

THE FORMATION OF THE DISCIPLES AS AGENTS OF DIVINE POWER  
AND REVELATION: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE GOSPELS  
ACCORDING TO MARK AND JOHN

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The opinions expressed in this dissertation do not necessarily reflect those of the South African Theological Seminary.

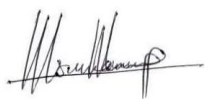


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## DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this dissertation is my own original work and has not previously in its entirety or in part been submitted to any institution for a degree.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Annang Asumang', with a horizontal line extending from the end of the signature.

Annang Asumang

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April 2010

## DEDICATION

*To Bill*

Who has taught me how to confidently study the Word of God

Follow me and I will make you fishers of men  
(Mark 1:17)

They followed Jesus...He said to them, "Come and see". They came and  
saw where he was staying, and they dwelt with him  
(John 1:37-39)

## **ABSTRACT**

With the overall task of explaining Christian origins in mind, this dissertation describes, analyzes and compares how the formation of the disciples of Jesus is depicted by the Gospels of Mark and John. It assumes the Gospel genre to be biographical and defines “formation” as the dialectical processes of interactions between Jesus and the disciples as His agents. A model that is based on the depictions of the divine-human interactions in the OT and literature of Second Temple Judaism is first developed for the analyses. This model is then piloted and fine-tuned in the first chapters of Mark and John in order to set the parameters for the study. With the aid of a narrative-theological method, the discipleship characters in both Gospels are identified, and the purposes of their formation, as well as the processes and events involved in their interactions with Jesus are separately analyzed and then compared to establish a number of hypotheses. These hypotheses are then validated by examining how both Evangelists narrate the feeding of the five thousand and the anointing of Jesus.

The dissertation identifies that both Gospels characterize the foundational group of disciples as much wider than those explicitly labelled as “disciples”. This foundational group was multiform, and made up of people of different socio-cultural and religious backgrounds, ethnicities, gender and social classes. In both Gospels, the purpose of their formation was to make them into agents of divine power and revelation. Mark emphasizes their formation as agents of divine power, whereas John complements this by emphasizing their formation as agents of divine revelation. Though the key formational activities, events and processes highlighted by either Evangelist differ; they nevertheless complement each other, and thus a global portrait of the formation of the disciples is attained. In both Gospels, hospitality features as a central formational phenomenon, both literally and metaphorically. While Mark emphasizes hospitality as a discipleship ethic, John underlines it as a Christological phenomenon. Several peculiar emphases in John also complement the Markan feature of the frequent failures of the disciples. The Passion and resurrection of Jesus is established as key to the formation of the disciples, but in a proleptic fashion.

I am deeply indebted to Dr Bill Domeris for over seven years of indescribable experience of academic discipleship throughout my study for the MTh, and now, PhD. It is not an exaggeration to state that the seeds of the ideas expressed in this dissertation, as well as the confidence to research the Word of God in faith while guided by the Spirit of God were sown and nurtured through my formative interactions with Bill. Though the mistakes and missteps of the study are all clearly mine, I certainly cannot lay claim to originality with the basic ideas expressed hereafter. Dr Kevin Smith has similarly enriched my learning experience with his careful attention to detail, pastoral encouragement and constructive guidance in the research. Koku, Bema, Clarence and Mike, four dear brothers and much cherished friends, with whom I have tested some of the ideas, but without their explicit knowledge, deserve my sincere thanks, and apologies. I am grateful to Edna, my extremely understanding wife for all the support throughout the period. And to You, my Lord, for teaching me what it means to be formed by You.



## ABBREVIATIONS OF ANCIENT SOURCES

Abbreviation	Full Title (Author)
<i>Abot R. Nat.</i>	Abot de Rabbi Nathan
<i>Ant.</i>	Jewish Antiquities (Josephus)
<i>b. Hag</i>	Babylonian Talmud Haggai
<i>B. Mešġa</i>	Baba Mešġa
<i>B. Qam.</i>	Baba Qamma
<i>Ber.</i>	Berakot
<i>Cels.</i>	Against Celsum (Origen)
<i>Deut. Rab.</i>	Deuteronomy Rabbah
<i>Dis.</i>	Discourses (Epictetus)
<i>Eph.</i>	An Ephesian Tale (Xenophon of Ephesus )
<i>Ep.</i>	Epistulae (Augustine)
<i>Exod. Rab.</i>	Exodus Rabbah
<i>Haer.</i>	Irenaeus Against Heresies (Irenaeus)
<i>Her. Ep.</i>	Refutation of Heresies (Epiphanius)
<i>Heir</i>	Who is an Heir (Philo)
<i>Hist. eccl.</i>	Ecclesiastical History (Eusebius)
<i>Il.</i>	Iliad (Homer )
<i>War</i>	Jewish Wars (Josephus)
<i>Lev. Rab.</i>	Leviticus Rabba
<i>m. Šabbat</i>	Mishnah Šabbat
<i>m. Sukkot</i>	Mishnah Sukkot
<i>Mem.</i>	Memorabilia (Xenophon)
<i>Od.</i>	Odyssey (Homer)
<i>Or.</i>	Oration
<i>p. Pesah</i>	Palestinian Talmud Pesah
<i>Pesiq. Rab.</i>	Pesiqta Rabbati
<i>Pesiq. Rab. Kah.</i>	Pesiqta de Rab Kahana
<i>R.H.</i>	Roman History (Dio Cassius)
<i>Roš Haš</i>	Roš Haššanah
<i>Sabb.</i>	Šabbat
<i>Sanh.</i>	Sanhedrin
<i>Sipra Behuq.</i>	Sipra Behuqotai
<i>Sipra Sav. M D</i>	Sipra Sav Mekhilta deMiluim
<i>Sipra Sav. Pq.</i>	Sipra Sav pereq
<i>Sipra Taz.</i>	Sipra Tazria
<i>Sipre Deut</i>	Sipre on Deuteronomy
<i>Sipre Num</i>	Sipre on Numbers
<i>Song Rab.</i>	Song of Solomon Rabbah
<i>t. Pe'ah</i>	Tosefta Pe'ah
<i>T.T.</i>	Table Talk (Plutarch)
<i>ta'an</i>	Ta'anit
<i>Tanh.</i>	Tanhuma Pekudei
<i>Tg. Song.</i>	Targum Song of Solomon
<i>Thaet.</i>	Theaetetus (Plato)
<i>Tim.</i>	Timaeus (Plato)

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# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Background**

Christianity resulted not only from the incarnation of God in Jesus, but also because as part of His charge, Jesus formed disciples to continue His mission. This dissertation aims to describe, analyze and compare how the Gospels of Mark and John conceptualized the role of the formation of the disciples in the origins of Christianity.

This is not the first time such a project has been undertaken. Yet, recent developments in Gospels Studies demand a fresh examination of the role of the formation of the disciples as part of Christian origins. From the Patristic era until the sixteenth century, it was generally taken for granted that the disciples were direct successors of Jesus, and their presence with Him during His earthly ministry naturally prepared them for continuing His mission. Few specific questions were asked regarding how exactly the Gospels depict these preparations, and whether such depictions adequately demonstrate a causal link between the preparations and Christian origins.

The introduction of the historical-critical paradigm into New Testament studies from the beginning of the nineteenth century launched different sets of assumptions and methodologies in the study of the Gospels which severely undermined some of these presuppositions. Complex form-critical, source-critical, redactional and sociological theories on the origins of the Gospels, their genre and the communities for whom they were written, made it difficult to formulate a concise description of the formation of Jesus' disciples based on these texts. Moreover, because the texts also describe several failings of the disciples—failings in their religious insights, faith, character and

performances—efforts were rather directed at investigating the motives of the Evangelists and their communities.

For these and other reasons, the task of describing the formation of the disciples and demonstrating its causal links to Christian origins was largely neglected or deemed unfeasible. In its place, interpreters tended to postulate that the portrayals of the Jesus-disciples interactions in the Gospels were literary strategies aimed at serving the Evangelists' purposes—whether polemical (Weeden 1971; Kelber 1973; Crossan 1973; Horsley 2001; Yang 2004), socio-rhetorical (Donahue 1983; Hutardo 1995; Danove 1998; Shiner 1995), theological (Wrede 1901; Radcliffe 1987), pedagogical (Tannehill 1977; Best 1981; Kingsbury 1989; Malbon 1986; Malbon 1983) or feminist (Schierling 1980).

Another aspect of the problem emanating from the period of Enlightenment was the virtual dislocation of the Gospel of John from making significant contributions to the investigation of the role of the disciples in Christian origins. It is true that in the last half century, there have been more than a few examinations of Johannine discipleship (e.g. Moreno 1971; Schnackenburg 1968; de Jonge 1977; Segovia 1985; Ringe 1999; Köstenberger 1998; van der Merwe 2003; Howard-Brook 2003; van der Watt 2005; Chennattu 2006). Yet, hardly any of these studies have consciously compared their findings with what pertains in the Synoptic Gospels. And in the handful that has made limited comparisons, the differences have been highlighted without shedding light on Christian origins (e.g. Henderson 2001; Mackay 2004; Culpepper 1983).

The reasons for the paucity of such comparative studies are not hard to find. Since the sixteenth century, John's Gospel has widely been held in influential scholarly circles to be too different from the Synoptic Gospels (e.g. Baur 1847, 239-315), much too late in composition (e.g. Jülicher 1904, 396), too pre-occupied with "sectarian" concerns (e.g. Meeks 1972, 44-72) and too ahistorical (e.g. Casey 1996) and even mythological (e.g. Strauss 1846, 1835) to offer much insights for addressing these basic questions. "Let John be John" (Dunn 1983) became the cue for isolating that Gospel's contribution for

answering historical questions in Gospels research. Moreover, a trend in which the narratives in John's Gospel were regarded as more or less allegorical presentations of the socio-historical circumstances of the "Johannine community" rather than as that of Jesus' earthly ministry (e.g. Meeks 1972; Brown 1979; Martyn 1979) meant that the insights from John could not be applied with confidence to illuminate Christian origins.

Three main developments within the present decade, however, indicate the need for a fundamental reappraisal of these approaches to the Gospels and a return to the original question of how the formation of the disciples throws light on Christian origins. Firstly, there is the widespread recognition that the Gospel genre is primarily historical biographies of Jesus (cf. Stein 2008; Burridge 1998; Burridge 2005, Hengel 2000; Blomberg 2001; Keener 2003). And even though "all history is interpreted history" (Wilkins and Moreland 1998, 39), and the Gospels are no doubt theological in intent, they nevertheless are theologically interpreted historical biographies. At least, most interpreters now accept that the Synoptic Gospels are as theological as John's Gospel. Since the genre of any literature serves as a "sacred contract" between its writer and the readers, investigators can only fairly study the Gospels as *bioi* of Jesus. Consequently, studies that interpret the narratives as the projections of the Gospel communities or overstate the Evangelists' "free" literary reshaping of the historical traditions are methodologically problematic.

Secondly, it is now emphasized that since the Gospels are primarily biographies of Jesus, and not of the disciples, investigation of discipleship cannot be as foregrounded and isolated from Christology as certain quarters of previous scholarship had done. Stated another way, the interpretation of the discipleship narratives of a particular Gospel cannot be divorced from the Christology emphasized by that Gospel (cf. Henderson 2006; Vincent 2005). Consequently, how interpreters view the portrayal of the Jesus-disciples interactions depend to a large extent on how they understand that Gospel's portrayal of the person and mission of Jesus.

Thirdly, the relationship between the Gospels according to Mark and John is increasingly viewed as not as discrepant as earlier scholarship had reckoned. On the contrary, within the decade, several investigators have highlighted the shared emphases and similarities between these two Gospels, while also noting their distinctive differences (cf. Matson 2002; Blomberg 2001; Mackay 2004). Accordingly, Albert Schweitzer's "*either John or the Synoptics*" (1936, 6) approach to Gospel studies is plainly no longer a viable methodological stance. Quite the reverse, there are several reasons to believe that John knew Mark and wrote his Gospel with readers of Mark in mind (Bauckham 1998, 2007, Anderson 2007; Mackay 2004, 54). In addition, though there are dissenting views (e.g. Esler 1998, 235-248; Sim 2001, 3-27) a number of investigators have recently re-iterated that at various stages of their narratives, the two Gospels interact, albeit in a complex manner (Smith 2001; Mackay 2004; Anderson 2001; Anderson 2007).

When put together, these most recent developments provide opportunities to re-examine how it came to be that the interactions between Jesus and His disciples contributed to the beginning of Christianity. Assuming the genre of the Gospels as the *bioi* of Jesus, and also that Mark's Gospel was historically prior to John's, a comparison of the Jesus-disciples interactions in the two Gospels may provide an illuminating portrait of the making of the disciples as part of Christian origins.

## 1.2 The Problem and *Status Questionis*

It appears that the root of the problem lies in how investigators understand how each Gospel depicts the person and mission of Jesus, and in that context, how the relationship between Him and His disciples is conceptualized by the Evangelists. In other words, an account of how the formation of the disciples is portrayed by each Gospel depends on the theological frame within which the Jesus-disciples relationship is couched by the respective Evangelists. The *status questionis* may therefore be stated as follows—*how should Jesus' formation of His disciples as portrayed by the Gospels*

*according to Mark and John be conceptualized so as to explain the origins of Christianity?*

This *status questionis* clearly has a number of sub-questions inherent in it:

1. In what similar and different ways do the Gospels according to Mark and John view the formation of the disciples?
2. What accounts for any differences that may exist in the way the Evangelists portray the Jesus-disciples interaction?
3. How do the various highlighted inadequacies of the disciples in both Gospels, but especially in Mark, relate to Jesus' formational programme?

### **1.3 Objectives and Rationale**

As formulated, the *status questionis* has historical, theological and pastoral implications. Historically, the problem of correctly conceptualizing the Jesus-disciples interactions in the Gospels relates to the broader task of establishing the socio-historical circumstances of Christian origins. Until the early 1970s historical investigations of Christian origins tended to begin from the passion narratives without adequately examining the earthly ministry of Jesus. Wright's provocative critique of the reformers is perhaps equally true of recent research into Christian origins—"the reformers had very thorough answers to the question, 'why did Jesus die?' They did not have nearly such good answers to the question, 'why did Jesus live?'" (1996, 14).

Even though investigators have of late sought to correct this imbalance by focusing also on Jesus' earthly ministry, this has often been done by seemingly bracketing out the Jesus-disciples interactions (e.g. Borg 1987; Allison 1998; Sanders 1993; Fredriksen 1988; Chilton 1984; Vermes 2003; Downing 1992; Crossan 1991). Yet, how and why the disciples of Jesus became the means of establishing the Church is a major area of historical interest which dovetails with "historical" Jesus studies (cf. Meier 1997, 635). That both Mark and John feature a Jesus-disciples interaction at the *beginning* of Jesus' public ministry illustrates the immense importance of that aspect of Jesus' mission. Forming the disciples is therefore one aspect of the answer to Wright's question—"Why



did Jesus live?" An objective of this study is to make a modest contribution to understanding some of these historical aspects of Christian origins.

Theologically, the problem also relates to how the Evangelists understood the Jesus-disciples interactions in their respective ways. By comparing the Christological elements in the respective portrayals of the Jesus-disciples interactions, the study hopes to elucidate how the Evangelists correspondingly conceptualized the Jesus-disciples interactions. Pastorally, recent and increasing interest in the subject of Discipleship, Christian Spirituality and Spiritual Formation in Practical Theology, especially within conservative and evangelical circles, needs to be informed by firm theoretical foundations grounded in academic Biblical Studies (e.g. Porter 2008; George and McGrath 2003; Lewis 2003; Howard 2002). As Porter warns, significant anxieties and questions have been raised by the several different approaches to the subject; and in some cases, by the lack of solid scriptural grounding for some of the methods employed (2008, 131). Since the formation of the disciples in the Gospels constitute the most sustained and ample record of formational interaction in the New Testament, the study hopes to make some pertinent, albeit theoretical, contributions to the current discussions.

At a personal level, I have had a long term pastoral interest in the subject of discipleship, and of late in spiritual formation of believers. There is therefore immense personal attraction to the project of investigating the theoretical and historical foundations of the subject. It is granted that the Jesus-disciples interactions cannot be transferred in a wholesale manner onto a postmodern situation without some qualifications. And investigation of this aspect is not the primary goal of the research. Nevertheless, by examining the formation of the disciples, one hopes to discover some illuminating facets of Christian discipleship and spirituality that is applicable to the contemporary world.

## 1.4 Design and Methodology

The bedrock of the study is the concept of the formation of human agents. In contrast to terms such as “teaching”, “training” or “education”, “formation” is a much more holistic way of characterizing the Jesus-disciples interactions. It encompasses three dimensions—(a) the structure or form of the Jesus-disciples relationship, (b) the purpose(s) or expected outcome(s) of the Jesus-disciples interactions and (c) the processes and events during those interactions. The methodology of the research is therefore designed to help elucidate these dimensions of the formation of the disciples in each Gospel. The research is essentially comparative in design and employs the narrative-theological method of exegesis as the primary tool for collecting the data from the Gospels.

### 1.4.1 The Comparative Method

The comparative method has its potential drawbacks. Generally, it does not intentionally seek to resolve apparent discrepancies and, on some occasions, it may inadvertently heighten differences. Also, there is the continuing debate in the discipline of sociology of knowledge regarding the apparent skewing effects of the parameters employed for performing comparisons. Besides, it may be argued that the assumption that one is comparing similar genres is an oversimplification. For example, it has sometimes been held that John’s Gospel has a significant element of dramatized history (e.g. Domeris 1983b, 29-35) or “genre bending” (Attridge 2002, 3-21), thus placing it in a different category from the Synoptics.

These drawbacks to the comparative method are however not insurmountable. By tightly defining the concept of “formation” and its dimensions, the parameters for comparisons can be isolated and controlled through the narrative-theological exegesis. In addition, though the Evangelists have consciously constructed the narratives with specific theological agendas in mind (cf. Mk 1:1; Jn 20:31); the fact remains that in broad terms, both Gospels are biographical presentations of the life of Jesus and His ministry. Indeed, the notion of the Gospels as possibly “dramatized history” is not

restricted to John's Gospel. France has for example also argued for regarding Mark's Gospel as "a drama in three Acts" (2002, 11). The significant parallels and similarities between the two Gospels indicate therefore, that a comparative study which is sensitive to their respective theological nuances is defensible.

There are other reasons for preferring the comparative method. It is versatile and eclectic, and so has the inherent potential for highlighting the similarities and differences between two or more categories. Comparison is also a natural extension of the processes of the human mind which seeks to make distinctions, establish similarities, explores relationships between categories and form tentative theories on how one body of knowledge may be related to another (cf. Lonergan 1972, 81; Collier 1993, 105-119; Lijphart 1971, 682-693). The method is particularly useful in research situations involving a small number of variables, or in qualitative studies, as it is in the case of the Gospels (Vavrus and Bartlett 2006, 95-103).

There is therefore sufficient theoretical foundations to support the employment of the comparative method as an epistemological tool in the study. Where the emphases between the two Evangelists dovetail and shed light on each other, the comparative method will enable a conceptual synthesis which is the bedrock of all historical research. However, where the depictions of the Jesus-disciple interactions appear to significantly diverge, the respective theological, and especially Christological, emphases will be sought as means of explanation.

The aim of comparison, it must be urged, is not to return to the method of Gospel harmonization similar to Tatian's *Diatessaron* of the second century. It will also not suffice to adopt the textual procedure similar to that by Andreas Osiander of the fifteenth century, in which parallel Gospel narratives were harmonized in a reductionistic manner without nuanced attention to the individual voices of the Evangelists. Yet, a degree of conceptual harmonization is inevitable in any historical research that is dependent on more than one source. As rightly argued by Wright, some of the charges that are sometimes made against harmonization of the Gospels *per se*, are often unwarranted

(1996, 88). The idea is to conduct a comparative study that is sensitive to the genre of the Gospels as biographies of Jesus, while at the same time taking the theological and Christological nuances of the individual Evangelists seriously.

#### 1.4.2 The Narrative-Theological Method of Exegesis

The burgeoning branch of the discipline of Literary Biblical Criticism, often labelled as narrative-theological exegesis, is proving to be an effective tool in Gospel studies (e.g. Motyer 2006; Henderson 2006; Resseguie 2005; Powery 2004, 129-147; Green 2004, 387-397; Wilkins 2004, 387-397; Malbon 2003, 373-385). There are several reasons for this current state of research. Biblical scholarship has of late come round to accept the idea that historical artefacts such as the Gospels are essentially literary in design (Weathers 1994, 115-129). History writing, so long as the pivotal matter of genre is taken seriously, is itself being recognized as a literary activity (Ryken 1987, 14; White 1973). For, a good historian relates what happened in such a manner as to enable the constituent events to be causally integrated and explained.

Many of today's historians also accept that the methodological question of the plausibility or credibility of stories that purport to be historical is considerably dependent on the presuppositions of the investigators (cf. Anderson, Just and Thatcher 2007; Wills 1997; Klink III and Klink 2007). Hence, even though significant methodological challenges remain to be resolved (e.g. Hedrick 2007, 345-359; Hedrick 1999), it is nevertheless apparent that the dichotomy that is sometimes made between the historical-critical method and literary approaches to Biblical Studies, as espoused by Moore for example (1989), is quite illusory. As rightly argued by Matson, the most suitable method of Gospel studies should combine both historical and literary methods that "focus on the text as the primary raw material of exegesis, but necessarily draws on the historical reconstruction of the ancient world—including available sources, cultural preconceptions and reader competencies—to ask how such texts might have been read" (2002, 134).

What is more, earlier approaches to Gospel studies that attempted to separate the theological nuances of the Evangelists from their narratives have been shown to be quite misguided; as, frequently, the investigators had only ended up replacing the Evangelists' theology with their own. Bultmann's failed attempt at "demythologizing" the New Testament is a case in point (cf. Evans 1996; Anderson 2007). "Theology", it is quite evident, cannot be completely extricated from any sound historical investigation of the Bible. Rather, and as Osborne has shown, "theology is a partner and path to history" and that the current approach of establishing "history through theology" is not without its logical foundations (2005, 676). It is therefore more appropriate to allow the Evangelists to direct the theological contours of their biographies of Jesus, than to substitute theirs with that of the investigator. Consequently, and since the *status questionis* is in any case not just seeking a historical answer, the narrative-theological method of exegesis seems appropriate for the study.

In the narrative-theological method, the Gospels are examined by focusing on the settings, characters, authors' points of view, the narrative time, and the plot and conflict in the story. In addition, implicit commentaries and creation of aporias or puzzling ironies within the narrative are explored as means of identifying the manner in which the account has been fashioned. Various contextual socio-historical and cultural issues will be brought to bear on the interpretation of the narrative. This is then linked with the theological formulations of the author. "Theology" here encompasses several different facets, such as how the author relates the accounts to the theological paradigms of the OT and Second Temple Judaism, as well as his Christology (Resseguie 2005; Culpepper 1983).

## 1.5 Hypotheses

In response to the *status questionis*, the dissertation will evaluate the following hypotheses:

- That in both Mark and John, the discipleship net is much wider than those explicitly labelled as “disciples”. This phenomenon indicates the broad and multiform nature of the foundational Christian community that was created by Jesus.
- That based on how Mark and John portray Him, Jesus may be conceptualized as the embodied Divine Council, and that this concept enables comparative studies to be conducted between the two Gospels.
- That in both Mark and John, the disciples function as apprentice agents of the embodied Divine Council through whom God’s power and revelation were channelled.
- That Mark’s Gospel highlights the formation of the disciples to become agents of divine power; whereas in John’s Gospel, their formation to be agents of divine revelation is accentuated. In this sense, the two Gospels complement each other.
- That John’s focus on the “union” of the disciples with Jesus complements the Markan phenomenon of the constant presence of the disciples with Jesus, as well as enabling explanation of some of the failures of the disciples
- That in John’s Gospel, discipleship is often expressed in terms of experiencing divine hospitality, whereas in Mark’s Gospel, discipleship is sometimes expressed as extending hospitality to Jesus and His agents.

## 1.6 Definitions

Several terminologies employed in the dissertation require specific clarifying definitions.

These are provided below:

1. *Formation*: This is the dialectical process through which, based on the nature of their relationship with Jesus, the disciples were psycho-socially, theologically and spiritually moulded into the pattern suited for their projected functions. Formation has three dimensions—the nature of the relationship with Jesus, the expected outcomes of the interactions and the processes and events involved in the interactions.

2. *Disciple*: The word “disciple” is used in the dissertation in a functional, rather than, technical sense, to describe any particular individual who is singled out by the Evangelists in some special manner in their interactions with Jesus, either in the manner of physically following Jesus or making some commitment as an adherent to Jesus’ teaching and / or sharing His mission.
3. *Power*: The word *power* is used in the dissertation in a sense of *numinous power*, that is, the supernatural and mystical quality that enables or causes the occurrences of events or the transformation of persons or circumstances, partially or wholly involving the suspension of the laws of nature. In this sense, power is integral prerequisite for the occurrence of miracles, exorcisms, visions, spiritual insight and transformation of character.
4. *Revelation*: Revelation in the dissertation is used to describe the supernatural act or process of knowing and making known. It therefore relates to the acquisition or transfer of information about God and the supernatural realm which cannot be obtained through natural means. In this sense, revelation encompasses the acquisition of *de novo* knowledge, as well as the accurate interpretation of symbols or symbolic actions in the form of miracles or supernatural and divine activities that transmit this knowledge.
5. *Embodiment*: The word embodiment is used in the dissertation to denote the incarnation of God in the person of Jesus.
6. *Second Temple Judaism*: The term Second Temple Judaism (STJ) is used in this dissertation to describe the variegated Jewish religious beliefs, traditions and practices during the period between the return from Babylonian exile (516 BC) and the destruction of the second temple of Jerusalem in AD 70.
7. *Mark*: Throughout the dissertation, the word Mark will be interchangeably used for both the Gospel that bears the name, and its author. The Gospel will be

occasionally characterized as the Second Gospel, and its author also occasionally as the Second Evangelist.

8. *John*: The word John will be used interchangeably for the Gospel that bears the name, and its author. The Gospel of John will be occasionally characterized as the Fourth Gospel, and its author as the Fourth Evangelist
9. *The Baptist*: To avoid confusion of names, John the Baptist will be called “the Baptist” throughout the dissertation. Quotations that bear his name as “John” will have (the Baptist) in parenthesis next to it.

## 1.7 Assumptions

Two main assumptions regarding the texts will be made without arguing their cases in the dissertation. Firstly, it is assumed that the genre of the Gospels is primarily the *bioi* of Jesus. Secondly, it is also assumed that Christianity originated with Jesus’ ministry, death and resurrection.

## 1.8 Declaration of Known Presuppositions

As a researcher I bring to this study my own personal presuppositions and prior experiences that could impact on the direction of the conclusions. Though one strives to be objective, the possible influence of my background and presuppositions cannot also be discounted. My background is one of a male evangelical Christian, a practicing non-denominational believer who previously worshipped with the Methodist Church and Independent Evangelical Accra Chapel, both in Ghana; and now, with Grimsby Baptist Church in the United Kingdom. I believe the Bible to be wholly and fully inspired by God.

## 1.9 Delimitations

Because the Gospels of Mark and John are largely regarded as at either ends of the spectrum of the canonical Gospels, a study that is delimited to how the two Evangelists



conceptualized the Jesus-disciples interactions may give as wide information as possible to help explain Christian origins. Yet, this implies that the conclusions do not paint the complete picture of the formation of the disciples. It is however hoped that the study will yield some insights that may be compared with similar studies in the other two Gospels. In addition, within the Gospels of John and Mark, the focus will be on the Jesus-disciples interactions, and detailed exegesis of the contents of Jesus' teachings will not be attempted.

## **1.10 Overview of Chapters**

The dissertation has six more chapters. Chapter two will conduct a literature review of studies which have examined the formation of the disciples. The focus of the review will be on how writers have conceptualized the nature of the Jesus-disciples relationship and how that sheds light on their formation. The agency model will be shown to hold promising features as investigative tool. Chapter three is aimed at developing this investigative tool to fit the biographical-theological genre of the Gospels. It will first survey the nature of the interactions between God and His agents as portrayed in the Old Testament and the literature of Second Temple Judaism. This will provide a model for studying the Jesus-disciples interactions in the Gospels. The model will then be piloted and fine-tuned in the first chapters of Mark and John to demonstrate that in both Gospels, the disciples function as agents of the embodied Divine Council.

Chapter four uses this model to examine the formation of the disciples in Mark. It will first show that in the second Gospel, the concept of "disciples" is much wider than the group that is explicitly labelled by the Evangelist as such. Many non-conventional disciples are formed by Jesus and make significant contribution to understanding Christian origins. The chapter will then employ a narrative-theological method to examine the Gospel and highlight the key processes and events that were involved in the formation of the disciples. The roles of the sea crossings, the Gentile mission and the Isaianic new exodus theology in the formation of the Markan disciples will be examined. It will also show how Mark's concept of divine power and revelation is

evident in the Jesus-disciples interactions. In the context of the formation of the disciples, a hypothesis is developed to explain how the highlighted failures of the disciples is a reflection of Mark's and his first readers' basic philosophy of education.

Chapter five will examine the formation of the disciples in John's Gospel. After identifying the people who are portrayed as disciples, their functions and characterizations, the chapter proceeds to discuss some of the events and processes involved in their formation. The pivotal roles of the witness motif, the footwashing and the "farewell" discourse are discussed. A major feature of the formation of the Johannine disciples is experiencing divine hospitality, in which Jesus, the divine Host, is sometimes metaphorically depicted as the Food, Drink or Place of dwelling for His guests. The role of the Passion, the theology of atonement and the post-resurrection appearances of Jesus in the formation of the disciples are also highlighted.

Chapter six conducts a comparative analysis of the formation of the disciples in Mark and John. It starts with a brief survey of the history of scholarship on the relationship between the two Gospels. It then argues in favour of a complementary relationship between them and suggests that such a theory is also the most pragmatic investigative approach. It then summarizes and compares the accounts of the formation of the disciples in both Mark and John and enumerates the accepted hypotheses. The hypotheses are then validated by examining how both Evangelists present the Jesus-disciples interactions in the feeding of the five thousand and the anointing at Bethany—two stories in which they overlap. The final chapter seven summarizes the findings of the study and makes a number of conclusions. It also suggests a few implications and recommends further questions that need to be addressed in the light of the findings.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **REVIEW OF SECONDARY LITERATURE ON THE FORMATION OF THE DISCIPLES OF JESUS**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

The present project stands on the broad shoulders of several previous investigations that have elegantly examined aspects of the Jesus-disciples interactions in the Gospels. A good grasp of the contributions of some of these studies is therefore necessary as foundation. Even though their objectives and methodologies vary, the present interest is in how these contributions shed light on conceptualizing the formation of the disciples. The basic questions to be answered in this review therefore emanate from the three dimensions of the idea of formation—how do writers understand the structure and form of the Jesus-disciples relationship? How have they couched the projected outcomes of the Jesus-disciples interactions? And what are the specific events and processes that have been highlighted as keys to the formation of the disciples?

When these questions are employed to interrogate previous studies, it becomes evident that the Jesus-disciples interactions have been conceived of in six broadly different categories—the disciples as rabbinic pupils, as converts of Jesus, as students of an ancient philosophical “school”, as a unique entity, as eschatological prophetic trainees and as apprentice agents of Jesus. Some investigators argue that the Jesus-disciples relationship transcend any of these categories, and in some cases combine two or more of the categories. However, in each case, one category is employed as the predominant model with which the Jesus-disciples interactions are analyzed. The review will therefore examine a sample of publications in each category. In addition, it will focus on those studies published in the English Language, even though, where necessary,

references will be made to significant contributions from works published in other languages.

The main criterion to be employed for assessing these studies is the degree to which their conceptualizations of the Jesus-disciples interactions enable explanation of the causal link between Jesus' earthly ministry and the Church that followed Him. In particular, it will be important to review what are regarded as the main processes and events that were fundamental to the formation of the disciples. Methodological questions may become important in specific cases.

## **2.2 The Disciples as Rabbinic Pupils**

Most examinations of the formation of the disciples of Jesus start by comparing them with contemporary rabbinic pupils at the time of Jesus' earthly ministry. There are good reasons for this approach. In Mark's Gospel, the word μαθηταὶ is used in a general sense to describe followers of the Baptist, the Pharisees and of Jesus (e.g. Mk 2:18; 6:29). Similarly, in John, μαθηταὶ is used for disciples of the Baptist (Jn 1:35; 3:25), of Jesus (Jn 2:2), and of Moses (Jn 9:28). In addition, in both Mark and John, Jesus is often addressed as Rabbi (Jn 1:38; 49; 3:2; 6:24), and Master or Teacher (Mk 4:38; 9:5; 10:20; Jn 4:31; 9:2; 11:28).

Several aspects of the relationship between Jesus and the disciples are also similar to the relationship between contemporary rabbinic pupils and their teachers. Like the disciples of the Baptist, Jesus' disciples followed Him and also baptized people (Jn 1:37; 3:22 and 4:2). In fact, the first two disciples of Jesus were former disciples of the Baptist (Jn 1:35). In addition, like the Scribes and Pharisees, Jesus' disciples received teaching, though of a profoundly different kind and authority (Mk 1:22). Like contemporary disciples, Jesus' disciples also performed menial tasks, such as buying food for Him (Jn 4:31), preparing the venue for celebrating the Passover (Mk 11), controlling access to Him (Mk 10:13, Jn 12:20-21) and helping Jesus during His ministry (e.g. Jn 6:11, Mk 6:41; 3:9). Indeed, other groups of contemporary disciples expected

Jesus' disciples to behave and practice their piety in similar manners (e.g. Mk 2:18). And typical of contemporary rabbis, Jesus and His disciples conducted public debates with other religious teachers on matters of interpretation of Scripture (Mk 2:16; 3:22; 7:5; Jn 4:1; 8:3).

Taking these data into consideration, a number of scholars have employed the historical depictions of the nature of interactions between rabbinic pupils and their Rabbis as models to study the training of Jesus' disciples in the Gospels (e.g. Riesner 1988; Chilton 2000; Vermes 2003). Review of two important contributions will perhaps be adequate in capturing how interpreters conceptualize the Jesus-disciples interaction—Birger Gerhardsson (1961) and Andreas Köstenberger (1998a).

### 2.2.1 Birger Gerhardsson (1961)

The work of Gerhardsson (1961) on formal rabbinic training practices provided a significant corrective to what constituted as a major neglect of this aspect of the portrayal of the disciples in the Gospels. By examining the practices of rabbinic pupils as portrayed in texts of the second century AD, Gerhardsson showed that their training focused on ensuring that pupils would be able to accurately remember and transmit oral and written tradition for subsequent generations. In this regard, the group of disciples of Jesus may be conceptualized as a Jewish Collegium of rabbinic pupils, comparable to the second century rabbinical academies or the Qumran community (1961, 331). Their duty was to collect, preserve and transmit the teachings of Jesus.

In addition to relying mostly on orality for their memory, Jewish rabbinic disciples also made written verbatim notes of their master's teachings to employ them for constructing mnemonics to aid memorization (pp. 160-162). Laborious oral repetition of the master's sayings was one of the hallmarks of the training of the rabbinic pupil (pp. 113-125). The rabbis frequently employed poetic and memorable styles of teaching, thus making the process easier for the pupils. Yet, in each case, a strong emphasis was put on careful transmission so that the pupil's duty was not just the transmission, but also on how accurate the transmission was (pp. 122-170).

Rabbinical disciples also concentrated on emulating the behaviour of the Rabbi, including those that may even be regarded as quirky and unexplainable. Gerhardsson argues that one of the major functions of the rabbinic pupil was to master the “rules of proper behaviour that he followed every action of his teachers with the closest scrutiny and recorded their slightest habits” (1961, 181). If the disciples of Jesus acted in anyway similar to rabbinic pupils, then the shape and content of the Gospels should be explained by the fact that the disciples served as repositories of the information on the events in Jesus’ life and ministry and His teachings.

Initially, Gerhardsson’s contribution did not receive unanimous acceptance among New Testament scholars, some pointing to the late dating of some of his sources (e.g. Henaut 1993, 45-47; Neusner 1971, 2.26-38). Others such as Smith (1963, 169-176) argued that many of Gerhardsson’s sources were derived from isolated branches of Pharisaism and did not necessarily apply to all branches of Judaism of the time. In addition, it is sometimes argued that the Gospel material, being a mixture of narrative and discourses, was not exactly comparable to the type of material that was transmitted by Jewish rabbinical pupils. Transmission in the rabbinical tradition, it is urged, would have been more formal than what pertains in the Gospels (Kirk and Thatcher 2005, 35).

Some of these objections have, however, been undermined with more careful analysis and comparative studies of the sources. It is now acknowledged by many New Testament scholars, that the fact of late dating of rabbinical sources, does not rule out the likelihood that they nevertheless record events and practices prevalent over the preceding century. In any case, it is quite unlikely that later rabbinical methods and records were created *ex nihilo*. Several scholars have therefore urged that blanket objections to the use of literature from the second and third century AD, for inferring the historical and cultural situation in Palestine in the first century, is unjustified (cf. Hagner 1993-1995, 1:xlix; Boyd 1995, 121). For example, the rabbinic custom of imitating the rabbi can hardly be limited to the post-first century period, since Jewish elementary education, both at home and in school had always emphasized this element (cf. Keener 2003, 58). With regard to the nature of transmission, it is possible that the rabbinical

methods were perhaps more formal than the type of material transmitted in the Gospels. However, and given the considerable similarities between the Gospels, it cannot also be wholly asserted that oral transmission in the Gospels was totally informal. In this regard, it is instructive that Neusner, one of Gerhardsson's most vehement earlier critics, later retracted significant portions of his objection in the foreword he wrote to the second edition of Gerhardsson's book (Neusner 1998, xxv-xlvi).

Gerhardsson's case cannot therefore be dismissed outright. At least his insights are a reminder of the need to ground models in the socio-historical circumstances of Jesus time. Of direct import to the present study is the fact that as rabbinic pupils, the disciples of Jesus would have regarded themselves as stewards of the teachings of Jesus which they had the duty to faithfully transmit to future generations of believers. Exactly how they did this is a matter to be fully described, even though memorization and note-taking may well have been part of it. Gerhardsson did not set out to examine the charismatic aspects of Jesus' ministry and how the disciples related to it.

### 2.2.2 Andreas Köstenberger (1998a)

Andreas Köstenberger's contribution cannot be fairly labelled as proposing that the disciples were just rabbinic pupils. He however believed that any investigation of the disciples in the Gospels should begin with the rabbinical model. His main contention is that like the Synoptics, "the Fourth Gospel shows that *Jesus was perceived by his contemporaries primarily as a rabbi*" (1998a, 97; his emphasis). He admits that this was not "the major or even a major aspect of Johannine Christology. Rather, as will be seen, John reflects the common perception of Jesus among his contemporaries, friends and foes alike: that Jesus was, perhaps more, but certainly no less, than a rabbi" (p. 99). Consequently, to Köstenberger, the rabbi-pupil relationship should be the "historical starting point" (p. 101) of the examination of the formation of the disciples.

Köstenberger argues that the terms with which Jesus is addressed in John—Rabbi (ραββι), Teacher (διδάσκαλος), and Lord or Master (κύριος) are largely synonymous

and that “while the evangelist’s portrayal of Jesus transcends that of Rabbi/Teacher/Master, enlarging the scope of his Christology to include terms such as Son of God, Son of Man, or Christ, his account makes clear that Jesus’ contemporaries perceived and addressed Jesus primarily as a religious teacher, a rabbi” (p. 100). In addition, John portrays the Jesus-disciple relationship in terms characteristic of rabbi-pupil relationship in first century Judaism. These characterizations include, “Jesus’ assuming the role of teacher by instructing his disciples through word and action, protecting them from harm, and providing for their needs; and the disciples’ assuming the role of faithful followers, including the performance of menial tasks and the perpetuation of their Master’s teaching” (p. 101).

Köstenberger also examines how the disciples related to Jesus as a rabbi—by following Him wherever He went and fellowshiping with Him. He points out that “One important difference between contemporary rabbinic practice and Jesus is the fact that Jesus chose his disciples, while generally, disciples chose to attach themselves to a particular rabbi (cf. 15:16)” (p. 120). The relationship between Jesus and the disciples, unlike His contemporaries, was also one of openness. Köstenberger argues that the rabbinic features of Jesus’ ministry should however be distinguished from the institutionalized rabbinic culture of post-AD 70, the type which is rather better documented than the loose titular term of Jesus’ own day. He also draws attention to the fact that Jesus transcended rabbinic categories—certainly at His farewell discourse. From then on, Jesus’ role as rabbi gives way to his role as the exalted Lord (pp. 124-126).

One major benefit of Köstenberger’s study is the wealth of information he derives from the rabbinic sources including the mishnaic and Talmudic writings to support the view that Jesus equally operated in a similar milieu. His approach also agrees with Riesner’s, that “a high Christology need not necessarily conflict with a portrayal of Jesus as a teacher, and the role of teacher and the working of miracles may complement each other rather than stand in conflict” (1988, 252).



### 2.2.3 Assessment of the Rabbi-Pupil Model

That Jesus was regarded by many of His contemporaries as a rabbi, and hence His disciples as rabbinic pupils, is not disputed. Gerhardsson's contribution therefore gives some indications about the primitive nature and form of the Gospels traditions. As rabbinic pupils, it was expected that Jesus' disciples would be committed to recording, retaining and transmitting His teachings and deeds to future generation of followers. The criticism of Gerhardsson's dependence on late sources is not adequate to reject his insights.

However, the Gospel accounts suggest that the rabbinic pupil category, though "a historical starting point" (Köstenberger 1998a, 101) for investigation, is nevertheless inadequate for studying the formation of the disciples. As will shortly be evident, despite the similarities, there were significant differences in the way Jesus called, commissioned, trained and related to His disciples. Consequently, while there is no reason to discount that some rabbinic practices were operative in the training of Jesus' disciples, it would be more appropriate to argue for locating the disciples in a different category.

## 2.3 The Disciples as Converts of Jesus

In line with popular notions, a number of studies have conceptualized the interactions between Jesus and His disciples during His earthly ministry as a form of evangelism and the formation of His disciples in terms of conversion experiences. And these conversion experiences are posited as the explanation for the continuity between Jesus and the early Church. The contributions of Edward Schillebeeckx (1979), Charles Wanamaker (1999) and Richard Peace (1999), each employing different methodologies, follow this trajectory, and will now be summarized.

### 2.3.1 Edward Schillebeeckx (1979)

Even though it has significant flaws, the proposal by Schillebeeckx is interesting for its attempt to link together major events in the ministry of Jesus—the failures of the disciples, the passion and resurrection of Jesus and the beginnings of Christianity. These major events are combined into a narrative scheme of conversion experience of the disciples. In his *Jesus: An Experiment in Christology* (1979), Schillebeeckx made a distinction between “following after Jesus” and “conversion”, which he defined as “seeing Jesus Christologically” (p. 424). In “following after Jesus”, the disciples acquainted themselves with the teachings and aspects of the identity of Jesus. However, they did not undergo any spiritual transformation. Their failures during Jesus’ ministry were therefore expected of people who had not experienced conversion.

The death of Jesus, according to Schillebeeckx, was the turning point for the disciples. “[A]fter the first shock of His dying, the memory of Jesus’ life, and especially the Lord’s Supper must have played a vital role in the process of their conversion to faith in Jesus as the Christ, the one imbued to the full with God’s Spirit” (p. 312). This memory stimulated their repentance, and Jesus offered them forgiveness—they encountered “the grace of Jesus’ forgiving; in doing so they experienced Jesus as one alive. A dead man does not proffer forgiveness—a present fellowship with Jesus is thus restored” (p. 391). This, he argues, led to the formulation of the resurrection narratives by the early Church. “It is a process of conversion that lies between the two historically accessible elements” of the death of Jesus and the beginning of apostolic preaching (p. 381).

Schillebeeckx employs what he regarded as a model of Jewish “conversion vision” to explain the historical link between Jesus, the resurrection and the early Church. He urges that “the conversion of a Gentile to the Jewish law is often called an illumination and is represented by what has become the classic model of a “conversion vision”—the individual concerned is suddenly confronted with a brilliant light and hears a voice” (p. 383). He cites Paul’s conversion as an example of this and reckons that it was a similar experience that occurred to the disciples after the death of Jesus. The resurrection appearance of Jesus to the disciples “is a conversion to Jesus as the Christ, who now

comes as the light of the world” (p. 384). To Schillebeeckx therefore, the Jesus-disciples interactions in His earthly ministry anticipated their conversion after the passion. The actual stimulus of the conversions was their memories of the words and works of Jesus during His lifetime, and not the resurrection appearances.

Though this is an interesting theory attempting to link Jesus’ ministry to the early Church, Schillebeeckx does not offer a convincing explanation of the differences between “following after Jesus” and “conversion”. Neither is his presumption of a pervasive Jewish model of “conversion vision” persuasive. His construal of the resurrection as a subjective experience by the disciples, rather than an objective historical event clearly undermines his scheme (cf. Davis 1980, 330-337).

### 2.3.2 Charles Wanamaker (1999)

In contrast to Schillebeeckx, Charles Wanamaker (1999, 16-31) sets out to show that the disciples indeed underwent a conversion experience *during* Jesus’ ministry. And it was this conversion that accounts for the persistence and continuity of Jesus’ message after His death. Wanamaker employs a sociological method which regards conversion as a “resocialisation process”. He clarifies,

Conversion is not a single dramatic event, but a socially negotiated process. Conversion to a group, whether religious or pseudo-religious, requires in the first instance exposure and significant social interaction with representatives of the group. This interaction takes the form of a resocialisation process to the extent that it is in discontinuity with previous socialization. Through the resocialisation process an individual negotiates a new identity based on a new universe of discourse. The new universe of discourse is learned and internalized in the form of beliefs, values, attitudes, and motivations. In the process of learning, behaviour is changed through a process of altercasting, modelling, and shaping (1999, 23).

Using Snow and Machalek's sociological typology of conversion (1983, 259-89) which argues that a convert shows four main characteristics—adoption of a master attribution scheme, biological reconstruction, suspension of analogical reasoning, and embracement of the convert's role—Wanamaker demonstrates from the gospels that the disciples of Jesus underwent a “resocialisation process” that can be characterized as their conversion (pp. 17-18). He then applies this model to explain several of the processes, events and interactions between Jesus and the disciples. Based on the anthropological description of Mediterranean people as possessing “dyadic personality”, he urges that in the Jesus-disciples interactions, “Jesus provided a significant other for His disciples. Because of their abandonment (either partial or total) of their former ways of life and the significant others in their lives, especially family (Mk 10:28), the disciples came to need Jesus to know who they were. This was a major component in their identity formation as converts” (p. 26). In participating in missionary activities with Jesus such as in Mk 6:7-13, the disciples were simply performing the master role of a convert, a role that persisted after the death of Jesus (p. 28).

Wanamaker's contribution supports the textual evidence that there was some form of transformation in the disciples during Jesus' earthly ministry. Typical of the sociological method however, the theological cause and basis of the transformation are not discussed, neither is the effect of the person of Jesus underscored as the main factor in the conversion of the disciples. Wanamaker's reliance on psychological and sociological paradigms to explain the persistence of the group of disciples after Easter also appears to bypass discussion of the role of the resurrection as a historical event.

### 2.3.3 Richard Peace (1999)

Richard Peace's *Conversion in the New Testament* (1999) is a pertinent contribution; since he bases portions of his insights on the Gospel of Mark. He posits that there are two “paradigms” of conversion in the New Testament, represented by the conversion of Paul and the conversions of the disciples in Mark. Like Wanamaker, Peace rejects the common presupposition that the disciples became converted when they first decided to

follow Jesus. The conversion of the disciples, in his view, proceeded in a gradual, even imperceptible manner. Further, he contends that “in the Gospel of Mark we see the unfolding conversion experience of the Twelve...the organizing theme in Mark is how the Twelve were brought step-by-step to experience of repentance and faith” (1999, 12).

Peace’s method is to analyze Paul’s conversion as presented in the Acts of the Apostles and apply the insights to the depiction of the Jesus-disciples interactions in Mark’s Gospel. He concludes that Paul’s conversion was made up of three components—insight, turning, and transformation—and its main characteristic were the suddenness of the experience. In contrast to Stendahl (1976), Peace makes a sharp distinction between conversion and call (or commission); even though he accepts that Paul did receive his call with his conversion. The commission was how Paul responded to his conversion (p. 93). Unlike Paul, however, the conversion of the disciples proceeded in a gradual manner (p. 106).

Peace goes further to propose that “*the conversion of the Twelve is a major theme in the Gospel of Mark and, in fact, the organizing principle by which Mark structures his Gospel*” (p. 107, his emphasis). He urges that Jesus’ purpose for selecting the twelve in Mk 3:13-19 was specifically to “evangelize them” (p. 227). Jesus’ further interactions with the twelve and His teachings gradually led them to faith and transformation. Mark, Peace points out, shows a process of turning of the twelve represented by a stepwise and progressive understanding of Jesus through six Christological titles—from a view of Jesus as teacher, prophet, the Messiah, the Son of Man and Son of David, to a complete view of Jesus as the Son of God. In this manner, the twelve are portrayed as “walking on the path of discovery so that first they find out that Jesus is not just a teacher but also a prophet” and then the Messiah and so on (p. 109).

