this word "tradition" and indicates its function of complementarity with *chrisma* purporting these are together foundational for right belief and action.[396]

Both Christ and antichrist are described as "coming" and this creates a heightened significance to the possibilities of "remaining" or "not remaining."[397] The author is trying to prevent the "diversion of a revolution onto a path that he fears may cause it to fail."[398] He is concerned that the claims of the seceders will weaken the firmness of his audience's belief.[399] Therefore, he attacks these claims as oppositional in order to reinforce adherence.[400] Schnackenburg suggests that the author wants his audience to see the reason why the seceders cannot be in fellowship with God and how that prevents their salvation ultimately. The *chrisma* enables the possessor to grasp the truth and to see

391. For Jesus as the one who promised, see Painter, *1, 2, and 3 John*, 198. Cf. von Wahlde, *Gospel and Letters*, 3:84.

392. Van der Watt, *Gospel and Letters*, 69.

393. Von Wahlde, *Gospel and Letters*, 1:462-463.

394. Strecker, The Johannine Letters, 19.

395. Painter, *1, 2, and 3 John*, 197.

396. Von Wahlde, *Gospel and Letters*, 3:98.

397. Breck, "Function of Πᾶς," 204.

398. Rensberger, "Conflict and Community," 290.

399. Painter, *1, 2, and 3 John*, 202.

400. Ibid. Note that the author's explicitly stated purpose is to prevent his audience from being led the wrong way (as opposed to the way of truth): 2:26; 3:7, 19.

"through the pretensions of the opponents."[401] However, this ability alone presents a narrow view of truth and one must be sure to account for the practicable component of it as well.

The prescription of *chrisma* is to be maintained over time, hence the emphasis on remaining. If this is achieved, the author's prognosis is life (2:25, 28). Implicit in this is the antithesis that defecting or rejecting the *chrisma* will result in a prognosis of death. The *chrisma* maintains a continuous connection to the source of life and truth. Without that connection the prognosis is depravity and a wandering away from truth and life. This medicinal analogy is a good one, since health had to do with integrity and wholeness of an individual. Similarly, the maintenance of the group's integrity is of utmost importance to its identity and health. Its strength and ability to continue long term is dependent on *chrisma*. This is reminiscent of the image of anointing as preserving and refreshing for the athlete (Philostratus, *Gymn*. S2).

The *chrisma* is the key to the prognosis of the community; that is, the prognosis is conditional on the maintenance of the *chrisma*'s centrality in the life of the group of believers. The author's prognosis also relates to the community's success in maintaining *chrisma*-taught mutuality of fellowship and love to the eschatological end. This fellowship is seen as both living and realized, yet maintains a hope for future consummation.[402] Bultmann discusses the relationship of remaining as one that is reciprocal and aims to perpetuate the new reality or existence established by the Revealer.[403] This existence is a continuation of what is present in the future.[404] The *chrisma* serves as protection against being led away from the path of truth (3:19) that the community members are expected to walk. This path leads to true life; that is eternal life (2:25). The receipt of this end is only assured by the maintenance of a lifestyle of truth in

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401. Von Wahlde, *Gospel and Letters*, 3:93.

402. Schnackenburg, *Johannine Epistles*, 64.

403. Bultmann, *Gospel of John*, 536.

404. Ibid., 546.

belief and action; that is, adherence to the traditional teachings and ethics of the community. This is the very identity of the community. Thus, the *chrisma* is that thing that identifies this community over and against all others.

Chapter 7

7   Concluding Remarks

In their particular geographical and social situation, a member of the Johannine community may have heard and understood the term *chrisma* in 1 John 2:18-27 as an expression of a commonly experienced symbolic reality with a social function of identification and group preservation in contrast to an ever changing and highly pressurized outside world. The term itself would have evoked a variety of types of anointing common in various settings in society at large. In verse 20, the term is anarthrous, yet defined in this context as originating with the Holy One. Verse 27 even more specifically defines the *chrisma* for this community, utilizing the definite article, and reinterpreting it metaphorically to mean something very specific to the group addressed in the text. The way the author does this reflects a community whose social response to greater society is separation and removal and whose view, concerning itself, is that it alone holds the salvific key to life.