The main benefit of Peace’s work is his attempt to theologically underline the idea of change or transformation in the disciples in the Gospel of Mark. A second advantage is that he highlights important theological concepts in the formation of the Twelve, such as call, conversion and commission, repentance, faith and transformation in the training of

the twelve. Though he appears to have excluded the transformation of other disciples of Jesus in Mark, his ideas provide a starting point for analyzing the formation of the disciples in the Gospel.

However, there are significant problems with Peace's approach. His characterization of the purpose and structure of Mark as moulded by the "conversion" of the twelve does not cohere with the Gospel's narrative flow and genre as a biography of Jesus and not of the disciples. Another problem is the inconsistent application of ideas emerging from the study of Paul's conversion. By using Paul's experience to derive a paradigm of conversion, Peace proceeds to show that the twelve underwent components of that experience, but without the suddenness that Paul experienced on the Damascus road. The end result appears to recast the formation of the twelve into a rather prolonged Pauline conversion experience. The actual intent of Jesus in appointing the twelve to be with Him and to be sent out to preach, according to Mark, appears not to have been taken to its logical conclusion.

#### 2.3.4 Assessment of the Conversion Model

On the whole, and despite its obvious attractiveness, conceptualizing the formation of the disciples as a conversion has significant drawbacks. The effort to demonstrate a spiritual transformation is laudable; since it enables practical application of the Gospel's narrative to the contemporary setting. There is also the simplicity it offers in explaining the changes that occurred in the disciples during and after Jesus' earthly ministry.

However, employing post-Easter, post-Pentecost paradigms of conversion to examine the phenomenon appears anachronistic. Indeed, it could be argued with some persuasion that the divine-human dimension of the interactions between the disciples and Jesus makes it unique, even in comparison to Paul, who nevertheless encountered the resurrected Jesus. In addition, and as McKnight (2002) has shown, several models of "conversion" *per se* have been described, making any attempt to examine the conversion of groups such as the disciples methodologically problematic. Also, there

are significant theological problems with the theory that implies that the participation of the disciples in Jesus' earthly ministry, such as their miraculous performances and teaching alongside Jesus proceeded without a conversion. The conversion model is therefore not sufficiently robust for studying the formation of the disciples.

## **2.4 The Disciples as Students of a Philosophical School**

The idea that, at least, some of the teachings and pedagogical techniques of Jesus could be favourably compared with wandering cynic sages or philosophers of His time, albeit of a Jewish variety (cf. Theissen 1978; Eddy 1996, 449-469; Downing 1998, 97-104; Downing 1992; Crossan 1991), gave rise to the trajectory of scholarship investigating the formation of the disciples using Greco-Roman philosophical notions of education and training. It is also noted by these scholars that as early as the second century AD, some prominent Christian writers compared Jesus and His followers with ancient Greco-Roman philosophers (e.g. Origen, *Cels.* 3.50; Julian, *Or.* 7). Thus one approach to examining the formation of the disciples has been through investigating how the Gospel accounts compare with literature on these Philosophical schools. For the present purposes, the works by Robbins (1992) and Shiner (1995) will be summarized.

### **2.4.1 Vernon Robbins (1992)**

Vernon Robbins' examination of the pedagogical activities of Jesus in relation to the disciples (1992) draws its inspiration from the philosophical school concept, even though he argues that in Mark, the idea is supplemented with Jewish prophetic tradition. Robbins employs the "socio-rhetorical" method to identify rhetorical forms of communication by Jesus in Mark's Gospel that are designed "to change attitudes and induce actions" (p. 7). These rhetorical forms are labelled as (a) progressive (logical or quantitative step by step argumentation by Jesus), (b) repetitive, which basically restate Jesus' statements, albeit in varied and new ways, (c) conventional forms, which elicit

predictable responses from Jesus' listeners, and (d) minor rhetorical forms, which distinguish and perpetuate the identity of Jesus' group as against those of the society.

The rhetorical forms are then used to analyze the whole gospel and show an intricate interplay of the Jewish prophet (including such reflections by authors such as Josephus and Philo on Elijah/Elisha and on Moses) and the Greco-Roman religio-ethical teacher pattern of communication in the gospel. By so doing, Robbins also shows that the entire gospel progressively portrays Jesus as a deliberate teacher whose goal was to transmit His system of thought to His disciples. He concludes that in Mark, the Jewish prophetic model is overshadowed by the Greco-Roman teacher model.

Robbins also identifies several stages in the development of the disciples as followers of Jesus and the adaptation of Jesus' methods at each stage. In the initial "summons and response" stage (Mk 1:1-3:6), there is a deliberate conflation of the Jewish prophetic call with the teacher tradition of the Greco-Roman culture, resulting in a fusion of Jesus with Yahweh as "Caller". In the intermediate phase (Mk 3:7-12:44), the Greco-Roman cultural portrait of teacher predominates, even though there are also elements of Jewish tradition. Robbins comes to this conclusion by comparing the Jesus-disciple relationship during this phase with those described in Xenophon's *Memorabilia*, Plato's *Dialogues*, and Philostratus's *Life of Apollonius of Tyana*. In all cases, Robbins identifies four phases of the account—there is an initial record of the teacher's ideology and actions (Mk 3:7-5:43), followed by inability of the disciples to understand the teaching (Mk 6:1-8:26), then a period of intense exploration of the full implications of the new system of thought (Mk 8:27-10:45), and finally the disciples' arrival at an adequate level of comprehension as the teacher's activities come to a close (Mk 10:46-12:44).

Robbins also suggests that the final stage of the Jesus-disciple relationship in Mark, the farewell and death of Jesus (Mk 13:1-16:8), is characterized by complex intermingling of patterns derived from both Jewish and Greco-Roman influences. The prominence of the Greco-Roman material in Mark, in Robbins' view, enabled the acceptance of the gospel



in its first environment. Robbins does not square this conclusion with the nature of the gospel genre.

An important benefit of Robbins' contribution is his regard for Mark as a theologian who has fashioned a narrative account of Jesus as a Teacher. He also reminds the student of the socio-rhetorical background of Jesus' pedagogical ministry. However, Robbins' reliance on Greco-Roman rhetorical forms as tools for examining Jesus' ministry appears to result in an overemphasis on the influence of the Greco-Roman material in Mark's presentation. Even though it is conceivable that Mark shaped the narrative to suit a Greco-Roman audience, presumably in Rome, employing purely Hellenistic rhetorical forms skews the data on the historical ministry of Jesus. In addition, since the Greco-Roman parallels are drawn from rather limited sources, Robbins' conclusions needed some nuances. As urged by Achtemeier, "the fact that Xenophon's *Memorabilia* is the only extant example of this *genre* means of necessity a limited scope of comparison" (1986, 605). Another problem with Robbins' approach is what has often been described as *parallelomania*, in which sociological comparative studies tend to force parallels between different materials, regardless of the important peculiar details and differing contexts (Sandmel 1962, 1-13).

#### 2.4.2 Whitney Shiner (1995)

Similar to Robbins, Whitney Shiner (1995) compared the disciples as portrayed by Mark with Greco-Roman works that discuss discipleship such as Xenophon's *Memorabilia*, Iamblichus' *Pythagorean Life*, Philostratus' *Life of Apollonius of Tyana*, and Wisdom of Ben Sira. Mark's list of disciples in Mk 3:13-18 for example, compares with the list of associates and successors in Xenophon and Iamblichus. In both, as in Mark, the list serves to legitimize the biography of the philosophers concerned since their successors are clearly identified and would have been familiar to their audiences. In each case, Shiner finds similarities as well as striking differences with Jesus' disciples and in how the authors portray the emotional exchanges between the master and the pupil. Socrates for example, did not cultivate as close a relationship with his followers as

Jesus is portrayed to have done in Mark's Gospel. Indeed, in the case of Philostratus' biography, Apollonius insists on being a lone figure, since, in his view, that is what characterized a true sage. Hence in many respects, Jesus and His disciples were very much unlike the Greco-Roman philosophers and their pupils. Shiner concludes—"Like the [other four texts], the portrait of Jesus and his disciples in the Gospel of Mark is unique in many respects. Mark shares with the other writers, however, a common pool of narrative and rhetorical strategies that were part of the culture of his time" (p. 289).

#### 2.3.4 Assessment of the Philosophical School Model

The philosophical school model offers interesting parallels to the education of the disciples within the larger Mediterranean milieu. For example the associates of Socrates are also designated as his μαθηταί, though he himself bitterly opposed this designation (Plato, *Apologia* 33a). Accordingly interesting results may accrue from comparing Jesus' disciples with a number of Greco-Roman parallels.

However, these models do not adequately illuminate the formation of the disciples of Jesus. As Robbins and Shiner have observed in their respective ways, there are significant differences between the disciples of Jesus and the Greco-Roman school model, so much so that it will not be wholly constructive to employ this model as the sole tool for studying their formation in the Gospels. In addition, much of the work depicting Jesus and His group of disciples as Cynic-sages has been based on studies in "Q" and hence is not necessarily as applicable to the situation in Mark and John, as it may seem in Matthew and Luke. What may, however, be attractive in the case of John's Gospel is an exploration using the sapiential or wisdom model. Such a model must, however, be derived from its second temple Jewish milieu and not from a purely Greco-Roman background.

Despite rejecting the Greco-Roman philosophical pupils' model for investigating the formation of the disciples, there may be specific elements which could be considered as reflected in the Gospel accounts. In particular, it should be kept in mind that at the literary level, the conception of the Evangelists regarding what may have constituted

essential rudiments of educational formation may well have affected which aspects of the biography they have chosen to accentuate. Although these elements may not be pivotal in determining what model one ought to employ, they may well enable explanation of certain features of the account.

For example, allowance must be made for the possibility that Mark's conception of "educational failure" was not as bleak as may appear on cursory reading of his account. In the contemporary Greco-Roman philosophical educational system, the notion of the *elenchus* (challenge-failure-learning) was regarded as almost essential for the trainee philosopher's eventual success. And emphases in these accounts are given as a reflection of the abilities of the sage. Consequently, it may well be that if Mark held such a view of religious educational formation; he would not have had any inhibitions in describing the failures of the disciples in as stark a manner as he has done. Accordingly in rejecting the Greco-Roman philosophical pupils' model, I shall nevertheless retain the option of employing some of its features for investigating aspects of the formation of the disciples.

## **2.4 The Disciples as Unique Entity**

Noting the significant differences between the disciples of Jesus and the contemporary Jewish and Hellenistic models of discipleship, a fourth group of interpreters opt for regarding the Jesus-disciples relationship as a unique entity not paralleled by any other phenomenon. The three contributions reviewed below—Karl Rengstorf (1967), Alexander Bruce (1971) and Thomas Manson (1955)—follow different methodologies, trajectories and conclusions. Nevertheless, they essentially demonstrate that the lack of a model does not necessarily obviate the gains that may be made in engaging the Gospel texts in a direct fashion.

### 2.4.1 Karl Rengstorf (1967)

In perhaps the first and most exhaustive examination of discipleship in New Testament scholarship, Rengstorf's article on μαθητης in the TDNT (1967, 415-460), employs lexical and linguistic criteria to clarify the roles and functions of the disciples of Jesus. After examining the use of the term in the ancient Greek world, and in Rabbinic literature, Rengstorf focuses on its use in the Old Testament and the New Testament. Regarding the OT, Rengstorf argues that the absence of the Hebrew equivalent of the term is a reflection of the absence of the concept of discipleship—"apart from the formal relation of teacher and pupil, the OT, unlike the classical Greek world and Hellenism, has no master-disciple relations. Whether among the prophets or the scribes we seek in vain for anything corresponding to it" (p. 427). Theologically, Rengstorf explains this absence as emanating from the fact that it was considered improper for a person to be a disciple of another human being, since all the people of Israel constituted as the elect of God. All Israel is the covenantal community, "controlled by the fact of its divine election, and on this basis it is quite impossible for it to use a noun formed from *lamadh* to denote the individual who gives himself specially to *lamadh*, and thereby to differentiate him from the other members of the chosen people" (p. 427).

Rengstorf examines the nature of the relationships between Moses and Joshua, Elijah and Elisha, Jeremiah and Baruch, and the prophetic schools phenomenon in the OT as possibly comparable models of discipleship in the Old Testament. However he rejects these options, since in his view, these relationships were more akin to leader-assistants or master-servants type of relationships rather than of discipleship (p. 428-430). In the case of the Rabbinic literature, Rengstorf observes that discipleship is used in a technical sense "exclusively for the one who gives himself (as a learner) to Scripture and to the religious tradition of Judaism", so that the Rabbinate is regarded in some literature as a School of Moses (p. 433).

With regard to the NT, Rengstorf observes that "apart from a few exceptions", the term is restricted only to the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles, and thus is uniquely attached to those people who personally interacted with Jesus. Even with regard to

these exceptions, a distinction is made between disciples of Jesus and disciples of the Pharisees, and the Baptist etc. A number of distinctive features of discipleship to Jesus are underlined. Firstly, in a fundamental difference with the Rabbinate, the disciples of Jesus are called by Jesus' own initiative (p. 457). Secondly, the nature of the relationship between the disciple and Jesus is unique—"It is wholly personal, whether as the relation of Jesus to the disciples or as that of the disciples to Jesus. The factor on which the whole emphasis lies is exclusively the person of Jesus. As it is He who finally decides whether a man enters into discipleship; so, it is He who gives form and content to the relationship of His disciples" (p. 458). In this, discipleship to Jesus differs from both Jewish Rabbinate and Greek philosophical training.

Thirdly, the uniqueness of discipleship to Jesus extended to the manner in which total obedience to Jesus' authority was expected—"the disciples unconditionally accepted His authority, not just inwardly by believing in Him, but also outwardly by obeying Him" (p. 459). The relationship then constituted a fellowship, in which Jesus is the source of its existence and maintenance. In this regard the disciple, in devotion to Jesus, also shares in the sufferings of Jesus. Fourthly, Rengstorf makes an important distinction, that the disciples are regarded not as bearers of tradition as much as eye-witnesses of Jesus. To him, this stems from the fact that though Jesus is underlined as a teacher, this aspect of His ministry is nevertheless made secondary to the call for allegiance to Him as Lord (p. 461).

Rengstorf's contribution exerted a significant influence in scholarship on discipleship up until recent times. His emphasis on the uniqueness of discipleship to Jesus, as centred on His Person, is very helpful and calls for sensitive nuances in the manner in which studies in the Gospel may be transposed to contemporary pastoral reflections on discipleship. However, several criticisms have been made against Rengstorf's linguistic methodology which depends on particular words for generating the history and nature of various concepts (e.g. Wilkins 1995, 3-5 cf. Barr 1961). It is argued that such an approach tends to conflate various nuances about the subject. In addition, though many of Rengstorf's insights will serve as part of the background material, they do not

adequately engage the texts themselves. His work informs our understanding of the structure of the Jesus-disciple relationship; but, more work needs to be done to characterize the processes and outcomes in the formation.

#### 2.4.2 Alexander Bruce (1971)

In contrast to Rengstorf, Alexander Bruce's classic, part academic, part popular work, *The Training of the Twelve* (1971, first pub. 1871), focuses more on the processes, events and outcomes of the training of the disciples. In this, Bruce assumes the continuity between Jesus and the Church that followed Him, and describes the very first meeting of the disciples with Jesus as an introduction of "the infant church in its cradle" to Jesus (p. 1). He approaches the project by harmonizing the relevant passages from the four Gospels into a narrative sequence. This has the advantage of portraying a progressive formational development of the disciples from the first introduction by the Baptist (Jn 1:29-51) to the day of Pentecost.

Bruce distinguishes three stages of development of the disciples. In stage one, they are believers in Christ and "His occasional companions at convenient, particular festive seasons" (p. 11). In stage two, there is an "uninterrupted attendance in His person, involving entire, or at least, habitual abandonment of secular occupations" (p. 11). The third and final stage of this formational development began with the specific appointment of "the twelve" to the office of apostleship and continued till the day of Pentecost.

Regarding the processes during their training, Bruce singles out the paramount mechanisms of "hearing and seeing" the words and works of Jesus (p. 41-51). Thus the disciples were to become witnesses of the teaching and actions of Jesus the Messiah. Bruce then surveys the various lessons that Jesus taught the disciples—on prayer, religious liberty, evangelism, faith, humility, self-sacrifice and controlling the temper. He also examines the specific events in the ministry of Jesus that contributed to the training of the disciples. These include the Galilean crisis that followed the feeding of the five

thousand, the confession of Peter, the transfiguration, the anointing at Bethany, the foot washing and the farewell discourse in John's gospel. A chapter is further devoted to the failures of the disciples during the passion period.

Evaluation of Bruce's contribution must always consider that it was primarily not meant to be an academic enterprise. Nevertheless, the specific strengths of the study include its wide ranging combination of the narratives of the canonical gospels to produce a general overview of the training of the twelve. On the other hand, because the work is not set in the wider socio-cultural and religious context of the first century, its contribution to the present study is limited. Also, adequate consideration is not given to the OT theological contexts which were paramount in, not only shaping the interactions between Jesus and the disciples in terms of expectations and interpretations, but also, in the way the evangelists have fashioned the gospel narratives.

#### 2.4.3 Thomas Walter Manson (1955)

Like Rengstorf and Bruce, Manson's contribution, *The Teaching of Jesus* (1955) opts for regarding the disciples of Jesus as in a unique entity, even though he proceeds by developing discipleship as a model derived from Christology. His is also a much more academic engagement of the Gospel material with the aim of characterizing the form and content of Jesus' pedagogical ministry and the role(s) of the disciples in fulfilling this mission. This move by Manson is significant, because he reckoned that the disciples were primarily being trained to share in Jesus' mission. Manson urges that the senses in which Jesus used important terminologies such as "Kingdom of God" and "Son of Man" hold the key to understanding the teaching ministry of Jesus and the role of the disciples in it (pp. 13-16).

Manson employs source criticism as his main method. After John's Gospel, being "a special and highly complex problem" (p. 6) is excluded, Manson applies set criteria to isolate specific pericopae in the Synoptics which are primary sources for the investigation of the teaching of Jesus. He subscribes to Markan priority, but supplements the material with pericopae from Matthew and Luke which, as was then

prevalent in source criticism, were labelled as Q, M and L sources. Based on these sources, Manson develops taxonomy of Jesus' teachings and identifies that the style depended on the audience. Towards the Scribes and Pharisees, Jesus' teaching was largely, "polemical" in which He appears to have used the language of the rabbinical schools and "fought them with their own weapons" (p. 18). To the general public on the other hand, Jesus tended to speak, not directly, but in parables, in contrast to His direct "private instruction of His intimate followers" (p. 18).

With regard to the training of the disciples, Manson identifies two distinct periods in Jesus' teaching ministry and argues that the confession of Peter served as "the watershed of the Gospel history" (p. 210). Before then, Jesus' teaching consisted of "constantly asking for one thing especially, namely, religious and moral insight" (p. 202). This emphasis however ceased after Peter's confession and was replaced by Jesus' demand for commitment to Himself as a person. "Once this fateful decision has been reached by Peter and his fellow-disciples, the demands of Jesus change...Jesus makes the claim for a loyalty to himself which elsewhere is reserved for God" (pp. 203-204). And it was only after Peter's confession that Jesus' use of the title "Son of Man acquires its special sense...and then only in sayings addressed to the disciples" (p. 205).

Manson's understanding of the objectives of Jesus' teaching of the disciples is linked to his conception of Jesus' mission as the Son of Man. After an extensive examination of the title in the Synoptic gospels, he concludes that "Son of Man" is the final embodiment in a series of conceptions derived from the Old Testament—the remnant from Isaiah, the Servant of Yahweh also in Isaiah, the "I" of the Psalms and the Son of Man of Daniel. The Son of Man is both a singular figure, the Primal Person, and also a corporate figure encompassing all His compatriots (p. 228). Whereas in the corporate sense, it was an ideal, in the singular sense, Jesus understood Himself to be that person, "embodying in His own person the perfect human response to the regal claims of God" (p. 228). Jesus' mission was to "create the Son of Man, the Kingdom of the saints of the Most High, to realize in Israel the ideal contained in the term" (p. 227). He attempted fulfilling this task through His parabolic teaching of the public, and the



consolidation of his band of followers. When this inclusion of His compatriots in the Son of Man failed, Jesus nevertheless, on His own, took on single-handedly this ideal and obeyed God the Father in perfection even unto death.

This conceptualization of Jesus' mission therefore explains His insistence on making discipleship synonymous with sacrifice, suffering and the cross. "This at once suggests that what was in the mind of Jesus was that he and his followers *together* should share that destiny which he describes as the Passion of the Son of Man: that he and they *together* should be the Son of Man, the Remnant that saves by service and self-sacrifice, the organ of God's redemptive purpose in the world" (p. 231; italics his). To Manson therefore, Jesus' death was not meant to be His alone—"That he did in fact suffer alone was due to the failure of his disciples to rise to the claims of the ideal of the Son of Man" (p. 232). By dying, Jesus has brought the Son of Man into existence, giving that dream-figure a body, a local habitation, and a name—It is the Church, his own body, of which he is head" (p. 235). His death was the full realization of the ideal of the Son of Man—"men are now called to become "the man" by union with him" (p. 234).

With this background of the projected functions of the disciples in mind, Manson, proceeds in a very informative note, titled "*The terms Disciple and Apostle*" (p. 237-243), to examine the implications of the characterization of the disciples as followers of Jesus. Taking his leave from Jesus' statement in Matt 10:37, that only those who have left their parents and siblings to follow Him were μου ἄξιός (worthy of me), Manson suggests that the Aramaic equivalent of this terminology is related to what was used to describe apprentices of carpenters, blacksmiths or weavers. Consequently, he argues that in opposition to the whole scribal system, in which "the *talmid* of the Rabbinical schools is primarily a student" (p. 239), Jesus saw discipleship as a

[P]ractical task to which men were called to give themselves and all their energies. Their work was not to study but practice. Fishermen were to become fishers of men; peasants were to be labourers in God's vineyard or God's harvest field. And Jesus was their Master not so much as a teacher of right doctrine, but a master-craftsman whom they

were to follow and imitate. Discipleship was not matriculation in a Rabbinical College but apprenticeship to the work of the Kingdom (pp. 239-240).

The major advantage of Manson's work is in his firm coupling of Discipleship with Christology. To Manson, the training of the disciples can only be understood in terms of Jesus' mission—the objective of their training was to apprentice them to share in this mission. This also leads him to emphasize the theme of union with Christ as paramount in the training of the disciples. Even though one may not agree with his overall assessment of the mission of Jesus, which downplays the atonement, Manson has nevertheless emphasized how it is nearly impossible to discuss the training of the disciples in isolation from the Christology of the gospels.

Manson's reliance on source criticism and his exclusion of John's Gospel from the discussion, limits some of his conclusions. In this regard, it is instructive that in the end, he depends on Paul's theology of union with Christ to conclude that the primary achievement of Jesus was that through His death, He managed to create "the Son of Man" so that men could live in union with Him (p. 234). Though Manson concludes that this achievement was not necessarily an original intention of Jesus for gathering followers to Himself, it can be shown that the union of the disciples with Jesus was a major pre-occupation of the Johannine Jesus. Consequently excluding John from contributing to the conceptualization of the formation of the disciples appears to have created a shortfall. In addition, one would have wished for a clearer linkage between Manson's conceptualization and the prevalent theological conceptualization of divine-human interactions in the Old Testament and Second Temple Judaism.

#### 2.4.4 Assessment of the "Unique Entity" Model

The major advantage of the "unique entity" model is its requirement for a direct engagement of the text. It is instructive therefore that when this approach is adopted, the emphasis tends to highlight the divine as much as the human dimensions of the

Jesus-disciples relationship. In the case of Rengstorf for example, he demonstrates that allegiance to Jesus was much more paramount in the formation of the disciples than formal collection and transmission of traditions about His teachings. Similarly, Manson's contribution is particularly enlightening; for, by linking Christology to discipleship, he underscores one of the fundamental tenets of my approach. In addition, by highlighting the mission of Jesus as the overriding focus of the training of the disciples, Manson succeeds in assessing the processes involved in their training with robust criteria.

The unique entity model however begs a number of questions. Though the Jesus-disciples relationship was historically unique, it is nevertheless likely that in describing it, the Evangelists would have done so with some ideas of how such relationships were expected to be like. Historical descriptions are always influenced by pre-existing models, both in a positive and a negative manner. Furthermore, the best way to characterize a unique phenomenon is to describe how it is like another phenomenon that is similar to it and yet, at the same time, distinguished from them. Therefore, inasmuch as the structure of the Jesus-disciple relationship was historically unique, it cannot be doubted. However, when describing Jesus' ministry, the Evangelists persistently employed comparisons, both with contemporary models and with the OT prophets, and Moses in particular. It is true that in all cases they underlined how superior Jesus was to these models and hence the uniqueness of the interactions with Him. Nevertheless, the comparisons support the proposition that a model is much more likely to facilitate than hinder accurate conceptualization of the Jesus-disciple relationship.

The "unique entity" approach cannot be fully dismissed however; for, inherent in its presupposition is that not only was the Jesus-disciple relationship unique, but also that a full understanding of it must begin from the texts of the Gospels. My approach will build on these two insights by developing a model based on, and piloted with the first chapters of the two Gospels.

## 2.5 The Disciples as Trainees of an Eschatological Prophet

The final two categories to be reviewed employ models that are directly derived from the Gospels. However, unlike the preceding “unique entity” group, they also build the model around theological conceptualizations derived from the Old Testament and Second Temple Judaism.

Several interpreters have posited that the nearest conceptualization that must have influenced the Evangelists’ depiction of the Jesus-disciples interactions is that of the OT prophets and the Jewish eschatological expectations during the second temple period. This is not surprising, given that many contemporary historical Jesus research also tend to begin from the premise that Jesus primarily regarded Himself as a prophet (cf. Borg 1987; Wright 1996; Hooker and Stacey 1997; Witherington 1999; Allison 1998). Thus concerning the best category through which to study Jesus and His disciples, Sanders is unqualified—“I continue to regard “prophet” as the best single category” (1993, 153). In addition, Pauline studies have conclusively demonstrated that the apostle grounded his self-understanding in the prophetic tradition (Aune 1991; Sandnes 1991; Witherington 1999, 311). Therefore, assuming that the disciples of Jesus shared similar self-understanding as Paul, the eschatological prophet model may yet prove useful for examining the interactions between Jesus and His disciples. However, there are nuances to be made, and two contributions in this category may be summarized in order to demonstrate these nuances—Martin Hengel (2005) and PHEME Perkins (1990).

### 2.5.1 Martin Hengel (2005)

Hengel’s contribution, *The Charismatic Leader and His Followers* (2005, originally published in 1968 in German), is regarded by many scholars as a landmark in Discipleship studies. Even though it was mainly directed at answering questions related to the uniqueness of the Jesus-disciple relationship and not the wider issue of the formation of the disciples; his contribution nevertheless began a decisive shift in scholarship on how to conceptualize discipleship based on the prevailing OT theological

material. Hengel's main achievement was to undermine the conception of Jesus-disciple relationship as the same as the rabbinical practice of "the teacher and pupil living together in the service of the Torah" (p. 1).

Hengel takes his cue from Matt 8:21-22 where an enquirer, wishing to follow Jesus, but only on the condition that he was allowed to first bury his father, is instructed by Jesus to "Follow me, and let the dead bury their own dead". Hengel argues that this call by Jesus was "hardly one that can stem from the tradition either of the Jewish or of the later community" (p. 5). Neither is this call to be paralleled to the OT ritual call of the Nazirites and High priests (p. 11). In a way, the call more appropriately fits those of the prophets (e.g. Ezek 24:15-24). In virtually overriding the fourth commandment, Jesus was demanding obedience "in a way in which in the Old Testament only God Himself enjoined obedience on individual prophets in regard to proclamation of his approaching judgment" (p. 12). The added element was "the prophetic apocalyptic motif of the destruction of the family in the period of the final eschatological" (p. 13). Though Hengel admits that Jesus was often addressed as a rabbi, this term merely functioned as titles of respect and not as characterization.

Hengel then proceeds to investigate this charismatic and eschatological background from the history of Religions (*Religionsgeschichte*) perspective. The options include Elisha's call by Elijah, following the charismatic prophet leader in a holy war, following apocalyptic prophets and zealots of the first century, following charismatics in the Hellenistic world, calling and conversion to religious vocation in the Greek philosophical world or among the rabbis and the disciples of John the Baptist. In all cases, Hengel identifies that the major ingredient was "the effects of the *charismatic* personality who breaks through the barriers of the commonplace, that is, in the religious field they depend on the personality of the prophetic teacher and redeemer (bringer of salvation)" (p. 14). Though Hengel admits that Jesus confounds all attempts to categorize Him to any particular class of trainers, he concludes that while the circle of the disciples of the Baptist could be regarded as the closest to those of Jesus even that does not offer adequate parallel to what is meant by following Jesus (p. 37).

Hengel examines the question of Jesus' essential mission. "In the eyes of his contemporaries, his supporters, and—negatively—also his opponents, he seemed to be first and foremost an eschatological charismatic (to use the most all-embracing term possible)" (p. 44). Hengel rejects any supposition that Jesus' mission was primarily as a teacher and grounds the call of Jesus to discipleship in the OT call of God to individual prophets from their various occupations. "Thus there are indeed good grounds for the stylization of the synoptic discipleship pericopae in terms of the call of Elisha by Elijah or of the prophetic vocation...Here "following" means in the first place unconditional sharing of the master's destiny" (pp. 71-72). The purpose of such calls, according to Hengel, was "to participate in his mission and authority, in the eschatological event which taking its beginning in him was moving powerfully towards the complete dawn of the rule of God" (p. 73).

The main contribution of Hengel is to distinguish the nature and structure of discipleship to Jesus, certainly from the contemporary rabbinical schools and also Greco-Roman Hellenistic parallels. In insisting that the closest parallels to Jesus' call to the disciples are God's call to the OT prophets, Hengel has provided one of the fundamental insights for the present study. If the call of the disciples can be viewed in terms analogous to the call of the prophets, then further examination of the nature of the interactions between Yahweh and these human agents in the OT may provide some indication on how to investigate the Jesus-disciple relationship.

However, and as several reviewers have observed, Hengel does not fully define the term "charismatic leader" which is critical to his reflections. Though he distinguishes Jesus from the contemporary rabbis, the descriptor, "charismatic leader" is too vague (cf. Praeder 1983, 490). In addition, since Hengel's main conclusion is based on Matt 8:21-22 a wider examination of the nature of the Jesus-disciple relationship in the gospels is needed to clarify their training. Moreover, as other reviewers have rightly pointed out (e.g. Domeris 1984, 58; Best 1983, 115), it cannot be completely dismissed that Jesus was addressed on several occasions as a teacher or rabbi (e.g. Jn 1:38, 49, 3:2). Consequently, though He must be sharply distinguished from the contemporary

rabbis, and His relationship with the disciples transcended that between a rabbi and pupil, Jesus' pedagogical credentials must be considered in any examination of the formation of the disciples.

### 2.5.2 PHEME PERKINS (1990)

PHEME PERKINS' contribution, *Jesus as Teacher*, (1990) sets Jesus' teaching ministry in the first century Mediterranean educational world. Perkins begins by comparing the teaching methods of Jesus with the four categories of adult teachers of His time—philosophers, sages, interpreters of the Jewish Law (scribes, rabbis and Pharisees), and prophets or seers. In Perkins' view the best description of Jesus' teaching credentials is as a charismatic teacher and prophet even though it appears that Jesus combined all four categories (p. 22).

Unlike Hengel, she explains the word “charismatic” as a sociological term—“first [Jesus] does not have the normal status, authority, or power systems to back up what He says, and second that he is able to convey his message to groups of people through his personal appeal” (p. 24). In addition, from the OT perspective, a charismatic leader receives his force of appeal or “anointing” through a “calling” from God. This last point leads Perkins to argue that the baptism of Jesus constituted the moment when Jesus received His call. It was also in a similar sense that the disciples received their “calls” from Jesus (p. 27).

Like Manson, Perkins examines the style of Jesus' teaching and notes that “Jesus spoke with prophetic voice to all people...[and] did not use a “scholarly” or “technical language” such as we find in philosophical writings of the time or in legal disputes over the meaning of the Law” (p. 38). She examines the nature of the proverbs and parables of Jesus, the legal and cultic disputation with the scribes and the Pharisees and the eschatological and apocalyptic teachings of Jesus. Of much interest also is a chapter titled *Adaptation of Jesus' Teaching in the Community* in which Perkins suggests that “Disciples of a famous teacher expanded and interpreted their master's teaching to

answer questions that arose after the master's death or to explicate unclear teaching" (p. 62). This raises a fundamental question about the genre of the Gospels, and the best method for examining them. Since in her view, the material had been adapted to suit the kerygmatic needs of the Church, her preferred approach is to combine methods from form, source, redaction and literary criticisms (p. 64).

Though Perkins does not focus attention on the training of the disciples, her main contribution is to set the teaching ministry of Jesus in its first century context in comparison with similar teachers. Her primary identification of Jesus as a charismatic teacher and prophet, though inadequate, draws attention to the OT dimensions of Jesus' ministry. It does not appear to have been her remit to examine the purpose of the gathering of followers to Jesus, even though she makes the distinction between those followers, "called" to break ties with family in a most radical way unparalleled in the first century environment in order to follow Jesus (p. 29) and those who did not have to.

### 2.5.3 Assessment of the Eschatological Prophet Model

There are several advantages of the "trainees of eschatological prophet" model. To start with, it underlines the fact that a model should be directly informed, not only by the Gospels themselves, but also by the contemporary Jewish conceptualization of the OT ministry and the theological expectations of the times. It is undeniable that the Evangelists were constrained by the OT Scriptures and the theology that emanated from them. Their burden, as it is obvious by their frequent citations, allusions and echoes of the Hebrew Scriptures, was to show the fulfilment of the Scriptures in the life and ministry of Jesus. Though unique, the Jesus-disciples relationship can only be fully characterized in the light of the OT. Models that do not reflect this are likely to falter. The OT prophetic office therefore appears to be an attractive option from which to build such model.

The eschatological prophet model is nevertheless much too inflexible to sufficiently guide the present investigation. Other elements of the theological conceptions in second



temple Judaism such as the divine warrior motif, eschatological ingathering of God's people, and sage-like functions of God's agents must be considered alongside the prophetic model. In addition, though it is clear that in some ways, Jesus ministered in the prophetic tradition, He functioned as much more than a prophet. And the Evangelists underline this on almost every page of their biographies. Moreover, Jesus' disciples also performed functions which transcended the prophetic vocation. Rengstorf is therefore correct that OT examples such as the Moses-Joshua, Elijah-Elisha or Jeremiah-Baruch relationships do not adequately parallel the relationship between Jesus and the disciples.

Furthermore, within the Old Testament itself, the idea of the prophet is portrayed in a variety of ways, depending on the function played by the person and his means of performing them. Some prophets operated in the ecstatic tradition, whereas others as seers and yet others more or less as exegetes. In the words of Bennema, the prophetic tradition in the OT underwent development "from the ecstatic prophet (Elijah, Elisha) to the classical prophet (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Hosea, Micah, etc.), to the "messenger" in Chronicles (Amasai, Azariah, Jehaziel, and Zechariah), and finally to the text interpreter (Ezra)" (2001, 9 n.9; cf. Schniedewind 1995). Besides, between the OT and the time of Jesus, the prophetic office underwent significant variations in conceptualization. Witherington has for example identified that by the first century AD the three great Jewish traditions of prophecy, apocalyptic and wisdom were conflated in such a manner as to make it difficult to distinctly separate one from the other (1999, 311). Consequently, examining the formation of the disciples under the prophetic rubric alone may inappropriately skew the manner and direction of the research.

At a fundamental level also, the prophetic model, and indeed most of the preceding models, limit the divine dimensions of the Jesus-disciple relationship. Beginning with an assumption that the Gospels' description of Jesus as divine was a kerygmatic layer superimposed by the Church on the historical material, several researchers have been reluctant to include notions of the divinity of Jesus in fashioning models for the study of discipleship. To be sure, care must be taken to insist that the human dimension of the

Jesus-disciple relationship is retained and underlined, so that a docetic interpretation is avoided. However, any discussion of the Jesus-disciples relationship that excludes the divine-human dimension is equally flawed. Certainly, for the Evangelists, the mirror through which Jesus' mission was understood was one that regarded Him at the least *the* divine Representative of God.

It is in pursuit of this balance that I find the next model more suited, both for its flexibility and at the same time its ability to describe both the human and divine aspects of the Jesus-disciple relationship.

## 2.6 The Disciples as Agents of Jesus

The Jewish agency institution of the *shaliach* constitutes a much broader category than the prophetic rubric. It therefore enables a model that include aspects of all the other categories, especially the eschatological prophet, as well as apocalyptic and wisdom motifs of Second Temple Judaism to be fashioned. Given the extensive potential of this category, and a number of variations in its applications, a brief and introductory synopsis of the history of NT scholarship on the concept will be beneficial.

### 2.6.1 History of NT Scholarship on the Jewish Agency Institution

The impetus for the application of the Jewish agency institution to discipleship studies began with the desire to identify the source and background of the concept of apostleship as found in the New Testament. In his review of history of research in this regard, Agnew (1986, 75-96) isolated three historical phases of conclusions—an initial enthusiasm, led by Rengstorf, was replaced by rejection led by Schmithals and Munck, and finally, by qualified acceptance of an adapted link between agency and apostleship. This final phase appears to be the predominant view among scholars today and offers sound and pragmatic grounds upon which to investigate the phenomenon of apostleship. Since Borgen also makes an original and extensive contribution to

understanding the *shaliach* institution, albeit in its application to Christology, a brief summary of his contribution will be in order.

#### 2.6.1.1 Karl Rengstorf (1952)

Rengstorf was the first person to have explicitly suggested the derivation or adaptation of the concept of apostleship from the Jewish institution of the *shaliach* (1952, 13-24). Yet, the possible link between apostleship and the *shaliach* institution was suggested much earlier in the third century AD in Jerome's commentary on Galatians (*Commentary in Epistle ad Galatians* 1:1), or perhaps earlier still, implied by Josephus in *Antiquities* 17.299-303. It was also more overtly articulated in Lightfoot's examination of parallels to apostleship with Judaism (1869, 93-94), even though he did not suggest a derivation as Rengstorf did.

Essentially, the *shaliach* institution was defined by the idea of a commissioned messenger who also had the full authority to represent, act on behalf of and in the full authority of the one who sent him. The institution is epitomized by one of the popular principles of the Rabbis—"a man's agent is like the man himself" (*Ber.* 5:5). Of the two components of the institution—the commissioning or "sentness" and the authorization by the commissioner—the latter was the more primary defining element. In other words, the most important component of being an agent was the fact that the agent possessed the representative authority of his commissioner. Not everyone who was sent was regarded as a *shaliach*, but every *shaliach* represented, acted on behalf of and in the full authority of the one who sent him. This authority lasted for the period of the operation of the agent and for the specific task upon which the *shaliach* was sent.

Rengstorf proposed three categories of Jewish agents—legal (those commissioned to cut covenants, establish business and perform rituals), ecclesiastical (those representing a group or community) and religious (priests and prophets sent by God and acting in His full authority) (1952, 12-24; cf. Barrett 1970, 12-45; Barrett 1978a, 94-115). The agent may therefore be an agent of God, of men and of an institution or

community. Rengstorf further argued for the existence of the institution in the OT (e.g. Gen 24; 2 Chron 17; 1 Sam 25), so that the apostles could be seen as a modification and not a complete innovation from what pertained in the OT.

#### 2.6.1.2 Peder Borgen (1968)

In contrast to Rengstorf, Borgen specifically applied the agency idea to the Christology of John's Gospel, since the idea of the "sentness" of Jesus is repeatedly underlined in that Gospel. In his article titled *God's Agent in the Fourth Gospel* (2000, 83-95; originally published in Borgen 1968, 137-148), Borgen finds close parallels between the idea of agency in the Jewish *halakhah* and the Christology and soteriology of John's Gospel. In particular, he isolates six halakhic principles of agency that influence the manner in which the Christology of John is presented—

1. The agent is like the one who sent him, and this is regardless of who the sender was. Whereas some rabbis insisted that the likeness was merely at the judicial level, others went as far as insisting on a judicial mystical union between the sender and the sent so that not only the authority but specific qualities of the commissioner are shared with the sent (2000, 85).
2. Though there is unity of identity between sender and agent, the sender always remains superior to the agent.
3. "It was a legal presumption that an agent would carry out his mission in obedience to the sender" (2000, 86).
4. The agent's mission is set in the context of a lawsuit in which the sender transfers his own rights and properties unto the agent. And this is often presented in a legal language in which the sender claims the transferred properties in court. Yet, because the agent remains in union with, and subordinate to, the sender, the property still remains that of the sender, as well as also that of the agent who has claimed it. To a limited extent therefore, the agent could be regarded as in a partnership with the sender (2000, 88).

5. The agent who had been sent must report back to his sender. Though some rabbis made distinctions between divine and human agency, so that the agent of God does not need to report back to Him (e.g. *Mek. Ex. 12:1*), this distinction is not underlined by John's Gospel.
6. An agent can appoint another agent to effectuate his mission.

Borgen finds parallels of these six principles in John's Christology, demonstrating that at least, such conceptualizations would have been current during the Evangelist's time. He also explores the idea that Jesus was a heavenly Agent, urging therefore that the Gospel of John should not be studied only within the milieu of normative Judaism but contains also influences of mystical Judaism such as that found in Philo.

#### *2.6.1.3 Objections to the Agency Model in NT Scholarship*

Not all scholars were initially convinced about a link between the *shaliach* institution and the NT, especially to the apostleship concept. The main objection was that none of the textual use of the *shaliach* terminology is dated before AD 140. Some also found Rengstorff's attempt to situate the institution in certain OT Hebrew terminologies unconvincing (e.g. Ehrhardt 1958, 5; Richardson 1958, 324; Schmithals 1969, 106; Munck 1950, 96-110). Munck for example, emphatically objects, "Far too much importance has for some time now been attached to these Jewish apostles . . . The Christian apostles are part of something entirely new and dynamic in that the whole Christian religion is something to be spread abroad. It is not mere chance that this is stressed by a number of important terms: it is the gospel, the good news which must be announced (*keryssō*) by heralds" (1950, 100). Others have also argued that in terms of equivalent terminologies, ἄγγελος and πρεσβύτες were closer to the apostle terminology, certainly before AD 70 and that the apostle concept was therefore much earlier than the *shaliach* terminology (cf. Wilson 1973, 114).

Similarly, and with regard to the conceptual parallels between the *shaliach* institution and apostleship, Schmithals countered that the nature of the authorization of the

*shaliach* in later Judaism was juristic, whereas that of the apostle was religious (1969, 105). The phenomenological operation of “the late Jewish legal institution of the *shaliach* has not even the least to do with the primitive Christian apostolate” (1969, 106). As an alternative, Schmithals proceeded to locate the background of the apostle concept in early Gnosticism (1969, 115).

#### *2.6.1.4 Nuanced Acceptance of the Agency Model in Recent NT Scholarship*

More recent NT scholarship has come round to acknowledge that some of the objections to using the agency institution as a starting model for examining the disciples are not insurmountable. Most scholars now accept that the lack of an equivalent Hebrew adjectival cognate for *shaliach* in extant literature does not necessarily imply that the *concept* itself did not exist in the Hebrew thought before AD 140. And though there were closer relationships between ἄγγελος or πρεσβύτερος with ἀπόστολος, the fluidity with which the earliest Christians used such terms suggests that this would not have prevented them from linking ἀπόστολος with *shaliach*. This situation exemplified by the manner in which terms like *Messiah* remained un-translated into Greek in several extant literature of the time (cf. Keener 2003, 312).

In addition, Schmithals’ suggested alternative in Gnosticism has been rejected by most researchers as having little grounding in the historical setting (cf. Agnew 1986, 89-90). Neither is his strict distinction between juristic and religious authorization of agents persuasive. As Borgen has shown, there certainly were rabbis who extended the mystical union idea to characterize the nature of the relationship between the commissioner and the agent (2000, 85). The argument for a *de novo* occurrence of the New Testament concept of apostleship is equally not in line with the nature of the continuity-discontinuity paradigm of the relationship between Judaism and early Christianity. Consequently, the current consensus in scholarship is that there might have been popular conceptions of the *shaliach* institution before and during Jesus’ earthly ministry which influenced the notion of apostleship.

Furthermore, there are several benefits inherent in adopting the agency model as a heuristic research tool. The main advantage appears to be its adaptability, both for characterizing the Christology, as well as the discipleship of the Gospels. Since the Gospel is the biography of Jesus, and since both Jesus and His disciples could be conceived of in terms of being agents, albeit of different kinds, the agency model presents powerful properties to be adapted to the study. The model also enables the description of the mission for which the agent is sent to be flexibly characterized and examined so that there is no significant skewing of the Gospel data. The variations in the way NT authors used the apostleship terminology, if it is true that the two were linked, also suggest that one ought to approach any links between the *shaliach* institution and apostleship with a degree of flexibility, allowing for different adaptations by the earliest Christian writers, including the Evangelists. In Keener's words, "the general institution of agency therefore informs the early Christian, including Johannine, conception of agency, but specific nuances of agency, which early Christian writers may have adopted, remain to be examined" (2003, 313).

It has also been suggested that one significant adaptation of the *shaliach* institution by the earliest Christians was the manner in which it enabled them to absorb the prophetic tradition into the apostleship concept. The New Testament apostle, being an agent of Jesus, also had properties and functions of a prophet (Kirk 1974-1975, 249-264). Yet, in addition to prophetic functions, the apostle as agent also acted like prophet-judge in analogous fashion to OT figures such as Samuel and Deborah or leaders of prophetic schools such as Elijah (Hill 1979; 116-117; Aune 1991, 206). Moses in particular appears to have served as a primary model for New Testament apostolic agent (e.g. 2 Cor 3, Jn 1:14; cf. Meeks 1967, 226-227). One may conclude therefore that agency institution constituted a versatile category with which the earliest Christians linked their religious functions with those of the OT and has immense potential for our project.

In actual fact, in later, third and fourth century AD Judaism, the *shaliach* institution became a broad rubric to describe the significant figures of the Old Testament. Moses (e.g. *Sipra Behuq. pereq* 13.277.1.13-14; *Abot de Rab Nat.* 1 A; *Ex. Rab.* 6.3), Aaron

(*Sipra Sav Mek DeMiluim* 98.9.6) and the OT prophets in general (*Mek Pisha* 1.87) were for example described as God's agents who performed functions normally reserved for God (*B Mešša* 86b; *m. Psalm* 78 § 5; *Ta'ānit Mishnah* 2a; *Babylonian Talmud Sanhedrin* 113a). Indeed *Sipra Sav Mek DeMiluim* 98.9.5 describes anyone who does God's will as His agent, including the storm sent by God in the Jonah narrative (*Abot de Rab Nat.* 37, section 95 B). There is no significant evidence that the institution of agency acquired such an extensive range of understanding during the time of Jesus. Nevertheless one cannot rule out the distinct possibility that the notion operated in popular conceptions of the time. Certainly, by the time the Evangelists wrote their account, their understanding of Christology, discipleship and theological significance of the events that had occurred would have been affected by such ideas of divine-human interactions through agents.

It is for this and other reasons that recent NT scholarship has found the agency model very useful as heuristic tool for examining the Gospels, both in characterizing the Christology and also the discipleship (e.g. Witherington 1990; Anderson 1999, 33-57; Wanamaker 1986, 517-528; Meier 1980; van der Merwe 2003, 303-324; Harvey 1987, 239). I now review a sample of these works.

## 2.6.2 Review of Secondary Literature on the Disciples as Agents of Jesus

The following review of the contributions by Mills (1990), Ringe (1999) and Henderson (2006) will serve not only to show the agency model's versatility, but also highlight areas that need to be further explored.

### 2.6.2.1 Mary Mills (1990)

In her *Human Agents of Cosmic Power* (1990), Mills employed structural analysis under the rubric of "Myth and Magic" to examine how second temple period Hellenistic Judaism adapted the agency idea for articulating conceptions of the divine-human interactions. Defining agents as "a community's link with the past while leading it on to



new life and development” (p. 15), Mills urges that agents of the divine functioned through operation of peculiar knowledge and power. Through special knowledge of the divine realm, God’s agents acquired the power to alter cosmic forces to serve as link between the community and the divine—“If one knows who the gods really are, one has access to the energy they possess” (p. 23). The special knowledge is related to the specific myth by which the agent could relate to the gods, whereas the magic is related to the agent’s ability to alter cosmic forces through application of specific mythical formulae (p. 33). The two are closely linked, for “Knowledge gives the agents power” (p. 33). The exhibition of power by the agent is not arbitrary or at the whim of the agent, but also serves as a way of revealing the knowledge to the community. Power then does not exist on its own but acts as a conduit for the declaration of knowledge from the divine realm to people. Agents act as mediators of both (p. 34).

After examining how these conceptions of human agents operated in extant texts on Moses, Solomon, Enoch and Tobit, Mills applies the insights to how they feature in the way Jesus is depicted in the Gospel according to Mark and of the apostles in Acts. Mark, she argues, presents Jesus as “God’s great agent—His wonders are worked not for their own sake, but for that of God’s kingdom which is thereby being continually extended” (p. 104). Jesus, being “God’s ultimate agent”, is also “God’s expression of wisdom in human terms. What he does, what he says, how he lives and dies, all teach those with “eyes to see”, what God’s rule means, and how to achieve a true understanding of the cosmos” (p. 107).