The *chrisma* is said to function to teach the community and the content of the teaching that the *chrisma* is purported to do concerns all things and relates to truth. For the author, truth is rooted in christology such that Jesus is viewed as the expression of divine truth. Therefore, the comprehensive teaching of the *chrisma* concerns the knowledge of the traditions concerning Jesus' teachings and the actions of his person. Truth or its antithesis, deception, is expressed in the beliefs and practices of people. Thus, the teaching of *chrisma* also concerns the practice of the teachings of Jesus and the modeling or mimicry of his work by the community. Truth is understood as a sort of path that leads to true, eternal life.

The *chrisma* is articulated in such a way in this passage as to remind the audience both that they have received it and from whom they have received it. This serves to trigger their memories of the source, the Holy One, which refers them to the tradition they have heard concerning Jesus. By recalling this tradition, they should both acknowledge that "the Christ is Jesus" and that his historical words and actions are foundationally

necessary for their salvation. They should recall that what initiated them into their current state of belonging and unity was the receipt (rather than rejection) of *chrisma*. Every individual who entered the community did not automatically possess the *chrisma*, even if there were a sacrament or initiation rite, such as baptism, that took place.[405] By articulating *chrisma* in this way, the author perpetuates his view of reality, what he witnesses to. In this way, he linguistically and socially formulates a reality for his audience. It unites them in a common mutual understanding, and defines more clearly the boundaries of their group.

This defining of group boundaries and identity is important for the community behind the text because of its polemical context. Not only has the community removed itself from greater society, but more than once it has been divided over Christological issues at various stages in its history and development. This accounts for the hostility displayed in 1 John 2:19 which uses the highly oppositional term *antichrist* to describe the outgroup, the seceders. The secession is described in this verse in spatial terms that may indicate a geographical move but more importantly speaks of a metaphorical separation. The Johannine writings reflect a move of the sacred space to the locus of the community, so the secession is really a description of the lack of salvation of those described. It was the destruction of the unity of the church that was discussed in this passage.[406] The *chrisma* is set against this disunity.

Understanding the *chrisma* as maintainer of unity (fellowship with God-Christ-community of believers) does not shed as much light on the identity of the outgroup as it does on that of the ingroup. In fact, it broadens the identity of those considered opposition. Anyone outside of the specifically defined theological system of the author would likely have qualified as "antichrist." This terminology certainly does not reflect a mystical or mythological apocalyptic creature, but more the calibre of false teacher or group of deceived deceivers. The image is not menacing or malevolent, but removed

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405. For the distinction of the *chrisma* as requiring faith for receipt, see Strecker, *The Johannine Letters*, 65.

406. Ibid., 64.

from relationship. Perhaps some of these individuals are attempting to remain connected in relationship and it is those of the audience who are receptive to that idea that are considered to be in particular danger of being led astray or deceived. The outgroup may have had the same memory of having been anointed, but would presumably reconstitute their own experience in a way which would polemicize the audience of 1 John and bolster their own claims. The author is extremely concerned to prevent any further division in the community to whom he writes. This unity he prescribes for himself and his audience to share in together is viewed as a matter of life or death, and *chrisma* has a central role to play in achieving and maintaining this state.

Exploring the rhetorical, socio-historical and theological dimensions of this issue of *chrisma* in 1 John 2:18-27 reveals a multifaceted concept. The labels assigned to the two groups in the passage bear more than just a meaning constructed against a complex social backdrop, but also serve functionally in the construction of the identity of the group implied as the audience of the text. They are part of the anti-language evolving in the anti-association that is the Johannine community. Philip Harland's work on identity has been especially helpful for understanding the ways in which anti-associations can incite others by utilizing unflattering and accusatory terminology in an exaggerated way in order to re-establish a sense of identity as superior to, and distinct from, all others.[407] This is a natural outflow of the highly agonistic societal context of the text in the ancient Mediterranean in which the ultimate aim is the identification and maintenance of group boundaries.