Though this is an extremely useful study, Mills does not apply these conceptions to examine the Jesus-disciple interaction in the Gospels. Her examination of the apostles is also based on their portrayal in Acts rather than on Luke’s Gospel. In addition, the conception of Jesus as Wisdom is asserted as evident in Mark without textual support.

### 2.6.2.2 Sharon Ringe (1999)

Whereas Mills' study employs a much broader structural approach to the issue, Ringe (1999) employs a nuanced exegesis of the text to show that John's Gospel utilizes the theological conception of Wisdom as Divine Agent interacting with Her human friends. This enables her to further conceptualize the formation of the disciples in terms of friendship with the supreme Agent of God. Ringe argues that John's Gospel presents Jesus as "at once Wisdom incarnate and the Friend who befriends others and commands them to be friends to one another" (p. 2). The church is a community "called into being around Wisdom" and "the basis of that community is the revelation it has from Jesus, and the character of the inner life is the joy it has in the Word" (p. 4).

Ringe demonstrates that in John's Gospel, Jesus, as "personified Wisdom, and Yahweh are represented as sharing common authority and responsibility, especially as the giver of life (1:17 and 1:20-23)" (p. 35). It is the activity of the gathering of disciples to this personified Wisdom which is portrayed in the early narrative sections of John's Gospel (1:35-51). The One to whom they come and remain with, is Wisdom, who befriends them as His disciples. The designation of friendship however emanates from Jesus' actions (Jn 15:13) and not by special revelation that the disciples have acquired (p. 67). Similarly the Baptist is labelled as the friend of the Bridegroom whose function was to bear *witness* (p. 65).

With regard to the background of the theology of Wisdom as God's agent, Ringe finds parallels between John's use of the word "abide" and the LXX's application to Wisdom. According to Ringe, "the word μένω is used in the LXX to convey divine "abiding" in such references as Daniel 6:26 and Psalms 9:7; 101:12. She appeals to the concept of the heavenly council as the source of Wisdom. Thus Wisdom acts as that Council's Representative—the heavenly council "abides according to Isaiah 14:24 and so do other manifestations of God's presence—God's will, word, righteousness, and promised new creation, according to Psalms 32:11; 111:3, 9; Isaiah 40:8 and 66:2" (p. 76).

Ringe further applies this conceptualization of the Jesus-disciple relationship as friendship by examining how it was exemplified in His interactions with the Bethany family, the Beloved Disciple, the sending of the Paraclete and the woman who anointed Jesus. With regard to the woman who anointed Jesus for example, her action is interpreted on one level as one of “welcome and hospitality to the friend and guest who has come to her home for dinner (12:2-3), and on another level, it is interpreted as the loving work of preparing her friend for burial (12:7)” (p. 77). This is a very useful specific nuance of Johannine conceptualization of the formation of the disciples.

One important contribution of Ringe’s study is the grounding of the investigation of the Jesus-disciples relationship within the prominent theological motifs of the prologue of John. Given that the prologues of the Gospels set the parameters for interpreting their Christology as well as discipleship, this move by Ringe is very astute. However, and in this respect, John’s theological idea of personified Torah revealing Himself to the disciples appears not to have been highlighted by Ringe. Similarly, the concept of revelation in the first chapter of John and its relationship to Wisdom’s discipling processes is not adequately emphasized by Ringe, even though she rightly underlines the prominence of revelation as a theological rubric to investigate John’s Gospel. In addition, whereas Ringe focuses on the closeness and loving interaction between Wisdom and His friends in John, she appears not to have underscored the ultimate purpose of such loving relationship in John. The question as to whether the disciples were expected to perform specific functions during Jesus’ ministry or afterwards, are not adequately answered in her examination.

#### *2.6.2.3 Suzanne Henderson (2006)*

Henderson’s work (2006) is an outstanding analysis of the inter-relationship between Christology and discipleship in Mark’s Gospel, which in many ways fulfil several of the criteria for a suitable model for examining the formation of the disciples. For a start, it is “text-based” (p. 24), that is, it takes Mark’s own narrative within its socio-historical and theological influences as its starting point and examines it to discover how the disciples

participated in Jesus' mission as understood and declared by the Evangelist. She then uses this conceptualization to explain the prominent Markan phenomenon of the failures of the disciples.

Henderson first argues that Mark had a manifold notion of discipleship which may however be examined under the Gospel's overall theological rubric of "the dominion of God as drawn near" (p. 254). She surmises that "apocalyptic history of God's coming kingdom" is the best theme that "lends an interpretive unity to Mark's two halves" (p. 26). In Henderson's view, it was Jesus' messianic mission which was the focus of the interactions (p. 256). And under this mission, the disciples function as Jesus' "agents in the campaign against the forces of the present evil age" (p. 25). According to her, the relationship between Jesus and the disciples may be summarized under the categories of "presence and practice" (p. 4). The purpose of the call of the disciples was "to remain in Jesus' presence as they bear witness to his Christological mission, which entails the proleptic demonstration of God's coming kingdom; what is more, through their physical and relational proximity to Jesus, these select followers receive privileged instruction concerning the nature of that kingdom" (p. 4). In addition, the disciples were meant to continue "Jesus' practice of wielding the power associated with God's apocalyptic reign" (p. 4). The main means by which the disciples participate in this practice is through proclamation and deeds of power (p. 25). This is very much demonstrated by their active participation in the feeding miracle in which it is the disciples who diagnose the crowd's hunger, provide the means for feeding them and distribute them (p. 26).

Jesus' Messianic identity was critical to Mark's portrayal of the Jesus-disciples interaction, but so also was Jesus' Messianic mission. The two must be kept in mind in the analysis of the narrative. Hence, in explaining certain peculiarities of discipleship in the Markan narrative, such as the phenomenon of the incomprehension of the disciples, both intertwining threads of *presence and practice* must be taken into account. The incomprehension is not merely one of failure to identify the correct identity of Jesus but also His mission and their *de facto* participation in it (p. 256). In view of this, Henderson examines several of the actions of the disciples in Mark and shows that the failures of

the disciples reflect the serious and formidable nature of the evil forces against which the dominion of God battles. In the second half of Mark which repeatedly portrays the failures of the disciples, Henderson argues that they demonstrate how the lack of appreciation of the full implications of the presence of Jesus results in unsuccessful practice.

Henderson's excellent treatment of Mark provides an effective foundation upon which to build our study. Like Henderson, I shall begin the search for a suitable model by examining the Christology, discipleship and theology of the first chapter of Mark, rather than the commoner practice of beginning Markan discipleship studies from its central section in Mk 8-10. Like her, I also intend to analyze the disciples from the viewpoint as Jesus' agents. She is also correct in locating Mark's theology in apocalyptic eschatology influenced by Isaianic new exodus motifs and the Book of Daniel.

A number of significant differences, however, exist between my study and Henderson's. Firstly, I shall emphasize the Christological element of the Divine Council in the prologues of Mark and John, so that the Jesus-disciples interaction should be seen as interaction of agents with the embodied Divine Council. Secondly, Henderson does not appear to adequately link the passion and Easter narratives in a positive way to the formation of the disciples. She highlights the negative connotations of the cross as epitomizing the evil forces at work against the dominion of God (p. 17). Yet, there are aspects in which this symbol is transformed in a positive manner in relation to discipleship in Mark. Finally, whereas Henderson restricts her investigations to the smaller and closest group of Jesus' followers, my study will take a much broader view of discipleship to Jesus, even though some of the information Mark gives are focused on the small group of followers. Unlike Henderson, the present study will also examine John's Gospel for comparisons.

## 2.7 Summary of Review and Implications for the Present Study

As table 2.1 shows, each of the six categories employed for examining the formation of the disciples has specific advantages and disadvantages. Despite its historical advantage, the rabbinic pupil model suffers from its significant differences from the Jesus-disciples relationship. The “converts” model highlights spiritual transformation in the disciples; but, only through the superimposition of external theological paradigms not very suited to the genre of the Gospels. Inasmuch as it derives most of its insights from outside first century Judaism, the philosophical school idea is inadequate. Though the “unique entity” model appears attractive for its ability to allow flexibility, it nevertheless suffers from lack of clear controls and standardization in the conclusions. The eschatological prophet model is certainly one of the most convincing conceptualization of discipleship, given that the apostle Paul grounded his self-understanding in the prophetic tradition. Yet, even here, it must not be forgotten that Paul functioned in a role that transcended the OT prophets.

Accordingly, and from my point of view, the best model for studying the Jesus-disciples interactions is the agency model. Most important among its versatile attractions, is the fact that both Jesus and the disciples could be appropriately examined under this rubric. This makes it possible to start the investigation from the Gospel and examine how it presents Jesus. Following that, the OT and second temple Jewish portrayal of God’s agents, especially those with affinities to the theological idioms of each of the Evangelists, may be used to formulate the coordinates of an appropriate model for each Gospel. Once that is done, this may be employed as heuristic tool to interrogate the Gospel’s presentation of the Jesus-disciples interactions and hence the formation of the disciples.

Table 2.1: Advantages and Disadvantages of Discipleship Research Models

Model	Advantages	Disadvantages
<b>Rabbinic Pupils</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Jesus behaved, taught, was regarded as, addressed as and related to His disciples as a Rabbi</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Significant differences in the way Jesus recruited, trained, commissioned and related to His disciples in comparison to the</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explains the primitive nature of several formal features of Jesus' teachings transmitted through the disciples</li> <li>• It is arguably "a historical starting point" for investigating the Jesus-disciples interactions</li> </ul>	<p>contemporary Rabbis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disciples of Jesus better viewed as apprentices to practice, than students</li> <li>• The Gospel narratives differ in their formal features from the Rabbinic traditions</li> <li>• A "starting point" but hardly adequate conceptualization of the Jesus-disciples relationship</li> </ul>
<b>Converts of Jesus</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Underlines the idea of transformation of the disciples in their interactions with Jesus</li> <li>• Enables linear application to Practical Theology</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appears anachronistic</li> <li>• Skewed by concepts from systematic theology and Pauline studies</li> <li>• Does not explain the participation of the disciples in Jesus mission</li> <li>• Difficult to fit the several models of conversion to the disciples as a group</li> </ul>
<b>Philosophical Students</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Patristic evidence of comparison of the disciples to students of philosophers</li> <li>• Highlights the Greco-Roman influences in first century Mediterranean setting</li> <li>• May enable explanation of certain features of discipleship, e.g. the failures of the disciples and Greco-Roman conceptions of failure</li> <li>• Fits aspects of studies in "Q"</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lacks a good grounding in OT and Second Temple Judaism</li> <li>• Avoids discussion of the divine and charismatic aspects of the Jesus-disciples interactions</li> </ul>
<b>Unique Entity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Underlines the uniqueness of the incarnation</li> <li>• Directly derives parameters from the Gospel</li> <li>• Tends to highlight the divine and charismatic aspects of the Jesus-disciples interactions as well as the human aspect</li> <li>• Enables a fitting and</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of a model leads to lack of standardization which in turn makes research difficult to assess and apply</li> <li>• The Evangelists would most likely have had in mind theological models with which they compared and contrasted the Jesus-disciples interactions</li> </ul>

	corresponding linkage between Christology and Discipleship for each Gospel	
<b>Eschatological Prophets</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Highlights the influence of the OT and theological idioms of the Evangelists on the Gospel narratives</li> <li>• Fits the idea that Paul grounded his self-understanding in the OT prophetic tradition</li> <li>• Some scholars see Jesus as an Eschatological prophet</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prophetic model is inflexible, even though there are a number of different categories of prophets in OT</li> <li>• Excludes other OT and Second Temple Jewish theological conceptions such as apocalypticism and Sapiental thought</li> <li>• Jesus was much more than a prophet</li> </ul>
<b>Agents of Jesus</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Versatile and allows for inclusion of the unique entity, prophetic and rabbinic elements</li> <li>• Enables each Gospel's Christology to be fitted with its discipleship</li> <li>• Allows for functional characterization of the nature of discipleship</li> <li>• Highlights the theological idioms within which the Evangelists wrote the Gospels</li> <li>• Fits the Gospel genre as biographical</li> <li>• Enables application in Practical theology</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Questions remain about the dating of textual support of agency model from rabbinic literature</li> <li>• The relationship between discipleship and apostleship must be clarified for each Gospel</li> </ul>

Three main conclusions which should direct the subsequent investigations may therefore be drawn. Firstly, it is apparent that the starting point for investigating discipleship ought to be the Gospels themselves. This includes taking the Christological and theological idioms and declared intentions of the Evangelists seriously. The present study will underline the pivotal roles of the prologues in fashioning the Christology, and the theological concepts within which discipleship must be examined. Secondly, even though one may confidently study the Gospels without the necessity of a model, its



absence tends to be disadvantageous. Certainly, a controlling model is essential to a successful comparison of two Gospels. This model must be informed by the theological currency of the Old Testament and Second Temple Judaism. The choice of the agency model enables this element to be factored, as well as bringing the prophetic, apocalyptic and wisdom traditions to bear on the Gospel data.

Finally, the best model should balance the divine and human dimensions of the Jesus-disciples relationship. In this respect, the agency model again offers significant advantages. A number of recent examinations of NT Christology have found the notion of the Divine Council as an extremely helpful tool for linking NT Christology with the OT and Second Temple Judaism (e.g. Dörmann 1983a; Bauckham 1999; Gathercole 2006). Given that the Divine Council features in prominent biblical scenarios in which God interacts with humanity, both at the material level, such as in the theophanies in the historical, prophetic and sapiential traditions and also in the apocalyptic visionary traditions, there is likely to be some mileage in developing a model fashioned around these conceptualizations.

It is proposed that a major contribution of this dissertation is to show that when Jesus is regarded as the embodied Divine Council and the specific theological idioms of Mark (apocalyptic eschatology) and John (apocalyptic Wisdom/Torah/Logos) are taken seriously, a versatile model with excellent potential for elucidating the formation of the disciples will emerge. It is to the task of fashioning this model that we now turn.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **AGENTS OF THE EMBODIED DIVINE COUNCIL: THE FIRST CHAPTERS OF MARK AND JOHN AS MODELS FOR INVESTIGATING THE FORMATION OF THE DISCIPLES**

The main task of the present chapter is to construct a model with which to examine the formation of the disciples as depicted by the Gospels of Mark and John. As a number of works reviewed in the previous chapter has shown, the investigation could be fruitfully done without employing a model. On the other hand, a model offers the project several additional advantages. The key heuristic functions of models in experimental and descriptive social studies have been well described. Gorrell has for example argued for four main benefits of models in the social sciences—(a) they help identify central problems and questions concerning the phenomenon, (b) they limit, isolate and systematize the domain to be investigated, (c) they provide a new language or universe of discourse for analyzing the phenomenon and (d) they provide explanatory sketches and means for making predictions (1981, 131-132).

In addition, the standardizing and stabilizing roles of models in comparative studies have also been recognized (Malina 1991, 220). Models help set the parameters for collating data to be used for the comparisons. Certainly, in a qualitative biblical research as the one at hand, a model is necessary to direct the collection of comparable data from the Gospels. In his discussion of typologies employed in sociological biblical studies, Domeris also maintains that “models enable one to make certain deductions concerning the structure and life of New Testament communities” (1991, 220). Hence the challenge is not whether a model should or should not be used for the investigation. Rather, the interest of this chapter is to identify the ideal features of a suitable model and use them to construct one for the project.

The previous chapter uncovered certain principles which must guide the construction of such a model. First among them is the fact that a suitable model must be derived from the Gospels themselves and guided by the Evangelists. Externally imposed models do have their advantages, but they almost always tend to skew the investigation. As will shortly be demonstrated, the prologues act as interpretive keys to the Gospels and when taken as such, provide direction for firmly grounding models for studying not only the Christology but also Discipleship of the Gospels.

Secondly, a suitable model must be faithful to the genre of the Gospels as historical-theological biographies of Jesus. This implies that in investigating discipleship in a Gospel, the Christological emphases of the Evangelists cannot be divorced from consideration. In this respect, the preceding and contemporary theological paradigms that constrained and influenced the biographical writing of the Evangelists must also be considered in fashioning the model. Thirdly, a suitable model must be flexible enough to enable the investigation of both divine and human dimensions of the Jesus-disciples relationship. Having already accepted the versatility of the agency idea for fulfilling this particular criterion, it is also important to take account of the various ways in which the encounters between divine and human agents are depicted in the OT and Second Temple Judaism.

The alternative to employing such Jewish backgrounds as starting point for constructing a suitable model would have been Hellenistic or ancient near eastern conceptions of the divine-human interactions. Indeed, from the beginning of the twentieth century until about three decades ago, scholarly constructs of Markan Christology tended to rely on Hellenistic conceptions of the Θεῖος Ἄνθρωπος (Divine Man) for studying the ministry of Jesus (e.g. Wrede, 1971; Bultmann 1963; Georgi 1964; Betz 1968, 116; Schulz 1967; Keck 1965, 354-357; Weeden 1968, 150-158; Achtemeier 1972, 220-232; Perrin 1974). Several significant factors have however resulted in the virtual abandonment of this conceptualization of Markan Christology. Chief among these is the fact that there is no concrete evidence of a fixed divine-man concept in Hellenistic literature of the time of Jesus. The earliest evidence of use of the terminology can only be traced to two centuries after the time of Jesus (cf. von Martitz 1972, 338-340; Kingsbury 1981, 243-

257). Consequently, most approaches to Markan Christology now depend on Jewish backgrounds for their constructs (cf. Kazen 2008, 591-614). The present project intends to travel along this path.

Taking these criteria into consideration, the present chapter has three main sections. The first section will summarize how the interactions between divine and human agents are portrayed in the OT and STJ and so furnish a general model for the study. In addition the theological ideas that emanate from these depictions and some of the recent scholarly discussions on the subject will be noted. The second and third sections will pilot and fine-tune the model in Mark and John. It will respectively examine the first chapters of Mark and John with the aim of identifying which of the theological paradigms from the OT and STJ are evident and act as specific models for interpreting their respective portrayals of the Jesus-disciples interactions.

### **3.1 Interactions between Divine and Human Agents in the OT and STJ**

An essential feature of the God of Israel is His self-disclosure and self-initiated interactions with His creation. A summary of how these interactions between the divine and human realms are presented in the OT and STJ literature will serve as an important background to the study of the Gospels.

#### **3.1.1 Divine-Human Interactions in the OT**

The categories of human agents in the OT include the patriarchs, priests, prophets, sages, seers, judges, king-warriors and their various helpers—some agents fulfilling more than one function. Regardless of the “specialty” of the agents, several passages in the OT depict specific interactions between God or His heavenly agent and a number of human agents. These interactions are generally depicted in two main ways—(a) as a revelatory encounter such as in visionary or dreamlike experiences in which the human agent sees events in the spiritual realm and in some cases ascends into God’s presence, and (b) as material theophanic encounters in which God (or His heavenly

agent) appears to and interacts with the human agent in various tangible forms. The two phenomena provide good entry points for the investigation.

### 3.1.1.1 *The Divine Council as Locus for Divine-Human Interactions in the OT*

In the category of revelatory encounters, human agents are granted the grace to view the proceedings of the divine realm, in which, in many of these cases, God is depicted as enthroned within an assembly or court of angelic hosts and divine persons who act rather like God's cabinet (e.g. Ps 82; 89; 103:21; 148:2). This phenomenon is called the Divine Council<sup>1</sup> and it is within this Council that strategic decisions are taken to influence human affairs (cf. Job 1-2). The first presentation of this phenomenon in the OT is when the plural *Elohim* is used for God in the creation account (e.g. Gen 1:2; 3; 10; cf. 3:22). Thus in the first description of the interaction between the divine and the human realms in the Bible, God is portrayed as a Godhead within whom a counsel, council or consultation occurs.

On several subsequent occasions in the rest of the OT, the interactions between God and human agents are similarly based on the Divine Council idea and its associations. In certain passages, the Divine Council is depicted as serving as judicial witness of Yahweh's decrees (e.g. Ps 50:7; 82:1-8; Zech 3:6; Amos 3:13 cf. Bokovoy 2008, 37-51). The Divine Council, it is underlined, may admit human agents to "see" and "hear" its deliberations, and even record the proceedings as witnesses (e.g. Amos 3:7; Jer 23:18-22; Isa 6:1-6; 40:1-8; Dan 7; 10). To Jeremiah therefore, the *sine qua non* of a true prophet is one who "stood in the council of the LORD so as to see and to hear his word? Who has given heed to his word so as to proclaim it?" (Jer 23:18)<sup>2</sup>. On the other hand, the Council may send messengers to carry out its orders and interact with human agents (e.g. 1 Kgs 22:19-23; cf. Job 1:6).

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<sup>1</sup> Other synonyms include the Divine Assembly, heavenly council or heavenly assembly or Assembly of God etc.

<sup>2</sup> Except otherwise stated as literal translations, all bible quotation are from the NRSV.

One of the strategic decisions that the Divine Council takes is the declaration of holy wars. In this, the Council issues a shout to recruit human agents to join God to fight this war (e.g. Deut 33:1-5; 26-29; Judg 5; Isaiah 13, Joel 3:9-21, Hab 3:11). Indeed, to Miller Jnr, planning, preparing for, declaring and executing holy wars is one of the most important functions of the Council (1968, 100-107). Other functions of the Council are reception of worship and declaration of judgment and/or grace and comfort.

The second part of the Book of Isaiah (Isa 40-66) plays a significant role in the portrayal of the Divine Council and considerably influences NT theology. It begins with an exchange of voices in the Divine Council calling for the comfort of God's people in Isa 40, and continues by depicting the coming of Yahweh to fulfil this call. Using the exodus concept of "the way in the wilderness", Isaiah portrays a new exodus of God's people in which Yahweh will lead them to Zion in joy and peace. The immense influence of this new exodus theology in STJ and subsequently in the NT has been described by several scholars (e.g. Wright 1996; Watts 1997; Pao 2000; Kwon 2009, 1-6) and it will be shown in the next chapter that this significantly influences how Mark presents the ministry of Jesus.

Though the sapiential literature of the OT—Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, some of the Psalms, Song of Songs and Job—do not purport to describe visionary or theophanic experiences with Yahweh, they nevertheless portray the interactions between God and human agents in ways that assume the existence and operations of the Council. In Proverbs, Wisdom is presented as a female divine Person, a heavenly divine agent, or God Himself, who seeks to relate to humankind in order to impart Her qualities. Similarly, and as noted earlier, the Council is the object of worship in several Psalms (e.g. Ps 50:7; 82:1-8) and is assumed in the prologue of Job. The Book of Daniel serves as advancement in this trajectory of depiction. In Dan 7-12 divine-human encounters are depicted in a corporate fashion, so that the Son of Man interacts not just with a single person, but with several persons called "the righteous ones" (Dan 12:3 cf. 7:3) whose function is to lead others to righteousness (cf. Freyne 1982, 7-23). In this manner, the book of Daniel prepares the way for the phenomenon in later second

temple period such as in Qumran, in which the whole congregation is regarded as coming into direct contact with the Council.

Another interesting feature of the accounts, which is developed in much more detail during the second temple period is the writing or recording by human agents in the presence of Yahweh. The idea that there are various kinds of heavenly books within the gathering of the Divine Council is mooted in passages such as Exod 32:32-33, Ps 69:28-29; 139:16; Isa 4:2-6; 34:16-17, Jer 22:30 and Dan 10:21. Some of these books are said to contain the records of the sins of people; others of various names, and yet, others, the record of future historical events (cf. Collins 1993, 326). In being granted access to the Divine Council, the human agent is also given the commission to act on behalf of the Council, record and declare its proceedings to other human beings.

The history of scholarship on the interpretation of these data, in the context of Jewish monotheism and the invisibility of Yahweh is complex. Scholarly investigation of the phenomenon of the Divine Council appears to have started in the 1940s when Robinson (1944, 151-157) described it as a purely literary device. Robinson's study was closely followed by Rowley's (1944, 151-157). However, it was Cross who described not only the pervasiveness of the concept in the OT; but, also proposed that it was derived from ancient near eastern mythological conceptions of the assembly of the gods or a pantheon of gods responsible for the cosmos (1953, 274-277). Cross' work has been followed by several other investigations, not only into the history of religions background but also its role in the OT. In particular, studies have examined how the conception features in the way the human agents of Israel are depicted, both in direct and indirect manner, as interacting with and deriving their authorization from the Council of Yahweh (cf. Kingsbury 1964, 279-286; Cooke 1974, 22-47; Polley 1983; Mullen 1973; Handy 1994; Savran 2005).

### *3.1.1.2 Theophanic Encounters as Locus for Divine-Human Interactions in OT*

Majority of the depictions of the divine-human encounters are usually through dreams or visions. In a number of OT texts however, the encounters are described as theophanic

phenomena in which a divine person materially proceeds from the Council, and appears to, and interacts with human beings<sup>3</sup>. In these cases, the human agents are described as seeing, hearing, exchanging conversation, and interacting with God in so personal a manner as to lead to their transformation. Abraham's hospitality and subsequent hagggle with Yahweh over Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen 18), Jacob's wrestling with "the man" (Gen 32), Moses' speaking with God, "face to face" (Ex 33), and Joshua's encounter with the "commander of the army of the Lord" (Josh 5) are few of the several examples of such theophanic encounters. These OT depictions should be distinguished from encounters with an angel, or an *angelus interpretus* who acts on behalf of Yahweh. In the particular instances in view, this divine person receives worship and acts and speaks on His own behalf as God's Council.

A variety of events and processes occur during these encounters. In most, the object of the encounter appears to be revelatory, so that the human agent would perceive or understand and so act as witness to the reality, power and intentions of God (e.g. Gen 18; Isa 40; Ex 3). In some, such as the case of Dan 7, the revelation serves to illuminate the agent's understanding and further application of previously known revelation, or in this particular case, scripture. Consequently memory plays a crucial function in these circumstances. Commissioning and authorization features in many of these encounters (e.g. Ex 3; Jer 1; Ezek 1-3; Isa 6), even though they also highlight the immense inadequacies of the human agent. In a few cases, the motif of cleansing or purification is prominent (e.g. Isa 6). The motif of testing human agents as in Gen 22 and Ex 20:20, though rare, is also noteworthy for the purpose of this study. Though some of these encounters can be rightly labelled as "call narratives", they nevertheless function much more than "calls". In these scenarios, the transformation of the agent to enable them fulfil the tasks also play significant part (cf. Savran 2005, 26).

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<sup>3</sup> E.g. Gen 18:1-33, 32:24-32; Ex 3:1-6; 33:9-34:8; Josh 5:13-15; Judges 6:11-13; Isaiah 6:1-13; Jer 1:4-19; Ezek 1:3-3:15 etc.



### *3.1.1.3 Hospitality during the Divine-Human Interactions in the OT*

In the bulk of the theophanic encounters, God is envisaged as the Guest-Stranger who visits the human agent, the latter acting as the host. And the interactions are often couched in terms of the cultural protocols of hospitality of the ancient near east. This is not surprising, given the pivotal role of hospitality as the main socio-cultural mode through which individuals in ancient near eastern and Mediterranean environment interacted (cf. Hobbs 2001, 3-30; Pohl 2008, 143-155; Bellinger and Arterbury 2005, 387-395; Reines 1977, 358-366; Arterbury 2005; Arterbury 2003; Elliot 1981).

However, in several other descriptions of the divine-human interaction in the OT, God acts as the Host to the human agent by providing the agent with food, drink and / or company. The idea first appears in Gen 1 where God is depicted as the benevolent Creator who welcomes the first humans into His creation and makes “every plant yielding seed...every tree with seed in its fruit... you shall have them for food” (Gen 1:29). God also plants a garden for the first humans and “freely” makes available to them every tree as food for His guests, apart from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Gen 2:8-17). Other agents portrayed as receiving hospitality from God include Hagar in Gen 21:19, the elders of Israel in Ex 24:1-11, Israel in the wilderness in Ex 16-17 and Deut 8:2-5, the alien and homeless in Deut 10:17-18, and Elijah in 1 Kgs 19.

These depictions of divine hospitality also form the background of several references to God as a benevolent Host in the poetic literature (e.g. Pss 23:5-6, 39:12, 104:10-15, 136:25, 145:14-16, 146:9; Prov 9:1-6). In Proverbs 9:1-6 for example, Divine Wisdom is portrayed as a benevolent Hostess, who builds a large guesthouse, prepares a sumptuous feast, and sends out emissaries to the streets to call willing guests to Her banquet. In other passages, God issues invitations to passers-by to come to Him for food and drink. In the Prophetic literature, divine hospitality is portrayed in eschatological terms with God as the Host of an eschatological banquet to which all manner of peoples are invited (e.g. Isa 14:1, 25:6; Amos 9:13-15; Joel 3:18). Also related to the phenomenon of divine hospitality is the metaphorical conceptualization of God that closely associates Him with a sacred Place in which He hosts His covenanted people (e.g. Ex 25:8; Lev 26:11-12; Ps 23:6; Ezek 37:27-28; 43:9). Since God is

omnipresent, His agent inhabits His Presence. However, in these contexts, the interactions are expressed in terms of *cleaving*, *dwelling* or *abiding* with God (e.g. Deut 10:20, 11:22, 13:4, 30:20; Josh 22:5, 23:8-11; Ps 15:1)<sup>4</sup>. As will become clear in the next two chapters, hospitality plays an important role in the depictions of the Jesus-disciples interactions in both Mark and John.

### 3.1.1.4 Power and Revelation in the Divine-Human Interactions in the OT

Phenomenologically, and irrespective of the “specialty” of the human agent who encountered God in the OT, two categories of phenomena occur—the phenomena of divine power and revelation. And it is with these two miraculous categories that the resultant mission of the agent may be defined. In such accounts as Abraham with the three strangers (Gen 18), Jacob’s wrestling with “a man” (Gen 32:28), Moses at the burning bush (Ex 3), Moses in the Sinai theophany of Ex 34, Joshua before the Captain of the Lord’s army (Josh 5), Elijah at Mount Camel and under the Juniper tree (1 Kgs 18-19), Isaiah in the temple (Isa 6), or Ezekiel by River Chebar (Ezek 1); each encounter involves the phenomena of God’s power and/or revelation.

The two types of phenomena often coexist, and are closely related to each other so that frequently, the ultimate effect of God’s acts of power is revelation. Conversely, the means of God’s revelation is often through His acts of power (e.g. Ex 31:3; 35:31; 1 Chron 28:11-12; 2 Chron 15:1-7). Hence, the crossing of the Red Sea is, for example, regarded in the OT as the ultimate demonstration of God’s power; but, it is also underlined as the means by which God revealed His nature to Israel (e.g. Ex 9:16, 15:6, 32:11). In a number of cases in the OT, God’s self revelation is the means of saving or empowering His agent. So, for example, in the midst of a severe crisis of self-doubt, Elijah received a special revelation from Yahweh that revived and empowered him for further service (1 Kgs 19:11). Similarly, Moses received a special epiphany of God

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<sup>4</sup> The idea of God as “Place” is much more prominent in Second Temple and Rabbinic Judaism e.g. *m. Abot* 2:9, 13; 3:14; *t. Pe’ah* 1:4; 3:8; *Sabb.* 7:22, 25; *Roš Haš* 1:18; *Ta’an* 2:13; *b. Qam* 7:7; *Sanh* 1:2; 13:1, 6; 14:3, 10; *Sipre Num* 11.2.3; 11.3.1; 42.2.3; 76.2.2; 78.5.1; 80.1.1; 82.3.1; 85.3.1.

precisely at the time of Israel's deep moral crisis (Ex 33:19-23; 34:6). The two categories of phenomena are however to be distinguished based on the dominant means by which God acts during the encounter. This distinction will become important in the study of John's Gospel in which some of Jesus' acts of power are regarded as signs revealing His identity, and the human comprehension of the meaning of the signs (i.e. "seeing and believing") as God's gracious miracle of revelation to His agent. A discussion of these two phenomena now follows.

#### 3.1.1.4.1 The Concept of Power in the Divine-Human Encounter

The OT concept of "divine power" refers to the numinous quality by which God effects changes in His creation. It essentially describes the activity of God and encompasses complex interplays of ideas of God's sovereignty, authority, holiness, and invariably, His Holy Spirit. The sovereignty of God describes His right and freedom to act in the manner He chooses, without being influenced by any other factor outside of Himself. In other words, God acts because He wills to act and wills the act to occur in the manner in which He wills it. God's power is therefore linked to His inherent authority (cf. 1 Chron 29:11; Job 26:14; Ps 66:7; Ps 145:11; Jer 27:5); for, authority is the right of God to act as sovereign Creator. It is based on this fact that both van der Leeuw (1938) and Eliade (1959) have defined religion as the human "confrontation with an overwhelming and mysterious power which transcends the phenomenon, object or person in which the power is manifested" (Schoenherr 1987, 53).

A distinction is often made between the concepts of authority and power—the former referring to the formalized and institutionalized right to perform certain functions; whereas the latter refers to the ability, capability and competence in performing the same actions, with or without the formalized authorization (cf. Schoenherr 1987, 52-71; Falbo and New 1987, 499-507). In relation to God therefore, authority is sometimes used in ascription to His transcendence, whereas power is used in relation to His immanence (cf. Powell 1963, 5-17; Grundmann 1932). However, such a distinction in relation to God, whose powerful activities in the world demonstrate His authority as the sovereign God, is not always clear-cut (cf. Ex 9:16; Ps 66:11; Jer 10:12; 32:17). The

power of God is evidence of His authority and hence the two are practically interchangeably (e.g. 1 Chron 29:11-12; 2 Chron 20:6; Ps 62:11; Jer 51:15). This idea of interchange between divine power and authority is important for the present project; for, as will be evident in chapter four, though there is constant reference to Jesus' authority in Mark's Gospel, it is His powerful divine activities which serve as evidence of His divine authority (e.g. Mk 2:9-12; 3:22-29).

It is here also that the idea of the holiness of God in the OT becomes relevant; for, the holiness of God is evident in His complete transcendence and authority over His creation—"People are bowed down, everyone is brought low, and the eyes of the haughty are humbled. But the LORD of hosts is exalted by justice, and the Holy God shows himself holy by righteousness" (Isa 5:15-16). God's holiness exhibits His sovereign authority in being separate from, and above all creation. Conversely, in His immanence, God's holiness is linked to His power. Indeed several OT notions of the holiness of God are inseparable from the power of God (e.g. 2 Kings 4-9; cf. Domeris 1986, 35).

The power of God thus constitutes the inner energy of His holiness (cf. Otto 1923, 78; Bloesch 1995, 140-145). Where the power of God is active, His holiness is also active. So for example, in the burning bush incident, the presence of God's power in the miraculous burning bush made the ground on which Moses stood holy (Ex 3:5). Similarly, in the face of the exhibition of divine power and holiness, Isaiah immediately recognizes and admits his sinfulness (Isa 6:5). Other examples of instances in which the idea of holiness is linked to the immanent power of God include the numinous power through the Ark of the Covenant (1 Sam 5:10; 6:19; 2 Sam 6:6) and the burning of "strange fire" by Nadab and Abihu (Lev 10). God's holiness positively operates as God's power to the extent that it immediately changes that with which it comes into contact. Indeed, in these two examples, the power of God is described with a quality not unlike the modern scientific notion of electricity. The radiating face of Moses in Ex 34:29-35 is another instance in which encounter with the power of God transforms His agent in a manner analogous to the modern concept of the transmission of electricity. There also,

the ideas of God's glory, His holiness and His power are intertwined. Elijah's mantle (1 Kgs 19:19, 2 Kgs 2:8-14) served a similar function.

The above examples illustrate the point that a bearer of God's holiness also becomes a bearer of God's power—"At one level this power equips the bearer to live a life of ethical and ritual purity, but at another level this power generates an electrical tension which comes to the fore whenever the holy one encounters the realm of the profane" (Domeris 1986, 35; cf. Otto 1923, 27). Also underlying this idea of divine power as the inner energy of the holiness of God is the frequent associations of judgment, grace and glory with God's acts of power (cf. Job 37:23; Ps 24:8; Mic 3:8). As will become clear in the next chapter, this complex interplay between divine power and holiness is important aspect of Jesus-disciples interactions.

Also inseparable from OT conceptions of God's power is the concept of God's Holy Spirit. It is true that the Holy Spirit is described in the OT as a divine Person, with intelligence and emotion (e.g. Isa 63:10), performing divine actions (e.g. Job 26:13; 33:4) and possessing divine attributes (e.g. Isa 40:13; Ps 139:7-10). However, the actions of the Holy Spirit in the OT are also described with fluid-like qualities linked to the powerful activity of God. So, for example, the commonest Hebrew term for spirit (*ruah* - 338 times in the OT), is also used for moving activity of natural fluids like wind, breath, odour and space. Its Greek equivalent πνεῦμα is similarly used for the wind (cf. Jn 3:8). These parallels are not surprising, given the attribution of God's power to His Spirit (e.g. Gen 1:2; Judg 14:6; 15:14; Zech 4:6). In some descriptions, the powerful acts of God's Spirit is depicted in terms of tangible physical energy and force—Elijah is for example thought by his contemporaries to have been caught up and transported by God's Spirit who throws "him down on some mountain or into some valley" (2 Kgs 2:16).

When the human agent therefore encounters God and is commissioned to fulfil a mission, God also graciously channels His power through the agent, but in such a fashion that the power is still derived from, dependent on and accountable to God. Similarly, the interconnected conceptions with God's power, particularly, His authority and holiness are also evident in the operation of the agent of God. For example, God's

agent may also be described as a holy person, because of the associated element of the operation of divine power in his mission. Equally, the agent may function as his commission requires only through the endowment of God's Spirit. Micah could therefore write, "But as for me, I am filled with power, with the Spirit of the LORD, and with justice and might, to declare to Jacob his transgression and to Israel his sin" (Mic 3:8).

In his examination of the actions of prophets in the OT, Overholt (1982, 3-31) divides the prophetic acts of power into two categories—(a) those acts which are within the normal human capabilities of the prophets but which in their specific contexts nevertheless constitute a means of revelation (e.g. the naming of the prophet's children in Isa 7 and Hos 1, or Jeremiah breaking a pot in Jer 19) or (b) those acts involving miraculous power which abrogate the laws of nature (e.g. Isaiah's movement of the sun dial in Isa 38:7-8, Elijah/Elisha narratives). The first served as means of revelation of the nature and intentions of God, whereas the second were acts of power, as well as of revelation. The revelatory nature of acts of power means that they often constitute also as parables communicating revelatory messages (cf. Blomberg 1986, 327-359).

#### 3.1.1.4.2 The Concept of Revelation in the Divine-Human Interaction

The OT idea of divine revelation, like that of divine power, is also closely associated with God's sovereign freedom and will. In the OT, the God of mystery is Himself hidden from the eyes of humanity (Isa 45:15), but chooses to reveal His nature and intentions as He saw fit—through His acts of blessings (e.g. Amos 9:7) or of judgment (e.g. Isa 13, Jer. 25:12-38, Amos 1:3–2:3, Nah 1–3, Zeph 2:8-15). The revelation may take several different forms—through the ordinary human senses, especially sight and hearing, through a conversational encounter in which God directs His agent in the exchange to the point of miraculously perceiving the truth, or through a miraculous conviction or insight into supernatural knowledge wrought by God within His agent. The human agent who encounters God then becomes an agent of proclamation of these revelatory acts of God, and the means of performing such tasks categorized as "revelatory activities" (cf. Buss 1981, 9-30).

Just as in the encounter with the Divine Council, the human agent is transformed to become a bearer of God's power; so also does he become a vehicle for declaring the μυστήρια (mysteries) of the Council. In a magisterial article titled, *The Semitic Background of the Pre-Christian Concept of Mystery*, Brown (1958, 417-433) identified that the Hebrew equivalent of the concept of mystery, *sôd*, is only used within the context of the Divine Council or confidential minutes of the council of political elders and that of intimate friends (1958, 421). True prophets of Yahweh have had access to this mystery emanating from the Divine Council (e.g. Amos 3:7 cf. Job 15:8, 1 Sam 14:37, Jer 23:18; Amos 3:7; Isa 6:8).

According to Brown, the pre-Christian development of the concept of divine mystery reached its most advanced form in Daniel where μυστήριον is used in two senses—on the one hand it refers to fresh *de novo* information received from God which cannot be acquired by any other means. On the other hand, μυστήριον in Daniel also came to apply to the special gift of wisdom to interpret God's revelation and apply it to the contemporary circumstances (1958, 423). In the words of Mare, mystery in Danielic terms is "that which is factually known but not understood; or...that which is both unknown (or rather, forgotten) factually and also not understood" (1965, 79; cf. Lawson 1997, 61-76). By the beginning of the Christian era therefore, the Jewish conception of μυστήριον was understood as either new supernatural *de novo* knowledge from God's Council or the agent's supernatural ability to interpret God's revelation to fit the prevailing circumstances. This distinction will become important in the understanding of the theology of revelation in both Mark and John's Gospels.

A "co-operative" interaction between God and His agent is essential for the latter to become bearer of divine revelation. Physical sight and sound, even if miraculous, do not automatically turn their witnesses into agents of divine revelation. The faithful response of the human agent to divine revelation is essential for the transformation to be complete. Similarly, as the extended conversations between Yahweh and Abraham, and with Moses, on separate occasions in Gen 18 and Ex 3 respectively show, a degree of interpretation on the part of the human agent is required for the divine revelation to be fully grasped by the agent. Revelation and hermeneutics are therefore closely

intertwined in the divine-human encounter. So, paradoxically, spiritual comprehension, perception and understanding play key roles in the transmission of divine revelation (cf. Laney 2001, 36-51; Stark 1999, 287-308; Vogels 1998, 144-157; O'Day 1986, 657-668).

Spiritual comprehension is different from cognitive comprehension in the sense that the former requires faith for its apprehension and is in itself a gracious gift of God. Faith is therefore not antithetical to spiritual comprehension; it is indeed integral to it<sup>5</sup>. Conversely, incomprehension or misunderstanding may be a reflection of inadequate faith. In fact, in OT theological terms, human knowledge and systems of comprehension are hindrances to spiritual comprehension. Hence the failures of Moses (Num 20:2) and Elijah (1 Kgs 19) should be seen in terms of their incomprehension (or miscomprehension) of God's will, intentions and power. In the case of Moses for example, God bars him from entering the Promised Land "Because you did not trust in me, to show my holiness before the eyes of the Israelites" (Num 20:12; cf. Beck 2003, 135-141; Helfgot 1993, 51-58). Incomprehension stemming from unbelief was therefore the reason for Moses' failure. Because divine revelation is a miraculous encounter, complete misunderstanding of divine revelation may result from unbelief—i.e. the wilful rejection of, or unwillingness to accept divine revelation.

Misunderstanding need not always be regarded in negative terms. In certain circumstances, misunderstanding by God's agent serves as the platform for further clarification of God's revelation. As Aune puts it, "In the ancient world, misunderstanding was understood as a characteristic human response to divine revelation" (1987, 55-56). So, for example, in the establishment of the Abrahamic covenant in Gen 17, Abraham's first response to God's promises was to misinterpret the promises as applicable to Ishmael. God then explains further, that though Ishmael will definitely be blessed, His covenant was specifically related to the yet to be born Isaac (Gen 17:17-22).

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<sup>5</sup> This idea is most elegantly expressed by the words of Augustine of Hippo, "Understanding is the reward of faith. Therefore seek not to understand in order to believe, but believe in order to understand" (*Ep.*, 120.I.2-3; cf. Rush 2001, 231-261).



It is true also that misunderstanding may serve literary and pedagogical functions; for, they have the ultimate effect of refining and focusing the narrative for the benefit of the reader. In certain scenarios the misunderstanding assumes overt literary characteristics as an irony or even a literary riddle whose resolution by the reader heightens the narrative's communication. Yet, these literary functions of misunderstanding should not be taken to imply that the accounts were ahistorical. In the case of the formation of the disciples, misunderstandings, and ironies may indeed have constituted significant repositories of the raw revelation from Jesus, but whose full meanings were grasped only after the Easter event (cf. Barrett 1978b, 200; Painter 1979, 82; Culpepper 1983, 152-165; Carson 1982, 59-91; Duke 1985; O'Day 1986, 657-668).

### 3.1.2 Divine-Human Interactions in STJ

The Second Temple period is regarded by most scholars as a theologically distinct and extremely frantic period of Jewish religious history. In addition to the massive cultural changes that occurred during the exile and Hellenization, and the political instability resulting from invasions by pagan nations, the immense social transformation of Palestine resulted in a very significant shift in Jewish theological understanding of the OT. In addition, Diaspora Judaism during the period became not only a distinct entity different from what pertained in Palestine, but also a much more dynamic force within Jewish religious milieu. Scholars recognize that the religion of the Jews during the period was complex, polymorphic and in some cases followed disparate lines of interpretations of the Torah (cf. Grabbe 2004). Accordingly, the Jewish literature of the period portrays further developments in the conceptions of the divine-human encounter. It is likely therefore that the OT conceptualization of the divine-human encounter was somehow refracted, or at least, affected by theological conceptualizations during the second temple period. A summary of these developments are therefore necessary in order to appreciate the theological viewpoints of the Evangelists.

Though the strands of Judaism in the period were diverse, there were several points of intersections between them. Hence it is often difficult to separate out one strand as for

example, completely apocalyptic, whereas the other, completely Torah centred or mystic. Categorization of the religious strands can therefore be rather deceptive. For the purposes of the present project however, and to enable some description of the conceptions of the divine-human encounter, five categories of the Jewish literature of the period are relevant—Qumran, Apocalyptic, Sapiental, Diaspora Judaism and Rabbinic Literature.

### *3.1.2.1 Divine-Human Interactions in the Qumran Literature*

A recurring feature of the Qumran literature is the phenomenon of initiates claiming to have received knowledge of mysteries by entering and even joining in the deliberations of God's Council (e.g. 1QH 12; 15; 18; 20)<sup>6</sup>. Worrell has indeed indicated that the Qumran sectaries often regarded their gathering as in tandem with the Divine Council of Yahweh (1970, 65-74). This is most prominent in the Manual of Discipline (1QS) and the Damascus Document (cf. Heiser 2004). In other parts of the Qumran material, the sectaries are regarded more or less as angels worshipping in the presence of the Council (Dimant 1996, 93-103; cf. Wold 2005). It will be shown that this fact alone is of immense relevance in the study of the depiction of the disciples in Mark's Gospel.

### *3.1.2.2 Divine-Human Interactions in the Apocalyptic Literature of STJ*

Though the technical definition of the term "apocalyptic" continues to be hotly debated (cf. DiTommaso 2007a, 235-286; DiTommaso 2007b, 367-432), there is widespread agreement among scholars that during the second temple period, the phenomenon of visionary experiences and conceptualizations of the divine realm became fundamental to many aspects of the theological understanding of several strands of Judaism (Collins 1998, 5). With the Book of Daniel as its most advanced OT model, apocalyptic literature of the second temple period employed visionary material to focus on eschatological issues (Aune 1987, 227-229).

The Judaism of the period was in many ways, apocalyptic, even though two broad categories of historical apocalypses and other-worldly journeys may be distinguished. Within the Qumran literature for example, several aspects of the community's beliefs and teaching had apocalyptic flavour. Of relevance to the present study is the collection of apocalyptic tractates in the Book of Enoch (dated around 300 BC). This book is identified by many scholars as exerting significant influence on Jewish conceptualization of the divine-human interaction that are also reflected in the New Testament. In a nutshell, it depicts a rebellion in the heavenly realms and the translation of Enoch into that realm to receive revelations which are transmitted through the book. As claimed by Charles, "nearly all the writers of the New Testament were familiar with it, and were more or less influenced by it" (1964, ix). Though the degree of such "influences" cannot be proven beyond doubt, the fact remains that parts of the book indicate some of the theological ideas that were current during the period prior to the first century AD.

Other apocalyptic texts such as Jubilees, 4 Ezra, Apocalypse of Abraham and 2 Baruch focus on seers who through visionary experiences encounter the divine realm. In some of these works, human agents are depicted as intermediary figures between God and humanity who are admitted into the presence of God (e.g. Moses in *Ezekiel the Tragedian* or the Son of Man or Enoch in the *Parables of Enoch*). These depictions cannot be compared with the Jesus-disciples interactions in the Gospel. However, it is important to examine some of the theological themes that emanate from these apocalyptic depictions and so investigate whether and if so, how much of it are reflected in the manner in which the Evangelists conceptualized the Jesus-disciples interactions.

### 3.1.2.3 Divine-Human Interactions in the Sapiential Literature of STJ

The influence of the Sapiential literature during the second temple period has not been as extensively discussed as that of the apocalyptic genre. However, there are indications that the influence of the Wisdom traditions, like apocalypticism, was protean

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<sup>6</sup> See also 1QH 3.21-22; 4.24-25; 11.11-12; IQSb 3.25-26; 4.23-25; IQSa2.8-9; 4QFlor 1.4; 1QM 10.10; 12.7. 1QM i 10; 4Q400-407

and affected wide areas of Judaism but to different degrees. The major texts in this category are Sirach and Wisdom of Solomon. In these texts, Wisdom is clearly personified as a female who shares God's qualities, including participating in the creation of the world. In Qumran, several scrolls are also clearly Sapiental (e.g. 4Q184-185; Targum of Job (11QtgJob); Wisdom Psalms (11Q Ps = 11Q5), and significant portions of 1QS and 1QH also contain sapiental material (cf. Harrington 1996).

These texts roughly emphasize the nature of the divine-human interaction in similar categories as that in the OT. So for example, in Wis 7:25-27, Wisdom is personified as God's supreme Agent who transforms and enables other agents to fulfil God's purposes—

She is the breath of the power of God, and a pure influence flowing from the glory of the Almighty: therefore can no defiled thing fall into her. For, she is the brightness of the everlasting light, the unspotted mirror of the power of God, and the image of his goodness. And being but one, she can do all things: and remaining in herself, she makes all things new: and in all ages entering into holy souls, she makes them friends of God, and prophets.

[Wis 7:25-27]

There are significant cross interactions between sapiental traditions and apocalypticism, so that some sapiental texts depict visions of the heavenly realm in which divine mysteries are revealed through books (e.g. 4Q417 1 i 13-18; 4Q299 ii 2.8; cf. Bennema 2001, 61-82). In his examination of the Wisdom traditions during the inter-testamental period, Bennema distinguishes four main strands—Torah centred, Spirit centred, Apocalyptic and Qumranic strands. He further argues that whereas the Spirit centred Wisdom traditions were largely prevalent in Diaspora Judaism, the apocalyptic Wisdom tradition was Palestinian in flavour (2001, 79). However this distinction may not be taken too far since the interactions between these strands were closely networked.

#### 3.1.2.4 *Divine-Human Interactions in the Literature of Diaspora Judaism*

It is difficult to accurately identify the nature of interactions between the theological conceptualizations of Diaspora Judaism and the Evangelists. Nevertheless, apparent similarities and parallels between the two groups of literature offer opportunities for comparative analyses. Of particular interest to our study are the personifications of divine qualities such as the Logos, Pneuma and Wisdom in literature of Diaspora Judaism and the nature of Jewish mysticism and piety during the period. Specifically, the Philonic material offers some interesting perspective. Other literature of Diaspora Judaism such as the Maccabean literature, Josephus collection and the Book of Tobit (cf. Helyer 2002, 42-74) may offer some background material on the historical and socio-cultural setting of Diaspora Judaism and the wider situation in the Middle East of the time. Though it is not envisaged that these materials will make significant contribution to understanding the Gospels, one ought to remain open to that possibility.

#### 3.1.2.5 *Divine-Human Interactions in the Rabbinic Literature*

The use of rabbinic texts for Gospel studies has undergone two main paradigmatic shifts in the last half century. Earlier scholarship felt inhibited by the difficulty in dating the materials, and hence ascertaining whether any influences could be shown between them and the Gospels (cf. Keener 2003, 185-194). Many therefore doubted the utility of these sources, some of which may be dated more than a century after the Gospels were written.

In the last decade or so, however, researchers have tended to approach the problem with a higher degree of sophistication. Essentially, the assumption that a text that post-dates another text may for that matter not share any common oral or traditional influences or even parallels have been questioned. When the rabbinical texts are regarded, not as potential *sources* for the Gospel writers as such, as earlier scholarship attempted to do, but rather as providing indications of some of the concepts, beliefs and traditions that were common during the period, they offer important ideas on the Judaism of the time. Vermes (1993, 8-9), in opposition to Neusner (1994), has for example strongly argued for a nuanced methodological approach which regards the

rabbinic texts as potentially able to shed some light on Jewish traditions that predated them and the NT.

One example of aspects of rabbinic literature which may hold promise for the present study is the manner in which some of the rabbis understood the divine-human interaction as occurring through the study of the Torah. Thus for example the Psalmist's prayer that God would "Open my eyes, so that I may behold wondrous things out of your law" (Ps 119:18) is interpreted as a plea for a divine-human encounter (e.g. *Sipra Sav pq.* 18.97; *Sipra Taz par* 1.121.1.6; *b. Hag* 6a). In these texts, the Torah is personified so that its study becomes more or less equivalent to an apocalyptic experience of encountering God (e.g. *Sipre Deut* 41.6.1). The study of the Torah was also regarded as a pietistic act of interaction with God (e.g. *b. 'Abbot* 6.5 *bar*).

### 3.1.2.6 Summary and Implications

The preceding survey, though brief and summarative, has focused on how the divine-human interaction was depicted in the Jewish literature of antiquity that most likely influenced religious thought during the time of Jesus. Within the OT, the Godhead is depicted in several texts as in Council with Himself and His agents, especially in formulating plans and strategies that influence events within His creation. Human agents interact with the Divine Council in the OT in two main ways—through revelation as in dreams or visions, or by personal interaction with a divine Person in a theophany. Several of these interactions are portrayed using the socio-cultural protocols of hospitality, in which God may act either as the Guest, or on some occasions, the Host. In the sapiential literature of the OT, qualities of God are personified who then interact with human agents to instruct them in their missions. Worthy of note is the contribution of the second part of Isaiah (40-66) in fashioning the theology of Yahweh proceeding from His Council to lead His people in a new exodus. Alongside this is the Divine Warrior motif in which God again proceeds from the Council to recruit the righteous as co-agents in a holy war.

Though the Jewish literature of the second temple period is varied in outlook and emphases, the divine-human interaction is broadly depicted in the two ways in the OT,

albeit in several different combinations. In the apocalyptic literature for example, the emphases on revelation of mysteries of the Divine Council are linked with heavenly journeys into the divine realm, during which human beings interact with the heavenly realm. This particular model is clearly unsuited to the situation of the disciples, though some aspects of apocalyptic theology are evident in the Gospels. So, for example, the Son of Man theology in Mark exhibits some apocalyptic elements which are reflected in the Jesus-disciples interactions. In addition, the phenomenon of the personification of divine attributes, who interact with humanity, holds much promise for the investigation. The personification of the Logos, Wisdom and Torah in the various traditions will be shown to have influenced how Jesus is portrayed by the Evangelists in the following chapters.

The above conceptualizations of the divine-human interactions in the OT and STJ have been applied in recent NT studies, albeit in an indirect manner, and often been through discussions of the question of the worship of Jesus in the light of Jewish monotheism (e.g. Bauckham 1999; Rainbow 1991, 78-91; Hurtado 1988). On the other hand, and in his unpublished PhD, William Domeris employed the concept of Jesus as the Agent of the Divine Council to directly explain the Christological title of “the Holy One of God” in John 6:69 (1983a). The present study intends to take this conceptualization of Jesus as Agent of the Council to its logical conclusion in the investigation of the Jesus-disciples interactions in Mark and John. Before then, however, the above models will be piloted and fine-tuned in the first chapters of these Gospels.

### **3.2 The Jesus-Disciples Interaction in Mark 1:1-20**

Few will disagree with Matera’s claim that “Readers who misunderstand the beginning [of a narrative] almost inevitably misunderstand the conclusion. At the beginning of a narrative, the narrator establishes the setting, introduces the characters, and lays the foundation for the plot” (1988, 3). This maxim is very true of Mark’s Gospel, in which he guides and privileges his readers by using the initial introductory statements to pre-empt the major themes and characters of the narrative. Without grasping and applying the

important ideas in the beginning, especially, the prologue, the reader of Mark's Gospel will very likely misunderstand the intentions of its writer in the rest of the book.

There are several different views on the functions of the prologue of Mark. In the opinion of Donahue and Harrington for example, the prologue "supplies readers with important "insider" information about Jesus that none of the human characters in the body of the gospel possess" (2002, 67). This "insider" information must be employed as the key for unlocking the message of the Gospel. Similarly, Hooker is of the view that through the prologue, Mark lets the reader into "the secrets which remain hidden throughout most of the drama from the great majority of the characters in the story" (1986, 6; cf. France 2002, 59; Stein 2008, 38; Lane 1974, 39). And Matera thinks that although not all information are provided by the prologue, it gives enough indicators to guide the reader in unlocking the essence of the whole narrative (1988, 4 cf. Sankey 1995, 4). It is fair to conclude therefore that for a summarative conception of Mark's view of who Jesus is, as well as the theological frame through which Jesus' interactions with His disciples are to be interpreted, the prologue is the place to begin.

An immediate difficulty regarding the textual limits of the prologue however confronts the interpreter; for, Mark smoothly transitions and weaves his prologue into the rest of the narrative by employing a carefully staged conceptual movement or "series of hinges" (Bryan 1993, 85). Locating where Mark's prologue ends, has therefore been the subject of extensive scholarly disagreement. Some interpreters argue for 1:1-8 (e.g. Byran 1993, 85-88; Gundry 1993), others for 1:1-13 (e.g. Stein 2008, 35; France 2002, 13; Donahue and Harrington 2002, 67; Matera 1988, 3-20; Lightfoot 1950, 15-20; Cranfield 1959; Schweizer 1970; Taylor 1966) and still others for 1:1-15 (e.g. Boring 1990, 43-81; Keck 1965/66, 352-370; Gibbs 1973; Anderson 1976; Mann 1986). A small minority argue for 1:1-20 (e.g. Myers 1988, 112). Of central importance in determining the limits of the prologue is identifying the key words used by Mark in his opening salvo. In this regard, the wilderness themes, as well as the ministry of the Spirit and the theology of "the way" are the crucial pointers to the limits of the prologue. The argument in favour of 1:13 as the limit of the prologue therefore appears to be the most



persuasive, since it closes the “wilderness scene” of the Gospel and 1:14 begins the Galilean scene of Jesus’ ministry.

However, since this study is interested in charting the interactions between Markan history, theology, Christology and discipleship, there is a strong attraction in choosing 1:1-20 as the limits for identifying the keys that Mark gives the reader to guide interpretation of the rest of his work. Moreover, interpreters who argue for 1:1-13 as the limits of the prologue also accept that the summarative introduction of Jesus’ inaugural ministry in Galilee in 1:14-15 and the account of the call of the first four core disciples in 1:16-20 are also programmatic for the rest of the Second Gospel. An examination of the Christology and other relevant theological themes of this prologue now follow.

### 3.2.1 The Divine Council and the theology of Mark’s Prologue

There are several indications that behind the prologue of Mark is the idea of the Divine Council intervening in human affairs to fulfil His promised eschatological purposes. As will be evident shortly, it is from the Divine Council that Jesus, the Son of God proceeds as Yahweh’s supreme Agent. And it is also from the Divine Council that His appointment is played out in a drama at His baptism. Mark’s key quotation in the prologue is derived mostly from Isaiah 40 which is similarly set within the Divine Council. The Baptist is also presented as commissioned from the same Council as the messenger to prepare the way ahead of Yahweh. Finally, the significant role played by the Spirit in the prologue highlight the operation of the Godhead in Jesus’ life.

Given the influence of the Divine Council idea on Mark’s prologue, the account of the first Jesus-disciples encounter which follows the prologue should also be interpreted in the light of this conceptualization. This encounter depicts Jesus as the embodied Divine Council who comes to recruit co-agents to fulfil the eschatological mission of the Council. These indications will now be examined in turns.

### 3.2.1.1 *The Divine Council and Mark 1:1*

Mark begins in an abrupt fashion—Ἀρχὴ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ υἱοῦ θεοῦ<sup>7</sup> (beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, Son of God). This abruptness may or may not be deliberately intended by Mark, but what it indicates is the “intrusion” of the Son of God into human history to bring into fulfilment the εὐαγγελίου of God. The role of the verse is disputed among scholars, some regarding it as the title for the whole work (e.g. Boring 1991, 47-53; Marcus 2000, 143; Donahue and Harrington 2002, 59-60), while others (e.g. Stein 2008, 39; Hooker 1991, 31-52) see it as an integral part of the prologue, without significant influence on the whole Gospel. At issue is which of the words in the verse appear to be emphasized by Mark. Those interpreters who think Mark stresses ἀρχὴ see the verse as part of the prologue; whereas those who believe that Mark underlines εὐαγγελίου as key to the rest of the narrative see Mk 1:1 as the Gospel’s title describing what will follow.

There are several reasons to opt for the view that Mark 1:1 is the title for the whole work. Firstly, if ἀρχὴ referred only to the prologue, then Mark would have given some indication as to where the prologue ended and the next sub-section of the work took off. Given the considerable differences of opinion regarding the limits of the prologue, it appears likely that ἀρχὴ is qualifying εὐαγγελίου and not just the prologue. Secondly, εὐαγγελίου in its objective genitive role is related to the Isaiah quotation that follows it, which in turn is related to the major theological themes of the whole Gospel, and not just the prologue. Mark’s use of the εὐαγγελίου in Mk 1:1 therefore, refers, not to the message preached by the earthly Jesus, but to the Good News of the fulfilment of the eschatological promise of God described within the Gospel. The “εὐαγγελίου refers to the contents and subject matter of Mark’s narrative as a whole, the story of Jesus, the saving act of God in His Son Jesus the Christ, His words, deeds, death, and resurrection” (Boring 1991, 51).

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<sup>7</sup> The textual problems associated with this verse are well discussed in Metzger 1971, 73; Guelich 1989, 6; Evans 2000, 67-81. The evidence for retaining υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ appears more persuasive. For a wider discussion of the other problems, including its grammar, stylistics and theology, see Croy 2001, 105-127.

Thirdly, the designation of Jesus as Son of God appears in key moments of the rest of Gospel (Mk 1:11; 3:11; 5:7, 9:7; 13:32; 14:61; 15:39). On all occasions, the title is declared in relation to activity in the divine or spiritual realm. And even though it is not explicitly stated in characteristic language of the Divine Council, it is fair to assume that given OT and STJ understanding of the concept, this idea is also present in the depiction of activity in the divine realm. Ulansey (1991, 123-125) has for example convincingly argued for seeing the rending of the sky and the heavenly voice at the baptism, as well as the rending of the temple veil and the centurion's confession at the cross, as a "cosmic inclusio" of the whole Markan narrative. On both occasions, the Son of God title is declared. Since the Son of God is the Agent of God embodying the Divine Council, it is clear that the initial reference in Mk 1:1 assumes the theological framework of the Divine Council as the setting of the whole Gospel<sup>8</sup>.

### *3.2.1.2 The Quotation in Mark 1:2-3, the Divine Council and the Theology of Mark*

The Scriptural quotation at the beginning of the second Gospel (1:2-3) is a major indicator of Mark's theological point of view—the view from which he interprets the events in Jesus' life and ministry. And here too, the Divine Council serves as the theological frame of interpretation.

Though Mark attributes the quotation to Isaiah, the passage is a conflated mixture of phrases from Ex 23:20, Mal 3:1 and Isa 40:3. There are three broadly nuanced interpretations of how this quotation from Isaiah 40:3 affects the interpretation of the surrounding verses—(a) some scholars regard it as specifically referring to the Baptist, (b) others to Jesus and (c) yet others, not primarily to the persons in the prologue but to the theology emanating from Isaiah 40-66. Most commentators argue that since the same quotation is applied to the Baptist by Matthew (Matt 11:10), Luke (Lk 1:76) and

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<sup>8</sup> Evans argues that the title Son of God may have been a deliberate attempt by Mark to parallel the Priene calendar inscription in honour of Caesar Augustus (2000, 68 cf. Boring, Berger and Colpe 1995, 169). Though a double *entendre* reference to the inscription, at the same time as the immediate theological purpose at hand, are not unlikely; the tenor of the title, and the quotation associated with it, militate against such a socio-political-religious interpretation of Mk 1:1.

John (1:23), a similar phenomenon must be occurring in the prologue of Mark. France for example regards the Baptist as the embodiment of “the voice” that cries in the wilderness, and “the immediate fulfilment of these scriptural models is therefore to be found apparently not in Jesus but in John [the Baptist]” (2002, 61; cf. Matera 1988, 7; Lane 1974, 45).

It is indeed wholly correct that Mark regarded the Baptist as Jesus’ forerunner who through his ministry “in the wilderness” prepares the way of the Lord. It is also likely that if Mark’s original readers were familiar with the application of Isa 40:3 to the Baptist, as the rest of the NT suggests, then the Second Evangelist has chosen to merely quote Isa 40:3 at the beginning of his narrative in an enthymematic fashion (cf. Donahue and Harrington 2002, 60; Gundry 1993, 31; France 2002, 50-51). Yet, and as will be emphasized below, this interpretation does not appear to exhaust all of Mark’s intentions for quoting Isaiah. Moreover, this approach separates Mark’s title from the body of the Gospel, since the quotation is by implication unrelated to the title.

A number of scholars have therefore suggested that the Isa 40 quotation is directed, not to the Baptist, but to Jesus, the Son of God in the title in Mk 1:1. The main contention of these interpreters is that the phrase *Καθὼς γέγραπται ἐν* (as it is written) in 1:2a is mostly employed by Mark and the rest of the NT to link an event or statement preceding it with one following it<sup>9</sup>. Hence it is suggested that Mark is using the reference to Isaiah to link with his title of “Jesus the Son of God”. This would indicate that Mark equated Jesus, the Son of God with Isaiah’s “Yahweh”, and the Baptist, as the preparer of the way for His coming. Tolbert for example argues that the whole of Mk 1:1-3 refers to Jesus and the reference to the Baptist only begins in Mk 1:4 (1989, 239-248; cf. Stein 2008, 42). The “you” and “your” of the quotation support this view as they certainly are addressing Jesus and not the Baptist. The problem with this approach however is that if Mark meant the quotation to refer only to Jesus, then the description of the Baptist’s ministry in Mk 1:4-9 appear to be a rather early digression to the Gospel narrative.

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<sup>9</sup> For example Matt 26:24; Mk 7:6; 9:13; 14:21; Lk 2:23; 3:4; Jn 6:31; 12:14; Acts 7:42; 15:15.

A more satisfactory approach argues that the quotation links the theology expressed in the title, i.e., “the beginning of the εὐαγγελίου of Jesus Christ”, with the depiction of the Baptist’s ministry that follows it. In that sense, Isa 40:3 is quoted to refer to *the* εὐαγγελίου which includes both the reference to Jesus in Mk 1:1 and to the Baptist’s role in preparing the way for Jesus in Mk 1:4-9. In support of this approach is the consistent manner in which the NT narrated the Gospel starting with the ministry of the Baptist. Thus Marcus (1992, 18), along with Guelich (1982, 6) have argued that for Mark, it is the εὐαγγελίου proclaimed by Isaiah which is the most important element in the quotation (1992, 19; cf. Watts 2000, 55-56). Also of a similar view, Boring believes that Mark applies the Isaiah quotation as an “offstage” discourse that heralds the drama that was about to start with the Baptist. In this discourse, Mark understood “the voice” in Mk 1:3 as the Voice of God, addressing Jesus “the Lord” in Mk 1:3 “behind the curtains”, so to speak (1991, 60).

This means that the opening verses of Mark provide an aural presentation of the Divine Council declaring Jesus the Son of God as the One coming to fulfil a mission, but whose way is to be prepared by the Baptist. “By this narrative technique, the reader gets to overhear the voice of God addressing Jesus, the one whose way is to be prepared, and this one is then called κυριος” (Boring 1991, 60). Thus in quoting Isaiah 40, Mark was also alluding to its context (cf. Sankey 1995, 7). What the quotation does therefore is to set a plotline, the theological frame, within which the εὐαγγελίου is narrated. This approach inevitably places Isa 40 and the whole of the Isaianic new exodus theology of 40-66, of which Isa 40 is its prologue, as a central source for ascertaining Mark’s theological, Christological and discipleship models.

Several aspects of Mark’s theological, Christological and discipleship themes should accordingly be examined from the perspective of the Isaiah quotation and its theological interpretations. That this quotation is the only explicit OT citation by Mark supports this view (cf. Watts 2000, 56). As will shortly be argued, the idea of the Divine Council in the Isaiah quotation shapes the Christology of Mark’s prologue. Similarly, several discipleship themes in the Gospel are shaped by this Isaiah quotation. The presence of the wilderness theme in the first part of the Gospel, “the way” theme in the central

portions of Mark, and the apocalyptic holy war against evil forces motif throughout Mark should also be seen as reverberations of the Isaiah 40 quotation. In addition, the Baptist's function of preparing the way of the Lord becomes a prototype, albeit not a complete one, of what it means for a disciple to share in Jesus' mission (cf. Marcus 1992, 43-45; Perrin and Duling 1982, 110).

Not all interpreters accept this specific understanding of the significance of the Isaiah 40 quotation. Snodgrass (1980, 24-45) has for example urged that Καθὼς γέγραπται ἐν before the quotation is atypical of New Testament use, is abrupt, and not linked to the preceding superscript. Rather, he believes that Mark assumes that the reader is familiar with several streams of Jewish eschatological interpretations of Isaiah 40:1-5. Exegetes in Qumran (e.g. IQS 8:13-14; 9:17-20 and 4Q176), Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha (e.g. Baruch 5:7, Enoch 1:6 and Assumption of Moses 10:1-5) and rabbinic traditions<sup>10</sup> interpreted Isa 40 "as a classic statement of the consolation that comes from God and was understood specifically in the context of God's eschatological comfort" (1980, 31). A further twist in this trajectory of interpretation is how the Qumran Essenes and second temple Jewish revolutionaries linked their "holy war" theology with the "escape to the wilderness" theme in anticipation of the return of Yahweh to lead His army against evil spiritual forces (cf. Schwartz 1987, 65).

Snodgrass is correct to draw attention to these varieties of interpretations and influences of Isaiah 40 in STJ. And it indeed underlines why the quotation in Mk 1:2-3 should not be seen as identifying the Baptist alone, but most likely highlighting the theology inherent in it. There is no need, however, to discount the possibility that while Mark may well have been aware of some of these other interpretations of Isaiah 40, his most pressing interest is in how they shed light on the εὐαγγελίου. Hence Snodgrass' intervention actually reinforces the likelihood that this exactly was the purpose of Mark's use of Isa 40 at the beginning of the Gospel.

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<sup>10</sup> E.g. *Pesiq. Rab.* 29/30A, 29/30B, 30, 33; *Lev. Rab.* 1.14; *Deut. Rab.* 4.11.

### 3.2.1.3 *The Divine Council and Agency in Mark's Prologue*

A striking feature of the prologue of Mark is its focus on the Baptist and Jesus as Agents of God. The two characters, though significantly different in status and roles, share a common link with the preceding OT quotation as authorized agents of God to fulfil specific missions. Indeed, all three OT texts that have been conflated by Mark in the quotation deal with the sending of a messenger by divine authorization<sup>11</sup>. Consequently, Jesus' interaction with the first four core disciples that immediately follows the prologue (1:16-20), should be understood as the recruitment of co-agents to help fulfil His divine mission. One aspect of this agency motif is the role of the Divine Council as the setting for commissioning the agents; for, Isaiah 40 is a poem which depicts the cry of "voices" in the Divine Council announcing the good news of comfort to herald the return of Yahweh to His people.

Not all interpreters accept that Isaiah 40 is set in the Divine Council. Most agree though that there are certainly elements of a call narrative, even though it lacks two of the six components<sup>12</sup> of Habel's form critically based criteria (1965). Thus Eddinger argues that there is no clear evidence of a Divine Council meeting in Isa 40, even though there is a suggestion that a meeting of the Council may have occurred before Isa 40:1 (1999, 124). Others who completely object to the presence of the Council in Isa 40 include Freedman (1987) and Watts (1989, 85-87).

Yet, there is enough evidence in Isa 40 to suggest that the Council is at least implied in the exchanges between the voices that constitute the poem of Isaiah 40. Melugin has shown through comparing the similar linguistic features of Isaiah 6 with Isaiah 40, that the Divine Council is assumed in the later, whereas it is described in full in the former (1976, 81). In that case, Isa 40 is a call narrative that assumes the presence of other

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<sup>11</sup> Exodus 23:20 describes the Angel of the Lord who is sent ahead of wilderness Israel; whereas Mal 3:1 also portrays the sending of a messenger to prepare for the day of Yahweh's appearance in His temple. And Isaiah 40 describes the sending of a messenger ahead of Yahweh who comes to comfort His people.

<sup>12</sup> It lacks divine confrontation and sign element but contains introductory word, commissioning, objection and reassurance (Eddinger 1999, 119-135).

criteria rather than restating them. Similarly, Seitz is of the opinion that God's voice in Isa 40:1 calling for the comfort of His people is directed to the Divine Council that is assumed to be present in the passage (1990, 229-247; cf. Cross 1953, 274-277).

It may be concluded therefore, that the quotation of Isaiah at the beginning of Mark's Gospel indicates that for Mark, the setting for the call of agents to fulfil God's mission is within the Divine Council (cf. Worrell 1970, 65-74; Cross 1966). When at His baptism therefore, a Voice from heaven declares Jesus as His Son, and the Spirit descends upon Him, it is being made clear that Jesus is both God's supreme Agent and the embodiment of the Divine Council. The manner of the depiction of the baptism as if it were "an event that takes place between the Father and the Son" (Berge 1997, 95) reinforces the Divine Council idea as the setting for commissioning agents. Indeed, Ps 2 which is reflected in the declaration of the Voice is also set in the Divine Council (cf. Donahue and Harrington 2002, 65). Also in support of this interpretation is the association of the Divine Council motif with the holy war theology in the Old Testament and in Mark (cf. Miller 1968, 100-107). Consequently human and non-human characters that interact with Jesus in Mark's Gospel are to be seen as coming into direct contact and confrontation with the embodied Divine Council.

### *3.2.1.4 Jesus as the Embodied Divine Council in Mark's Prologue*

By providing a number of privileged information to the reader in the prologue, most of which were unavailable to the actual actants of the narrative, Mark expected the interpretation of his document to proceed more smoothly than the actual events themselves. Key among these privileged pieces of information is the fact that Jesus is both divine and also human. So, concerning His humanity, Jesus is said to have ἦλθεν, (come) from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized, like the many other human beings who came from the Judean countryside for the same purpose (Mk 1:5-9). Equally, the temptation of Jesus by Satan underscores His humanity.

Yet, the prologue also highlights the fact that Jesus is much more than what He appeared to be. Several statements in the prologue point to the divinity of Jesus. In



describing Jesus as Son of God, Mark intimates the divinity of Jesus right at the beginning of his Gospel. Also of note is the Voice from heaven who addresses Jesus as, “You are my Son, the Beloved”. The Baptist also indicates the divine nature of Jesus’ identity in his description of Jesus as the more powerful One (Mk 1:7). The three theophanic events accompanying the baptism—the rending of the heavens, the descent of the Spirit and the heavenly Voice—mark Jesus out as the Inaugurator of God’s eschatological kingdom (cf. Edwards 1991, 43-57).

Furthermore, the Spirit of God is noted on three occasions in the prologue as playing primary roles in Jesus’ life (Mk 1:8; 10; 12), leaving the reader with no doubt of Jesus’ divinity—He baptizes with the Spirit, the Spirit descends on Him and the Spirit “drove” Him into the wilderness. The idea of Jesus as one who baptizes with the Spirit in Mk 1:8 has been considerably investigated by interpreters. The expression “baptism with the Spirit” (Mk 1:8) was rarely used in Judaism before the time of the Baptist (cf. Bennema 2003, 41). Consequently, several interpreters believe that it refers to later Christian understanding of Spirit baptism, and hence has no specific pre-Christian influences in Mk 1:8 (e.g. Dunn 1977, 21; Stein 2008, 51; Donahue and Harrington 2002, 64).

In this reading of Mk 1:8, Mark is thought to have been comparing the dispensation epitomized by the Baptist with the Christian dispensation that was to follow it. In support of this trajectory of interpretation is the fact that apart from 1 Cor 12:13, all the other occasions in which “baptism with the Holy Spirit” occur in the New Testament (Matt 3:11; Lk 3:16; Jn 1:26-33; Acts 1:5; 11:16), compare the Baptist’s water baptism with Jesus’ Spirit baptism. The problem with this approach, however, is that it depends more on what Mark (and the other Evangelists) is purported to have meant by what he has written, rather than as statements made by the Baptist in the historical setting as the text intends it to be read.

Other commentators (e.g. Lane 1974, 52; France 2002, 72; Marshall 1973, 130-140; Brown 1984, 300-310; Manicardi 1980, 166-169) opt for understanding the phrase as the Baptist’s own rephrasing of the Jewish concept of the eschatological outpouring of the Holy Spirit. There are a number of reasons for preferring this second interpretation

of Mk 1:8. Firstly, the aorist perfect present use of ἐβάπτισα in Mk 1:8 suggests that the statement should be taken as a direct assertion by the Baptist rather than one that was coined by Mark. In which case the meaning of the phrase, “baptize you with the Holy Spirit” in Mk 1:8 should be traced to its pre-Christian antecedents rather than its later Christian use. According to Marshall, the pre-Christian meaning of βάπτισαι denotes being “overwhelmed with” or “drenched in” the Spirit (1973, 130-131 cf. Isaacs 1976; Dunn 1984). In this regard, Isaiah’s prophecy regarding the extensive operation of the Holy Spirit during the new exodus “in the wilderness” and through the Messiah (e.g. Isa 32:15; 44:3; 63:11-15) would have provided the Baptist with such an Old Testament mandate to predict Jesus’ charismatic ministry. The testimony of the Baptist that Jesus would baptize with the Spirit therefore, points to the divinity of Jesus; for, the outpouring of the Spirit was regarded in the OT as a distinctive eschatological act of God Himself (Isa 32:15; 44:3; Ezek 36:26-27; 39:29; Joel 2:28; Zech 12:10).

Secondly, the cross-interchange between Old Testament conceptions of divine power and the Holy Spirit (cf. Wood 1998, 39-63) suggests that in indicating that Jesus was the more powerful One, the Baptist was predicting the overwhelming operation of the power of the Spirit of God in the earthly ministry of Jesus (cf. Brown 1984, 300-310; Manicardi 1980, 166-169). In other words, on the lips of the Baptist, “baptism with the Spirit” in Mk 1:8 intimated the explicit and implicit references to the operation of the power of God in Jesus’ ministry in the rest of Mark’s Gospel.

Thirdly, the other two references to the Spirit in Mark’s prologue shed further light on the Spirit baptism in Mk 1:8. In one, the Spirit descends on Jesus and anoints Him (Mk 1:10). In the other, the Spirit “drives” Jesus into the wilderness (Mk 1:12); suggesting an overwhelming energy or force of the Spirit on Jesus as divine Agent. If these two references to the Spirit in Mark’s prologue are to serve as guide, Jesus baptizing with the Holy Spirit (Mk 1:8) should be understood to mean the active operation of the Holy Spirit through Jesus to effect changes in others. In the next chapter, this understanding of the Spirit empowered ministry of Jesus will be employed to explain some of the Jesus-disciples interaction. For now, it suffices to note that these threefold reference to

the Holy Spirit in Mark's prologue, and the ubiquitous presence of the Spirit in His ministry, underline Jesus' divine identity.

Accordingly, given that Mark's prologue simultaneously depicts Jesus as both divine and human, and given that its theology is influenced by the Isaiah quotation that portrays God as Divine Council; *the most functional term to be used for summarizing the Christology of the prologue is Jesus as the "embodied Divine Council"*.

The phrase "embodied Divine Council" may at first appear self-contradictory and novel, to the point that it merits a brief explanation. Its self-contradictory nature underlines the mystery that Jesus is; for, no human categories would be adequate to summarize the Person of Jesus. And the nature of Mark's narrative Christology itself, together with decades old scholarly debate on the "keys" to his Christology, illustrate this internal tension within the Person of Jesus. Thus the evidently self-contradictory nature of the phrase "embodied Divine Council" only serves to highlight the mystery of Jesus' personality. As the phrase stands however, it conceptualizes the idea that Jesus is God's supreme Agent, who though human, also fully acted in history as *the Representative of the Divine Council*. More significantly, the phrase firmly links the functions of Jesus with those of the Divine Council of God depicted in the OT and STJ, an approach which most likely influenced the biographical writing of the Evangelists.

Furthermore, other alternatives to the phrase, "embodied Divine Council" suffer from more serious disadvantages. The "Son of God" title in Mark's prologue, though an attractive option, does not fully conceptualize the functional nature of Jesus' agency. It is unsurprising therefore, that several scholars have unsuccessfully tended to pit Mark's "Son of God" Christology with the "Son of Man" Christology (e.g. Donahue 1973; Perrin 1974). The concept of Jesus as "the Messiah" would have been desirable as a summary of the Christology of Mark's prologue, given the emphasis of the work of the Holy Spirit in His life. However, the Messiah title, depending on how it is construed, may fall short of underlying Jesus' full divinity in the way that the prologue of Mark does.

Another advantage of "embodied Divine Council" as summary of the Christology of Mark's prologue, for the present purposes, is that the phrase enables comparison of the

Christology of Mark's Gospel with that of John's Gospel. Consequently, even though the terminology appears novel, "embodied Divine Council" nevertheless adequately captures the functional portrayal of Jesus in Mark's prologue, and will be employed as the summarative model of Christology in the rest Mark's Gospel.

### 3.2.2 The First Jesus-Disciples Interaction in Mark 1:16-20

The account of the call of the first four disciples of Jesus begins Mark's focus on the disciples which is one of his most important features. The pericope also appears to be programmatic or even "paradigmatic" (Donahue and Harrington 2002, 76; cf. Gundry 1993, 70) for all future Jesus-disciples encounters in Mark. Thus the purpose of the call of disciples and the procedure for their formation to fulfil those functions is expressed in this pericope. Mark 1:16-20 therefore, shapes the expectations of the reader of how the Jesus-disciple interactions in the rest of the Second Gospel will be portrayed (cf. Marcus 2000, 182; France 2002, 94).

The four disciples in the passage are summoned in two pairs to follow Jesus in an interestingly abrupt manner. The call is quite brazen in character; for, these men were called while they were fully employed at their work as Jesus "passed along". No indication is suggested of a previous acquaintance between the men and Jesus. Equally abrupt is their response to the call—"immediately they left their nets... [and]...their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men, and followed him" (1:17, 20). Specifically, four features of the account require examination—(a) the nature of the encounter with Jesus, (b) the stated purpose of the call to turn them into ἀλιεῖς ἀνθρώπων (fishermen of men), (c) the peculiar promise to ποιήσω (I will make) them and (d) the meaning and significance of ἠκολούθησαν (followed).

#### 3.2.2.1 *The Nature of the first Jesus-Disciples Interaction in Mark 1:16-20*

The brazen nature of the first Jesus-disciples encounter in Mark, whereby, with an urgent command, signified by the adverbial imperative δεῦτε (come), Jesus orders

actively employed men to abandon their work and family and to follow Him, has unsurprisingly stimulated scholarly discussion regarding how it fits in the general biographical history of Jesus (e.g. Best 1981, 168; Gundry 1993, 70). Mark does not label this encounter as the very first historical meeting between Jesus and the disciples. However, an attempt must be made to establish the significance of such a presentation. The brazen nature has for example, been compared to the calls of the OT prophets (e.g. Isa 6; Jer 1; Ezek 1; Ex 3-4 cf. Donahue and Harrington 2002, 77; Best 1981, 168-169). Thus in his examination of this pericope, Hengel finds significant parallels between the call of the disciples and the call of Elisha by Elijah in 1 Kgs 19:19-21 (2005, 16-18). The parallels are however incomplete, since Jesus acts in His own divine authority. Moreover, unlike the disciples, Elisha is allowed to go and seek his parent's permission before becoming Elijah's disciple.

Hengel also draws attention to the apparent parallel between Jesus' imperative δευτε οπισω μου (come after me) in Mk 1:17 and Elisha's δεϋτε οπίσω μου (come after me) in 2 Kgs 6:19 LXX, addressed, not to disciples, but to Aramean soldiers who had come to arrest the prophet. Though the verbal links between 2 Kgs 6:19 and Mk 1:17 are tenuous, the conceptual parallels of the holy war motif in both pericopes are much more convincing. Given the motif of holy war expressed in the new exodus theology in Mark's prologue, it is possible that a similar situation occurs in Mk 1:17. In this respect, the disciples in Mark are called as human co-warriors joining the embodied Divine Council in a holy war against evil forces (cf. Miller 1968, 100-107).

The concept of a "divine call", in which God confronts a human agent and in the process, miraculously transforms them so that they perform certain specific functions, is fundamental to discipleship. In theological terms, a "call" is the means by which God commands and incorporates human agents to share in the process of actualization of His divine intentions for them (Pyne 1993, 203-218). Indeed, Mk 1:16-20 is one of several "calls" to disciples in the Gospel. As will become apparent in the next chapter, in addition to "the disciples", several other individuals and groups of people who encountered Jesus are also called. The brazen nature of the encounter in Mk 1:16-20

certainly underlines the miraculous nature of the divine-human interaction, as well as indicating a transformation in the disciples who duly follow Jesus upon the call.

### 3.2.2.2 *The Interpretation of ἀλιεῖς ἀνθρώπων (Mk 1:17)*

Jesus' stated purpose for calling the disciples to follow Him was to make them into ἀλιεῖς ἀνθρώπων (fishermen of men). In its most basic sense, this clearly figurative phrase is understood as the harvesting of people into the Kingdom of God. Thus Jesus is understood to be punning and playing on the words to the effect that men who previously harvested fish from the sea were being now promised a much more noble employment of harvesting human beings into the kingdom.

Several interpreters argue for leaving the interpretation and the play on words at that level, without seeking any OT background to it. Fishing metaphors, as demonstrated by Wuellner (1967, 7), were after all so common and varied in meaning in first century Palestinian and Mediterranean world that ascertaining the exact referent in ancient literature depends to a large extent on the context within which it is being used. And in the present context, it clearly appears to mean helping Jesus in His mission to bring people into God's Kingdom (cf. Shiner 1995, 175; Stein 2008, 78; Meje 1968, 102). In support of this approach is the fact that this phrase is never repeated again in the Markan narrative. The use of the γὰρ clause in Mk 1:16 to clarify that Simon and Andrews were fishermen, also supports this interpretation.

Other interpreters, however, argue that far from just playing on words, the metaphor has a significant OT background which also provides a "surplus" of meaning to further illuminate the projected functions of the disciples (e.g. Smith 1959, 187-204; Lane 1974, 67; Derrett 1980, 108-137). In the OT, the metaphor of fishing, and its associated occupations, together with its related equipment such as nets and hooks, are employed in passages such as Jer 16:16, Ezek 19:4–5; 29:4–5; 38:4, Amos 4:2, and Hab 1:14–17 to depict God's activity among human beings, though this is often "distinctively ominous in tone, stressing the divine judgment" (Lane 1974 67). If such a direct link existed between Jesus' call of the disciples and the OT metaphor of divine activity, then one

may conclude that the disciples in Mark were being called to participate in the judgment of the world. Myers opts for exactly this interpretation when he notes that in summoning the first disciples, “Jesus is inviting common folk to join Him in His struggle to overturn the existing order of power and privilege” (1988, 27). This “judgment” interpretation is however difficult to identify as the *only* function of the disciples in Mark, even though one can justifiably argue that the evil forces in Mark are judged by Jesus and His co-agents, and also that people who rejected their missions were judged and condemned (cf. Mk 6:11). All the same, for such a paradigmatic passage, the emphasis on judgment might appear to be rather unusual. Thus France maintains that Markan disciples were expected “to gain more disciples, to rescue people *from* rather than catch them *for* judgment” (2002, 97 cf. Donahue and Harrington 2002, 74).

Given the tenor of Mark’s account, and the fact that the whole section is pregnant with significant theological undertones of a call narrative, the idea of a theological or religious background to ἀλιεῖς ἀνθρώπων should not be discarded. Since the Markan Jesus is continuously involved in redefining OT imageries, it may well be that the fishing metaphor is refracted and utilized, not in a primary sense of judgment of people but rather in an eschatological harvesting sense, but with a secondary judgment element. Hence the idea that “part of the fishers’ task seems to be the eschatological re-gathering of the people of Israel in the new exodus” (Marcus 2000, 184), which is in view in Mk 1:16-20, is attractive. This theme of eschatological harvesting will be repeated at various stages of the Markan narrative, such as the plucking of grain (Mk 2:23-28), the Sower parable (Mk 4:1-20), the seed growing secretly parable (Mk 4:26-29), and vineyard parable (Mk 12:1-9); the harvesting of leftovers of loaves and fish by the disciples after the two feeding miracles (Mk 6:43 and 8:8 cf. 8:19-20), and the harvesting of the elect by the angels at the coming of the Son of Man (Mk 13:27). There is a subtext of negative judgment in all cases, but the predominant picture is also one of harvesting. The same is present in the imagery of ἀλιεῖς ἀνθρώπων.

This eschatological dimension of the call of the first disciples, indicated by the metaphor of ἀλιεῖς ἀνθρώπων is supported by two further aspects of the narrative. Firstly, in the prologue, Jesus, the embodied Divine Council declares His mission as an

eschatological mission (Mk 1:15). The co-agents who are now recruited to join Him in this mission would therefore be sharing in the same function. Judgment is part of this function, especially when the holy war motif is also considered. The quotation from Mal 3:3-4 which is conflated with Isa 40:3 in Mk 1:2-3 is also related to judgment (cf. Sankey 1995, 8), underlining the fact that this function is the flip side of the coin of the metaphor of harvesting. Nevertheless, the more positive dimension of the mission of Jesus and His disciples is the Isaianic comfort theme and the drawing of people into the Kingdom.

Secondly, the location of the call on the shores of the Sea of Galilee, in Markan terms, should draw attention to an important eschatological significance. As Malbon has convincingly shown, within Mark's narrative theology, the Sea of Galilee functions as the location where the power of Jesus is repeatedly demonstrated against the chaotic evil forces symbolized by the sea (1984, 363-377). The call of the disciples, specifically at this location is therefore part and parcel of this demonstration of the power of Jesus (contra Stein 2008, 77). The response of the disciples to this call is paradoxically a demonstration of how it is that men could be harvested like fishes; for, the disciples are hooked by Jesus' authoritative words as He passed along the Sea of Galilee. His divine action is paradigmatic of the harvesting mission into which the disciples were being called. They would similarly be drawing men from the grips of the chaotic evil forces to join the eschatological mission of the Divine Council.

### 3.2.2.3 *The Significance of ποιήσω (Mk 1:17)*

In summoning the disciples to follow Him, Jesus promises to ποιήσω ὑμᾶς (I will make you). The choice of words is striking and calls for a few comments on Jesus' intentions. There are generally two connotations in the word ποιήσω—one focused on the end product of a process (as used for example in declaring, ordaining, appointing or designating), and the other, focused on the actual process of making the product (as used for example for preparing, shaping, creating, constructing or moulding). Choosing the former interpretation Meye argues that Jesus is indicating the future appointment and designation of the disciples as His apostles after a period of training (1968, 105).



This interpretation is however inadequate. Firstly, and as will shortly become evident, Mark sees apostolicity as functional and not a different category of discipleship to which the disciples would be promoted. Secondly, in the Greek religious world of the first century, ποιήσω and its cognates were often used to describe the creative activity of deity (e.g. Plato, *Tim.* 31b; 37d; 38c; 41d to 42e Epictetus, *Dissertation* 1; 6; 9; 11). In the Septuagint, it is also used to describe God's action, especially in the creation of the world (e.g. Gen 1:27) but also with regard to judgment (Num 14:35 & Deut 20:15) and His miraculous actions (Ex 15:11). Even though the word group is also used to describe human activity, considering the extraordinary circumstances of the call of the disciples, it is highly likely that Mark uses ποιήσω in the divine formational sense. After all, the Baptist had introduced Jesus as the more powerful one who baptizes with the Spirit. The making or forming of the disciples therefore follows on from this power of Jesus as Baptizer with the Spirit.

Consequently, in Mk 1:17, Jesus should not be understood as merely promising the disciples a future designation to become apostles, as Meye construes it. Much more, He was indicating that in following Him, the interactions with the embodied Divine Council will constitute a formational process that will result in the disciples becoming fishermen of men. Robbins agrees with the basic tenets of this interpretation when he notes that the use of ποιήσω “introduces logical progressive form into the narrative. The reader now expects Jesus to engage in the interaction necessary to equip these disciple-companions with the ability to ‘fish men’” (1984, 85). From now on, the constant interaction with Jesus should be seen as their formation as agents of the Divine Council.

#### *3.2.2.4 The Meaning and Significance of ἠκολούθησαν (Mk 1:18)*

The use of the word ἠκολούθησαν to describe the responses of the disciples to the call of Jesus has a consistent double meaning. In the literal spatial sense, it means that the disciples walked behind Jesus. Yet, this spatial interpretation is itself symbolic of the commitment they were making as His disciples who will share in His mission of harvesting people into the eschatological kingdom. Overwhelmingly however, Mark's

use of this term, and others such as the imperative, δεῦτε ὀπίσω μου (come after me) is distinctive of the expression of following Jesus' spiritual leadership—i.e. discipleship (Mk 1:20, 2:14, 15, 3:7, 5:24, 6:1, 8:34, 9:38, 10:21, 28, 32, 52, 15:41). It is also related to “the Way in the wilderness” theme emanating from the Isaianic new exodus motif in the prologue and pictures Jesus as the Leader or Path-breaker ahead of the throng of followers fulfilling God's mission. Its application to other “followers” in addition to the conventional disciples in Mark's Gospel is one of the main reasons for not restricting the concept of being a disciple of Jesus only to the “conventional disciples”.

Inherent in ἠκολούθησαν is the element of imitation, in which, through mimetic activity, the disciple comes to incorporate the character and practice of his master in his own life<sup>13</sup>. Imitation was a crucial element of the training of Jewish children and rabbinic pupils. Writing about the teaching of children of his day (175 BC), Ben Sirach notes, “He that teaches his son grieves the enemy, and before his friends he shall rejoice of him. Though his father dies, yet he is as though he were not dead: for he has left one behind him that is like himself.” (Sirach 30:3-4). Similarly, as Gerhardsson points out, one main function of the rabbinic pupil was to master the “rules of proper behaviour that he followed every action of his teacher with the closest scrutiny and recorded their slightest habits” (1961, 181). Thus, in many ways, discipleship will be portrayed in both Mark and John as a reflected Christology, in which several features and functions that are previously attributed to Jesus are also attributed to the disciples. In following Him, the disciple of Jesus comes to share not only in His mission, His destiny and His methods, but even more in aspects of His Identity.

ἠκολούθησαν is also an appropriate terminology for describing discipleship to Jesus because of the distinctive way Jesus defined the nature and purpose of the calls. It was not to a body of teaching or ethics that the disciples were being called to learn and pass

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<sup>13</sup> A recurring debate in scholarly circles regards whether discipleship in the Gospels, as opposed to the Pauline letters, involved imitation of Christ (cf. Clarke 1998, 329-360; Shuster, 1998, 70-81). Clearly, imitation should be distinguished from mimicry. Yet, even then, several scholars avow that imitation was not in any way part of the training of the disciples (see the review in Webster 1986: 95-120). It appears to me that this debate is coloured by anxieties as to the implications for a present day application. All forms of education involve degrees of mimesis and the formation of the disciples is for that matter not immune.

on to others, but to a relationship to Jesus. And when they followed Him, the idea was not to learn principles but to be ποιήσω, made, fashioned, moulded, and formed into ἁγίῳ ἀνθρώπων by the Stronger One who baptizes with the Spirit. The word also contains the element of service and subordination; for, in following Jesus, the disciples were not being called into “a partnership of equals but to be His followers and servants” (Stein 2008, 78).

### 3.2.3 Summary of the First Jesus-Disciples Interactions in Mk 1:1-20

The prologue of Mark leaves the reader with no doubts about the identity of Jesus, the theological frame with which the Gospel is to be interpreted and the dynamics at work in the Jesus-disciples interactions. The predominant theological frame of the prologue is the Isaianic new exodus motif. This will no doubt be further elaborated and supplemented by other theological themes in the rest of the Gospel. Absent, at least in the superficial sense for example is the Son of Man idea with its apocalyptic influence from Daniel which will shortly become prominent in the Gospel.

Regarding the Person of Jesus, He is the embodied Divine Council, the Son of God who comes from Nazareth to proclaim the eschatological kingdom of God. In this sense, the disciples of Jesus must be considered to be at least at par with the agents in the OT who encountered and interacted with the Divine Council. Jesus, according to the prologue, is also the Stronger One who baptizes with the Spirit, and the Divine Warrior who recruits co-agents in the fulfilment of God's eschatological mission. He is fully human, being tempted as all humans are. Yet, He is also affirmed as God's only Son by the Council at His baptism.

It is this Person that the disciples encounter, and in the process, are formed to share in His mission. This mission is depicted as the eschatological harvesting into God's Kingdom, though the element of judgment is also not far from the understanding of the unique phrase ἁγίῳ ἀνθρώπων. The means by which the disciples share in this mission is to follow Jesus, so as to be ποιήσω, made into qualified “harvesters”. And the mechanism by which their formation will occur is through the power of Jesus, the

Stronger One who baptizes with the Spirit. On the other hand, the disciples respond to this divine initiative by ἠκολούθησαν Jesus. This means much more than literally walking behind Jesus or even adhering to His teachings. It is relating to Jesus in a personal interactive fashion so as to be formed by Him. These elements will be elaborated in the subsequent Markan narrative. The question though is whether John presents a similar picture?

### 3.3 The Jesus-Disciples Interactions in John 1:1-51

Like Mark, John also begins his biographical account of Jesus with a prologue and a programmatic discipleship section in which several disciples are recruited to join Jesus' mission. John's prologue has however been subject of much more extensive scholarly investigations regarding, among other things, its textual limits and its role in relation to the whole narrative<sup>14</sup>. Most interpreters agree that the major transition occurs between 1:18 and 1:19, even though there are smaller transitions within the preceding 1:1-18. It is true that 1:19 resumes the earlier references to the Baptist in 1:6-9 & 1:15. Yet, it can be rightly argued that the reference to the Baptist in Jn 1:19 serves as the beginning of the Gospel narrative proper, as it is in the rest of the New Testament. Other proposals urging a shorter prologue, such as 1:1-5 or 1:1-13 or 1:1-14 (Witherington 1995, 47) do not appear as persuasive as the break between 1:18 and 1:19. The comparison of John's prologue to a series of hinged doors gradually leading the reader to the narrative proper is quite an appropriate analogy (cf. van der Watt 1995, 311-332; Barrett 1978a; Keener 2003; Carson 1991; Witherington III 1995; Kostenberger 2004; Howard-Brook 2003 and Voorwinde 2002, 15-44). Hence for the purposes of the present project, the limits of the prologue will be regarded as Jn 1:1-18.