Since the 1 John group does not take up prescriptive or revolutionary discourse concerning broader society, but remains internally focused on intragroup issues, the community cannot be properly described using sectarian models.[408] Group formation theory, however, can be applied to this and other early Christian groups, types of elective associations, formed in the competitive milieu of the day and centered on communal ethos, and common interests. Membership in the 1 John ingroup is determinative of its

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407. Harland, *Dynamics of Identity*, 162.

408. Malina, "Early Christian Groups," in Esler, *Modelling Early Christianity,* 108.

members' individual identity construction in much the same way as their identity is ascribed to them at birth on the basis of their geography or family of origin. This collectivistic view of identity explains why *chrisma* could be understood as playing a role in the construction and maintenance of communal identity.

Since people were not born into this community, an actual experience must be claimed which would define the collective identity of the group, and in this case it was the receipt of *chrisma*. Its receipt, teaching function, and remaining qualities are all a part of the construction of the identity of the group. The pride with which the *chrisma* is claimed reflects the honour-shame dichotomy of the culture. Competing groups in this passage are vying for the *chrisma* and related truth (and life). Therefore, those "opponents" of the group would necessarily have to be afforded opprobrium since there could be no *chrisma* outside of that ascribed to the adherents. The preservation of this good has become extremely important to the author and this is reflected in his appeal to the community members as his fictive kin, since loyalties and preservation of familial connections were the best means to maintenance of honour and value. Also important is the maintenance of connection to those in hierarchically superior positions, in this case, the Holy One, the Son, and ultimately, the Father. These are strategic allegiances for the acquisition of the goods required by the author and his audience (truth, *chrisma*, life).

The context of this Epistle in Greco-Roman culture as an incredibly diverse and complex system of symbols is significant. Influences are likely from a wide variety of sources including membership in other social groups, the mystery religions, philosophical schools, *palaestra*, Judean, Roman, and general Hellenistic traditions. The intersection of these various cultural groups produces a complex mix of symbols and streams of thought. Exploring *chrisma* through cultural and rhetorical approaches as well as the application of social-scientific models has been fruitful for establishing the means of nuance for the terminology emerging in this environment. It is not the development of a timeline or the drawing of direct lines of influence that has been the focus of this thesis, but rather the description and exploration of the rich cultural texture behind the text of 1 John 2:18-27 and its use of the term *chrisma*. These approaches are not to discredit those that explore the author's style of writing or use of rhetorical devices in order to make his argument

clear, or the clues that can be gleaned from studying the text itself about the particular situation in which it was written. The textual and linguistic features of the text remain important.

For the author of 1 John, *chrisma* is the group-defining label assigned to an invisible reality experienced communally as an instructive force supplied by Jesus which functions to construct and maintain the identity of the group, and to unify the community in its teachings and lifestyle. Thus, *chrisma* is both cognitively and behaviourally instructive in the experience of the community. It identifies them as a unified group over and against all others. The effectiveness of this label lies partially in its ability to evoke anointing imagery from other daily-use contexts for the audience that contributes to the understanding and maintenance of the christological and ethical message the author is attempting to reaffirm. The possession of *chrisma* and its ongoing effectiveness in the community represents the reality of the truth of the message to which the author witnesses and therefore part of its instructive force is based on the avoidance of its loss. In this respect, the juxtaposition to the label *antichristos* in 1 John 2:18-27 is significant because it demonstrates the perceived result of the abandonment of the Johannine truth in order to motivate its adherence instead.

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Curriculum Vitae

Name: Jenny Meggison

Post-secondary   University of Western Ontario
Education and   London, Ontario, Canada
Degrees: 2003-2007 B.Sc. Honours

                        Huron University College
                        London, Ontario, Canada
                        MTS 2010-2012, partially completed

                        Huron University College
                        London, Ontario, Canada
                        MA 2011-present

Honours and   Archbishop Michael Peers Prize in Biblical Languages
Awards: May 2013

                        Dean's Honour List
                        April 2011

Related Work   Marking Assistant
Experience   The University of Western Ontario
                        2012-2013