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<sup>14</sup> The various questions raised by the prologue may be categorized into four—(a) its authenticity or authorial source, (b) its conceptual relationship with the rest of the Gospel, (c) its literary structure and (d) its theological background. It is assumed that the prologue is integral part of the work by the same author, and provides interpretive clues for understanding the rest of the work.

The prologue of John is followed by an elaborate passage, often labelled as the Testimonium (1:19-51), in which individual characters are introduced and then recruited into Jesus' core group. The passage begins with the testimony or witness of the Baptist (1:19-34), followed by the response of Andrew and an unnamed disciple to follow Jesus (1:35-39) and then the recruitment of Peter, Philip, and Nathanael (1:40-51). The whole section therefore serves the function of narrating how the core members of Jesus' group were gathered (cf. Keener 2003, 465). Even though in the first half of John's Gospel, other specific individuals are also recruited as disciples of Jesus, there is no new information about the recruitment of any other member of "the twelve". Kim is correct in suggesting that in literary and theological terms, this passage belongs more with the prologue together with which they serve as introduction to the Book of Signs (2008, 324). Indeed Beasley-Murray regards the prologue of John as continuing through this passage till Jn 1:51 (1987, 18). And Culpepper regards Jn 1:19-51 as "a second narrative introduction" to the Gospel (1998, 120). The whole of John 1:1-51 may therefore be considered introductory, made up of a prologue (1:1-18) and a programmatic narrative of the gathering of Jesus' core group of disciples (1:19-51).

The first chapter of John's Gospel then, deals with three broad elements that are relevant to the subject at hand—(a) Jesus as the embodied Divine Council who is incarnate Logos, Wisdom and Torah, (b) the Baptist as a prototype witness of Jesus and (c) the first Jesus-Disciples encounter. These topics will now be examined in turns.

### 3.3.1 The Christology of John's Prologue

Against Bultmann, most commentators now believe that the prologue of John is basically Christological rather than soteriological. In other words, the focus of the Evangelist is to capture the identity of Jesus and to summarize the controlling theological prism through which the Evangelist is going to narrate His biography. John starts from "the beginning" of creation, and states that Jesus is the pre-existent Son of God who has come in the flesh "and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son" (Jn 1:14). For the purposes of the present project, four

aspects of the Christological themes in the prologue are important and will now be explored.

### 3.3.1.1 *Jesus as the Embodied Divine Council in John's Prologue*

John's prologue begins by making certain basic but profound affirmations about the identity of Jesus. Jesus is in every respect God—He existed before “the beginning”, He was God (Jn 1:1), and indeed the Person through whom all things were created (Jn 1:3). In addition to this affirmation, John also underlines that Jesus is not alone in the Godhead. He was with God from the beginning (Jn 1:1, 2), He is the Father's *μονογενοῦς*, “only begotten of the Father” (Jn 1:14 NKJV)<sup>15</sup>—He, as the only Person who is closest to the Father, has “seen” and made God known (Jn 1:18).

John also underlines the humanity of Jesus in the prologue. Jesus came into the world (Jn 1:10), to people who were regarded as His own (Israel). He became flesh and lived among human beings, some of whom saw His glory (Jn 1:14-15). As most commentators have pointed out, *ἐσκήνωσεν* (“lived” NRSV or “dwelt” NKJV) depicts Jesus as God tabernacling among human beings, particularly with new exodus connotations (cf. Keener 2003, 408; Barrett 1978b, 165; Carson 1991, 127; Howard-Brook 2003, 58; Witherington III 1995, 55; Morris 1995, 91-92; Bruce 1983, 40). Just as the OT tabernacle “became the site of God's localized presence on earth” (Brown 1966, 32), so was Jesus' presence. The prologue of John therefore affirms the full divinity and full humanity of Jesus. It also stresses that Jesus was on a specific mission in the world. He was the Agent of the Godhead, through whom the world was made (Jn 1:3). As agent, He came as the true light to enlighten people (Jn 1:9). As the Father's

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<sup>15</sup> The meaning of *μονογενοῦς* is disputed among interpreters. The traditional translation of “only begotten” as in “only naturally born child” (so NKJV) appears to be the best option and is common in the LXX (Judg 11:34; Ps 21:21; 24:16; 34:17); and inter-testamental literature (e.g. Tob 3:15; 6:11; 8:17; Wis 7:22). However, there is also a wholly acceptable argument in favour of interpreting it as “only Son” (so NRSV) as in “uniqueness” (cf. Keener 2003, 412-416). In both cases Jesus is portrayed as sharing the full divine status with the Father.

μονογενοῦς, He came with His full authority to give those who believe on His name “power to become children of God” (Jn 1:12).

John also chooses a particular theological idiom through which to narrate the biography of Jesus as the embodied Divine Council. As agent of the Father, Jesus is portrayed as the embodied Logos, Wisdom and Torah. All three are essentially linked within the conceptualizations of the divine-human interactions in Second Temple Judaism, but will now be separately examined.

### *3.3.1.2 Jesus as the Λογος in John's Prologue*

Because of the many potential meanings that the concept would have held in John's specific socio-cultural milieu, the Λογος in John 1 has attracted several trajectories of investigations. For the purposes of the present project however, the specific history of religions background to the concept that may shed light on the formation of the Johannine disciples will be the focus. In relation to this question, some scholars have concluded that John uses the Λογος concept independent of his socio-cultural milieu. Bligh, for instance (1955, 401-402) urges that John received the idea by a vision, whereas M'Gillivray (1920-21, 282) suggests that John received the concept via the Spirit's revelation of Christ's glory. While these suggestions may be so, historical studies require us to identify how others in John's milieu may have understood John's use of the concept in the prologue.

Other scholars locate the source in Hellenistic philosophical and religious ideas. Suspecting an anti-pagan polemic in John's use of the concept, Clark (1972, 18-19) suggests a Gnostic background. Similarly, Bultmann urges, “The Johannine Prologue, or its source, speaks in the language of Gnostic mythology, and its Λογος is the intermediary, the figure that is of both cosmological and soteriological significance” (1971, 28). Previous to Bultmann, a number of scholars had posited the background in Mandaeism or Hermetic sources (cf. Keener 2003, 342). Others traced the source to Hellenistic Stoic philosophy (e.g. Moore 1920, 249; MacGregor 1928, xxxiv-xxxvi; Duncan 1979-80; Tenney 1948, 62). Still others have attempted bridging the gap

between Jewish and Hellenistic backgrounds by locating similarities between John's Logos and Philo's (e.g. Garvie 1915, 164; Howard 1945, 160; Sylvia Mary 1964, 64; Middleton 1938-1939, 101-103). On the other hand, Dodd (1965, 276-277) urges that there are parallels between Philonic Logos and Johannine Logos, but no clear dependence.

The purely Hellenistic or even Philonic interpretation of the Logos concept in John has fallen on hard times in NT scholarship. The suggestion of Gnostic background has no historical basis and John's Gospel does not, even in a polemical sense, appear to concern itself in significant ways to Gnostic concepts. In addition, in both Hellenism and Philonism, the Logos is created, and hierarchically below God, even if above other powers by which God orders His creation. Indeed in Philo, the Logos functions rather like an archangel who separates the Creator from His creatures (e.g. Philo *Heir* 205). More significantly, John's Logos is a historical Person, whereas Philo's is a platonic impersonal reason.

It may well be that the prevalence of the concept in both Hellenistic and Jewish socio-cultural and religious milieu was the very reason why John chose to introduce Jesus in this fashion. It certainly would have caught the attention of people from all walks of life in Mediterranean antiquity. In Casey's view, John employed an ambiguous literary strategy in which he has "his feet planted firmly in two worlds...[so as to]...allow his gaze to wander easily from one to the other" (1958, 270). If this were John's intentions, then the continued scholarly fascination with the potential backgrounds of the Logos concept indicates the degree of his success.

Yet, there are very good reasons why the Logos, as John 1 employs the concept, may be regarded as influenced by similar ideas from the OT and STJ. The use of certain terminologies within the first part of the prologue (Jn 1:1-5), such as ἀρχὴ (beginning), ἐγένετο (came into being), φῶς (light), σκοτία (darkness) and ζωή (life) directs the reader much more readily to Genesis 1. In John's conceptualization, the only suitable historical starting point to the biography of Jesus is the point before all things came into being (cf. Ps 33:6). A number of other OT passages reiterate the notion of the creation



of the world by God's *Word* (e.g. Ps 33:4; 6; 9; 11; cf. Isa 55:11; Ps 29). Even though this is not sufficient in themselves to identify the Word of God as a Person, later and STJ depicted God's Word as personified (e.g. 1 Enoch 14:24; 15:1; Wis 18:15). Morris is therefore correct in regarding the language of Jn 1:1-5—"John is writing about a new beginning, a new creation, and he uses words that recall the first creation" (1995, 64; cf. Morgan 1957, 159-160). John's utilization of the concept appears therefore to be a natural growth of this Jewish belief.

It is clear that by John's time the Jewish understanding of the Logos had reached the point whereby the Logos was regarded as a Person within the Divine Council by whom God created all things (cf. Hengel, 1974, I: 154-155 ). In the Targums such as *Neofiti*, the Logos appears to have been personified as the *Memra*, even though some scholars argue that this is figurative or hypostatization, rather than a full personification (e.g. Middleton 1938-39, 113; cf. Hayward 1981, 24, 147). Be it as it may, in most of these Jewish conceptualizations, the Logos was regarded as inferior to Yahweh. John's Gospel, on the other hand, explains that the Logos is Jesus; and proceeds to chart a new and further path in insisting that the Logos was God. He is God's agent of creation, as well as God's self-communication (cf. Jn 1:18; cf. Witherington III 1995, 19).

Yet, it is a confounding task attempting to identify in what specific ways the Logos is portrayed in the rest of the Gospel. Hooker has suggested that the concept of the Logos acts rather like the "Messianic secret" of Mark—it is information about the identity of Jesus as an integrative and interpretive key that is given to the reader but not explicitly known to the actants of the narrative (1974, 40-58). In addition, it is clear that John has deliberately brought together the idea of personified Logos, Wisdom and Torah into one in Jesus in his prologue. Thus for the rest of the Gospel, Logos is present through the activity of Wisdom and Torah.

### 3.3.1.3 Jesus as *Σοφία* in John's Prologue

While the history of religions background of the Logos is subject to scholarly debate; that for Wisdom is not. Indeed most of the activities that John attributes to the Logos in Jn 1:1-5—His creative work, His life giving mission, and His light endowing functions—

were also attributed to Σοφία in Jewish literature long before John's time. Within these texts, Wisdom is personified as divine person who was also agent of creation (Prov 1; 3; 8-9; Sir 15:2; 4Q381, frg 1, line 1; 11Q5 28.10; IQS 11:11). In many of these texts, Wisdom has a feminine image (Sir 15:2; Wis 8:2-3) and is depicted as actively involved in pursuing and seeking to disciple humanity. Like John's Wisdom, the Σοφία in Bar 3:29-30 descended from heaven. In Wis 7:25-27, She is pictured as providing life and light to humanity. According to Bauckham therefore, Σοφία and the Λογος were both understood in these Jewish texts as personifying divine qualities within God's identity, thus allowing distinction within that identity (1998, 17-20).

Whereas it may be argued also that the Logos concept is not that pressed in the rest of John's Gospel, the idea of Jesus as Wisdom is much more evident, especially in the manner in which John portrays the interactions between Jesus and other actants in the Gospel (cf. Ringe 1999, Witherington III 1994). John's emphasis on the glory of the incarnate Logos in the prologue (Jn 1:14) is also a prelude to several references to the glory motif in the Gospel (e.g. Jn 2:11; 7:18; 8:50; 11:4; 12:41; 17:5; 22; 24). This motif is also commonly associated with Wisdom (Wis 6:12; 7:10; 7:26; 9:10). Accordingly, it is through Wisdom that the Logos interacts with humanity. In Wisdom of Solomon 9:1-2 for example, the world is said to have been created by Logos, the Word. Yet, it is by Wisdom that man acquires dominion over the creation. God, it is said, has "made all things with thy Word, and ordained man through thy Wisdom, that he should have dominion over the creatures which thou hast made". Similarly, Wisdom is closely identified as God's Word in Sir 24:3 where it is said that She "came out of the mouth of the Most High, and covered the earth as a cloud". And Wis 18:15 and 9:10 interchange the Logos with Wisdom as proceeding from the throne of God.

The reasons as to why John preferred Logos in the prologue rather than the usual Sophia when describing the interactions between the embodied Divine Council with humanity may be protean. It has been argued that the masculine gender of the Logos would have been more suited in the socio-cultural circumstances, as was the case of Philo (cf. Keener 2003, 354). However, it is much more likely that John wanted a concept that went far deeper and wider into the OT conceptualization of God at work in

His creation and in contact with humanity. Though Wisdom is the most appropriate starting point for John's theology, the Logos roots his conceptions far more in the very beginning and throughout the OT.

#### *3.3.1.4 Jesus as Νομος in John's Prologue*

There are other indications in the prologue of John that Jesus is also identified as the embodied Νομος or Torah. In Jewish literature predating John, all the statements that John makes about the Logos, were also attributable to the Torah, with the exception of "the Word made flesh" (Dodd 1935, 335). In Ben Sirach, the Torah is identified as the source of Wisdom (Sir 1, 15:1; 19:20; 24:23; 34:8 and 39:1). Also in Bar 3:29-4:1 and 4 Macc 1:16-17 the Torah is identified closely with Wisdom. Thus the expression of Jesus as Wisdom also contains certain notions of Jesus as Torah. More specifically, the apparently abrupt contrast between the Law of Moses and the grace and truth from Jesus in Jn 1:17 are more suited for ideas related to the Torah than to Wisdom or Logos.

However, the evidence for the personification of the Νομος in the OT and STJ is not as clear-cut as it is for the Logos and Wisdom. In the OT, God promises that in the eschatological age, the Torah would "go forth" from Zion (Isa 2:2-4) and with a new covenant (Jer 31:31-34; Ezek 36:27). These promises became invested in the coming Messiah rather than separately identifying the Torah as such. The close identification of Torah with Wisdom may however have facilitated ideas of a personified Torah. Be it as it may, several Jewish texts postdating John's gospel certainly speak of a personified Torah. The giving of the Torah at Sinai is, for example, portrayed as a wedding (e.g. *Pesiq Rab Kah* 12:11; 26:9) at which the Torah is betrothed to Israel, God's daughter (e.g. *Sipre Deut* 345.2.2; *Pesiq Rab Kah* 26:9; *Ex Rab* 29:4; *Song Rab* 8:11). In other literature, She is portrayed as God's bride and Queen (*Song Rab* 8:14 § 1) and was indeed the one with whom God planned the creation in saying "Let us make man" (*Tanhuma Pekudei* 3). Thus several attributes which were associated with personified Wisdom are also associated with personified Torah in these rabbinic texts. Indeed,

according Ringgren, the tendency in rabbinic texts was to replace personified Wisdom with personified Torah (1947, 123).

A methodological question therefore arises as to how far such rabbinic texts, some of which may be dated as late as the third century AD, could be regarded as sources for historical investigation of John's background. However, the point here is not so much to prove that John borrowed from pre-existing concepts of a personified Torah. If even John was the first to have postulated the concept of a personified Torah, the plethora of later rabbinic texts also regarding the Torah in similar terms only support the contention that the idea was not an aberration. It is likely that these conceptions existed in the popular imagination and theology long before they were recorded in the rabbinic texts.

The pervasive Johannine concept of light, witness (or testimony) and truth, which begins in John's prologue, is another manifestation of this emphasis on Jesus as the embodied Torah. In this sense, Jesus as the *Nopoo* embodies the fullest of God's revelation and testifies of the Father to humanity. As the "true light" (Jn 1:9), Jesus as Torah enlightens everyone. The *Testament of Levi* 14:4 attributes the same function to the Torah (though this may have been dependent on John's Gospel). As Borgen has also shown, the giving of the Torah on Mount Sinai was regarded by the early Jews as the giving of Light to all nations at a specific time in history (1972, 115-130). The link between light and life in Jn 1:4 may also relate to this Torah idea; for, in John, Jesus embodies the truth (Jn 14:6) just as He embodies life (Jn 1:4). Several passages in the OT link observing the Torah with life (e.g. Lev 18:5; Deut 30:6, 19). And in Judaism, these are also associated with the Torah (e.g. Bar 3:9; 4:1-2; Pss Sol 14:1-2; *Abbot* 2:7; *Abbot* Nat 34A).

By far however, the most potent indication of the *Nopoo* concept in the prologue is the contrast John makes between the Mosaic Law and Jesus. It is ultimately a contrast between the limited Mosaic Law and the full embodied Torah who is Jesus Himself (cf. Hoskyns 1947, 159; Glasson 1963, 26; Longenecker 1970, 40). The "grace and truth" that came from Jesus also alludes to the covenant keeping God who appeared to Moses in Ex 33:12-34:9 being declared as "God merciful and gracious...slow to anger,

and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness” (Ex 34:6 cf. Lincoln 2005, 106). To the writer of John’s Gospel therefore, “Jesus was thus the supreme revelation of God; the Torah had gone forth from Zion” (Keener 2003, 363). As the embodied Torah, Jesus has ἐξηγήσατο (literally, exegeted) God to humankind (Jn 1:18). In Josephus, and according to Beasley-Murray (1987, 16), ἐξηγήσατο is the technical term for the exposition of the Law by the rabbis. Here John applies it directly to Jesus. In the Jesus-disciples encounter, grasping the identity of Jesus is to be seen as similar to a revelatory encounter with the Torah.

In the rest of the Gospel, Jesus’ words are shown to fulfil the functions of the Torah (e.g. Jn 5:47; 6:63; 8:51; 12:47-48). As Liroy has also shown, the series of signs in John 2 serve John’s Christological agenda of portraying Jesus as the incarnate Torah (2007, 23-39). And Keener has also pointed out that this Johannine emphasis has some crossover as well as nuanced similarities with Matthew’s emphasis on the Torah. Whereas in Matthew Jesus is portrayed as the Torah’s perfect expositor, in John, Jesus Himself *is* the Torah (Keener 2003, 362).

An important question confronts us before proceeding to apply how this Christology functions in the Jesus-Disciple interaction in John’s Gospel. Why did John conflate the Λόγος with Σοφία and Νόμος in the prologue? The simple answer is that, by John’s time, the Logos, Torah and Wisdom were used interchangeably and sometimes the substitutions were assumed by the writers and readers. So for example, in as abrupt a manner as Jn 1:17 introduces the Torah into the prologue, Sir 24:19-22 effortlessly moves from describing the invitation of Wisdom to Her disciples to “come and eat and drink Me”, to refer to the Torah—“All these things are the book of the covenant of the most high God, even the law which Moses commanded for an heritage unto the congregations of Jacob” (Sir 24:23).

As comprehensively documented by Epp, there is a long trajectory of Jewish interpretation from the time of the second temple period through the first century to the late rabbinic literature that closely associated Wisdom and Torah, both being portrayed as pre-existent, personified and interacting with humanity to give life, light and salvation

(1975, 133-136). For John however, combining all three served a powerful evangelistic function by broadening the Christological net as wide as possible. At each point in his account therefore, Jesus functions in nuanced ways that will reveal the Father to humankind. The disciples who interacted with Him would be experiencing the embodied Λόγος, Σοφία and Νομός.

### 3.3.2 The Baptist as an Agent of the Divine Council in John 1

Like Mark's Gospel, John also begins his narrative with an early reference to the Baptist as God's agent. In Mark, the Baptist as an agent of the Divine Council *prepares the Way of the Lord*—in fulfilment of Isaiah's eschatological new exodus vision. In John's Gospel on the other hand, the presentation is much more complex and debated by scholars. On three separate occasions in the first chapter of John's Gospel 1:6-9, 1:15 and 1:19-37, the Baptist is placed at the centre of the narrative. On each occasion a deliberate contrast is made between the Baptist and Jesus as well as an emphasis on the Baptist's function as a witness to Jesus. Does the Baptist hold similar significance to the theme of discipleship in John as he does in Mark's Gospel?

Several interpreters have argued that unlike the Synoptics, John employs the references to the Baptist for polemical purposes (cf. Brown 1966, 35; Strachan 1917, 17; Burkitt 1932, 97; Painter, 1983, 51; Keener 2003, 389; Lincoln 2005, 111). This polemical reading, however, appears to exaggerate the differences between John's Gospel and the Synoptics. Within the Synoptics themselves, the Baptist insists on his own inferiority, and Mark in particular highlights the discontinuity between Jesus and the Baptist (e.g. Mk 1:7-8 and 2:18-20). This is of the same degree of stress as what John's Gospel emphasizes, albeit in a repeated fashion. It is granted that in John, the interest in Jesus' pre-existence is reflected in addition to His superiority; thus heightening the differences between the two agents. However, this effect does not necessarily emanate from a specific polemical intention of the author.

The fact is any historical account of the Jesus movement needed to show how the Baptist and Jesus were associated and then subsequently dissociated from each other

(Theissen and Merz 1998, 208-211; Allison Jnr 2003, 6-27). Lupieri has also described this apparent comparison as part of the well documented phenomenon of “precursorisation”—the literary phenomenon whereby the narration of the historical beginning of a sect is began from its continuity with its “precursor prophet” and then distinguished from it (2001, 49-56 cf. van der Merwe 1999, 267-292). It is better therefore to see the contrast as an attempt to more fully account for the historical discontinuities between the Baptist and Jesus.

In contrast to the polemical interpretation, there is much more mileage in the second view which postulates that the Baptist is employed as a prototype of what it means to be a disciple of Jesus—witnessing (Jn 1: 32; 34; 3:26; 5:33; cf. Hooker 1969-1970, 354-358; MacLeod 2003, 305-320; Trites 1977, 226). In other words, more than any other function, the disciple of the Johannine Jesus is a *witness*, and the Baptist is the first and prototype of that function in the fourth Gospel. This is even more poignant, given that the witness theme is influenced by the second part of Isaiah, where in passages such as Isa 43:10-13; 44:7-9; 50:4, Yahweh confronts the disbelieving world in a trial motif at which Israel features as a witness.

The witness function of the Baptist is underlined in all three references in the first chapter of John. In the first, it is noted that though the Baptist is not the light, “he came as a *witness* to testify to the light...to testify to the light” (1:7; 8). John was an agent commissioned and sent by God to specifically witness to the Light, the embodied Torah. The second reference in 1:15<sup>16</sup> superficially appears parenthetical (so the NRSV). But there are good reasons to argue that it perfectly fits in the flow of the narrative of the fourth and final strophe of the prologue (1:14-18 cf. Staley 1986, 241-264; Carter 1990, 40; Barrett 1978b, 167) which also highlights the witness and testimony elements affirming the preceding statements.

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<sup>16</sup> John 1:15 is a similar move to Mark’s Gospel, whereby the Baptist associates himself with Jesus (Jesus *comes after* the Baptist) and at the same time underlines the difference in status between them. This is interpreted by scholars in two different ways—(a) Jesus’ ministry *temporally* comes after John’s ministry, in other words the Baptist was Jesus’ forerunner (so e.g. Bultmann 1971, 75; Bruce 1983, 42;

The third reference to the Baptist in 1:19-37 also underlines the witness functions of the Baptist, even though it is much more elaborate. Firstly, in John 1:19-28, the theme of witness assumes formal forensic lawsuit overtones characterized by interrogation, denial, confession, clarification and eyewitness testimony (Lincoln 2000, 21-23). The Baptist is thus acting out in anticipation of how disciples of Jesus would later also witness in more hostile environment (e.g. Jn 9). Secondly, this formal witness is then followed by an extended witness—not only that Jesus is greater and that he the Baptist had previously prophesied about His coming, but also positively identifying Jesus as “the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world” (1:29), as the One who possesses the Spirit (1:32-33) and as the Son of God (Jn 1:34). To a large extent, this positive threefold elaborate identification of Jesus summarizes the content of the witness of Johannine disciples (cf. Dodd 1965, 248).

The twice repeated testimony as the “Lamb of God” (1:29, 36) has rightly attracted some scholarly attention regarding what exactly the Baptist and the disciples who responded to that witness understood about this title (cf. Dodd 1965, 230-238; Sandy 1991, 447-460; Barrett 1954-1955, 210-218; Keener 2003, 452-456; Lincoln 2005, 113; Howard-Brook 2003, 67; Morris 1971, 146; Skinner 2004, 89-104; Witherington III 1995, 66-67; Beasley-Murray 1987, 24-25). The best explanation of its background is that the “Lamb of God” on the Baptist’s lips was a conflation of the Servant of Isaiah 53 who is led to the slaughter and the sacrificial Passover Lamb<sup>17</sup>. What is noteworthy here is the appropriateness of the Baptist’s witness to Jesus—its public nature, its boldness, its truth content (even at this early stage of Jesus’ ministry) and its result in leading some of the hearers to follow Jesus. John as a prototype witness demonstrates not only that a disciple of Jesus witnesses; but, also the content of their witness.

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Carson 1991, 131; Morris 1995, 96) or (b) Jesus *spatially* comes after, i.e. He was the Baptist’s disciple (so Meier 1994, 116-130; Witherington 1995, 63; Black 1941, 170).

<sup>17</sup> The apocalyptic “conquering Lamb” interpretation is also attractive, but does not fit in well with the sin-bearing indicated by Jn 1:29.



### 3.3.3 Power to Become: The Concept of Formation in John 1:12-18

The final two strophes of the Johannine prologue describe the coming of the embodied Divine Council into contact with humanity. In this portion, the fourth Evangelist uses several key images and expressions to set out his theological grid of human transformation, through which agents become children of God. Clearly, the idea of agents becoming God's τέκνα (children) is different from the idea of Jesus as the Father's μονογενοῦς (only begotten son). Yet, the emphasis is on the degree to which human agents may become transformed in union with the μονογενοῦς so as to effectuate Jesus' mission (cf. Keener 2003, 399; Turner 1976, 271-277). The passage also illustrates a feature of Johannine discipleship as a reflected Johannine Christology. Indeed, at a later stage in the Gospel, this close relationship will be described as friendship (Jn 15:13-15).

What is also striking in this section is the concentration of several terminologies, formulae and description of the processes through which this transformation would occur during the interaction between the embodied Divine Council and humanity. Important among these terminologies are ἔλαβον (receiving) Jesus, πιστεύουσιν εἰς τὸ ὄνομα (literally, believing *into* His name), ἐξουσίαν (literally, authority or power), γενέσθαι (literally, become) and ἐγεννήθησαν (literally, to be born). The external means, by which these transformative processes are triggered, are further described in Jn 1:14-18 as "seeing" the glory of Jesus (i.e. revelation). These terminologies therefore intimate that the interactions between Jesus and the disciples will be described as the building of a closer and deeper relationship with Jesus as the embodied Divine Council. And in the Johannine sense, *the transformation of the human agent requires the regenerative power of God, whereby through contact with divine revelation, the agent is drawn into this relationship with the Divine Council.*

Of specific interest to the project at hand is the use of metaphors and expressions related to divine hospitality to describe the Jesus-disciples interaction. The apparently curious use of πιστεύουσιν εἰς (believing into), instead of the commoner πιστεύετε ἵνα (literally, believe that) is one illustration of this Johannine emphasis on divine hospitality.

The disciple is thereby, not just a person who accents to a set of propositions, but even more enters into an ever closer and dynamic relationship with Jesus through which transformation into a child of God occurs. It is these concepts which are manifest in the first Jesus-disciples interaction in John's Gospel, and to which we now turn.

### 3.3.4 The First Jesus-Disciples Interactions in John 1:35-51

Having narrated the witness of the Baptist, John proceeds to a clearly programmatic section in which the Baptist points two of His disciples to Jesus. These disciples follow and experience Jesus' hospitality, and also bring others to the faith through their witness. Though the theme of witness no doubt continues in this passage, its distinctiveness separates it from the preceding witness of the Baptist and has attracted several questions of its own. Three of these questions are of interest to the present project—(a) how does Jn 1:35-51 fit into the historical events of Jesus' earthly ministry, (b) what is the nature of discipleship depicted by the passage, and (c) who is the anonymous disciple in the passage?

#### 3.3.3.1 *The Place of John 1:35-51 in the Earthly Ministry of Jesus*

The strikingly different account of the first Jesus-disciples encounter in John's Gospel, in comparison to the synoptics, has raised the question of the historical plausibility of John's version and if so how it fitted into the events in Jesus' earthly life. In contrast to John, the first Jesus-disciples encounter in Mark does not involve the Baptist, who is in prison at the time (Mk 1:14). Moreover, the encounter in John occurs in Bethany near the Jordan instead of Mark's near the Galilean Sea. Furthermore, Peter is among the first called in Mark 1:16; whereas in John, Peter comes to Jesus in response to the testimony of Andrew.

Several interpreters have urged that the Johannine account is ahistorical and rather aimed at establishing theological points. They find the summarative nature of the account and the fact that several "high" Christological titles are uttered by the newly recruited disciples as indication of largely parabolic account serving John's agenda.

Rejecting the historicity of the passage, Bultmann urges that in a purposely contrived manner, the narrative “at once portrays the right way of seeking Jesus, the power of the word which acclaims Him, and the right way of hearing this word—in the following of discipleship” (1971, 106). Indeed for Bultmann, both Mk 1:16-20 and Jn 1:35-51 “are not historical accounts” (1971, 108); for, they both contain significant mythological elements. Brown concurs with Bultmann and reasons that even though some “historical information underlies John’s account, it has been re-organized under theological orientation” (1966, 77). This theology, he reckons, extends till 2:11 where after several gradual revelations from Jesus, the disciples finally believe in Jesus. John 1:35-51 is therefore not an account of the first Jesus-disciples encounter, but rather “summarizes discipleship in its whole development” (1966, 78).

What is however missed by this interpretation is the fact that, for John, what mattered was not so much the title one ascribed to Jesus, but the significance and meaning that the confessor attached to the title (cf. de Jonge 1925, 140-149). Accordingly, these titles could well have come from the lips of the disciples at these early stages and yet remain inadequate by Jesus’ standards. Indeed, Jesus’ promise to Nathanael that “you will see greater things than these” (1:50) should be taken to mean that in Jesus’ view, the confession of Nathanael needed development as to its content.

The literary form of the account has also been subject of investigation. Against Bultmann and Brown, who regard the passage as “call narratives”, Painter has proposed that it is part of the evangelist’s theological tome of “quest narratives” (1991, 33-70). Painter reasons that, though the quest stories in John generally parallel the pronouncement stories of the synoptic gospels; the particular narrative of Jn 1:35-51 should be seen as a transformation of the call narratives of the synoptics (1991, 45-49). Though helpful, there is no need to suppose that John had no access to an independent account that focused on “quests” rather than on “calls”. If, as Painter suggests, John has “retained” a synoptic call narrative in Jn 1:43 (1991, 40), then John is clearly not particularly averse to “call” narratives. It is therefore possible that John’s choice of the quest form is simply because the encounters were exactly historical quests. The attempt to solve the problem of Jn 1:35-51 by form critically linking it to the call narratives in Jn

21 as suggested by Franzmann and Klinger, though innovative, is however also unconvincing (1992, 7-15). The two accounts are certainly separated by Easter.

When the Christology espoused in the prologue is taken as a controlling interpretive prism it becomes clear why John has chosen to focus on the first encounters between Jesus and His disciples. Wisdom was more frequently portrayed in the OT and STJ as seeking and making Himself sought. In Sir 51:23 for example, Wisdom cries out to would-be disciples, “draw near unto me, you unlearned, and dwell in the house of learning”. Theologically therefore, quest narratives fit the Christological paradigm of John (Witherington 1995, 64 cf. Ringe 1999).

John may also have had concrete historical reasons for presenting the first encounter between Jesus and His disciples in this fashion. John aimed to narrate his account from the very beginning, when the Baptist was an unhindered witness, not yet in prison. Thus an important contrast exists with Mark, in which the call occurred after the Baptist was imprisoned. The two accounts are certainly different. Moreover, and as will be discussed in chapter six of the dissertation, if John knew Mark and wrote with readers of Mark in mind, this account would have served as a good background to understand the brazen nature of the calls in Mark’s Gospel (cf. Bruce 1983, 55; Carson 1991, 154; Keener, 2003, 465-467).

### 3.3.3.2 *The Nature of Discipleship According to John 1:35-51*

The passage portrays discipleship in superficially elementary terms. At this point, it is crucial to appreciate the often *double entendre* nature of John’s vocabulary. At the purely historical level, the vocabularies are perfectly understandable. Yet, it is often obvious that one has not exhausted the meaning of the words that have been used in the narrative. In his examination of the sociolinguistic aspects of John’s use of language, Petersen describes how John uses a special language “that employs the grammar and vocabulary of the everyday but uses the vocabulary in a very different way, leading to misunderstandings and partial understandings on the part of those who only speak the everyday language” (1993, 1). Few will disagree with this assessment.

The challenge for the interpreter, however, is how to keep the literal and the clearly symbolic meanings of some of the words in balance. Some interpreters appear to over-emphasize the symbolic, so that the whole account in Jn 1:35-51 is mostly seen as an allegory. Barrosse's interpretation of the days of the week in the narrative as equivalent to the days of the new creation is one such example of rather extreme allegorical interpretation that must be avoided (1959, 507-516). The approach by Chennattu (2006, 23-49), postulating OT covenant motifs within the narrative has some merit. However, it appears to overstate the form and structure of the encounters over the content of the exchanges between Jesus and the disciples in the narrative.

A preferable approach would be to capture the key and repeated words that John uses to depict the encounters and employ the main Christological picture in the prologue to exegete the Jesus-Disciple encounter. In terms of Christology, the Logos-Wisdom-Torah interpretation is paramount, since there are indications that the account of the recruitment of the first disciples culminates in the revelation of Jesus' glory at Cana (2:1-11). Since this first Johannine sign reveals Jesus as the embodied Torah (cf. Liroy 2007, 23-39), one would not be far from correct in interpreting the interactions with this Christological conception in view. Supporting this approach are the several occasions in the passage in which Jesus begins the interaction with a revelatory and prophetic word (e.g. Jn 1:38, 42, 43, 47-48), and the conclusion of the passage with the promise of revelation (Jn 1:51). As will be observed later in chapter five, this pattern is repeated in many of the interactions between Jesus and His disciples.

With these caveats in mind, examination of the key words in the narrative is instructive. The words that attract attention and appear to be emphasized by the evangelist include (a) sight related words such as "see", "saw", "look" and "gazed", (b) hearing related words; (c) movement related words such as following; (d) hospitality related words such as staying or abiding, (e) seeking and finding related words and (f) the witness or confession motifs.

### 3.3.3.2.1 ὄψεσθε and Cognates in Jn 1:35-51

Perhaps one ought not to be surprised to find that as their primary function would be as witnesses who testify of Jesus, Johannine disciples are encouraged in the passage to “look” at the Lamb of God (1:36) and to “come and see” (Jn 1:39, 46) Jesus. In the final statement of the passage, Jesus promises Nathanael a vision of apocalyptic-eschatological dimensions, “You will see greater things than these...you will see heaven opened” (Jn 1:50). The word is also applied to Jesus, sometimes in an apparently deliberate emphasis—e.g. Jesus turned and saw the two disciples following (Jn 1:38), or Jesus “looked” at Simon (Jn 1:42) or that He “saw” Nathanael sitting under the fig tree (Jn 1:48). The theology of this passage is therefore hinged around revelation. When a would-be disciple comes into contact with Wisdom, revelation is a primary dynamic in the interaction (e.g. Wis 6:12-16; Prov 1:20-28).

Also intriguing is the emphasis on Jesus looking, or rather θεασάμενος, (literally “gaze”) on the following disciples (Jn 1:38). Is John making a theological point here? The parallel with Jn 21:20 where it is Peter who turns to βλέπει (literally, see) the Beloved disciple has been noted by Barrett (1978b, 180). Yet, the choice of verbs is different. It may be that the phrase “turning to see” is the Evangelist’s way of emphasizing the profoundly religious and theophanic nature of the encounter; for, a similar phrase is used of Moses at the burning bush (Ex 3:3). On the other hand, as underlined by Bruce, the dramatic detail may merely reflect a vivid recollection by an eyewitness (1983, 55). Be it as it may, the emphasis on revelation in the passage is hard to miss. In the subsequent narrative, this element will again be stressed.

The key statement by Jesus to the first two disciples to “Come and see” is also repeated in such a manner as to suggest that they are heavily weighted theological statement. It is certainly much more than “come and satisfy your curiosity”. The phrase or its similar equivalent is used in the LXX sometimes idiomatically, and other times with theological nuances (e.g. Gen 42:12; 2 Sam 13:6; 2 Chron 31:8). Even at its metaphorical level, the invitation by the One who has just been declared as the Lamb of God would definitely have some theological significance. Consequently, and against Barrett who believes that the currency of its use among the rabbis negates the possibility of theological

connotation (1978b, 181), “come and see” should be understood much more as the invitation of divine Wisdom challenging seekers to yield themselves to enjoy the intimate hospitality She provides and learn from Her (e.g. Prov 8:5; 9:5; Wis 6:12-14; Sir 51:23).

### 3.3.3.2.2 ἤκουσαν and Cognates in John 1:35-51

The first disciples responded to the testimony of the Baptist after they heard the declaration that Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world (Jn 1:37). This hearing is emphasized again in 1:40 where it is stated that Andrew found and brought his brother Simon to Jesus. It is also implied by the continued use of reported speech and their contents. There is certainly an underlying impression that the Evangelist aims to portray that people respond to Jesus by hearing testimony. In Koester’s reckoning, the hearing element is part of a triangle of hearing, seeing and believing in Johannine conceptualization of the dynamics of faith (1989, 347).

### 3.3.3.2.3 ἠκολούθησαν and Cognates in John 1:35-51

Even if some of the movement related words in the pericope are plainly literal (e.g. Jn 1:37; 38), the narrative also indicates that in following Jesus, the disciples were pledging their discipleship to Him. The scene in Jn 1:35-37, in which on hearing the testimony of the Baptist, his disciples “followed” the Lamb of God, is surely meant to be a *double entendre* depicting the two disciples as both physically following Jesus and symbolically committing themselves to be discipled by Him. Schnackenburg’s insistence that Jn 1:37 does not carry any connotations of discipleship is therefore overly restrictive (1968–1982, 1.308). The two physically walked behind Jesus but also in a symbolic manner of committing themselves to become His disciples.

### 3.3.3.2.4 Ζητεῖτε and Cognates in John 1:35-51

Jesus’ question to the two following disciples, which are also His first words in John’s Gospel, τί ζητεῖτε (“what do you seek”, Jn 1:38, NKJV), is rightly labelled by Bultmann as “the first question which must be addressed to anyone who comes to Jesus” (1971,

100). On the one level, this is a natural way of opening a conversation, allowing the disciples to articulate their wishes. It was also a natural means by which would-be disciples sought and committed themselves to a rabbi. In addition, in Jn 18:4, Jesus confronts the soldiers who had come to arrest Him with a similar question—τίνα ζητεῖτε (“Who do you want?”). Τι ζητεῖτε is therefore in itself not out of place in a conversation, especially when one is being followed late in the afternoon by two men.

Yet, the whole passage appears to invest these first words of Jesus with theological significance when a number of its semantic cognates are subsequently repeated in the rest of Jn 1:35-51 (e.g. Jn 1:41; 43). Seeking and finding therefore has added and symbolic meanings in this passage. In addition, cognates of the word are repeated in symbolic fashion elsewhere in the Gospel (e.g. Jn 6:26; 7:34; 36; 20:15). Furthermore, the phrase is not infrequently used in the OT and STJ in relation to seeking deity, as in Jn 4:23. In the case of τι ζητεῖτε in Jn 1:35-51 for example, a number of interpreters have drawn parallels with God’s first question to Adam in the Garden, or Cain in the field (Gen 3:9; 11; 4:9; cf. Keener 2003, 468). Perhaps, Barrett’s suggestion of parallels with the Logos-Christ confronting humanity to identify exactly what they needed is nearer the mark (1978b, 180; cf. Carson 1991, 155). Much closer still is the way the OT and STJ depict the searching and finding of divine Wisdom as a primary religious quest (e.g. Prov 1 & 8; Wis 1:1; 6:12-18; 8:2; Sir 51:13-14; Jub 1:15; IQS 1:1-2). Taking other indications in the passage into consideration this later interpretation appears most satisfactory (cf. Witherington III 1995, 70).

### 3.3.3.2.5 Μένει and Cognates in John 1:35-51

The response of the first disciples enquiring and seeking hospitality from Jesus is again natural. In any case, a disciple in those times would seek to attach himself to a rabbi (e.g. Xenophon *Mem.* 4.1.1; 4.2.40; cf. Gerhardsson 1979, 16-17). Thus μένει in Jn 1:39 should be taken, in the first instance, to be stating what actually happened. Jesus was lodging in Bethsaida which was nearer than Capernaum several walking hours away;



and the disciples requested for hospitality in order to learn and hear Jesus expound Scripture (cf. Schnackenburg 1.380).

At the theological level however, there appears to be an attempt by the Evangelist to underscore the fact that the disciples' μέωεις with Jesus for the day was much more significant than receiving social hospitality from the Rabbi. If, as has been argued, "Come and see", is heavily weighted with theological significance of divine proportions, then responding to such an invitation and μέωεις with Jesus should similarly carry symbolic significance. Added to this is the subsequent Johannine emphasis in the rest of the Gospel on "dwelling" or "abiding" with Jesus as an important element of discipleship (e.g. Jn 6:56; 8:35; 14:10, 16-17; 23; 26; 15:4-10). It may also be said that Andrew's successful recruitment of Peter to Jesus occurred because he had μέωεις, "abided" with Jesus the previous day (Jn 1:40-42). Bearing fruit, as Jesus would later emphasize, only occurs when the disciples continues to abide with Jesus (Jn 15:5; cf. Keener 2003, 472 n.410).

Consequently, and to a significant extent, Johannine discipleship may be defined as experiencing divine hospitality through an intimate relationship with Jesus. As will be emphasized in chapter five of the dissertation, the concept of experiencing divine hospitality as integral part of disciple formation is a major contribution from John's Gospel. It is evident in three main ways—(a) through the metaphorical or symbolic use of concepts such as μέωεις (dwelling or abiding) in Jesus or God, (b) through the peculiar use of prepositions which imply Jesus or God as a Place or Receptacle into whom human beings put their faith, and (c) through the narrative or metaphoric portrayal of Jesus or God as Host who provides food or drink, and sometimes as the Food or Drink that is ingested to give and sustain eternal life.

#### 3.3.3.2.6 Witnessing and Confession Motifs in John 1:35-51

A final component of the cluster of discipleship motifs in Jn 1:35-51 is the witnessing and confessing motifs. Once the first two disciples yield to the invitation by Wisdom to dwell with Him, Andrew's next action was to find his brother Simon, testify to, and bring

him to Jesus. In a similar manner, once Philip comes to Jesus, he also finds Nathanael, testifies to, and brings him to Jesus. Thus Jn 1:35-51 indicates the witnessing activities that the disciples shared with the Baptist and Jesus in the very early stages. Later in the Gospel, this function of witnessing will be linked with harvesting (e.g. Jn 4:38) and bearing fruit (Jn 15:8, 16).

The nature and number of the confessions in the passage has attracted some scholarly attention. In the short passage, Jesus is called Lamb of God, Rabbi, Messiah, the Prophet to come, and the Son of Man. Could these disciples have acquired such knowledge about Jesus at this early stage? Roughly, there are two approaches to answering this question. Those scholars who understand Jn 1:35-51 as more a less literary summary of the nature of discipleship, designed to guide the reader rather than setting out a full historical account, see the avalanche of Christological confessions as also programmatic. Witherington's point is roughly representative, "this reshaping of the original stories that can be said to be call narratives (cf. Mk 1:16ff) has been undertaken because this Gospel is intended as a missionary document. Reaching out to a variety of sorts of people" (1995, 68).

Though there is merit in this interpretation, one is much more attracted to the category of interpretation that regards the confessions as statements that were made in a historical setting, but whose real significance were not fully appreciated by those who made them. In other words, the Christological confessions should be seen as indicating that the disciples were aware of various titles for the Messiah. Since the first two were disciples of the Baptist, and were looking forward to the Messiah, it should not be surprising that they would have known some of these confessions. This does not mean however, that they understood the full significance of these confessions. Indeed, from now on, their interactions with Jesus will expose several of their misconceptions of the meaning of the titles, till they fully come to believe. Discipleship in John's Gospel is therefore not just the ability to make the correct confession. Much more than that, it is the reception of the revelation of the true meaning of the confessions.

### 3.3.3.3 *The Anonymous Disciple of John 1:34-51*

Though the question of the identity of the unnamed disciple should not affect the exegesis of the passage, there is some mileage at this point to briefly review some of the options and make a judgment on his identity. The naming of all other actants, the renaming of Simon, and the several “names” attributed to Jesus in the passage sharply contrasts with the decision on the part of the Evangelist not to declare who this person was. The Evangelist apparently wished to keep this particular disciple anonymous.

It is possible for the interpreter to read too much into this anomaly, given that John’s aim in the passage was to focus on witnessing and the formation of the group. Yet, as Polzin has convincingly shown, and as will be again highlighted in chapter five, anonymity is a very potent strategy of characterization in Biblical narratives (1993, 205-213). And Petersen has urged that Jn 1:35-51 uses language in a deliberate manner to characterize the main players of the narrative (1993, 26-32). Collins has also shown how crucial characters, including anonymous characters, are to the John’s narrative strategy (1995, 359-369). The anonymity of this particular disciple may therefore be deliberate. In that case, it may well be wise for the reader to leave it well alone.

Yet, the temptation to speculate is strong, especially considering that a main player of the Johannine discipleship circle, the Beloved Disciple, will also remain anonymous. One can, with some certainty, rule out some of candidates who have been proposed. The anonymous disciple of Jn 1:35-51 is plainly not Peter, since the latter is subsequently brought to Jesus by Andrew. The suggestion also, that this disciple is Philip, as postulated by Schnackenburg (1968-82, 1:130), creates more problems for the interpretation of the passage than it solves; since it is later said that Jesus found Philip in Galilee the next day (1:43). The close association of Philip and Andrew later on in the Gospel (6:58 and 12:21-22) should be expected in a band of close followers of Jesus and does not indicate that they were also together in Jn 1:35-51.

On the other hand, the objection that the anonymous disciple of Jn 1:35-31 cannot be identified as the Beloved Disciple is not that persuasive. It is granted that since John’s focus in the passage is not necessarily enumerating the recruitment of the twelve, one

should not assume that this anonymous disciple must be a member of the twelve. All the same, it does not necessarily follow that the Evangelist may not be describing the initial contacts of the well known members of the Jesus group with Jesus. The sudden introduction of the Beloved Disciple in Jn 13:23, also supports the possibility of an earlier presence within the group. Indeed, as noted by Minear, on all occasions where the Beloved Disciple appears, others present are deliberately named to heighten his anonymity (1977, 105-123). If this principle is correct, Jn 1:35-51 appears to confirm a Johannine style of indicating the presence of the Beloved Disciple. Another advantage for regarding the anonymous disciple of Jn 1:35-51 as the Beloved Disciple is that the vivid details in Jn 1:35-51 suggest an eyewitness testimony. Consequently, in the absence of further evidence, it appears that the best option is to regard the anonymous disciple in Jn 1:35-51 as the Beloved Disciple.

### 3.3.4 Summary of the First Jesus-Disciples Interactions in John 1

The prologue of John presents Jesus as the Revealer of God—He is the Divine Logos, Wisdom and Torah. Perhaps much more explicit than Mark, these depict Jesus as the embodied Divine Council, who has come in the flesh (Jn 1:14, 18). The disciples should therefore be understood to have interacted with God Himself. Also like Mark, the Baptist forms an important part of the description of the beginning of Jesus' ministry in John. However the emphasis is more elaborate and staged. It has been argued in the preceding pages that inherent in this presentation is the idea of the Baptist as a prototype disciple of Jesus, whose main function was to witness to Jesus.

This witnessing and confession motif dominates the first Jesus-disciples encounter which in itself serves to illuminate the nature of discipleship to Jesus. The prevalence of words and metaphors of seeing, hearing, knowing, abiding, dwelling, witnessing and confessing and hospitality in the chapter all point in this direction. Discipleship for John is the building of an abiding relationship with Jesus. The Baptist bears witness to Jesus as the Lamb of God and his disciples, having heard that witness, follow Jesus, are transformed, pronounce confessions and testify to bring others to Jesus. The

transformation entails the operation of God's power to make the one who believes "into" this relationship a child of God. These terminologies of Johannine discipleship will recur in the rest of the Gospel and illustrate the means and mechanisms involved in the Jesus-disciples interactions in John's Gospel.

### **3.4 Conclusion**

This chapter has demonstrated that starting with the prologues of the Gospels, a model that is faithful both to the genre of that Gospel, as well as the theological influences that shaped the manner in which the Evangelists have couched their biographies of Jesus may be constructed. As table 3.1 summarizes there are similarities and differences between the models employed by the two Evangelists to present the Jesus-disciples interactions.

In both Mark and John, the disciples encounter God incarnate—in the conception of the OT and STJ, they encounter the embodied Divine Council. Yet, both Evangelists also nuance the descriptions based on key theological idioms of the OT and STJ. The background provided in the first section of this chapter significantly aids the examination of both accounts. As this chapter has shown, Mark employs an eschatological and apocalyptic nuance of this concept, whereas John employs Sapiental and Torah apocalypticism in explaining the mystery of the Jesus-disciples interactions. The next two chapters will examine the formation of the disciples from these perspectives.

Table 3.1 Comparison of the Jesus-Disciples Interaction in Mark 1 and John 1

Parameters	Mark 1:1-20	John 1:1-51
<b>Key Theological Themes</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The εὐαγγελίου</li> <li>2. The Isaianic New Exodus theme</li> <li>3. Way in the Wilderness</li> <li>4. The Kingdom of God</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Word, Light and Life</li> <li>2. Jesus as Manifestation of God (New Exodus)</li> <li>3. Becoming children of God</li> <li>4. Witnessing and Believing</li> </ol>
<b>The Role of the Baptist</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Forerunner who prepares the Way</li> <li>2. The Baptist preaches repentance and baptizes for the remission of sins</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Prototype witness unto Jesus</li> <li>2. The Baptist confesses, and points people to Jesus</li> </ol>
<b>The Person of Jesus</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Son of God</li> <li>2. Embodied Divine Council</li> <li>3. Divine Warrior who baptizes with the Spirit</li> <li>4. Jesus is God's anointed</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Son of God</li> <li>2. Embodied Divine Council</li> <li>3. Divine Logos, Wisdom and Torah</li> <li>4. The Spirit remains on Jesus</li> </ol>
<b>Formation of Disciples</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Abrupt "first" introduction</li> <li>2. Called by Jesus</li> <li>3. Eschatological Harvesters (ἀλιεῖς ἀνθρώπων)</li> <li>4. Follow Jesus – obedience, relationship, imitating and serving Jesus</li> <li>5. Key formation word – ποιήσω (make)</li> <li>6. Calling → Follow → Make → Harvesters of men</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Gradual "first" introduction</li> <li>2. "Quest" for Jesus in response to Witness by other people (with some elements of "call")</li> <li>3. Revelatory and prophetic Word from Jesus</li> <li>4. Follow Jesus – obedience, relationship, imitating and serving Jesus</li> <li>5. Witnesses – Disciples are Eye and Ear witnesses who confess Jesus</li> <li>6. Key formation word – μέωεις (abide or dwell)</li> <li>7. Quest (Call) → Follow → Seek → Believe &amp; Abide (dwell) → Confess → Witness → Bear fruit (harvest or bring others to Jesus)</li> </ol>
<b>Key Background OT &amp; STJ Passages</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Isaiah 40-66 and its interpretations</li> <li>2. Elijah-Elisha cycle</li> <li>3. Daniel, Job, 1 Enoch &amp; Qumran Literature.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. OT Sapiental Literature</li> <li>2. Sirach</li> <li>3. 1 Enoch, Wisdom of Solomon, Qumran &amp; Philo.</li> </ol>

## CHAPTER FOUR

### THE FORMATION OF THE DISCIPLES AS AGENTS OF THE EMBODIED DIVINE COUNCIL IN THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK

Beginning with the calls of Simon and Andrew along the shores of the Sea of Galilee, Mark tells a story in which Jesus, the embodied Divine Council is constantly depicted in the presence of groups of followers with whom He interacts in a formational manner. The main objective of the present chapter is to describe and analyze the formation of these followers. Specifically, the chapter aims to employ the model, which was developed, piloted and fine-tuned in the previous chapter, to generate a comprehensive idea of how Mark's account of the formation of the disciples helps explain Christian origins.

As defined earlier in the introduction, in the present context, the word "formation" encompasses three main dimensions—(a) the structure or form of the Jesus-disciples relationship, (b) the projected outcomes or purposes of the interactions, and (c) the processes and events involved in their formation. With regard to the structure of the Jesus-disciples relationship, it has been firmly established that "agents of the embodied Divine Council" constitutes the best model to characterize the relationship. This in itself also gives some indication of the purposes of their formation; for, as agents, disciples of Jesus shared in aspects of His mission. In specific terms, this function is also described as eschatological harvesting together with its concomitant element of judgment, both of the evil cosmic forces, and the godless human system they perpetrate. With regard to the processes involved in the formation of the disciples, the previous chapter identified that the key words, ἠκολούθησαν (follow) and ποιήσω (make) in Mk 1:17, describe the dynamics of formation of the disciples. Further light now needs to be shed on how these initial observations, and the processes and events involved in their formation, are elaborated in the rest of the Gospel.

To enable the fulfilment of these objectives, the present chapter will be made up of two sections. The first section will isolate the individuals and groups of actants who are characterized as “disciples” of Jesus in Mark’s narrative. The second section will employ the narrative-theological method to examine how the events and processes in Jesus’ interactions with “the disciples” shed light on their formation.

#### **4.1 Who is a Disciple of Jesus in Mark’s Gospel?**

In the first appearance of the term μαθηταῖς (disciples) in Mark (Mk 2:15), it is used to distinguish a particular group from among a larger group of Jesus’ followers. This is accompanied by an explanatory γάρ clause—γὰρ πολλοὶ καὶ ἠκολούθουν αὐτῷ (literally, “for there were many who followed him”), indicating the large size of Jesus’ followership, even at that early stage of the narrative. It is apparent therefore, that “the disciples” constituted a subset of a larger group of followers of Jesus. The challenging question is whether Mark’s characterization of, at least, some of the “many” others who “followed” Jesus, suggests that they may also be regarded as “disciples” in the sense that they followed Jesus, were “formed” or transformed by Him and fulfilled certain discipleship functions, just as “the disciples” did. In other words, does Mark’s characterization of other individuals who are not so labelled indicate that he conceived of discipleship to Jesus as not exclusive to “the disciples”?

Underpinning this question is the complex nature of characterization in ancient literature and specifically, in the Gospels. In his elegant examination of this subject, Burnett (1993, 3-78) highlights three main features of characterization in the Gospels which are of relevance to the present project. Firstly, he notes that in tandem with ancient literature, characters in the Gospels are often portrayed by what they say and do, as much as what the Evangelists say about them (1993, 11). A Gospel writer may choose to characterize a person by explicitly categorizing that person as a member or type of a particular group. On the other hand, the Evangelist may choose to describe the actions and speeches of the person in such a manner as to enable the reader do that categorization. In this second scenario, the Evangelist expected the first readers to infer



and construct the character being portrayed through the actions and speeches made by that character, as well as what he, the Evangelist, says about the character. The implication of this phenomenon for the present study is that even when a particular character is not labeled as a disciple, his or her specified actions and speeches may be intended by Mark to depict that character as a disciple.

Secondly, Burnett highlights the key effects of giving proper names or titles to characters in the Gospels (1993, 20; cf. Stanton 1974, 122; Rhoads and Syreeni 1999, 13). The naming of the character is at least meant to draw attention to the full and rounded features of that person, as well as an attempt to ground the account in the historical setting (1993, 20; cf. Bauckham 2006, 39-55). In the present study, it is relevant to, at least, investigate the potential that a named person who is also portrayed in a positive interaction with Jesus is being depicted as a disciple in the broader sense of “following” Jesus, being formed by Him and fulfilling discipleship functions. Clearly, this particular feature of characterization in the Gospels has its limits, since anonymity may also be a means of heightening characterization (cf. Mk 14:3; Beck 1993, 143-158; Polzin 1993, 205-213). Nevertheless, it is worth establishing if by naming a character, Mark intended to draw attention to the importance of the character as a “disciple” of Jesus.

Thirdly the degree of a person’s contribution to the plot of a narrative point to the manner in which the author intends to characterize them (Burnett 1993, 22). Thus for example, in letting the haemorrhaging woman dominate that particular pericope (i.e. Mk 5:25-34; cf. Twelftree 1999, 133; Marshall 1989, 105-106; Haber 2003, 171-192; Selvidge 1984, 619-623; Fletcher-Louis 2007, 57-79), Mark may well be drawing the attention of the first readers to the importance of that character to his overall narrative plot. It is legitimate to, at least, explore whether this character could be broadly considered as a disciple of Jesus. And if so, how her interaction with Jesus contributes to the conceptualization of the formation of the disciples in Mark’s Gospel.

Given these relevant features of characterization in the Gospels, it appears prudent to be open to the possibility that some characters in Mark are portrayed as disciples of

Jesus without being so identified. Clearly, the “conventional”<sup>18</sup> disciples had characteristics and roles that distinguished them from the “non-conventional” disciples of Jesus, and this must also be identified from the narrative. The answer to the question, “Who is a disciple of Jesus according to Mark’s Gospel?” must however be sought, not just by direct linguistic identification of those labelled by the narrative as such. A careful narrative-theological examination of the whole Gospel, together with semantic field analysis of the linguistic clues in each pericope, must be employed to ascertain if the persons are being so characterized as disciples.

Also critical to the decision to adopt this approach is Mark’s use of the term μαθηταῖς (disciples) for the followers of the Pharisees in Mk 2:18. Technically, the Pharisees of Jesus’ day did not have “disciples” in the same nominal sense that Jesus had “the disciples” and the Baptist also had disciples<sup>19</sup>. In using “disciples” for the followers of the Pharisees therefore, it appears likely that Mark did not restrict the idea of being a disciple of Jesus to only those whom he explicitly denoted as “the disciples”. The quest to identify other characters in the narrative as “non-conventional” disciples is therefore a logical one.

What then are the key criteria for characterizing a disciple in Markan terms? To start with, Mark’s use of ἠκολούθουν (follow) for the “many” in Mk 2:15, along with his first use of the word μαθηταῖς (disciples) in that verse, appears to be a key criterion of Markan discipleship. This also fits in well with the earlier use of ἠκολούθουν for the specifically called disciples in Mark 1:16-20. Lane construes ἠκολούθουν in Mk 2:15 to be a non-technical usage that was not meant to indicate discipleship on the part of the many “tax collectors and sinners” fellowshiping at table with Jesus (1974, 102 n.35 cf.

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<sup>18</sup> For the purpose of the dissertation, those individuals explicitly labelled by the Evangelists as disciples will be identified as “conventional” disciples to distinguish them from the non-conventional disciples, being those who fulfil some functions of discipleship but not explicitly labelled as such.

<sup>19</sup> This is why, characteristic of his tendency of using the term “disciples” in relation to Jesus as a technical term for the twelve, Matthew omits μαθηταῖ in relation to the Pharisees but retains it in relation to the Baptist for his parallel of Mk 2:18 in Matt 9:14. Matthew 22:16 however uses μαθηταῖ to qualify emissaries of the Pharisees.

Meye 1968, 142-145). However, since the same term is used for Levi's response to Jesus' call in the preceding verse; it is more likely that ἠκολούθουν in Mk 2:15 similarly qualifies the "tax collectors and sinners". Thus the verse suggests that "many" others had made spiritual commitments to Jesus to follow Him, just as Levi had just done. In France's words, the verse indicates "a degree of enthusiasm for Jesus, similar to that which led Levi to leave the τελῶναι" (2002, 134; cf. Donahue and Harrington 2002, 102).

Mark 2:15 therefore continues a parallel account in Mark's Gospel in which Jesus and "the disciples" are accompanied by various other groups of Jesus' "followers" (e.g. Mk 1:31-32; 4:1-34; 5:21-43; 10:32-45; 10:46-52). It certainly indicates that Mark did not intend to restrict "following" Jesus to only the group of followers he labels as "the disciples". There is therefore mileage in assessing whether other candidates in the Gospel may so qualify to be considered as "disciples" because they "followed" Jesus. It is important, however, not to restrict such an assessment to the linguistic level, but to also investigate if conceptually, a character could be described as metaphorically "following" Jesus.

To this end, the Gospel according to Mark was analyzed using a crude narratological criteria that identified all characters and groups of characters depicted in a positive manner as "following" Jesus, either in the physical spatial sense, or metaphorically in the sense of making or appearing to make some form of commitment to Jesus (Appendix A). Each identified character was further analyzed in the narrative setting to ascertain if there are any extra positive indicators in their interaction with Jesus as to their level of commitment to Jesus. Using the "conventional" disciples as standard, some of these characters were then eliminated as not being depicted as "non-conventional" disciples of Jesus.

To maintain tightly definable criteria, characters who received healing from Jesus, even if commended for their faith, are not necessarily regarded as "disciples". Combrink has convincingly argued (2005, 33-66) that there is the distinct likelihood that the exercise of faith by Markan characters underscores soteriological or at least, some spiritual commitment on their part to Jesus. Yet, for the purpose of the present project, the

confounding issues involved in ascertaining the discipleship of characters associated only with healing cautions against accepting their “healing-related faith” *alone* as the criterion of discipleship. Therefore, these characters must have some additional indication in the narrative that they committed themselves to Jesus *after* the healing to be qualified as disciples.

This criterion may appear rather restrictive and in certain specific cases perhaps iniquitous. The Syrophoenician woman is a case in point (Mk 7:24-30). She is commended by Jesus for her confession that amounted to the fact that, she believed that in Jesus, the eschatological promise of God was being fulfilled, and the Gentiles may therefore share the blessings from the Messianic banquet with the Jews (cf. Perkinson 1996, 61-85; Skinner 2006, 14-21; Rhoads, 1994, 343-375). Despite her profound insight, and faith, I have opted to eliminate her from the list of non-conventional disciples because of the lack of additional explicit indication of her *subsequent* commitment to Jesus *after* the healing of her daughter. Though it is very likely that in the historical situation, this woman fulfilled discipleship functions contributing to Christian origins, the criterion has been set so as to capture a definable group of characters in Mark as foundational members of Christianity.

Be it as it may, it is unlikely that a significant number of eligible candidates would be eliminated by this criterion. In Mark’s Gospel, eleven characters are depicted as receiving healing in the context of “faith”. These are Simon’s mother-in-law (Mk 1:29-31), the leper (Mk 1:40-45), the paralytic (Mk 2:1-12), the man with the withered hand (Mk 3:1-6), Jairus’ daughter (Mk 5:21; 35-43), the haemorrhaging woman (Mk 5:24-34), the Syrophoenician woman (Mk 7:24-30), the deaf and mute man (Mk 7:31-37), the blind man of Bethsaida (Mk 8:21-26), the father of the boy with an unclean spirit (Mk 9:14-29) and Bartimaeus (Mk 10:46-52). Of these characters, three (e.g. the paralytic, the Syrophoenician woman and the blind man of Bethsaida) are eliminated because the narrative does not explicitly indicate subsequent commitment to Jesus after the healing, even though it is very likely that this spiritual commitment did indeed occur. Furthermore, though the leper of Mk 1:40-45 exhibited faith in Jesus *before* his healing, his subsequent disobedience of Jesus’ command disqualifies him as a disciple.

Healed characters with whom “faith” is not associated, but who nevertheless appear to subsequently make commitment to Jesus are considered as at least potential candidates. Thus the demoniac of Mk 5 is retained because he made commitment to Jesus *after* his healing. Conversely, though the man with unclean spirits in the Capernaum synagogue confessed Jesus as “the holy One of God”, the narrative indicates that this major Christological “confession” was made by the unclean spirit through the man (Mk 1:24-25) and not by the man himself. “In the Markan story world, people possessed by demons cannot have faith” (Rhoads 1994, 349). Hence this man cannot be regarded as a “non-conventional” disciple of Jesus.

The functions that the “non-conventional” disciples play in the narrative were then compared with the “conventional” disciples and the implications of the similarities and differences were examined. The results of the exercise are displayed in tables 4.1 and 4.2. Based on the above exercise, three categories of Markan characters may be considered as possible “non-conventional” disciples—anonymous characters, named characters, and the “crowds”. Mark’s use the phrases, “the disciples”, “the twelve” and “apostles” also require some clarification.

#### 4.1.1 The Terms “the disciples”, “the twelve” and “apostles” in Mark

##### 4.1.1.1 *“The Disciples” in Mark*

The terms “disciple” or “disciples” occur some fifty two times in Mark’s gospel, mostly in reference to Jesus’ closest followers. Identifying the exclusive characteristics that distinguishes “the disciples” from other followers of Jesus in the Gospel of Mark who are not so labelled is however not straightforward. It is evident that “the disciples” physically and metaphorically “followed” Jesus. However, since many others also similarly followed Him (e.g. Mk 2:15), followership is clearly not exclusive to “the disciples”. The idea that “the disciples” were being trained as leaders of the group of Jesus’ first followers has significant merit. However, since Mark does not as explicitly portray this

leadership element, as for example Luke does, this question cannot be discussed until all the groups of Jesus' followers in Mark have been examined.

Four other characteristics may be considered as possible distinguishing features of "the disciple"—(a) a calling by Jesus, (b) severance of relationship with family to an itinerant lifestyle, (c) specific functions played by "the disciples" in the narrative and, (d) serving as Jesus' companions. As I now show, there are good grounds to conclude that of these attributes, being companions of Jesus was the most exclusive defining characteristic of "the disciples". And it will be suggested that this companionship characteristic of "the disciples" reflects the pivotal role of hospitality as a key discipleship ethic in the Gospel of Mark (cf. Asumang 2009a, 1-25).

The "calls" of the first five disciples may at first suggest that a "calling" was a pre-requisite for being one of "the disciples" (Mk 1:16-20, 2:13-14). Also, Mk 3:13 appears to underline the primacy of a "call" for such disciples. As I shall shortly suggest however, the "call" of Bartimaeus, though "indirect", nevertheless contains features that indicate that he should be regarded as a "non-conventional" disciple. In addition, even though the rich young ruler came to Jesus on a "quest", rather than through a "call", Jesus offered Him the opportunity to become His disciple. In that encounter, the "quest" was converted into "a call" that was rejected by the would-be disciple. Thus "calls" were not directed only to the conventional disciples.

Furthermore, there are several pericopae in which Jesus is depicted as "calling" others who were not among "the disciples" (e.g. all sinners 2:17; the crowd 7:14; 8:34). It is true that in these pericopae, the sense of the word "call" is related to Jesus' preaching and prophetic activity, rather than the sense of His divine imperative drawing specific individuals to share in His mission as in Mk 1:20. But such a strict divide between "call" as a prophetic act against one that is a divine act is artificial when Jesus, the embodied Divine Council is the Caller. When He calls, both elements are at work. Also, Mark employs varieties of Greek words for "call", even though these are not consistent enough to limit "call" to just "the disciples". It appears therefore that "a call" was not

necessarily an exclusive characteristic of “the disciples”, even though discipleship is ultimately a sovereign choice of Jesus.

Regarding severance of relationship with one’s family, Meier defines a disciple, as Mark uses the term, as a person who has left “home, family, and work, and exposing oneself to possible hardships and opposition from others, including one’s own family” to follow Jesus (1997, 636). Such a definition may however be disputed. It is true that in Mk 10:28, Peter states that “the disciples”, in contrast to the rich young ruler, had “left everything” to follow Jesus. However, at least in the earlier parts of the Gospel, he, Peter and Jesus maintained contacts with their “homes” and “families” (e.g. Mk 1:29-34 and 2:1). Both Peter and Andrew also appear to have continued to own a boat which was used by the group for their several journeys across the Sea of Galilee (Mk 3:9; 4:1; 4:36). Similarly, Levi hosted a banquet for Jesus and His followers, after he became Jesus’ disciple (Mk 2:15)<sup>20</sup>. In so doing, these disciples, like some of the OT agents, demonstrate their discipleship by extending hospitality to the embodied Divine Council.

However, these caveats also suggest that a complete severance of relationship with “home” and “family” was not a primary pre-requisite of “the disciples” as Meier construes it. Rather, it was the commitment to the itinerant lifestyle with Jesus that was being alluded to in Mk 10:28. As Jesus is constantly depicted on the move in Mark’s Gospel, so that almost every pericope begins with a verb of motion, His disciples, who physically followed Him, were also expected to share this itinerant lifestyle. In choosing this lifestyle, the disciples lost their sources of income, in contrast to the rich young ruler who could not sacrifice his source of socio-economic security to follow Jesus. The itinerant lifestyle of “the disciples” was secondary to the fact that they shared in Jesus’ ministry. In any case, itinerancy was not exclusive to “the disciples”, since Bartimaeus

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<sup>20</sup> The construction of 2:15b (αὐτὸν ἐν τῇ οἰκίᾳ αὐτοῦ) is ambiguous and could either mean that Levi hosted the banquet for Jesus’ entourage (so Malbon 1985, 282-292) or Jesus hosted it for Levi and his friends (so May 1993, 147-149). The former is the more likely scenario (cf. Stein 2008, 127). In either case, the point appears to be underlined that a complete severance of relationship with “home” and “family” does not occur for “the disciples” in the earlier part of the Gospel.

and some of “the crowd” and especially the women followers were also frequently with Jesus, albeit in the closing stages of the narrative.

Table 4.1 Specific functions performed by “the disciples” in Mark’s Gospel

<b>Agents of Revelations</b>	<b>Agents of Power</b>
Given the secrets of the kingdom (4:11)	Fish for people (1:17)
Preach (6:30)	Pluck grains on Sabbath (2:23)
Peter received revelation (8:29)	Disciples prepare boat for Jesus (3:9)
The three receive revelation (9:18)	The Twelve were sent two by two (6:7)
Disciples will bear testimony (13:9; 11)	The twelve perform miracles (6:30)
Disciples hear Jesus’s teachings and explanations (e.g. 4:10; 11:21; 13:1)	Disciples miraculously serve bread and fish, and harvest leftovers (6:41; 8:6)
Several theophanic revelations	Disciples break purity laws (7:2)

Regarding identifying the exclusive characteristics of “the disciples” through the specific functions they perform in the Gospel, the following observations may be made. As indicated by Mark 3:13-15, “the disciples” broadly performed two categories of functions—they preached and exercised Jesus’ dominion over the evil forces—i.e. they acted as agents of divine revelation and of divine power. As the summary in table 4.1 shows, as agents of revelation, “the disciples” received Jesus’ teaching (e.g. Mk 4:10-11; 6:30), observed Jesus’s actions and miracles (e.g. Mk 4:37-41; 6:45-53) and received special theophanic revelations of Jesus’ identity (e.g. Mk 8:18; 8:29; 9:18). As agents of Jesus’ power, the disciples performed services directed at facilitating Jesus’ mission (e.g. Mk 3:9; 11:1; 11:7), participated in Jesus’ ministry of harvesting and judgment (e.g. Mk 1:17; 2:23; 3:14-15; 6:7; 30; 41; 8:6) and were predicted to perform future functions of martyrdom (e.g. Mk 10:39).

Table 4.2 Parallels between some of the actions of Jesus and of “the disciples”

<b>Actions of Jesus in Mark</b>	<b>Actions of Disciples in Mark</b>
Preaching and teaching (1:21; 4:1; 6:2)	Teaching and Preaching (6:12, 30)
Exorcism (1:34; 39)	Exorcism (3:15; 6:13; 30, 9:39-40)
Baptism of Death (10:39-40)	Baptism of Death (10:39)
Bear testimony before chief priests (14:62)	Bear testimony “to them” (13:9; 11)
Revelation at His baptism (1:10-11)	Receive Revelation (8:29; 9:18)
Breaking the Sabbath (3:4)	Breaking the Sabbath (2:23)

The functions of “the disciples” as agents of divine power and revelation also parallel some of Jesus’ activities (table 4.2). This underlines the crucial point that the disciples, as His agents, shared in the mission of Jesus and imitated Him as part of their



formation. It should not be a matter of surprise that the formational activities of the disciples involved mimesis. As noted in the previous chapter, mimesis was characteristic of the contemporary rabbi-pupil relationship and served also as the mainstay of Jewish education at large. However, and as I shall shortly show (table 4.3); some of these activities of “the disciples” are also performed by a number of “non-conventional” disciples. Thus for example, an anonymous “non-conventional” disciple who did not physically follow Jesus, successfully performed exorcism in Jesus’ name, and was accepted by Jesus as “for us” (Mk 9:39-40). This shows that “the disciples” cannot be exclusively distinguished by the specific functions they performed in the narrative.

A much more exclusive characteristic of “the disciples” in Mark’s Gospel is their ubiquitous presence with Jesus throughout the Gospel. In Mark 3:13-15 where the functions of “the twelve” are summarized, it is also stated, that they were designated ἵνα ὦσιν μετ’ αὐτοῦ (literally, “that they might keep Him company”). If as I shall shortly argue, the term “the disciples” is coterminous with the term “the twelve” in Mark’s Gospel, then it is suggested that “being with Jesus”, i.e. being a companion of Jesus, was the exclusive characteristic of this group (cf. Schweizer 1971, 41).

Indeed, “the disciples” were present, and are portrayed as active characters, in all but six of the fifty-six pericopae in Appendix A (Mk 3:1-6; 6:14-29; 7:24-30; 7:31-37; 8:22-26; 12:1-40). And the six pericopae in which their presence is not highlighted appear to prove the rule that the constant presence of “the disciples” with Jesus was an exclusive characteristic of the group. Firstly, in those pericopae in which a glaring physical separation between Jesus and His disciples is implied or stated, an important event of theological implications occurs to highlight the consequences of the separation. For example in the storm miracle of Mk 6:45-52, the physical separation serves as the prelude for the theophanic encounter on the sea, as well as underlining the dependence of the disciples on Jesus. Similarly, in Mk 1:35-39, the early morning separation of Jesus from His disciples underlines Jesus’ prayer life and dependence on God prior to a major evangelistic campaign in cities surrounding Capernaum (cf. Mk 14:33-41).

Secondly, the other pericopae in which the presence of the disciples is not explicitly stated appear to nevertheless assume their presence. So for example, Mk 3:1-6 does not explicitly identify the presence of the disciples in the synagogue during the healing of the man with the withered hand. However, there is the likelihood that the disciples were present. Mark 3:7, following immediately after the miracle in 3:1-6, indicate that Jesus went to the lakeside *with* “the disciples”, thus maintaining the impression that the disciples were with Jesus in the synagogue in the previous pericope. In a similar vein, it is likely that the disciples were present at the healing of the blind man of Bethsaida (Mk 8:22-26), given that they are present in the preceding and following pericopae. A similar phenomenon occurs in Mk 7. It is also likely that, even though it is not explicitly stated, the disciples were present in the audience during the teaching on the wicked tenants and the dispute with Jesus’ opponents that followed it (Mk 12:1-40)<sup>21</sup>. Thus the constant presence of “the disciples” with Jesus is an exclusive characteristic of that group.

Thirdly, in several passages, “the disciples” are linguistically interchanged with Jesus, making it sometimes difficult to distinguish between Him and the disciples as distinct actants in the narrative (e.g. Mk 1:21; 1:29; 3:1; 3:7; 5:1, 5:18; 8:22; 11:15; 10:46; 11:27). In those passages in which the presence of the disciples is assumed, such as Mk 3:1-6 and 8:22-26, it is apparent that “Jesus” linguistically represents “Jesus and His disciples”. Turner identifies as many as twenty-one such occurrences in the whole Gospel and labels this linguistic phenomenon as constituting “perhaps of all the most significant distinction between the three Synoptists” (1924-1925, 225-226).

The classic expression of this phenomenon is in the healing of the man with withered hand in Mk 3:1-6 in which it is initially said that “Jesus” entered the synagogue; and yet, in Mk 3:7, he departs *with His disciples*. It is evident that Mark meant that “Jesus and His disciples” entered the synagogue together and left together. A similar phenomenon occurs in Mk 10:46a where the plural ἑρπονται (Jesus and His entourage) enter Jericho, only to be immediately followed by Mk 10:46b where the singular genitive absolute

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<sup>21</sup> Mark 6:14-29 is an authorial interlude that narrates the martyrdom of the Baptist and does not indicate the presence of the disciples; though, it is linked to the missionary enterprise of “the disciples”.

ἐκπορευομένου αὐτοῦ (literally, “He travelling out”) is used. This is then followed by an apparently redundant repetition combining the singular with the plural in Mk 10:46c καὶ τῶν μαθητῶν αὐτοῦ καὶ ὄχλου ἱκανοῦ (literally, “and the disciples and a large crowd”). These passages demonstrate a Markan phenomenon of simultaneous conflation of “the disciples” with Jesus, followed by distancing of Jesus from the disciples.

In the recent past, interpreters had explained this linguistic-textual phenomenon as evidence of editorial lapses (e.g. Johnson 1978, 192; Bultmann 1957, 368-369; Turner 1924-1925, 228; Robbins 1973, 228). The lack of proof of any pre-Markan texts, however, hampers the utility of such redactional approaches to the linguistic problem. A more satisfactory explanation is Mark’s theological tendency to closely associate Jesus with “the disciples” so much so that without specifically identifying the disciples, ἐκπορευομένου αὐτοῦ, is used to rather indicate that Jesus travelled from Jericho with His disciples, as the subsequent genitive nouns in Mk 10:46c explain. Thus at the same time as the narrative underlines the close companionship and sharing of identity of Jesus with “the disciples”, there is also a clear separation of Jesus from the disciples.

This phenomenon has an important bearing on conceptualizing the theological roles of “the disciples” in Mark’s Gospel. The disciples are depicted not just as “followers”, but “companions” of Jesus. In addition to the hospitality ethic that this emphasis underlines, it also reflects the fact that the disciples share in several aspects of Jesus’ mission. In some pericopae, such as Mk 2:23-28, the disciples appear to be depicted as sharing Jesus’ identity as the Son of Man and perform eschatological functions *in the place of* Jesus. They also receive special instructions not offered to the general crowd (Mk 4:10; 4:34; 7:17; 9:28; 10:10).

Yet, at the close of the Gospel, a significant separation between Jesus and His disciples occur, so that Jesus is the only one who died on the cross, though the function of the disciples were to remain loyal to Him. Furthermore, though Mark does not go as far as explicitly propounding a theology of union of the disciples with Jesus; it will shortly be shown that there is a suggestion that this theology indeed underlines the Jesus-disciples interactions in some of the pericopae. It is one of the theses of this dissertation

that John's Gospel complements this Markan phenomenon through his emphases on the union of the disciples with Jesus.

#### 4.1.1.2 *"The Twelve" in Mark*

The term "the twelve" is used by Mark on ten occasions. It first appears in Mk 3:13-15 where Jesus "went up to the mountain", προσκαλεῖται (called) a group and ἐποίησεν (designated) twelve "to be with him, and to be sent out to proclaim the message, and to have authority to cast out demons". Apart from the textual problems associated with this passage<sup>22</sup>, three further questions, which are of relevance to the present project, have been raised—firstly, was "the twelve" a subset of "the disciples" or are the two terms, as used by Mark, coterminous? Secondly, what was the exact historical composition of membership of "the twelve"? And thirdly what is the theological significance of the number "twelve"?

The language<sup>23</sup> of Mk 3:13-14 may appear at initial cursory reading to imply that Jesus went up to the mountain with a larger group of followers, from among whom He προσκαλεῖται (literally, "called") or selected a subset. From this group, a further subset labelled "the twelve", was ἐποίησεν (literally, made or designated) to be with Him (so, Meier 1997, 638. n.8; Best 1977, 390-393). There are indications however, that Mk 3:13-14 is typical of the Evangelist's style of repeating statements in apparently redundant form as a means of emphasis (cf. Stein 2008, 168-169; France 2002, 160; Lane 1974, 132; Donahue and Harrington 2002, 126). The pericope compares with

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<sup>22</sup> A number of ancient manuscripts (e.g.  $\kappa$  B  $\Theta$   $f^{13}$   $sy^{h,mg}$  and Coptic) contain the additional phrase *οὐς καὶ ἀποστολοὺς ὠνομασεν* indicating that Jesus designated the twelve as apostles (cf. Skinner 2004, 322-329). It appears however that this was a scribal attempt at harmonization Mark with Matthew's Gospel. A number of other ancient manuscripts also add that the twelve were designated to heal, in addition to having authority over demons (cf. Matt 10:1). The ten occasions of the term "the twelve" are Mk 3:14; 4:10; 6:7; 9:35; 10:32; 11:11; 14:10; 14:17; 14:20; 14:43.

<sup>23</sup> Καὶ ἀναβαίνει εἰς τὸ ὄρος καὶ προσκαλεῖται οὓς ἤθελεν αὐτός, καὶ ἀπῆλθον πρὸς αὐτόν. καὶ ἐποίησεν δώδεκα, literally reads – "And he goes up into the mountain, calling those he was wanting Himself, and they went off to Him. And He designated twelve..."

similar pericopae in which Mark begins a new section or division by highlighting an interaction between Jesus and the disciples (e.g. Mk 1:16-20; 6:6-13; 8:27-33). In these passages there is an initial summarative statement of Jesus' call of the disciples, followed by a more detailed clarification of what that "call" entailed. Thus the main point of Mk 3:13-14 is to underline the *call* of "the twelve" and the purposes of the call to make them agents of divine power and revelation. The repetitions stress the sovereign prerogative of Jesus to choose who to be in His immediate company. And therefore, Jesus' call should be understood as equivalent to the designation, rather than an elevation of "the twelve" above the larger group of disciples.

In addition, Mark never uses the two terms, "the disciples" and "the twelve" together, suggesting an interchangeable equation between the two. Best has suggested that in passages such as the above, Mark uses the term μαθηταῖς in such a manner as to imply a larger group than "the twelve" (1977, 157-158). Yet, as he also admits, the more natural sense of μαθηταῖς in these passages is that it is equivalent to "the twelve". Thus contrary to Marcus (2000, 266), Meier (1997, 638) and Taylor (1952, 230), who understand the twelve as a subset of "the disciples"; in Mark, the two terms are to be understood as coterminous (cf. Stein 2008, 169; France 2002, 158; Lane 1974, 132; Black 1989, 273).

This interpretation may initially appear to weaken the approach I have adopted to identify disciples in Mark beyond "the twelve". However, Mark's consistent use of the term "the disciples" to characterize "the twelve" appears to negate the use of "the disciples" for an unspecified group or number of people. Yet, this does not also mean that he regarded discipleship as exclusive to the twelve. Perhaps he used the term, "the disciples", as it was also used by his first readers, recognizing also that discipleship to Jesus was open to an unlimited number of followers of Jesus.

The second question regards the list of "the twelve" in Mark and how it compares with the lists in Matthew and Luke. The order of the names slightly differs between the three synoptic Evangelists (Matt 10:1-4; Lk 6:12-16). This however is unlikely to be a matter of significant theological import. It certainly underlines the historicity of the group that

the Evangelists have produced independent lists of the twelve. What is more interesting is the absence of the name Levi in Mark's list; given that Levi had previously been called in a manner that was similar to the first four disciples. Most commentators agree with church tradition and the other synoptics that Matthew and Levi (Mk 3:18) referred to the same person. Despite a few dissenting voices (e.g. Meier 1997, 638; Malbon 1986, 104-130), there is no evidence that this could not have been the case.

As to the reasons for the number twelve, most commentators have argued that this was related to the redemption-historical and eschatological mission of Jesus. In his *Haeresies*, Epiphanius regards the twelve as "a testimony to Israel" (*Haeresies* 30.13). Thus, according to Lane, "the twelve" proleptically represented "the final form of the messianic community, the eschatological creation of God" (1974:133). Indeed, writings such as the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs support the likelihood of intense interest in first century Jewish circles of the renewal or restoration of the twelve tribes (cf. Vincent 2008, 582; Horsley 2001, 88-92; Bauckham 2006, 95; Bryan 2002, 123-124). In Sir 36:13 and 48:10, it is predicted that Elijah would come and "restore the tribes of Judah". And in several passages in the Qumran literature, there are clear assumptions that the eschatological age would see the restoration of chiefs of the twelve tribes of Israel (e.g. IQS 8:1-3; IQM 2:2-3; 5:1-3, IIQT 18:14-16). Hence in selecting "the twelve", Jesus was making a highly symbolic statement of His eschatological mission.

Perhaps, the request by James and John to be granted to sit on either sides of Jesus on His throne stems from this belief (Mk 10:35-45; cf. Vincent 2008, 583; Henderson 2006, 87-91; Dunn, 1992, 94-117). Jesus' correction indicates however, that though He employed the symbolism of the twelve tribes in appointing "the twelve", their calling was to serve and represent the eschatological Messianic community, rather than as chiefs of His people. Seen this way Jesus' interactions with the disciples may be regarded in a similar manner as His interaction with the whole Messianic community that He had inaugurated. And this would seem to support the approach to study the formation of "the disciples" as a prototype of the formation of the followers of Jesus. Stein similarly notes, "Through the symbolism of choosing the twelve, Jesus was proclaiming that He was

bringing the long-awaited kingdom of God to Israel” (2008, 169-170). This symbolism of the number twelve, in Meier’s view, accounts for the rapid disappearance of the group as a separate entity in the early church not long after Pentecost (1997, 637). Thus “the twelve” and therefore “the disciples” served a limited historical-symbolical function as a distinct group. Their leadership role, which is emphasized in Luke, is not as well stressed in Mark.

#### *4.1.1.3 “The Apostles” in Mark*

The term ἀπόστολοι (apostles) is used in Mark on only one occasion (Mk 6:30), even though the verb ἀποστέλλει (send) is also used in Mk 3:14 to describe the function of “the twelve” as agents of Jesus. It is also significant that the term was used of the twelve after returning from their independent missions. It is apparent that this single use of “apostles” in Mark suggests that the Evangelist saw it as a functional term describing their role as Jesus’ agents. It certainly does not appear to be a separate category of discipleship. To Mark, the disciples remained disciples before and after their evangelistic missions. The use of the term “apostle” in a functional sense supports the stance taken in this dissertation to employ the rubric of agency under which to examine the structure of the Jesus-disciples relationship.

#### *4.1.1.4 “The three” and “the four” in Mark*

Though Mark does not label a group of disciples as “the three”, or “the four”, there are a number of occasions in which Jesus selects three or four members of “the twelve” to accompany Him to specific events. In the transfiguration (Mk 9:2-8), the raising of Jairus’s daughter (Mk 5:37) and the prayer in Gethsemane (Mk 14:32-42), Jesus was accompanied, not by all the members of “the twelve”, but by the “three—Peter, James and John. Indeed, in Mk 5:37, a single article (τὸν, the) is used to introduce the names, giving an impression that perhaps the three constituted as a group. On two other occasions, i.e. at Simon’s house (Mk 1:29) and during the Mount of Olives eschatological discourse (Mk 13:3-4), Jesus was accompanied by four disciples—Peter, James, John and Andrew.

The significance of this inner core of disciples to earliest Christianity is indicated by the narration of their calls at the beginning of Jesus' public ministry (Mk 1:16-20). Yet, even though their leadership role is evident in the other Gospels, it is apparent that they did not constitute as a separate category of discipleship from the others (cf. Donahue and Harrington 2002, 126). What may be concluded though is that they appear to play roles of eyewitnesses in Mark's Gospel. In line with Mark's apocalyptic rendition of revelation, the "secret of the kingdom" could only be revealed to special insiders. Thus it appears important that not only should these four special events be witnessed by specifically named people, but more so the inner core of the insiders (cf. Culpepper 2000, 32-38).

#### 4.1.2 Named Characters who Perform functions of Disciples

A number of named characters in the Gospel of Mark not explicitly identified as disciples nevertheless perform functions which characterize them as disciples of Jesus. Important for the present purposes will be to examine whether Bartimaeus, Jairus, Simon of Cyrene, Joseph of Arimathea and the named women of Mk 15-16 (Mary Magdalene, Mary mother of Jesus, Mary mother of James and Salome) could be regarded as "non-conventional" disciples of Jesus<sup>24</sup>.

##### 4.1.2.1 *Bartimaeus as a "disciple" of Jesus*

There are several reasons to suggest that Bartimaeus (Mk 10:46-52) plays a crucial role in Mark's portrayal of discipleship and must therefore be regarded as a non-conventional disciple. Firstly, the identification of the character by name in itself is significant; for, apart from the Baptist, Jairus, Simon the leper and Herod Antipas, the only other named characters before the passion were the disciples and Jesus. This

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<sup>24</sup> Simon the Leper (Mk 14:3) qualifies to be in this group, since he extended hospitality to Jesus and provided the setting for His anointing by the woman. Since lepers were usually isolated, hosting a banquet for Jesus suggests that he had previously been healed (cf. Edwards 2002, 412-413; Stein 2008, 633). Thus he fulfils the main criteria for discipleship. However, his characterization in the pericope is very limited and hence he cannot be discussed in any meaningful detail as a non-conventional disciple.



suggests an authorial effort to identify a most likely popular character among the earliest Christian movement (cf. Bauckham 2006, 53).

Secondly, the public and vociferous confession of Bartimaeus that Jesus was “Son of David” has been noted as significant by a number of commentators (Stein 2008, 495; France 2002, 423; Donahue and Harrington 2002, 319; Nineham 1969, 282). This Messianic title occurs only on the lips of Bartimaeus in Mark’s Gospel and favourably compares with the confession of Peter (Mk 8:29). Jesus subsequently explains in Mk 12:35-37 that despite its insight, the title, or its contemporary interpretations, did not adequately characterize His identity. Nevertheless, its repeated and emphatic use by Bartimaeus indicates a significant expression of faith and public declaration of it. In a prophetic manner the blind man’s insightful confession “opens a new phase in the gradual disclosure of Jesus in Mark” (France 2002, 423; contra Lane 1974, 388; Kingsbury 1983, 102-113). In this sense Bartimaeus acts as an agent of revelation.

Thirdly, the emphasis on a call, albeit indirect (Mk 10:49-50), when collated with other indicators in the pericope, reinforces the discipleship element. It is not clear whether it was “the disciples” (so, Donahue and Harrington 2002, 318; Suggit 1991, 57-63) or “the crowd” that followed Jesus (so, Stein 2008, 496) who transmitted Jesus’ call. Be that as it may, the unusually emphatic Φωνήσατε by Jesus (literally, call or cry out with a loud voice), which is thrice repeated in Mk 10:49, underlines that in all likelihood, Mark is highlighting the significance of the “call” of Bartimaeus. A number of commentators have countered that Jesus dismissed Bartimaeus by asking him to “Go (Υπάγε); your faith has made you well” (Mk 10:52; e.g. Gundry 1993, 594). Yet, this interpretation misses the point that Jesus’ words were in fact the words of healing that granted Bartimaeus’ petition (cf. Mk 7:29; 1 Sam 1:17). Rather than dismissing Bartimaeus, Υπάγε is used as a word of blessing. In any case, even if Jesus meant to dismiss Bartimaeus, the fact that the blind man nevertheless followed Jesus heightens, rather than diminishes, the sense of his commitment to Jesus (cf. Combrink 2005, 45).

Fourthly, the vivid and dramatic detail, that Bartimaeus threw off his outer cloak, and literally “sprang up” to come to Jesus (Mk 10:50), heightens the discipleship

connotations of the encounter. Some interpreters have suggested that it signified discarding an old life to take on a new one (e.g. Culpepper 1982, 131-132; Suggit 1991, 57-63; Johnson 1978, 191-204). Others have also noted the possibility of baptismal connotation in that Markan detail (e.g. Scroggs and Groff 1973, 531-548; Smith 1966, 217-238). It is difficult however to firmly prove such interpretations beyond the fact that Mark has given a dramatic account. If at all Mark meant an additional connotation, then it may well be the sense that Bartimaeus left behind his source of income to follow Jesus; for, the outer cloak of blind beggars were usually spread on the roadside or on the laps to receive alms (cf. Keener 1993, 164).

Fifthly, the climactic conclusion that Bartimaeus “followed” Jesus *after* his healing should be understood not just as a physical following of Jesus but also a metaphorical and spiritual commitment to Jesus as a disciple. Finally, the prominence of “the way” theme in the whole pericope (Mk 10:46-52) focuses the healing as closely intertwining Mark’s theology of revelation as a miraculous transformation wrought by God, with discipleship to Jesus (cf. Achtemeier 1978, 115-145; Beavis 1998, 19-39; Steinhauser 1983, 204-206; Robbins 1973, 226). These elements of the pericope firmly highlight Bartimaeus as a disciple of Jesus, albeit not one of “the twelve”.

#### 4.1.2.2 *Is Jairus depicted as a “disciple” of Jesus?*

The direct identification of Jairus by name, his act of falling at Jesus’ feet, his expression of confidence in Jesus to heal his daughter, together with Jesus’ exhortation that he should believe (Mk 5:35), and the immensity of the miracle of the revivification of his daughter, could together indicate that perhaps Jairus subsequently became one of the important foundational members of Christianity. However, in themselves, these actions are not adequately strong basis to make the judgment that Jairus was a “non-conventional” disciple. Jairus had a need, and even though he sought for help from Jesus, it will be difficult to disentangle the elements related to his petition for help from those related to commitment to Jesus. Being a receiver of a miracle does not necessarily qualify one to be a disciple of Jesus. In his case, falling at Jesus’ feet as part of a petition for help should certainly not be interpreted as automatically denoting

worship of Jesus (cf. Mk 7:25-26; 1:40; 5:10). It could equally be an indication of desperation on the petitioner's part. Jairus' faith in coming to Jesus is all the same depicted in a positive manner.

Because the account of the revivification of his daughter is intercalated with the healing of the haemorrhaging woman, it is tempting to see his faith as at the same level as that of the woman. However, as Donahue and Harrington have correctly noted, whereas "the woman's faith is praised (5:34), Jairus is on the other hand encouraged to have faith" (2002, 181; cf. Bonneau 2001, 321-340; Derrett 1982, 474-505). In the end, because of the limited information on Jairus' subsequent response to the miracle, a decision to label him as a "non-conventional" disciple can only be equivocal. In the project at hand, Jairus is excluded as a disciple.

#### *4.1.2.3 Is Simon of Cyrene depicted as a "disciple" of Jesus?*

The brief comment in Mk 15:21 identifying Simon of Cyrene as the bearer of Jesus' cross, and naming his sons, underlines the historicity of the narrative (cf. Bauckham 2006, 51-52). Stein (2008, 709), along with France (2002, 641), note that Simon was compelled to carry Jesus' cross and so they do not believe that he is in anyway portrayed positively, let alone with connotations of discipleship. They are correct to draw attention to the use of ἀγγαρεύουσιν (literally, "coerced service") as connoting forced labour by the Roman soldiers, rather than a voluntary service for the cause of Jesus. Also in favour of rejecting Simon the Cyrenian as a possible disciple is the fact that no indication is given as to whether he believed in Jesus or not.

Stein and France however appear to have undervalued a number of other indicators in the verse, which when taken together, could depict Simon more positively. Firstly, the essential effect of Simon's service, even if coerced out of him, was nonetheless, to help Jesus to complete His journey to the cross. That Jesus was disserved by His closest followers, only to be helped by a stranger who happened to have been present, still does not diminish Simon's contribution to the fulfilment of Jesus' mission (cf. Blount 1994, 171-198; Tannehill 1977, 152). Secondly, the verse provides otherwise

superfluous information to draw attention to the importance of the character to Mark's purposes. One of these purposes was that Simon of Cyrene is portrayed as an eyewitness of the crucifixion of Jesus. With "the disciples" absent from the scene since Mk 14:72, Simon provides a narrative link between the events in the Praetorium and the death of Jesus on the cross. This eyewitness function will shortly be taken over by the named women in different circumstances.

Thirdly, the use of ἄρῃ τὸν σταυρὸν αὐτοῦ (literally, he might carry his cross) in Mk 15:21 matches its earlier use to depict discipleship to Jesus (Mk 8:34; cf. Donahue and Harrington 2002, 441). Even though the αὐτοῦ here refers to Jesus and not Simon, one ought to be open to the possibility that given the idiomatic nature of the verbal construction, this may be an authorial *double entendre*. If this were so, it could be surmised that Mark would have used such a literary device on proviso that Simon was probably already known in the earliest Christian community as "one of those who carries his cross", i.e., a disciple of Jesus (cf. Blount 1994, 171-198).

Finally, although no indication is given of any spiritual commitment to Jesus, and he is described as a "passer-by", the note on the names of his sons appears to support a conjecture that Simon may have been a follower of Jesus. Indeed Simon the Cyrenian's case parallels that of a number of characters in Mark, such as Peter's mother-in-law, who act or serve in a manner that helps Jesus' mission, but of whom it is difficult to prove beyond reasonable doubt that they could be characterized as non-conventional disciples. In this particular case however, and unlike Simon's mother in law, though there is some merit in studying Simon of Cyrene as a contributor to the dynamics of early Christianity, the confounding elements in the account cast a fair amount of shadow of doubt over including him as a substantive "non-conventional" disciple.

#### 4.1.2.4 Joseph of Arimathea as a "disciple" of Jesus

The detailed and elaborated actions of Joseph of Arimathea described in Mk 15:42-46 certainly qualifies him as a non-conventional disciple of Jesus. Firstly, the reference to his piety has been noted by several interpreters as crucial information, though others

believe that this information should not be construed as necessarily implying that Joseph was a follower of Jesus (e.g. Taylor 1952, 600; Gundry 1993, 983; Hooker 1991, 381; Donahue and Harrington 2002, 453). Joseph, it is stressed, was merely fulfilling Deut 21:22-23 by burying Jesus, as any devout Jew would have done. Yet, this interpretation appears unsatisfactory. Given the tremendous effort required of Joseph to arrange Jesus' burial over "not much less than two hours" (Brown 1994, 2.1211-1212), it is more than likely that Joseph's actions were inspired by much more than a general feeling of Jewish benevolent piety.

In addition, there is no indication that Joseph was concerned about the other victims of the crucifixion, suggesting a specific and deliberate act of devotion toward Jesus in person. The burial in a special tomb also suggests a calculated action of a devotee. In any case, Mark underlines that, Joseph had to muster the *τολμήσας* (Mk 15:43, courage, dare or boldness) to secure the body of Jesus from Pilate. When these data are taken, together with the fact that Joseph was "waiting expectantly for the kingdom of God" (Mk 15:43), a phrase which, to Mark, "was bound up with the mission of Jesus" (France 2002, 666-667), Joseph is portrayed as one of Jesus' disciples.

Donahue and Harrington observe that Mark had earlier condemned "the whole" of the Sanhedrin as unanimously culpable for delivering Jesus to Pilate (cf. Mk 14:55, 14:64; 15:1); and hence Joseph, being a member of that group, must have approved of those actions. Yet, there is no evidence that Joseph of Arimathea personally consented to the decision<sup>25</sup>. Even if he was physically present at the various meetings of the Sanhedrin, his subsequent conduct heightens his candidature as a "non-conventional" disciple rather than diminish it. By implication, he would have been so deeply affected by Jesus' testimony before the Sanhedrin and the other events of the previous hours to have had a dramatic change of mind to have taken on the task of burying Jesus and with exceptional boldness. The actions of Joseph indeed compare favourably with that of the woman who anointed Jesus, even though hers had significant prophetic overtones.

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<sup>25</sup> Infact Luke indicates that Joseph did not consent to the Sanhedrin's decision (Lk 23:50-51).

Secondly, and much more importantly, earlier on in the Gospel, Mark described that when the disciples of the Baptist heard about the death of their master, “they came and took his body, and laid it in a tomb” (Mk 6:29). In the absence of an eldest son, rabbinic disciples, who related to their rabbi as fictive sons, were expected to bury their dead master (Keener 1993, 151). Accordingly, Joseph’s actions should be seen in a similar light. This is more so given Mark’s narrative style of intramural literary echoes whereby one story in the Gospel pre-empts and echoes a subsequent one,<sup>26</sup> thus inviting the reader to interpret Joseph’s actions in the light of those of the Baptist’s disciples. In his characterization of Joseph of Arimathea therefore, Mark indicates that though “the disciples” had deserted Jesus, a “non-conventional” disciple nevertheless ensured that, like His forerunner, Jesus was also “properly” buried.

It may be argued that in arranging the burial of Jesus, and in so elaborate a detail, Joseph failed to grasp the true identity of Jesus as One who could not be contained by death and embalmment. A true disciple, such an argument might go, ought to have believed Jesus’ repeated predictions of His resurrection (Mk 8:31; 9:31; 10:32-34) and would not have acted in the manner that Joseph did. Yet, even if Joseph was aware of these predictions, the objection nevertheless points to some failure of comprehension on his part, and one that is comparable to those of the conventional disciples (cf. Williams 1994, 189-192). It does not negate the fact that Joseph regarded himself as a disciple to the extent of courageously arranging the burial of his Master (cf. Lane 1974, 579; France 2002, 665-666; Stein 2008, 724).

#### *4.1.2.5 The Named Women as “disciples” of Jesus*

The pivotal eyewitness roles of the named women in Mark certainly qualify them to be regarded as “non-conventional” disciples. These acted as agents of divine revelation and also served Jesus. Mark establishes that Mary Magdalene and Mary, mother of

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<sup>26</sup> Other explicit examples are (a) the Baptist Mk 1:7; 1:21-28; 3:27, (b) feeding miracles Mk 6:30-44; 8:1-10; 8:19-20, (c) passion predictions Mk 8:31; 9:31; 10:32-33, (d) desertion of disciples and Peter’s denials Mk 14:26-31; 50-52; 66-72, and (e) Judas’ betrayal Mk 14:10-11; 17-21; 43-50.

James the younger and of Joses (Mk 15:40) were present at the crucifixion and burial of Jesus. Mary Magdalene, Mary, the mother of James and Salome were also present at both the crucifixion and at the tomb on the Easter morning (Mk 16:1). The fact that Mark names them suggests that they were prominent and well-known members of the primitive Church. He was therefore identifying them as eyewitnesses whose testimonies could possibly corroborate his account. Their presence at these pivotal events, and in the absence of “the disciples”, confirm these women as substantive eyewitnesses of Jesus’ death and resurrection. The women “see Jesus die, they see His body being laid in the tomb, [and] they find the tomb empty” (Bauckham 2006, 48). No other groups of Jesus’ followers were entrusted with such a combination of all three profound eyewitness experiences.

It is also stated that these women “used to *follow* him and provided for him when he was in Galilee” (Mk 15:41). Ἠκολούθουν in Mk 15:41, certainly appears to qualify these women as “disciples” (cf. Donahue and Harrington 2002, 449; Bauckham 1991, 245-275; Boomershine 1981, 225-239; Malbon 1983, 29-48). In addition, service to Jesus as performed by the women, is a key element of the functions of “the disciples”. Just as the twelve tribes of Israel took turns to provide food for Yahweh in His tabernacle, and the angels waited on Jesus in the wilderness (Mk 1:13), so also were “the disciples” to cater for the embodied Divine Council. Hence their provision of service, hospitality and food to Jesus qualifies the women as disciples (cf. Asumang 2009a, 1-25).

The narrative also underlines the perseverance of these women, perhaps in contrast to “the disciples”. So, it is stated that the women had followed Jesus all the way from Galilee and “come up with Him to Jerusalem” to as far as Golgotha. This contrasts favourably to “the disciples” who, narratively, did not complete this parabolic journey of discipleship “in the way” (cf. Mk 10:32). Crucially also, the women were given the “apostolic” commission to “go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him, just as he told you” (Mk 16:7). Thus Mark’s characterization of the named women firmly establishes them as disciples of Jesus.

### 4.1.3 Anonymous Characters who Perform functions of Disciples

A number of anonymous characters in Mark's Gospel play crucial functions and are worthy of note as "non-conventional" disciples of Jesus. The most important among them are Simon's mother-in-law, the healed demoniac of Mk 5, the haemorrhaging woman, the anonymous exorcist, the woman who anointed Jesus, the owner of the "Upper Room" and the centurion at the cross.

#### 4.1.3.1 *Simon's mother-in-law as a "disciple"*

The healing of Simon's mother-in-law (Mk 1:29-31) served as the beginning of a very successful day of ministry in Simon's house in Capernaum. As noted earlier, though there is merit in examining the relationship between faith and healing in Mark (cf. Achtemeier 1978, 135; Stock 1982, 78-79; Combrink 2005, 33-66), the present project wishes to isolate those recipients of healing in this group who are further characterized as committing themselves to Jesus *after* their healing. In this regard, the "service" rendered by Simon's mother-in-law to Jesus and His entourage appears to qualify her as a non-conventional disciple. Stein argues that the *δῖνκει* (serve) in Mk 1:31 is meant to provide proof of her healing rather than have any connotations of discipleship (2008, 94; cf. Lane 1974, 78). Similarly, to France, the statement underlines that the healing was immediate and that no period of convalescence was required before the woman "fulfilled what would have been the expected role of mother-in-law in the family home, by serving up refreshments" (2002, 108).

Yet, Mark's Gospel on the whole, does not make such a drastic dichotomy between "discipleship" and "service". On the contrary, Mk 9:33-37 and 10:43-45 underlines that Markan discipleship, like Markan Christology, is distinguished by service and servanthood. The fact that Mark includes the actions of Simon's mother-in-law, and did not just indicate that she was healed, suggests his aim to highlight the service in the context of the hospitality she provided Jesus (cf. Selvidge 1983, 396-400; contra Munro 1982, 225-241). It is worthy of note that the "service" of Simon's mother-in-law was directed to Jesus and His entourage and did enhance their successful Capernaum mission (Mk:



31-34). In addition, hospitality plays a significant function in the depiction of discipleship to Jesus (e.g. Mk 2:15; 15:41). Given Mark's portrayal of Jesus as the embodied Divine Council, the significance of such direct service to Jesus should not be diminished (compare e.g. Abraham's hospitality to Yahweh in Gen 18; cf. Asumang 2009a, 1-25).

It is also significant that the only previous use of *διηκόνει* in Mark's Gospel describes "service" rendered to Jesus by the angels in the wilderness (Mk 1:13). As will be noted shortly, this is part of a general paralleling of the angels with disciples of Jesus in Mark's Gospel. The episode in Simon's house therefore shows how a human agent rendered table service to the embodied Divine Council and His co-agents. And her table service compares favourably with those of the named women in Mk 15:40-41 (cf. Rhoads 1994, 368). Thus Simon's mother-in-law should be regarded as a non-conventional disciple.

#### *4.1.3.2 The Demoniak of Mark 5 as a "disciple"*

The demoniac of Mk 5 is characterized by Mark in a fashion that suggests that he is to be regarded as a "non-conventional" disciple. Firstly, his healing from the physical and mental illness, as well as the exorcism from the demon possession is also depicted as a spiritual transformation. The previously violent and possessed man, who dwelt in the tombs, is not only exorcised (Mk 5:5) but described as "sitting there, clothed and in his right mind" (Mk 5:15). Stein along with others rightly note that this characterization also describes the man's salvation (2008, 257; cf. Combrink 2005, 33-66; Derrett 1979, 2-17; Donahue and Harrington 2002, 170; France 2002, 231; Bligh 1969, 383-390).

Secondly, the missionary elements of the narrative indicate that the demoniac became a non-conventional disciple. The healed man showed his enthusiasm by begging to become one of Jesus' companions and to share in His mission. Though this request was refused, he was commissioned by Jesus as more or less the first apostle to the Gentiles—"Go home to your friends, and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and what mercy he has shown you" (Mk 5:19). Apart from "the disciples", no other

character in the Gospel is commissioned by Jesus in such a clearly defined manner<sup>27</sup>. The former demoniac therefore acted as an agent of divine revelation.

Finally, and significantly, this man's obedience in κηρύσσειν (Mk 5:20; literally, "proclaiming") in the Decapolis, as well as his immense missionary success testifies to the fact that he is depicted as a Gentile "non-conventional" disciple. In interpreting Jesus' instruction to tell (ἀπαγγεῖλον) friends of "how much *the Lord* has done for you" (Mk 5:19) as a mandate to proclaim in the whole Decapolis of "how much *Jesus* had done for him" (Mk 5:20), this former demoniac shows that he indeed had come to believe that Jesus was the same as "the Lord", the Divine Council. Certainly, that Mark uses κηρύσσειν (proclaim) to also denote Jesus' Galilean ministry in Mk 1:14 and 1:38-39 suggests that Mark, (and by extension, Jesus), did not disapprove of the man's public preaching (cf. Raisanen 1990, 154).

#### 4.1.3.3 *The Haemorrhaging Woman as a "disciple"*

The haemorrhaging woman belongs to the category of healed suppliants who also committed themselves to Jesus *after* their healing (Mk 5:24-34). The physical/medical, emotional, financial, religious-purity and the socio-cultural and gender barriers that confronted the woman were enormous. Yet, Mark's emphases on certain features of the interaction appear to be aimed at demonstrating the multi-dimensional nature of the Jesus-disciple encounter. At the outset, Mark uses several participial clauses in Mk 5:24-25, in a manner sympathetic to the woman that also draws attention to her as an important person for the Evangelist's purposes (cf. Haber 2003, 171-192). And the rest of the narrative indeed confirms this role of the woman as a "non-conventional" disciple who demonstrates the agency of the numinous power of Jesus. The "passivity" of Jesus

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<sup>27</sup> The commissioning of the leper who disobeyed Jesus (Mk 1:40-45) comes closest. He and the demoniac both received explicit instructions from Jesus; but, whereas the leper was "sternly" warned to "say nothing to anyone" apart from the certifying priests, the demoniac was to tell friends about his encounter with God. The results of their actions were also different—Jesus' ministry was hindered by the leper's disobedience; whereas the enthusiasm of the former demoniac led to many more followers. Wrede's categorization of both characters as "failed disciples" is quite incorrect (1971, 170-179).

in this miracle therefore further validates the woman's faith and discipleship (cf. Powell 2005, 67). Not only had she "heard about" and actively "came" to Jesus (Mk 5:27), but she also believed that by merely touching Jesus, she would be healed. Significantly also, Jesus commended her for her faith (5:34).

The woman's faith is also underlined by the apparent contrast between her and the disciples in discerning the operation of the numinous power of Jesus (Mk 5:30-32). Furthermore, in stressing that the woman came from "behind" Jesus (Mk 5:27), Mark may have been stressing either that she was a member of the crowd that already "followed" Jesus (Mk 5:24), in which case, indicating her discipleship (so Donahue and Harrington 2002, 174) or that she aimed to secretly touch Jesus without wanting to create a commotion (so Marcus 2000, 357; Gundry 1993, 269). Be it as it may, there is also a possible allusion to an underlining emphasis on Jesus' divine personality; for, the "behind" of Yahweh is depicted in Ex 33:17-34:9 as the place full of mercy and grace (Ulrich 2002, 410-412; Phillips 1984, 282-294). If such an allusion was intended, then the woman's faith extends beyond merely seeking for healing, to acknowledging Jesus as the incarnate God, the Merciful One and the embodied Divine Council.

Also significant is the woman's commitment to Jesus *after* her healing. After Jesus enquired as to who had touched Him, she "came in fear and trembling, fell down before him, and told him the whole truth" (5:33). This reaction describes "human fragility in the presence of divine power" (Donahue and Harrington 2002, 175); or it refers to "the positive response and appropriate awe in experiencing the mighty, healing power of the Son of God" (Stein 2008, 270). It also constituted a public act of acclamation of Jesus as divine. In falling down before Jesus, the woman was submitting to none other than the embodied Divine Council. This is because, if as is likely, an allusion to the "back" of Yahweh was in view in Mk 5:27, then the woman's "fear and trembling" parallels Moses' similar response after he had also "seen" the "back" of Yahweh (Ex 34:8). Jesus' response in calling the woman, "daughter" (Mk 5:34) also demonstrates His acceptance

of her submission. Apart from the paralytic<sup>28</sup>, no other character in Mark is addressed in such an endearing manner. And in both pericopae, the divinity of Jesus is a paramount consideration. Thus the woman qualifies to be regarded as a non-conventional disciple.

#### *4.1.3.4 The Anonymous Exorcist of Mark 9 as a “disciple”*

The anonymous exorcist of Mk 9:38-40 challenges some of the so far established canons of followership of Jesus. It is stated that the man did not “follow us”; and yet, he successfully exorcises in Jesus’ name. In other words he was a “non-following follower” of Jesus—he did not physically follow Jesus, but he was committed to, and believed in Jesus to the extent of doing “a deed of power in my name”. Put another way, he was an agent of divine power.

Moreover, in his correction of the disciples, Jesus explains that the act of exercising “deeds of power” in His name is potentially open to all who are “for us” (Mk 9:40). The essential qualification was for Jesus to be the centre of such a person’s ministry. Inherent in John’s protest was the erroneous belief that the exorcist was not a member of the “select elite”. Jesus would have none of such elitism however; for He, Jesus, was the source of the miraculous power exercised by the disciples and not the group. In this way, Jesus radically keeps the door of discipleship and the function of sharing in His eschatological mission of overthrowing the evil forces open to any who believed in Him. The story of this non-following follower of Jesus, contrasts favourably with those of the nine disciples who failed to exorcise the dumb boy of Mk 9:14-29 (cf. Stein 2008, 445-446). Thus this anonymous exorcist should be considered, at least in functional terms, as a non-conventional disciple of Jesus.

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<sup>28</sup> Though the paralytic is addressed by Jesus as “son” and his sins forgiven (Mk 2:5), he has been excluded as a “non-conventional” disciple because there is no explicit comment on his subsequent commitment to Jesus after his healing.

#### 4.1.3.5 *The Woman who anointed Jesus as a “disciple”*

The woman who anointed Jesus (Mk 14:3-9) is certainly singled out by Jesus as a “non-conventional” disciple. Her act prepared Jesus’ body for His imminent death, thus denoting her insight into, and acceptance of, what Jesus had previously predicted (Taylor 1952, 533; France 2002, 550, Stein 2008, 635). In addition, in calling her actions “good” (Mk 14:6), Jesus was affirming its discipleship, eschatological and prophetic nature. It was “good” because it was at the correct time, just before His death. Her prophetic act of good “service” (14:6), according to Jesus, will be told as part of the proclamation of the Gospel (Mk 14:9). That Jesus affirms this promise with an “Amen”, “Amen” (Mk 14:9; cf. 3:20; 8:21; 9:1; 13:30; 9:41; 10:15; 11:22; 12:42; 14:25) underlines His deep appreciation of the woman’s love, insight and commitment (cf. Hooker 1991, 329; Gundry 1993, 813). Mark’s theological understanding of the woman’s actions in comparison with what pertains in John’s Gospel will be the subject of analysis in the final chapter of the dissertation.

#### 4.1.3.6 *The Owner of the “Upper Room” as a “disciple”*

Similar to Simon’s mother-in-law, the owner of the house in which Jesus hosted the Passover meal (Mk 14:12-16) should be considered as a non-conventional disciple of Jesus. Firstly, it is evident from the narrative that the owner previously had positive dealings with Jesus, hence the instruction to the two disciples to follow the man carrying a jar of water to his house. The instructions suggest that similar to the triumphal entry (Mk 11:2-6), Jesus knew the owner and had already made the arrangement with him (cf. Taylor 1952, 537; France 2002, 564-565; Donahue and Harrington 2002, 393). Secondly, Jesus describes Himself as “*the Teacher*” (Mk 14:14), indicating a pre-existing Teacher-pupil relationship with Jesus.

Thirdly, Jesus confidently lays claim to the owner’s house calling the room “*my guest room*” (Mk 14:14), thus emphasizing the owner’s stewardship. This stewardship is further heightened by the anonymous owner’s extension of hospitality to Jesus, which parallels the extension of hospitality by the angels in the wilderness (Mk 1:13). Like the

services of Simon's mother-in-law and of the named women, the account in Mk 14 affirms the owner's discipleship credentials. Finally, the narrative indicates the owner's obedience to the prior arrangement with Jesus. Jesus predicts that He "will show you a large room upstairs, furnished and ready" (Mk 14:15). True to Jesus' predictions, the two messenger disciples discovered that "everything" had been prepared as Jesus predicted. Consequently, Mark's characterization of the owner of the Upper Room indicates that he should be regarded as a non-conventional disciple of Jesus.

#### *4.1.3.7 The Centurion at the Cross as a "disciple"*

The centurion who confessed Jesus as "Truly this man was God's Son" (Mk 15:39) deserves mention as a potential non-conventional disciple. A number of interpreters have noted that given the anarthrous nature of υἱὸς θεοῦ, a Roman soldier would have used the phrase in the not uncommon Roman political sense as "a son of God" (e.g. Johnson 2000, 406-441; Shiner 2000, 3-22). However, given the circumstances of Jesus' death, an intended Roman political meaning of υἱὸς θεοῦ would have been a much more extraordinary statement than a purely religious one. Furthermore, since a similar anarthrous use of υἱὸς θεοῦ occurs in Mk 1:1, the rendition with the definitive article as "*the* Son of God" (so RSV, NAB, NIV, KJV, ESV) is more likely what Mark had in mind. The centurion was therefore the only human witness of Jesus as *the Son of God*, confirming what the voice from heaven (Mk 1:11; 9:7), the unclean spirits (Mk 3:11), the demoniac of Mk 5:7, and Mark himself had indicated in his account (Mk 1:1).

Stein muses that it is possible that the "historical" Roman centurion may not have understood the title or its full Jewish implications as the "literary" centurion appears to lead the reader to conclude (2008, 719). Even though such an irony may have been intended by Mark, it is nevertheless impossible to distinguish between exactly what the "historical" centurion may have meant and what Mark, the author, construed the meaning of the centurion's confession. It is also not unlikely that the centurion may have been familiar with the Jewish theological implications of the title. In any case, the characterization of the centurion is certainly one who positively confesses the full

divinity of Jesus, having witnessed Jesus' death and the associated cosmic phenomenon (Kim 1998, 221-241). In this sense, his confession parallels those of others in the narrative and qualifies him as a non-conventional disciple who functions as an agent of divine revelation. Table 4.4 summarizes some of the parallels between the conventional and non-conventional disciples.

Table 4.3: Comparison of Functions of Conventional and Non-Conventional Disciples

The Conventional Disciples in Mark	Non-Conventional Disciples in Mark
"Called" to fish for people (1:17)	Demoniac brought many to Jesus (Mk 5:1-20); Bartimaeus and others "called" (10:49)
Disciples prepare boat for Jesus (3:9)	Peter's mother-in-law serve them (1:31)
The Twelve's threefold functions (3:14-15)	Anonymous Exorcist performs deeds of power (9:38-40); demoniac as agent of Jesus (Mk 5:20)
Disciples given the mysteries of the kingdom (4:11)	"Those around Him" given the mysteries of the kingdom (4:11)
The twelve were sent two by two (6:7)	Demoniac sent to "Go home and proclaim" (5:19)
Peter confesses Jesus as Messiah (8:29)	Bartimaeus confesses Jesus as Messiah (10:47)
Cross bearing (Mk 8:34; 10:21)	Cross bearing (Mk 8:34; 10:21; 15:21)
Two disciples get the colt (11:1; 7)	?Simon of Cyrene carries Jesus' cross (15:21)
Eyewitnesses of Jesus ministry (before the Passion)	Eyewitnesses of Jesus' Passion (?Simon of Cyrene, the named women, Joseph of Arimathea and the Centurion)

#### 4.1.4 The "crowd", "those around Him" and the "outsiders"

A consistent feature of Jesus' ministry in Mark's Gospel is the frequent presence of "the crowd" with Jesus. The characterization of the "followership" of this crowd and other groups of people in Mark's account deserve a brief but significant note, for they are sometimes depicted in as positive terms as "the disciples". As table 4.4 shows, several words and actions associated with "the crowds" are also associated with the disciples. Just as the disciples are portrayed as enthusiastic but fallible followers of Jesus, underscores Malbon, "the crowd is also portrayed in the Gospel of Mark in both positive and negative ways in relation to Jesus and serves to complement the disciples in a composite portrait of followers of Jesus" (1986, 104).

From among the crowd, a group of followers appear to be depicted as closer, and more committed to Jesus than the rest of the general crowd. Beginning with Mk 2:15, Jesus is

accompanied by large number of followers, “tax collectors and sinners”, who appear to be distinguished in terms of closeness to Jesus. In Mark 4:10, a distinction is also made among the followers of Jesus, so that “the twelve” are joined by the *περὶ αὐτὸν* (others around Him) to seek for the interpretation of the parable of the Sower. It was to this whole group—the *περὶ αὐτὸν*, together with the twelve—that “the secret of the kingdom of God has been given” (Mk 4:11).

Table 4.4: Parallels between actions of “the crowds” and “the disciples” in Mark

<b>Actions Related to the Disciples</b>	<b>Actions Related to the Crowds</b>
Jesus calls the disciples (Mk 1:16-20; 3:13-19; 6:7; 8:1,34; 9:35; 10:42; 12:43)	Jesus calls the crowds (Mk 7:14; 8:34)
The disciples follow Jesus (Mk 1:18, 20; 6:1; 10:28)	The crowds follow Jesus (MK 2:15; 3:7; 5:24; 11:9).
Jesus teaches the disciples (Mk 8:31; 9:31;	Jesus teaches the crowd (Mk 2:13; 4:1-2; 6:34; 10:1)
Jesus feeds the disciples (Mk 14:22-25)	Jesus feeds the crowds (Mk 6:39, 41-42; 8:2-6)
The disciples are amazed at Jesus (Mk 4:41; 6:50,51; 9:6,32; 10:24,26,32;	The crowds are amazed at Jesus (MK 1:22, 27; 2:12; 5:15, 20; 6:2; 7:37; 9:15; 11:18).
The disciples are opposed by the Jewish leaders (Mk 2: 23-27; 7:1-13; 8:15; 9:14)	The crowd are opposed by the Jewish leaders (Mk 11:18, 32; 12:12; 14:2)
The disciples’ hearts are hardened (Mk 6:52; 8:17)	The crowds’ hearts are hardened (Mk 4:15)
The disciples abandon Jesus (Mk 14:10, 43, 50, 66-72;	The crowds abandon Jesus (Mk 14:43; 15:8, 11, 15).

As will be discussed in the next section, the idea of the “secrets” of God’s kingdom being gifted to specific people is related to the revelation of the mysteries of the Divine Council of Yahweh. In other words this group, made up of the twelve and “those around Him”, entered into the presence of the embodied Divine Council in analogous fashion as the OT prophets were underlined to have stood in the Divine Council. The twelve and “those around Him” hence function as agents of divine revelation. It is also noteworthy that in Mk 4:11, Jesus distinguishes His general audience into “outsiders” and “Insiders”—the “insiders” are graciously given “the mystery of the kingdom”, whereas the “outsiders” are not. Yet this distinction should not be taken to be cast in stone. Individuals, such as Jesus’ family, fluxed between being “insiders” to become “outsiders” and apparently later again as “insiders” (cf. Busch 2006, 477-505; Synge 1980, 53-58; Marcus 1984, 557-574).



Similar to Mk 4:10, Mk 10:32 also appears to distinguish two sub-groups of Jesus' "crowd-followers" in addition to "the twelve" being led into Jerusalem. One group is said to become ἐθαμβοῦντο (astonished) at the determination of Jesus to go to Jerusalem. A second group, thought to be "the twelve" by Donahue and Harrington (2002, 310), or the same crowd who were astonished, according to Lane (1974:374), Best (1981:120) and Hooker (1991, 244-245), or more likely, a subgroup of the crowd who were more committed to Jesus than the astonished crowd and from among whom are "the twelve", is said to be ἐφοβοῦντο (afraid; France 2002, 479). Be it as it may, it is evident that Jesus drew significant variations of degrees of commitment from "the crowd". Some may well have continued to become important members of the earliest Christian movement.

#### 4.1.5 The Angels and the Disciples in Mark's Gospel

In addition to human beings, there are two other categories of characters in Mark's Gospel—evil spirits and angels<sup>29</sup>. Though not very prominent, the few references to angels in Mark provide an important insight into the nature of Markan discipleship. Direct references are made to the angels on five occasions (Mk 1:13; 8:38; 12:25; 13:27; 13:32). Significantly, on all five occasions the activities or functions of the angels parallel those of the followers of Jesus. In Mk 1:13, the angels are said to διηκόνουν (wait on) Jesus. Though interpreters have offered different opinions on the meaning and significance of this table service by the angels, the fact that Mark uses the same expression to depict the discipleship of Simon's mother in law (Mk 1:31) and the named women (Mk 15:41) indicates an interesting functional parallel between the angels and human agents of Jesus (cf. Asumang 2009a, 14).

In Mk 12:25, followers of Jesus are again paralleled with the angels in the eschatological age—believers "neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven". Thus following the resurrection, disciples of Jesus will be similar to

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<sup>29</sup> Though it plays a key role in the Jerusalem entry, the colt (Mk 11:1-11) is excluded.

the angels in functional terms. Then in Mk 13:27 the angels are said to perform the function of ingathering of God's elect "from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven". Though this function no doubt occurs at the end of the age when the Son of Man comes, it nevertheless parallels the function of disciples as eschatological harvesters (Mk 1:16-17).

Table 4.5 Parallels between the Angels and Disciples of Jesus

Functions of Angels	Functions of Disciples
Angels table-serve Jesus in the wilderness (Mk 1:13)	Simon's mother-in-law (Mk 1:31) and the named women table serve Jesus (Mk 15:41)
Angels don't marry or have children (Mk 12:25)	Disciples will be "like" the angels (Mk 12:25)
Angels harvest "the elect" at the end of the age (Mk 13:27)	Disciples are eschatological harvesters (Mk 1:6-17)
"Holy Angels" appear with the Son of Man (Mk 8:38)	Jesus will be ashamed of failed disciples in the presence of "holy angels" (Mk 8:38)
Angels do not know "the time or the hour" (Mk 13:32)	Disciples do not know "the time or the hour" (Mk 13:32)

Finally, in Mk 8:38, the parallel is actually a contrast between failed disciples and "the *holy* angels" at the coming of the Son of Man. If a disciple is ashamed of Jesus, and so refuses to honour Him before "this adulterous and sinful generation", the verse warns, Jesus will equally be ashamed when he comes accompanied by the "holy angels". As correctly indicated by France (2002, 342), the imagery of judgment depicted by this verse is influenced by the Divine Council imagery of Dan 7:13-14 and Zech 14:5. Thus, before the glorious presence of the Son of Man in His enthroned court, the failed disciple is paired and contrasted with the loyal and holy angels of that court.

These parallels between followers of Jesus and the angels in Mark's Gospel are clearly functional and not ontological (cf. Wright 2003, 422). However, and as discussed in the previous chapter, it confirms a similar paralleling of angels with the Qumran sectaries (cf. Worrell 1970, 65-74; Heiser 2004; Dimant 1996, 93-103; Wold 2005). For the present purposes, it underscores the fact that the disciples of Jesus were functionally agents, as well as attendants, of the embodied Divine Council, just as the angels in the heavenly court.

#### 4.1.6 Who then is a Markan Disciple? Summary and Implications

From the above discussion, it is plain that Jesus had a very large followership. From among this followership, “the twelve” formed a core group, also labelled by Mark as “the disciples”. Their exclusive function was to keep Jesus’ company. They also seem to play a leadership function, even though Mark does not highlight this element. Yet, discipleship to Jesus was not restricted to “the disciples” alone<sup>30</sup>. Various other named and anonymous followers of Jesus play prominent roles of disciples and interact with Jesus as such. Mark’s characterization of these actants certainly urges the interpreter in the direction of regarding them also as disciples. The interactions between Jesus and non-conventional disciples provide key insights on the overall conceptualization of the formation of disciples by Jesus that explains Christian origins.

From the forgoing account and for our purposes therefore, a Markan disciple is best defined as “any particular individual who is singled out by the Gospel according to Mark in some special manner in their interactions with Jesus, either in the manner of physically following Jesus or making some commitment as an adherent to Jesus’ teaching and / or sharing in His mission”.

Table 4.6 Interactions between Jesus and some “non-conventional” disciples

Non-Conventional Disciple	Christological Elements	Discipleship Elements
<b>Simon’s mother-in-law (Mk 1:29-31)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jesus as Healer and Divine Guest</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Table served Jesus</li> <li>• Contributed to Jesus’ ministry</li> </ul>
<b>Demoniac (Mk 5:1-20)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jesus is Son of God</li> <li>• Jesus’ power over Satan</li> <li>• Jesus is “the Lord”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spiritual and Physical transformation</li> <li>• Volunteered to accompany Jesus</li> <li>• Commissioned as missionary</li> <li>• Acknowledged Jesus as “the Lord”</li> <li>• Successful ministry</li> </ul>
<b>Haemorrhaging Woman (Mk 5:24-34)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jesus is divine</li> <li>• Jesus is Merciful One</li> <li>• Jesus is Powerful</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• She “heard” about Jesus</li> <li>• She “came” to Jesus</li> <li>• She “followed” behind Jesus</li> <li>• She worshipped Jesus in “fear”</li> <li>• She encountered the power of God</li> </ul>

<sup>30</sup> Paul’s statement that the resurrected Jesus appeared to five hundred believers at the same time therefore has significant historical grounding (1 Cor 15:6).

<b>Bartimaeus (Mk 10:46-52)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jesus is Davidic Messiah</li> <li>• Jesus is Revealer</li> <li>• Jesus is Merciful Teacher</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bartimaeus “heard” about Jesus</li> <li>• He shouted and cried out to Jesus</li> <li>• He would not be silenced</li> <li>• Indirect call through other followers</li> <li>• Confession of Jesus as Messiah</li> <li>• Abandoned clothes (income source)</li> <li>• He “saw” the Messiah</li> <li>• He followed Jesus “on the Way”</li> </ul>
<b>Woman who anointed Jesus (Mk 14:3-9)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The death of Jesus</li> <li>• Body of Jesus</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Act of love and devotion</li> <li>• Good service to Jesus</li> <li>• Prophetic anointing of Jesus</li> </ul>
<b>Owner of Upper Room (Mk 14:12-16)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jesus as Teacher</li> <li>• Jesus as Divine Guest turned Host</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stewardship</li> <li>• Hospitality</li> <li>• Obedience</li> </ul>
<b>Joseph of Arimathea (Mk 15:42-46)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Death of Jesus</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pious Jew</li> <li>• Waiting expectantly for the kingdom</li> <li>• Boldness in asking for Jesus’ body</li> <li>• Performed burial rites as a disciple</li> <li>• ?Repented from Sanhedrin decision</li> </ul>
<b>The Centurion (Mk 15:39)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Death of Jesus</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Confession of Jesus as Son of God</li> </ul>
<b>Named Women (Mk 15 &amp; 16)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Death of Jesus</li> <li>• Jesus as Divine Guest</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Followed Jesus</li> <li>• Table-served Jesus</li> <li>• Eyewitnesses of Jesus’ passion</li> <li>• Apostolic commission</li> </ul>

The following comments may be made as summary of the insights from the examination of the processes involved in the interactions between Jesus and “non-conventional” disciples. Faith is emphasized as playing a key role in the interactions between Jesus and the haemorrhaging woman and Bartimaeus. In both cases also the element of “hearing” about Jesus is also noted by Mark. Some of the non-conventional disciples are “called” by Jesus (e.g. Bartimaeus, albeit indirectly). Others came to Jesus seeking help with their diseases but were nevertheless spiritually transformed through the interaction (e.g. haemorrhaging woman, Simon’s mother-in-law). Others enthusiastically volunteered to follow Jesus after their healing (e.g. the demoniac, Bartimaeus).

In most of the cases, discipleship is also exhibited through confession by the disciple, either in an explicit confessional manner pointing to the identity of Jesus (e.g. Bartimaeus, the centurion) or in the manner in which Mark implies it in his account (e.g. the haemorrhaging woman, the demoniac). Disciples also perform different functions as

part of their discipleship. The demoniac acted as a missionary whereas the anonymous exorcist performed deeds of power in Jesus' name. In other interactions, discipleship is underlined by the service rendered by the disciple in aid of Jesus' mission (e.g. Simon's mother-in-law and woman who anointed Jesus). The service of the woman who anointed Jesus is unique because it contained a significant prophetic element as well as the practical act of hospitality. That of Joseph of Arimathea may not be as profound, but nevertheless underlined his commitment to Jesus as His disciple. The hospitality of the owner of the upper room, as well as his stewardship and obedience also underline his discipleship to Jesus, "the teacher".

In most of the cases above, the actual process of transformation of the non-conventional disciple is underlined by Mark as miraculous. In some cases, the spiritual transformation is linked with a healing of some sort. Put another way, the transformations of Simon's mother-in-law, the demoniac, the haemorrhaging woman, and Bartimaeus are depicted in such a manner as to make it difficult to separate out that element of spiritual transformation from their healing. Yet, such separation would be artificial and unnecessary; for, the narrative seeks to underline the operation of the numinous power of Jesus as the key element in the transformation of disciples, be it physical or spiritual (cf. Combrink 2005, 38). These observations will now serve as guides for examining the interactions between Jesus and the "conventional" disciples.

## **4.2 The Formation of "the Disciples" in Mark's Gospel**

The constant presence of the conventional disciples with Jesus throughout the Gospel brings an added progressive dimension to their interactions with Jesus, compared with the non-conventional disciples. Before attempting the description and analysis of this progressive interaction, however, a brief comment on the relationship between the literary structure of Mark and the Jesus-disciples interaction is in order.

#### 4.2.1 Literary Structure of Mark and the Formation of the Disciples

There is no scholarly consensus on the best literary structure of Mark (cf. Larsen 2004, 140-160; France 2002, 13-14; Stein 2008, 35-37; Cook 1995; Hedrick 1983, 255-268). Whichever structure is chosen, however, a roughly consistent feature is the occurrence of summary reports on the ministry of Jesus at specific points of the narrative (Mk 3:7-12; 6:6-13; 8:14-21; 10:35-52<sup>31</sup>; 14:11). Occasionally, these summaries are also augmented with geographical comments (e.g. Mk 3:7; 11:1); but, these spatial signposts are not consistent enough to be used on their own for structuring the Gospel. However, and though not all interpreters agree, the summary reports punctuate Mark's account and serve as useful pointers of its progress (cf. Dodd 1967, 1-11; Egger 1976, 2; Stein 2008, 35-37 contra Hedrick 1984, 289-311).

For the present purposes also, the summary reports appear to serve as points of inflexions in the developmental stages of the interactions between Jesus and the disciples (cf. Zeitz 1984, 322-332). Within each summary, there is a direct or implied commentary on Jesus' ministry, an interaction between Jesus and the disciples is described, and in some cases an interaction between Jesus and particular member(s) of the twelve is further noted. Thus taking these summary reports as transitional breaks or interludes in the narrative, a possibly progressive description of the Jesus-disciples interactions may be made. Based on these interludes, Mark's Gospel may be divided into six divisions—Phase 1 Galilean Ministry (Mk 1:21-3:12), Phase 2 Galilean Ministry (Mk 3:13-6:13), the Mixed Area Ministry (Mk 6:14-8:21), On the way to Jerusalem (Mk 8:27-10:52), Ministry in Jerusalem (Mk 11:1-14:11) and the Passion (Mk 14:12-16:8<sup>32</sup>).

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<sup>31</sup> Mark 10:46-52 does not fit this structure. It narrates the call of Bartimaeus immediately after the account of the misguided requests of James and John, and Jesus' summarative teaching on discipleship as service. The Bartimaeus pericope appears also not to fully fit into Mk 11:1-11 which narrates the entry into Jerusalem, even though the temptation to link the Son of David Christology with Mk 11 is strong. On the other hand, the pericope appears to be paralleled with the healing of the blind man of Bethsaida (Mk 8:22-26), suggesting that it belongs with the preceding division. I have opted to include Mk 10:46-52 with the preceding literary division. Other minor summaries in Mark include Mk 1:14-15, 21-22, 39; 2:13; 5:21; 6:30-33, 53-56; 10:1.3.

<sup>32</sup> Questions regarding the original ending of Mark are still disputed among scholars, even though most commentators regard verses subsequent to Mk 16:8 as later additions (cf. Thomas 1983, 407-419);

Using a similar approach to structuring Mark's Gospel, Robbins (1981, 97-114) identified Jesus' "summons" of the disciples in Mk 1:14-20; 3:7-19; 6:1-13; 8:27-9:1; 10:46-11:11; 13:1-37 as transitional points of the narrative. He then argued that each of these interludes has three parts—Jesus' general command or summons to the crowd is followed by specific summons to "the disciples", then a more specifically directed call, sending or teaching of a particular individual or disciple or group of disciples. With this structure, Robbins suggests a six stage progressive development of the training of the disciples (1981, 113-114)<sup>33</sup>. A similar approach, but with minor variations, are also put forward by Guelich (1989, xxxvi) and Marcus (2002, 64). Though ingenious and similar to my proposal, Robbins himself admits that his scheme breaks down in the later stages of the Gospel. In addition, his approach is narrowly focused on Jesus' teaching ministry and does not consider the charismatic activities of Jesus. An approach that takes the summary reports in general as transitional points and attempts to analyze the Jesus-disciples interaction within each division is therefore more preferable.

Table 4.7 Literary Structure of Mark and the Formation of the Disciples

Division of Mark's Gospel		Jesus-Disciples Interaction at Beginning	Jesus-Disciples Interaction at the Close of literary division
Part 1	Mk 1:16 – 3:12	Call of the Four Disciples	Joint mission at the Lakeside
	Mk 3:13 – 6:13	Call of the Twelve	Parallel independent mission in Galilee
	Mk 6:14 – 8:26	Report from mission field	Rebuked for "hardness of heart"
Part 2	Mk 8:27 – 10:52	Confession by Peter	Misguided request by James and John
	Mk 11:1 – 14:11	Disciples procure colt	Judas seeks opportunity to betray Him
	Mk 14:12 – 16:8	They prepare Passover	"He is going ahead of you to Galilee"

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France 2002, 685-688; Stein 2008, 727-728; Lane 1974, 601-611). There is nevertheless also an ongoing debate regarding the reasons for the apparent abruptness of Mk 16:8, which superficially gives the impression of an unfinished narrative without a closure (cf. Williams 1999, 21-35; Boomershteyn 1981, 225-239; Lincoln 1989, 283-300). Without aiming to reduce the immense relevance of these debates, the dissertation will nevertheless assume that Mark's Gospel ends at Mk 16:8.

<sup>33</sup> The initial stage of the teacher/disciple relationship (Mk 1:21-3:6), is followed by special instruction and awareness of special powers (Mk 3:20-5:43), then performance of duties within discipleship (Mk 6:14-8:26), struggle over the central dimensions of the teacher's value system (Mk 9:2-10:45), addressing general issues in public forum (Mk 11:12-12:44), and finally, unwillingness to accept the necessity of the arrest, trial, and death of the teacher (Mk 14:1-15:47).

Another advantage of the above (table 4.7) literary structure is that the beginning of each division is immediately, or soon afterwards, associated with a fresh and positive interaction between Jesus and the disciples—Mk 1:16-20 (call of the four); 3:13-19 (call of the twelve); 6:14-30 (report from apostolic mission); 8:27-33 (Peter's confession); Mk 11:1-11 (preparation to enter Jerusalem); and Mk 14:12-16 (preparation of Passover meal). Given that a number of the divisions also end on a negative note for the disciples (e.g. Mk 6:14-8:21; 8:22-10:52), the positive notes at the beginning of the subsequent divisions create the sense of complete units of phases of development in the formation of the disciples. This therefore enables an overall assessment of the Jesus-disciples interactions within each literary division, while at the same time building an image of the progress from one literary division to the next.

Peter's confession in Mk 8:27-33 also acts as a turning point, both for the ministry of Jesus and the formation of the disciples. This results in a larger two part division of Mark superimposed upon the above structure (Mk 1:16-8:26 and Mk 8:27-16:8)<sup>34</sup>.

Table 4.8 Differences between the divisions of Mark on the formation of the disciples

Formation of the Disciples in Mk 1:16-8:26	Formation of the Disciples in Mk 8:27-16:8
Focused on what they do (fishers of men)	Focused on what they must be (character)
Recognition of Jesus' identity and mission	Understanding the nature of Messianic mission
Misunderstood Jesus' revelation and mission	Misunderstood the nature of Jesus' mission
Several exorcisms by Jesus and the disciples	Failed exorcism by the disciples
Discipleship as participating in Jesus' mission	Discipleship linked to sharing Jesus' suffering, but after His Passion
The disciples accompany Jesus	The disciples dissent Jesus in the final hours

There are some interesting differences between the two divisions that are significant for appreciating the formation of the disciples. Before Mk 8:27, the formation of the disciples appears to be focused on what they were called to *do* as agents of Jesus (fish for people); whereas after Mk 8:27, the focus is on what they are called to *be* as Jesus'

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<sup>34</sup> Commentators continue to debate whether the second part begins at Mk 8:22 or Mk 8:27. In favour of 8:22 is the fact that the healing of the blind man of Bethsaida is paralleled with the healing of blind Bartimaeus, thus acting as an *inclusio* for a section that deals largely with the progressive opening of the eyes of the disciples. In favour of Mk 8:27 is the fact that Peter's confession, which is clearly a watershed moment in the Gospel, also continues the pattern whereby each section begins with a specific, often positive, focus on the disciples. The later approach appears to be a more persuasive option (but see France 2002, 321; Lane 1974, 288-289; Robbins 1981, 97-114).



agents. Furthermore, before Mk 8:27, the emphases in terms of revelation was on the disciples' recognition of the identity, authority and mission of Jesus. This appears to be modified so that after Mk 8:27, the emphases is on the disciples' understanding of the nature of this mission and their subsequent following in that path. Also, before Mk 8:27, most of Jesus' teaching is public, whereas most of His teaching after Mk 8:27 are private and directed towards the disciples. Whereas several exorcisms and miracles are recorded before Mk 8:27, only isolated miracles occur after that. Before Mk 8:27, explicit references to Jesus' death are minimal, and the demands of discipleship in tandem with Jesus' destiny are not elaborated, even though alluded to on a few occasions. From Mk 8:27 however, Jesus begins to elaborate His fate on the cross, and in an explicit fashion; while closely associating discipleship with suffering, rejection and the cross itself. The focus on the formation of the disciples in the first part of Mark may therefore be characterized as focus on performance, whereas that of the second half is on ethics. The significance of this progressive pattern, though clearly related to Jesus' ministry, will be further explored in chapter six.

Detailed examination of each and every pericope depicting an interaction between Jesus and the disciples will be onerous. Consequently, each phase of Jesus' ministry will be initially summarized, then followed by exegesis of selected pericopae in order to illustrate the formation of the disciples as depicted in the phase.

#### 4.2.2 The Jesus-Disciples Interactions during Phase 1 Galilean Ministry

The summary of Jesus' lakeside mission in Mk 3:7-12 concludes the first phase of His ministry and also provides the setting for the subsequent phase. If this summary is therefore taken as a guide for exegeting the preceding chapters, Jesus is depicted in the first phase as the supreme Agent of God's power and revelation. His proclamatory activities, together with the healings and exorcisms marked Him out as an extremely successful "teacher, healer, exorcist and liberator from Pharisaic interpretations of the Torah" (Burkill 1968, 409). Within the division itself, Jesus is also revealed as the "holy One of God" (Mk 1:24), the Son of Man (Mk 2:10; 2:28), and the Messianic bridegroom

(Mk 2:20) whose divine ἐξουσίαν (authority) is constantly on display. These characterizations of Jesus also affirm Him as the embodied Divine Council.

In terms of discipleship, the division begins with the call of the first disciples and ends with them assisting Jesus in His public ministry on the same lakeside from where they had been recruited. In between, the disciples follow a rather busy Jesus who ministers in several different contexts in Galilee. Soon after their calls, Jesus inaugurates His mission in Capernaum with authoritative teaching and exorcism in the synagogue. This is followed by further healings and teachings in several other contexts, each with significant formational import on the disciples.

The disciples undertake six forms of formational activities during this phase—they follow Jesus in response to His call, they keep Him company, they observe (see and hear) Jesus' ministry, they receive teaching through questioning Jesus, they participate in Jesus' authority and functions, and they assist Jesus in His ministry. Thus the whole first division highlights the multifaceted contexts of Jesus' ministry as well as the making of the disciples as agents of divine power and revelation.

#### *4.2.2.1 The Making of Agents of Revelation (Mk 1:21-28 & 1:35-39)*

Through following, keeping Him company, observing and actively learning, the disciples received several revelations about, and from Jesus that contributed to their formation. Chief among these revelations were the disclosure of the identity, mission and authority of Jesus the embodied Divine Council in Mk 1:21-28 and the clarification of the geographical extent of the mission in Mk 1:35-39. The two incidents reflect the two complementary aspects of divine revelation as discussed in the previous chapter (§ 3.1.1.4.2)—the first is related to the *de novo* reception of supernatural information, while the second is the hermeneutical explanation and application of divine intention in particular prevailing circumstances.

The public identification of Jesus as “Jesus of Nazareth...the Holy one of God” (Mk 1:24) at the inauguration of His public ministry in the Capernaum synagogue, denotes

Jesus as the embodied Divine Council. He was humanly speaking, “Jesus of Nazareth”; and yet at the same time, He was in terms of His divine origins, “the Holy One of God”. Though the ascription as “Holy One of God” is used here in functional rather than titular terms, it nevertheless encapsulates Jesus’ divine identity as one who fully represented the Divine Council. As Domeris has shown, the phrase “the Holy One of God” found on the lips of the demon possessed man essentially discloses Jesus as “the agent of God’s Council” (1983a, 2; cf. 2 Kgs 4:9; Ps 106:16). On the other hand, Stein has suggested that the title was probably understood by Mark as synonymous to the “Son of God” title (2008, 88). Be it as it may, in both scenarios, the true identity of Jesus of Nazareth was revealed by the demon to the disciples as the One embodying the Divine Council.

As the embodied Divine Council, Jesus’ mission was to execute a holy war or judgment on the evil forces of this world. So, in speaking on behalf of the Satanic fraternity, the demon revealed that Jesus was on a mission to judge and destroy them—hence his antagonistic, “What have you to do with us?” (cf. 2 Sam 16:10; 19:22; Judg 11:12; 1 Kgs 17:18; cf. France 2002, 104; Stein 2008, 88).

Also evident in this phenomenologically charged encounter was the radiation of divine power and authority from the embodied Divine Council. In calling Jesus “holy”, the demon recognized not only the separateness of Jesus from the profane realm, but also that Jesus’ union with God resulted in the radiation of divine authority, sovereignty, holiness, power, and ultimately, the Spirit of God from Him. It is He who baptized with the Holy Spirit (cf. Brown 2001, 28). The disciples will soon participate in effectuating this ἐξουσίαν in other contexts. Here in the Capernaum synagogue, however, they received a *de novo* revelation of the identity, mission and authority of Jesus; though it is uncertain as to how much of this they grasped at the time. In terms of Mark’s apocalyptic theology, despite the fact that it emanated from a dubious source, it nevertheless constituted correct supernatural *de novo* revelation (cf. Marcus 1984, 559; Reiterer and Nicklas 2007; Scalise 1992, 461-526; Pimentel 1988, 173-175).

During the phase, Jesus clarified the nature, extent and purpose of the mission to which the disciples were called on two occasions (Mk 1:35-39 & 2:16-17). It is noteworthy that

both clarifications resulted from a misunderstanding—one, on the part of the disciples, and the other, on the part of Jesus' opponents. On both occasions however, the interactions served as key points of revelation to the disciples. In the first instance in Mk 1:35-39, Simon and his colleagues go out *κατεδίωξεν* (literally, hunting for or in pursuit of) Jesus on the morning following the successful Capernaum ministry. Jesus' response when they finally found Him indicates that they had misunderstood who and what controlled the strategy for the mission—"Let us go on to the neighbouring towns, so that I may proclaim the message there also; for that is what I came out to do" (Mk 1:38). He also took the opportunity to define His mission in more concrete terms—He had "come out" (from above) to proclaim the message beyond the humanly imposed geographical boundaries—thus intimating in advance a major aspect of the mission beyond Galilee to other regions, including Gentile territories. As will shortly become clear, this ethnic-geographical aspect of Jesus' mission would be crucial to the formation of the disciples.

A number of interpreters have understandably suggested that this pericope serves as the beginning of Mark's "negative" portrayal of the disciples (e.g. Gnllka 1978, 89; Marcus 2000, 204; France 2002, 111). Cited in favour of this interpretation is the rather strong sense that *κατεδίωξεν* carries, giving an impression of frustrated and misguided disciples rudely intruding into the prayer time of a calmly focused Jesus (cf. Hooker 1991, 76). However, this interpretation appears to overstate the implication of the description; for, *κατεδίωξεν* may also be taken to indicate an expression of the enthusiasm with which Simon and his colleagues sought for Jesus. They had witnessed the extraordinary in-breaking of the kingdom during the previous day's mission, and wanted more of it without delay. Their concerns, even though misplaced, need not therefore be interpreted as an attempt to limit Jesus' ministry. Certainly, Mark's intention appears to emphasis the popularity of Jesus in Capernaum against Jesus' contrary intention to move the mission forward to its predetermined conclusion (cf. Gundry 1993, 100; Stein 2008, 101).

Furthermore, the negative interpretation does not take the sometimes positive function that misunderstanding played in the formation of the disciples. It assumes that the disciples could intelligently reason out and understand Jesus' missionary strategy in

their own human capacity. As will become much clearer later, such a construal of the capabilities of the disciples, conflicts with the nature of Markan epistemology. In Markan theology, knowing and understanding Jesus emanated from a supernatural experience. No human being could therefore comprehend the identity, mission and authority of Jesus through logical deductions (cf. de Jonge 1970/71, 359). Hence a constant interchange between the agent and the embodied Divine Council was required to clarify the mission for which the agent is sent.

The fact therefore is, in terms of Jesus' eschatological mission, the disciple could only come to that knowledge by the revelation that Jesus gave. In this sense, the articulation of their misunderstanding to Jesus served as the platform for the clarification of the purposes of the embodied Divine Council. And since there is no indication that Simon and his colleagues objected to the expansion of the mission, at least at this stage, their misunderstanding of Jesus' strategy of ministry should be viewed not in as negative manner as has been construed. Mark's emphasis on Jesus' prayer life here is therefore important. As supreme Agent of the Council, Jesus acted only as in consonant with God's will and strategy. And just as Jesus retains knowledge of the strategy of His mission by constant prayer, so were the disciples to receive clarification of the strategy through constant interaction with Jesus. The disciples may not therefore be as much contrasted with Jesus as the negative interpretation does.

#### *4.2.2.2 The Plucking of Grain and the Making of Agents of Power (Mk 2:23-28)*

The plucking of the grain incident in Mk 2:23-28 was a major turning point in the formation of the disciples. Until that pericope the disciples are portrayed as followers, companions and observers of Jesus. They however do not participate in His mission until they broke the Sabbath and with Jesus' approval in Mk 2:23-28. It is true that in Mk 2:18-22, the disciples are singled out for criticism by Jesus' opponents for not being ascetics, like "John's disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees" (Mk 2:18). And in attributing the reasons for their lack of fasting to the fact that they were the Messianic bridegroom's guests (or attendants), Jesus elevated the statuses of His disciples (cf. Stein 2008, 136-137; Gundry 1993, 132-133; Vincent 2005, 155-159). However, unlike

the grain plucking, the reason for not fasting was squarely situated in Jesus whose presence transformed the status of His disciples. Accordingly, though the disciples are depicted as Messianic guests, they do not as much participate in Jesus' Messianic authority and functions in Mk 2:18-22 as they do in the plucking of grain incident.

In the plucking of grain on the Sabbath incident (Mk 2:23-28) however, the disciples symbolically acted as eschatological harvesters through whom the divine authority of Jesus, the Son of Man, was transmitted. The passage itself has been the subject of extensive scholarly debate. Its textual problems<sup>35</sup> not only underline some of its interpretive challenges, but also the immense significance that ancient scribes attached to the apparent elevation of the disciples in the episode. For the purposes of the project at hand however, two questions are relevant for elucidating the formation of the disciples—(a) what particular action(s) of the disciples at the time was singled out by Jesus for approval, and (b) in what sense did the justification, “the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath” (Mk 2:28), apply to the disciples whose action(s) started the controversy in the first place?

#### 4.2.2.2.1 What Action(s) of the Disciples did Jesus Approve?

Regarding the first question, there is no doubt that the Pharisees believed that a major Sabbath law had been broken by the disciples. Yet, their challenge to Jesus—“Look, why are they doing what is not lawful on the Sabbath?” is unspecific and require some clarification as to the exact illegal action(s) that Jesus approved. Based on the description of the actions in Mark 2:23, there are three possible answers to this first question—(a) the making of the way through the cornfields, (b) the plucking of the grain, and (c) the eating of the grain.

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<sup>35</sup> Firstly, there is a significant textual variation in D W OL sy<sup>s</sup> with regard to Mk 2:26; together with some redactional differences with the parallels in Matthew and Luke. Secondly, questions have been raised regarding the literary and textual relationship between Mk 2:26 and Mk 2:27 (see Hultgren 1972, 38-43; Stein 2008, 142-144). Thirdly, the reference to David's companions and Abiathar in 2:25-26 has been a source of considerable debate.

With regard to the first option, a number of interpreters have drawn attention to the awkward Greek construction of Mk 2:23b—ἤρξαντο ὁδὸν ποιεῖν τίλλοντες τοὺς στάχους (literally, “they began way to make plucking stalks of grain”). It has been suggested that this description was a special Markan theological emphasis which point to the reason for Jesus’ approval. It clearly depends on whether Mark’s emphasis in the sentence is judged to be on the word, “way” or the word “plucking”. Marcus (2000, 239-240) and Derrett (1977, 87-95) have both chosen an instrumental participial interpretation and so suggested that this sentence was Mark’s manner of expressing discipleship as a life of “making a way in the desert ahead of the Messianic Jesus”. In other words, Jesus felt it necessary to defend His disciples because, though they broke the Sabbath law, they did so as a symbolic act of discipleship “in the way of the Lord”.

However, this option does not make sense of the original historical event; since it is difficult to imagine the disciples creating a new path through the cornfield by merely plucking the grain (cf. Meier 2004, 564 n.6). In the historical setting, it was more likely that Jesus and the disciples were walking on an already existing path in the cornfields, while the disciples plucked the stalks of grains by the wayside. Moreover, creating a new path through someone’s cornfields would have added another offence of vandalism to the Sabbath violation; an offence, which Jesus was unlikely to have approved.

Furthermore, if the Pharisees were objecting to the work done in creating the path, or the distance travelled on the Sabbath, Jesus ought to have been included among the accused. Since Jesus was excluded by the Pharisees (Mk 2:24), the making of a path or travelling along it was not the violation at the centre of the dispute. Besides, whereas, it may be confidently argued that the subsequent dispute in the synagogue in Mk 3:1-6 was focused on what constituted as legitimate “work” on the Sabbath, the controversy recorded in Mk 2:23-28, certainly in the manner that Jesus construed it, was focused on the authority of the Son of Man. Hence Mark 2:23b is better understood in a temporal participle sense, indicating that “as they made their way, His disciples began to pluck heads of grain” (NRSV; so KJV, NIV).

Appeals to the “hunger” of the disciples, and hence the third, “eating of the grain” option, at first appears reasonable. After all Matthew explicitly indicates that the disciples were hungry (Matt 12:1). In addition, in citing David’s eating of the holy bread, it may be argued that Jesus focused on the eating as the bone of contention. However, there are indications that in the Markan version, the eating of the grain is not underlined as the essential violation. Firstly, there was no law against eating on the Sabbath. Secondly, as I shall shortly note below, even though David’s eating violation was cited by Jesus, the appeal to David was to his authority and not to the specific violation or the day of the violation. Thirdly, and crucially, Mark did not state that the disciples ate the grain. And he also appears to have been deliberate in omitting to mention the hunger of the disciples, especially since he does so with regard to David in Mk 2:25. Accordingly, for Jesus, the Pharisees and for Mark, the act of eating the grain, which admittedly was the reason for plucking it in the first place, was nevertheless not as significant as the act of plucking or harvesting the grain, the second option.

Consequently, the Sabbath prohibition which was violated by the disciples was the harvesting of the grain (Ex 34:21). Elsewhere in Mark, harvesting is used as symbol of the functions of the disciples (Mk 1:16-20; 6:43; 8:8). It also features as an important eschatological symbol in the Sower parable (Mk 4:8, 29), the parable of the growing seed (Mk 4:26-29) and the harvesting of leftovers after the feeding miracles (Mk 6:43; 8:8). The primary act, for which Jesus defended His disciples, was therefore in symbolical consonance with their eschatological functions. Specifically, in the Markan version of the account, the disciples’ act of plucking the grain was symbolic, not primarily of the necessity to satisfy the humanitarian needs of Jesus’ followers. Rather, it was symbolic of the eschatological harvesting associated with the arrival of the kingdom of God and which cohered with Jesus’ mission. In terms of Overholt’s (1982, 3-31) categorizations of prophetic acts of power, as discussed in the previous chapter (§ 3.1.1.4.1), the plucking of the grain is in the first category in which “normal” human actions of God’s agent nevertheless exhibit divine power or revelation.

In this symbolization of God’s power and revelation, the element of Sabbath is relevant, but nevertheless secondary to the element of harvesting. Put differently, that the



harvesting occurred on the Sabbath, and with Jesus' approval, underlined the eschatological urgency with which the disciples were to perform their functions. So, in a figurative manner, the plucking of the grain illustrated that in the performance of their functions as eschatological harvesters, the Sabbath law was secondary to "fishing for men".

#### 4.2.2.2.2 The Disciples as "Son of Man"?

This leads on to the second question related to the plucking of grain incident—in what sense did the justification, "the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath" (Mk 2:28), apply to the disciples whose plucking of the grain led to the controversy? Most interpreters agree that Mk 2:28 is the key to interpreting the whole pericope and should not be isolated from the rest of the account; for, it explains that the plucking of the grain illustrated the unique *ἐξουσίαν* (authority) of the Son of Man. However, since Jesus Himself did not partake of the act (Mk 2:23), even though it was done in His presence, the question is raised as to how the actions of His disciples illustrated the lordship of the Son of Man? Specifically, are the disciples to be regarded as the "Son of Man"?

Several different approaches have been adopted by interpreters to answer this problem. Firstly, it is apparent that interpretations which regard the account as ahistorical and the statement in Mk 2:28 as therefore unrelated to the preceding incident (e.g. Meier 2004, 561-581; Tannehill 1981, 107) bypass the raw data and may therefore be set aside. Given the subsequent Sabbath incident in Mk 3:1-6, there is no reason to query the plausibility of the incident, based purely on the difficulty of Mk 2:28. Secondly, and on the other hand, Lohse appears to overstate the role of the Sabbath in Mk 2:23-28 when he argues that all five controversies in Mk 2:1-3:6 were specifically concerned with later Sabbath conflicts between Christians and Judaists (1960, 83). As noted earlier, what was at stake in this pericope was the authority of the Son of Man and not the specifics of the Sabbath laws (cf. Parrot 1993, 117-137; Hooker 1989, 83).

Thirdly, other interpreters take it that in Mk 2:25-28, Jesus gave an illogical answer to the Pharisees, which nevertheless succeeded in fending them off. Cohn-Sherbok for

example suggests that Jesus' answer was an incoherent attempt at a technical rabbinical hermeneutical method of *gezera shava* (1979, 31-41). Though He failed, the Pharissess nevertheless lacked the capacity to answer Him back. But this interpretation surely misses the point that what was at stake, as Jesus saw it, and in Mark's view, went beyond a public verbal sparing over the correct interpretation of the Sabbath law. Jesus' answer in Mk 2:25-28, in any case, does not attempt to deal with the correct interpretation of Sabbath laws, as He does in Mk 3:1-6. His answer basically situates the authority to perform the act in the Son of Man.

As noted earlier, there is a nuanced difference between Mark's approach and the parallel in Matthew (Matt 12:1-8), in which discussions of the details of Sabbath law are included *in addition to* the issue of the Son of Man's authority. Matthew therefore makes reference to *another* statement by Jesus defending the disciples under a separate Sabbath precedent of Num 28:9-10 (Matt 12:5). In other words, details of the Sabbath law were not isolated as an issue in Mark as it was in Matthew. And Matthew appears also to deal with the humanitarian argument of satisfying the hunger of the disciples, whereas Mark dealt with the authority of the Son of Man and His companions, without identifying their hunger or their eating of the grain.

The appeal to David also underlines the point that what was at stake was the Son of Man's authority; since 1 Sam 21 to which Jesus referred, does not indicate that David's breach of the protocol occurred on the Sabbath<sup>36</sup>. Instead Jesus referred rather to David's unlawful eating of the holy bread. The appeal to David then is to David's authority and not to the day on which he broke the law (cf. France 2002, 147-148; Stein 2008, 147). Accordingly, any attempt to deal with the internal logic of Jesus' argument in Mark 2:25-28 without situating it in the Son of Man's authority is inadequate.

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<sup>36</sup>Later rabbinic elaboration of the story explicitly associated the act with the Sabbath, perhaps because the holy bread was replaced on each Sabbath (e.g. Lev 24:5-9, Ex 25:30; Num 4:7). It would not be relevant to my approach whether the incident occurred during the grain harvest or not. In both scenarios, the point of harvesting as a symbolic act related to Jesus' kingdom is not vitiated.

Fourthly, a number of other interpreters, agreeing that at stake was the Son of Man's authority, nevertheless take it that Jesus the rabbi was taking responsibility for the actions of His disciples. Daube (1972, 1-15) for example, draws attention to the rabbinical tradition in which the rabbi was expected to take responsibility for the actions of his disciples. There are some merits of Daube's argument, given that in the previous pericope (Mk 2:18-22), Jesus had similarly defended His disciples for not fasting because of His presence. Yet, as pointed out earlier, the two incidents are significantly different—in Mk 2:23-28, the disciples broke the Sabbath law, while Jesus did not. Thus Jesus may well be taking responsibility for answering for the actions of His disciples, but His answer indicates a shared authority by which the disciples could at the time act the way they did. Jesus was not merely apologizing for the misdemeanour of His followers.

Fifthly, a group of interpreters see this pericope as indicating a participation of the disciples in the identity of the Son of Man as a corporate group and not just as an individual. Casey (1976, 167-180) for example, sees the corporate Son of Man idea as the predominant understanding of the term during Daniel's time and hence evident in its use by Mark. Expressing a similar sentiment, Marcus observes, "Mark pictures Jesus not just as an individual but as a figure with collective dimensions" (1992, 123). Manson (1955, 213-215), together with Vincent (2005, 155-159) have also taken this particular pericope as illustrating the sense in which the disciples were elevated to become sharers of the corporate Son of Man's identity. In Vincent's view, though Jesus is clearly the "primal Son", "the disciples are a continuing manifestation of 'Son of Humanity' by their actions which are coherent with the actions of the primal Son, Jesus" (2005, 158). In this way, Vincent urges, the practice of the disciples "reflects that of Jesus, and leads to a 'Christology by reflection' or a 'Christology by imitation' by the disciples" (2005, 158-159; cf. Theissen 1999, 85-86).

This corporate interpretation of the Son of Man title is however not shared by many other interpreters (e.g. Wink 2002; Marcus 2000, 528-532; Lemcio 2005, 43-60; Gathercole 2004, 366-372). Given how the Son of Man title is used in the divine sense in Mk 2:10, its use in Mk 2:28 should also be understood in divine and not anthropological terms (cf. France 2002, 147; Stein 2008, 149). In Mk 2:10, the title

clearly underlines the authority and power of the Son of Man—Jesus could forgive sin on earth and heal with His words because He had the divine authority of the Son of Man. And it is this idea of divine authority which is repeated in Mk 2:28. It is true that previous scholarship had tended to see the title in Mk 2:10 and Mk 2:28 as anthropological rather than Christological (e.g. Boobyer 1954, 115-120; Hay 1970, 69-75). However, since the issue at stake in both cases was the uniqueness of Jesus' authority, it is much more likely that Mark's first readers would have seen the "Son of Man" in both passages as Christological. In the words of France, "the title must be understood not primarily as identifying Jesus with the rest of humanity, but precisely as setting Him apart" (2002, 128). So, Mk 2:28 states that the act of breaking the Sabbath law by plucking the grain was an act that could only be performed by divine authority.

Consequently, it is evident that in Mk 2:23-28, the authority of the divine Son of Man was phenomenologically transmitted through the disciples for the plucking of the grain to illustrate the nature and extent of their mission as eschatological harvesters. In other words, in the presence of the embodied Divine Council, His agents became vehicles through whom His authority was transmitted to effectuate the Lordship of the Son of Man over even the Sabbath. Such an understanding of the passage is much more conducive to the narrative and the fact that Jesus is the baptizer with the Holy Spirit.

In the previous chapter, it was observed that phenomenologically, the power of the Divine Council was conceived of as an energy that may be transmitted through His agents (§ 3.1.1.4.1). Indeed, as will soon become apparent, elsewhere in Mark's Gospel, this phenomenon recurs in the disciples' participation in the feeding miracles, their ministry of exorcisms and in the case of the haemorrhaging woman (Mk 5:25-34). Furthermore, and as noted in chapter two, an antecedent of this concept of the union of the agent with the commissioner was described in Second Temple Judaism (§ 2.6.1.2). In Borgen's (1968, 85-88) exploration of this phenomenon, he draws attention to a number of circumstances in which the agent did not only share the authority and functions of the commissioner, but also his qualities (e.g. *b. Qamma* 70a; *Qiddushin* 43a). Accordingly, at this point, the agent was not just a representative but at one in a numinous sense with the Commissioner. In the case of Jesus, such a union was made

possible by the fact that He baptized with the Holy Spirit. The plucking of the grain incident should therefore be regarded as the first of such instants during which the disciples participated as agents in exerting the power of Jesus the embodied Divine Council.

Accordingly, the main foundations of the formation of the disciples as agents of divine power and revelation are laid in the first phase of Jesus ministry. These foundations will be consolidated and then tested in the subsequent phases of development.

#### 4.2.3 The Jesus-Disciples Interactions during Phase 2 Galilean Ministry

The second phase of Jesus' Galilean ministry (Mk 3:13-6:13) is associated with a significant development and consolidation in the disciples' growth as agents. It begins with the call of the twelve and finishes with a detailed account of their independent missions in Mk 6:7-13 in which they fulfilled functions of agents of divine power and revelation. In this mission, and unlike the plucking of grain, the disciples exercised the power of Jesus over demonic forces and unclean spirits, and this, in the physical absence of Jesus. These functions also parallel and imitate Jesus' earlier mission in Mk 3:14-15 and indicate that the baptism and enablement of the disciples by the Spirit endowed Jesus did not always depend on His physical presence. This aspect of the development of the disciples will soon be tested in the subsequent phases during the sea crossings and the failed exorcism.

It is within this phase also that the foundations for understanding Mark's epistemology are laid. Because much of the subsequent incomprehension of the disciples is related to how interpreters understand Jesus' use of the concept of *μυστήριον*, a detailed examination of the idea in this section of Mark is warranted.

##### 4.2.3.1 Divine *μυστήριον* and the formation of the Disciples (Mk 4:1-34)

Mark 4:1-34 demonstrates the nature of Markan epistemology especially in its relationship to the formation of the disciples. With the use of several parables, Jesus

explains how and why some encountered the revelation of God and yet bore no fruit, whereas others bore fruit to different degrees. The impression is therefore given that the passage would give explanation of how divine revelation flourishes in His agents. The passage itself is made up of a collection of Jesus' teachings. However, for the purposes of the present project, the reasons Jesus gave for teaching in parables in Mk 4:10-13 and their relationship with the formation of His disciples are of key interest<sup>37</sup>.

Regarding this question, there is little doubt that Jesus' statement that the disciples have "been given the *μυστήριον* of the kingdom of God" (Mk 4:11) is the *crux interpretum*. To start with, several interpreters have noted an apparent contradiction regarding the purpose(s) of the parables. On the one hand, the disciples are by implication not the intended audience of the parables, since they were gifted with knowledge of the divine mysteries (Mk 4:10-13, 33-34). Yet, on the other hand, they did not understand the parable of the Sower and needed its interpretation (Mk 4:14-20). Indeed, appearing to undermine the notion that the disciples did not require explanations of Jesus' teachings is the fact that Mark frequently refers to their incomprehension (e.g. Mk 6:51-52; 7:17-23; 8:10-21; 9:30-32). Yet, Mk 4:34 certainly affirms the distinction between "insiders" and "outsiders", so that parables were directed to "outsiders", whereas explanations were directed to "insiders". Moreover, Jesus' use of Isa 6:9-11 suggests that rather than revealing the truth, parables concealed the truth from the outsiders and ultimately resulted<sup>38</sup> in their unbelief and rejection. How do these data match up and relate to the formation of the disciples?

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<sup>37</sup> Though Mark frequently refers to the teaching ministry of Jesus (e.g. Mk 1:14, 38, 39; 2:2; 6:2, 6, 34; 14:49), Mk 4 & 13 are the only passages with extended details of the contents of those teachings. The question of the literary genre of the parables is also of immense interest but will not receive a detailed discussion in the present project. Jeremias was among the most prominent scholars who advocated that the word *παραβολή* had various meanings ranging from "proverb" (e.g. Lk. 4:23; 6:39), "symbol" (Heb 9:9; 11:19; Mk 13:28) or "riddle" or an "extended metaphor" (Mk 7:17). He opted for regarding them as "riddles" whose meanings was clear only to a select few (1972, 14). Recent theories on the parables have suggested a multiform nature, more closely aligned to their contemporary Jewish allegorical stories or "apocalyptic allegories" (cf. Wright 1996, 178; Kistemaker 2005, 49-55; Snodgrass 2008).

<sup>38</sup> The use of *ἵνα* in Mk 4:12 continues to be debated by interpreters. Explanations include its role as a quotation formula, a mistranslation of an original Aramaic, and its use to mean "purpose of revelation", rather than my preferred, "result of revelation" in the wilful "unbeliever" (cf. France 2002, 199).

Subscribing to the idea of a contradiction in Mk 4:1-34, a number of interpreters take the apologetic option and suggest that the explanation in Mk 4:10-20 was the Evangelist's (e.g. Montefiore 1927, I. 102; Linnemann 1967, 118), or the early Church's (e.g. Julicher 1910, 147-148; Dodd 1946, 14-15; Jeremias 1972, 14-25; Weeden 1979, 97) own composition as a means of explaining Judaism's rejection of Jesus. In other words, it is argued that Jesus' parables were transparent lessons about spiritual growth, but Mk 4:10-12 was later inserted as a theological device for explaining Jewish rejection of His teaching. This approach is however unwarranted by the evidence. Jesus' claims and actions were sufficiently provocative enough to have elicited the extreme outrage in many of His observers and more so opponents, and so explain the intensity of the misunderstanding, even by His own disciples. Neither Mark nor the early Church needed therefore to have composed additional controversies to explain such misunderstandings. Furthermore, and as will be shortly clarified, the epistemological philosophy expounded in Mk 4:10-12 is in total agreement with the apocalyptic nature of the ministry of Jesus and the general religious atmosphere in Second Temple Judaism (cf. Beavis 2001, 3-30; Riddle 1937, 87; Kirkland 1977, 1-21; Taylor 1952, 257).

Other interpreters (e.g. Lambrecht 1968, 45-48; Dewey 1980; Fay 1989, 65-81) have suggested a concentric chiasmic structure of Mk 4:1-34 so that what appears to be a contradiction is actually a double edged statement about the functions of the parables. Though innovative and perhaps offers a reasonably correct interpretation of Jesus' explanation, the lack of agreement on the most appropriate structure raises doubts as to whether Mark had any of these literary structure(s) in mind. Besides, this approach fails to explain the theological tension generated by the quotation of Isa 6:9-11.

The key to interpreting Mk 4:10-12 is in appreciating the OT background of the phrase "μυστήριον of the kingdom of God". As explained in the previous chapter, μυστήριον referred to a secret of God's Council which could only be known by miraculous means in its *de novo* form, as well as the miraculous capability to accurately interpret the revealed information to fit the current situation. The idea that God's μυστήρια were given to a few but withheld from the many was common in apocalyptic circles of Jesus' time and Second Temple Judaism (e.g. 2 Bar 48:2-3; 4 Ezra 6:28, 12:36-37; 1QS 4:6;

5:11-12; 9:17, 21-22; Josephus, *Wars* 2:87 §141). It is therefore possible that this idea, to a limited extent, influenced the use of μυστήριον here in Mk 4:10-12.

However, Jesus' use of the concept in the Gospel is much more influenced by Dan 2:18-19, 27-30, 47 (cf. France 2002, 196; Freyne 1982, 7-23), where, as in Mk 4:11, the emphasis is on the miraculous and proleptic potential nature of the μυστήριον. In Daniel, the μυστήριον was a gift from God that enabled the prophet as a "seer" to receive, interpret and declare Nebuchadnezzar's dream, as well as apply it to the prevailing circumstances. In these contexts, mystery represented the inner insight and conviction of the nature and content of divine revelation and its eschatological ramifications, and not just of the cognitive meaning of the revelation. Μυστήριον in Mk 4:11 is therefore an inner miraculous insight into Jesus' teaching which served as the basis of spiritual comprehension of the unfolding eschatological mission of Jesus. That was the gift that the disciples and others around Jesus received.

Furthermore, in both cases of Daniel and Mark, the lack of the gift of μυστήριον by "outsiders" resulted in their inability to know and interpret the revealed information in the manner consistent with the current circumstances. Thus Nebuchadnezzar's dream in Dan 2, as well as the parables had a double edged effect—it was concealed from the group of magicians and palace wise men, but revealed and understood by Daniel and his compatriots, whose duty was to declare it. The quotation of Isa 6:9 by Jesus is therefore in line with this understanding of the nature of divine mystery—to those who lacked the gift of μυστήριον and the necessary response of faith, the encounter with God's revelation, leads to concealment and blindness, and not revelation.

Possession of the μυστήριον is clearly not equivalent to automatic comprehension of Jesus' teaching, even though it formed the key that enabled comprehension to occur (cf. Stein 2008, 207; Collins 1995, 10-23; Maloney 2003, 433-437; Hill 1987, 309-324). In other words, what the disciples and "those around Him" (the insiders) had received was not the cognitive understanding of the parables, but an inner spiritual transformation that proleptically gave them the potential to comprehend the parables in the apocalyptic sense that they stood for. As noted in chapter three, what was needed



was the response of faith of the agent in order to comprehend divine revelation (§ 3.1.1.4.2; cf. Henderson 2001, 11; Marcus 1986, 99). Accordingly, the suggestion that *μυστήριον* in Mk 4:11 represented a specific body of knowledge that the disciples had already been taught, as postulated by Watts (1997, 194-210) is an inadequate interpretation of the concept. Rather, *μυστήριον* referred to the repository that made the agent capable of comprehending Jesus' teaching.

Consequently, the parables of Jesus (and for that matter, all of His teachings) were double edged revelatory devices—of revelation and concurrently, also of concealment (cf. Wright 1996, 178; Kistemaker 2005, 49-55; Snodgrass 2008). And in this regard Jesus should be understood to be speaking in a proleptic fashion in Mk 4:11; for, the full possession of the *μυστήριον* would only occur after Jesus' death and resurrection (cf. Marcus 1984, 570). Several failures and incomprehension of the disciples indicate not only their lack of adequate faith, but also that the *μυστήριον* was not yet completed. As will later be shown, this is an element of Mark's Gospel that is complemented by John.

The three parables in Mk 4 involving seeds illustrate these points about the nature of spiritual epistemology in the Gospel of Mark and its relationship to the formational development of the disciples. The parable of the Sower (Mk 4:1-20), should also be regarded as the parable of the soils; for, it was the different kinds of soils that made the eventual difference to the fruit bearing. The various kinds of soils represented the spectrum of various degrees of responses to the word of revelation. The good soil clearly represented the disciple who responded to the word—"they hear the word and accept it" (Mk 4:20). The degree of faithful response to the revealed word correlated to the degree of fruit that was borne by the disciple. On the other hand, the receiver of revelation who allows his or her heart to become wilfully hardened will "fall away" (Mk 4:17). In between, there are several different responses and results of divine revelation in the disciples, depending on the nature of the response. This lays a programmatic foundation for the subsequent phases of the formation of the disciples as agents of divine power and revelation in the rest of the Gospel (cf. Juel 2002, 273-283; Sabin 1992, 3-26; Evans 1985, 464-468).

#### 4.2.4 The Jesus-Disciples Interaction during Mixed Area Ministry

The exact contribution of the Jesus-disciples interaction in Mk 6:14-8:26 to their formation is complex. The division begins with the return of the disciples to report their successful independent missionary activities to Jesus (Mk 6:14-29). It ends, however, with the stinging rebuke by Jesus for their blindness, incomprehension and hardness of heart (Mk 8:17-21), terms which have also been already applied elsewhere in the Gospel to the outsiders (Mk 4:11-12) and to Jesus' opponents (Mk 3:5). In between the two incidents, the disciples partner Jesus in two extraordinary feeding miracles, both of which point to His divinity (Mk 6:30-44 & 8:1-13). They also act as agents through whom Jesus' abrogation of Jewish purity traditions was evidenced (Mk 7:1-23). This period was in effect one of the highest points of the disciples' career with the earthly Jesus.

Within the same division, the reader is also confronted with the Evangelist's explicit commentary regarding the failures of the disciples at sea (Mk 6:45-52) in which, similar to Jesus' rebuke, Mark describes the disciples as hard hearted (Mk 6:52). It is evident however, that readings which regard these censures as altogether pessimistic in terms of the formation of the disciples are problematic. Rather than terminally consigning them as failures, Jesus' rebuke at the end of the division rescued the disciples from their "hard-heartedness", and prepared them for the next stage of their formation.

A number of peculiarities in the episodes of this phase of Jesus' ministry also reflect the complexity of the Jesus-disciples interactions. In addition to the sea crossings of Mk 6:45-52 and Mk 8:13-21, most of the other events during the phase also occur somewhere around the Galilean Sea or not far from it. Furthermore, the feeding miracles mirror each other in some ways but not in other significant ways. Literarily, the motif of loaves of bread is drawn into other incidents such as the rebukes of the disciples in Mk 6:52 and 8:17-21, the dispute over ceremonial washings (Mk 7:2) and the exchange between Jesus and the Syrophoenician woman (Mk 7:24-30). The reader's attention is thereby focused on the feeding miracles as holding important keys for exegeting this division of Mark.

Recent examinations of this section of Mark have also postulated that several of these events are related to Jesus' mission to Gentiles. Though not all interpreters accept this theory, it is nevertheless worth evaluating in what sense Jesus' Gentile mission, if indeed Mark describes it, may have affected the formation of the disciples. Accordingly, it will be beneficial to first examine the tenets of the theory of Gentile Mission in Mark before proceeding to study how it may have related to the formation of the disciples. The feeding of the five thousand (Mk 6:30-44) and the miracle of walking on water (Mk 6:45-52) are integrated by both Mark and John and will be examined in chapter six.

#### *4.2.4.1 The Gentile Mission in Mark and the Formation of the Disciples*

Mark's narrative geography has attracted significant scholarly attention, not the least because of its apparent relationship with some of his theological emphases. Earlier studies tended to focus on how the contrast between Jesus' ministry in Galilee and Judea in the Gospel reflected the theological intentions of the Evangelist (e.g. Lohmeyer 1936; Lightfoot 1938; Kelber 1974; Marxsen 1969). Several recent studies have, however, noted the sophistication of spatiality in Mark's Gospel and specifically the geopolitical, symbolical and theological role of the Sea of Galilee to the narrative. Important among these observations is the relationship between the Sea of Galilee and the Gentile mission of Jesus; for, all six crossings of the sea by Jesus and His disciples (Mk 4:35, 5:21, 6:32, 6:45, 8:10 and 8:13) are critical to Mark's account. In particular, three of these crossings (Mk 4:35, 6:45 and 8:13) are associated with significant events in the ministry of Jesus, and as I now show, they are also relevant to the formation of the disciples (cf. Petersen 1980, 185–217; Malbon, 1992, 36). In what follows, I shall discuss the arguments for a Gentile mission in Mark, why the sea crossings were integral part of the formation of the disciples in Mark, and the exact formational lessons during these sea crossings.

#### 4.2.4.1.1 The Arguments for a Gentile Mission in Mark's Gospel

The arguments supporting a Gentile mission in Mark's Gospel are largely based on three categories of considerations—(a) the geopolitical conceptualizations of the ethnic make up of the regions surrounding the Sea of Galilee, (b) the nature of the encounters between Jesus and the people on the eastern side of the lake, compared with those on the western side, and (c) the events which occur during the crossing of the sea from the west to the east are depicted as signifying demonic opposition to the mission. It is the third class of arguments that is of most relevance to the present project, even though the other two are also important in providing the background to understanding the formation of the disciples during the phase.

Geopolitically, several interpreters have put forward the suggestion that Mark conceived of the western side of the lake as ethnically, and hence theologically, distinct from the eastern side. The west was Jewish, whereas the east, Gentile. Before the first sea crossing in Mk 4:35, the Jewishness of the western side, is evidenced by the frequent references to synagogues (Mk 1:21, 23, 29, 39; 3:1), the Sabbath (Mk 1:21; 2:23, 24, 27, 28; 3:2, 4) and Jewish religious authorities (i.e. priests Mk 1:44, scribes Mk 2:6, 16; 3:22 and Pharisees Mk 2:16, 18, 24; 3:6). On the other hand, though the Gentile people of Gerasenes refused to accept Jesus during His first mission (Mk 5:17), their rejection is not treated as at par with the Jewish rejection of Jesus in His hometown (Mk 6:1-6).

The Gentile mission in Mk 7:24-8:10, in which Jesus travelled northwards from Galilee to Tyre, then through the region of the Decapolis to eventually arrive at the eastern shore of the Galilean sea, does not involve the crossing of the Sea of Galilee. However, the depiction of the Gentile pedigree of this eastern side is evidenced by the encounter with the Syrophoenician woman, and the missions in Gentile Bethsaida and in Caesarea Philippi. In this regard, the summary of Jesus' healings and exorcisms on Gentile territory in Mk 6:55-56 parallels a similarly successful mission on Jewish territory in Mk 3:10-12. As will shortly be noted, a number of interpreters also regard some of the features of the narrative of the feeding of the four thousand (Mk 8:1-9) as suggesting a Gentile environment. Though this may be debated, there certainly is a notable absence of any reference to Jewish elements on the eastern side of the sea.

This geopolitical pattern of the narratives therefore suggests a degree of ethnic-theological east-west divide across the Sea of Galilee, with Jesus traversing the divide on several occasions. In the view of Kelber, the Sea served as a theological bridge in Mark's conceptualization of Jesus' ministry. The sea, he observes, "is transposed into a symbol of unity, bridging the gulf between Jewish and Gentile Christians" (1974, 63). Similarly, Svartvik is categorical—in Mark's mind there was a "dichotomy between the Jewish west side of the sea and the Gentile east side of the sea" (2000, 238; cf. Myers 1988, 194). By employing the method of structural analysis, Malbon has also concluded that though in Hebrew thought the sea was a place of chaos and danger, Jesus' several journey's across it to the eastern Gentile side evidenced His desire not only to bridge the Jewish and Gentile opposition created by the sea, but also to overpower the chaotic forces that existed across it (1986a, 76-69; Aune 1998, 230-251).

Not all interpreters agree with this neat distinction between the western Jewish and eastern Gentile regions, and of the Sea of Galilee as a liminal space dividing Jewish from Gentile space in a west-east fashion. The suggestion that Galilee had a significant proportion of Gentile population during Jesus' time has recently been challenged (e.g. Rapinchuk 2004, 197–222). Smith has also countered that the concept of distinct ethnic east-west spaces is more of a modern scholarly construct than would have been to Mark (1996, 364–365). He nevertheless concedes that conceptually, Mark saw the sea in a theological-symbolical sense. The point however is, even if there was a mixed Jewish-Gentile population in Galilee, this would not have precluded Mark from conceiving of a theologically "less" Jewish eastern region of the sea. This is exactly the impression that his account gives. Hence the idea of a possible east-west Gentile-Jew divide across the Galilean Sea is not vitiated.

The second line of argument in support of a Gentile mission in Mark's Gospel is the nature of the encounters between Jesus and the people on the eastern side of the Sea. Chief among these are the exorcism of the demoniac in Mk 5:1-20 and the feeding of the four thousand. The exorcism of the demoniac after the first sea crossing incident of Mk 4:35-41, inaugurates Jesus' Gentile mission in the Gospel of Mark. Even though it is now difficult to geographically locate "the country of the Gerasene", said to be on "the

other side of the lake” (Mk 5:1), and the text itself is associated with several different variants, it is nevertheless stated that the miracle occurred in the region of the Decapolis, a well-known Gentile district which Jesus visits in Mk 7:31-37 (cf. Stein 2008, 250). Other indications that this was a Gentile space include the reference to pigs (Mk 5:11, 12, 13, 16), and swineherds (Mk 5:14). The demoniac’s success in evangelizing the region was therefore a prelude to Jesus’ subsequent missions to the region. A number of interpreters have thus suggested that the demoniac performed a forerunner function parallel to that of the Baptist (cf. Wefald 1995, 14; Derrett 1979, 2-17).

Yet, and again, not all interpreters take this exorcism as necessarily related to a Gentile mission in Jesus’ day. Meier for example argues that the place name was Gerasa which was in the western Palestinian countryside, rather than near the eastern side of the sea (1991-2001, 2:651–52). Similarly, Guelich believes that the apparent Gentile references such as the rearing of pigs were later additions to an original incident unrelated to any Gentile mission (cf. 1989, 277). Watts has also challenged the view that just because the demoniac lived in a Gentile area did not necessarily mean that he was a Gentile (1997, 165). Based on the premise that the reference to tombs and pigs in Isaiah 65:1-2 as part of the Isaianic new exodus motif was in relation to the Jews, Watts argues that the demoniac may have been a Diaspora Jew. However, even though Isa 65 was focused on Israel, in Rom 10:20-21 Paul applied it to Gentiles, making it possible that even if Isa 65:1-2 influenced the literary motifs in Mk 5:1-20, the possibility of a Gentile environment is not ruled out. Furthermore, since Jesus sent the man back to his family, who were in the area of Decapolis, it is more likely that the demoniac was a Gentile, or at least those who believed his proclamation were. In either case, Jesus began a Gentile mission through contact with the demoniac.

After noting the similarities<sup>39</sup> between the two feedings of Mark’s Gospel, several interpreters nevertheless also point to the distinctive differences<sup>40</sup> as indication of two

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<sup>39</sup> These include Jesus’ compassion for the crowd (Mk 6:37; 8:4), problem of how to feed them (Mk 6:35; 8:4), both occur in the desert (Mk 6:35; 8:4), same question regarding the amount of available food (Mk 6:38; 8:5), instruction for the people to sit (Mk 6:39-40; 8:6), Jesus’ blessings are similar (Mk 6:41; 8:6-8), the disciples distribute the bread (Mk 6:41; 8:6), all the people were satisfied (Mk 6:42; 8:8), leftovers collected (Mk 6:43; 8:8), and the people dismissed by Jesus (Mk 6:45; 8:9)

separate Jewish and Gentile feedings. Certainly, if Mark held a theological conceptualization of the eastern shore as Gentile space, then the feeding of the four thousand ought to be also understood as Gentile feeding. In addition to the influence of the location of the feeding miracle on its direction of interpretation, some interpreters point to other indicators in the passage as suggestive of Gentile feeding. These include the symbolisms of the different numbers and the peculiar words used for the baskets, (cf. France 2002, 305; Marcus 2000, 487; contra Stein 2008, 367). Hence it can be safely surmised that Jesus' mission to the eastern side of the Sea of Galilee was towards Gentiles and the crossings of the sea from west to east can therefore be described as Gentile missions.

The third line of argument in support of the Gentile mission in Mark is the nature of the events that occurred during the west-to-east crossings of the Sea of Galilee. It has been explained above that in Mark, the Sea of Galilee represented an important theological and ethnic liminal space. Description of the events that occurred when crossing it from west-to-east also demonstrates that it posed as a significant spiritual opposition to Jesus and the disciples which lends credence to the theory that the crossing was conceived of as a missionary journey. Moreover, and as will be shortly discussed, in the sea crossings in Mark, there are strong echoes of Isa 43 where Yahweh promises "Jacob" an intense experience of recreation and spiritual formation while passing "through the waters" to evangelize "the nations". Indeed, it is apparent that Jesus regarded the spiritual opposition during the crossings as opportunities for the formation of the disciples. Furthermore, and as table 4.9 shows, there appears to be progression in several elements of these lessons during the sea crossings, in the Christological, discipleship and the formational aspects. Put together, these features of the sea crossings suggest a purposed missionary enterprise designed to also form and transform the disciples.

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<sup>40</sup> The important differences are different sizes of the population fed, different locations, different amounts of loaves and fishes, in Mk 6:41, the bread and fish are blessed, but in Mk 8:6, Jesus offers thanks, the amount of leftovers are different, and the baskets are named differently (κοφίνων in Mk 6:43; and σπυρίδας in Mk 8:8).

Table 4.9 The three Sea Crossings and the formation of the Disciples

Feature	Mark 4:35-41	Mark 6:45-53	Mark 8:13-21
<b>Destination</b>	Gerasenes	Bethsaida (arrived at Gennesaret)	Bethsaida
<b>Features of the Gentile Mission</b>	Disciples as Jesus' observers and companions	Independent mission was aborted and later implemented with Jesus by land	Successful co-participation of the disciples in Jesus' mission
<b>Jesus</b>	Asleep in the boat. He rebukes the disciples for fearing the opposition	Walked on water and revealed Himself as Yahweh	Rebuked the disciples
<b>The disciples</b>	Theophany, lessons on trust and not fearing demonic opposition	Theophany and Failure of nerve to exercise divine power	Failure to comprehend the miracle of feeding
<b>Misunderstanding of the disciples</b>	Jesus' identity and morbid fear of demonic opposition	Jesus' identity, authority and mission	Jesus' mission

A brief examination of the first sea crossing (Mk 4:35-41) confirms these observations on the theological nature of the west-to-east sea crossings. In the first crossing during which Jesus stilled the storms, He also revealed Himself to the disciples as the God whom “even the wind and the sea obey” (Mk 4:41 cf. Job 26:12, 38:8-11; Pss 65:5-8; 89:8-9; 107:23-32; Jer 35:31; Amos 4:13; cf. 2 Mac 9:8). His comfortable sleep in the ship while the disciples struggled with the wild storms has also been interpreted in relation to Old Testament passages such as Ps 44:23-24; 78:65; 121:4 and Isa 51:9-10 which speak of Yahweh rousing Himself as if from sleep, to save His people (cf. Mrozek 1999, 415-419; Meze 1978, 1-13; Petersen 1980, 185-217). A parallel with Jonah has also been made, even though the significant contrasts between the two persons limit the usefulness of that comparison (contra France 2002, 223; Cope 1976, 75–76).

The theophanic nature of the account in Mk 4:35-41 should however not obscure the basic tenor of the narrative that it also demonstrates the immensity of the spiritual opposition to the Gentile mission. There are two main reasons for this conclusion. Firstly, the Galileans believed that the maritime storms and waves over the sea were essentially demonic in nature (2 Enoch 40:9; 4 Ezra 6:41-42; Jub 2:2; cf. 1QH 3:6, 12-18; 7:45; Malbon 1984, 374). Indeed, the manner in which Jesus rebuked the storm suggests the likelihood that the storm was regarded as influenced by demonic forces.



Jesus rebuked the wind saying, Σιώπα, πεφίμωσο—“be silent, be muzzled” (Mk 4:39)—a command which parallels the manner in which He had earlier exorcised the demon possessed man in Capernaum in Mk 1:25 (Φιμώθητι καὶ ἔξελθε—“be muzzled and come out”; cf. Stein 2008, 243; McInerny 1996, 255-268; Batto 1987, 153-177; Tolbert 1996, 166). This view is reinforced by the fact that the storm is described as “tanodoe-like” (λαῖλαψ μεγάλης ἀνέμου). At least there is the suggestion that the opposition to the mission was more than the physical elements of the sea.

Secondly, the account of the first sea crossing ends by focusing on the *fear* and *unbelief* of the disciples. Jesus’ rebuke in Mk 4:40—“Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith”—has unsurprisingly been cited as evidence of a major failure on the part of the disciples which Mark wished to underline (Marshall 1989, 213; cf. Fowler 1981; Petersen 1980, 185-217; Hanson 2000, 229-230). In any case, it was the first of several explicit rebukes and occurs at a crucial moment when Jesus was advancing the mission into Gentile territories (cf. 7:18; 8:17, 21, 32, 9:19).

Scholarly opinions however differ as to whether the lack of faith of the disciples during this first crossing was due to (a) their fear of the storm (e.g. Marshall 1989, 217), (b) their inability to recognize Jesus’ divine identity, or (c) their inability to independently calm the storm (e.g. Rhoads, Dewey and Michie 1999, 90; Henderson 2006, 232; Best 1981, 230-234; Bornkamm 1948, 49-54)? Even though all three options are possible, it appears that (a) and (b) are more likely the reason for Jesus’ rebuke; given that Jesus would not have expected them to independently still the storm in His presence. This view is reinforced by the emphasis that Jesus’ rebuke replaced the disciples’ morbid fear with “great awe” (Mk 4:41). Accordingly, in the first sea crossing, the disciples acted largely as recipients of the theophany and companions who were to learn to trust the embodied Divine Council in the face of the severe cosmic opposition to the mission. At least it exposed them to an example of how to deal with the demonic opposition. The second sea-crossing, to which we now turn, offered a different class of formational lessons, but built on the first.

#### *4.2.4.2 The Sea Crossing of Mk 6:45-52 and the Formation of the Disciples*

The second sea crossing (Mk 6:45-52) occurs after the first feeding miracle and was destined for Bethsaida, on the “other side” of the lake (cf. Mk 6:45, 8:22). Since the “other side” in Mk 6:45 should be understood as the “other side” of the sea from where the feeding occurred on the westbank, Mark locates the intended destination of the second sea crossing, Bethsaida, on the eastern side of the lake. Several questions of exegetical and theological nature are however raised by the account and must be addressed in order to establish the role of this sea-crossing in the formation of the disciples—(a) Was Bethsaida regarded by Mark as a Gentile Space? (b) Was the crossing an intended Gentile Mission? (c) What was the precedent for Mark’s conceptualization of the sea crossings as Gentile mission? (d) What was the intended formational lesson of the second sea crossing? and (e) What were the reasons for aborting the mission?

##### *4.2.4.2.1 Bethsaida as Gentile Space*

Like Gerasenes, an intense debate continues among interpreters with regard to the geographical location of the intended destination of the second sea crossing. Cartographically, Bethsaida was located on the northeastern side of the Sea of Galilee just at the point where the River Jordan empties into the Sea of Galilee. John 1:44 identifies Bethsaida as the home town of Peter and Andrew, which in Mark is situated in the environs of Capernaum of Galilee. Added to this uncertainty about the location of the intended destination, Luke 9:10 suggests that the feeding of the five thousand occurred somewhere near Bethsaida, making it difficult to explain how it was that after the feeding Jesus nevertheless sends His disciples away towards “Bethsaida”. As solution to this problem, a number of interpreters have suggested that there might have been two Bethsaidas, one on the western side which was Jewish, Peter’s hometown and where the feeding occurred, and the other on the eastern side of the lake which was Gentile and the intended destination of the second sea crossing (cf. Gundry 1993, 339). This explanation is possible, and quite attractive. The only problem is that it lacks supporting archaeological or historical evidence of two first century Bethsaidas.

Other interpreters postulate that there was only one Bethsaida on the northeastern shore of the sea. France discounts Luke's placement of the feeding in Bethsaida and suggests that the feeding occurred on the opposite north-western side of the inflow of the Jordan (2002, 264). The second sea crossing was therefore a short distance, except that they had to cross the deep gorges that characterized the inflow. Indeed Strickert has offered convincing archaeological evidence in support of the view that Bethsaida, though just a few miles from Capernaum was separated from Galilee by a very deep gorge of the river, necessitating a safer travel by boat (1998, 31-45). Thus Luke was also right in placing the feeding around Bethsaida, the nearest city to the "deserted place" where the feeding occurred. This will also explain how the crowd managed to catch up with Jesus by foot after the feeding in Mk 6:33. This second explanation, like the first, is also likely. However, it does not explain why Bethsaida in this sense should have been regarded as a Gentile space by Mark, especially given its Jewish name (Bethsaida means "house of fishing or fishermen").

However, recent archaeological evidence put forward by Arav, identified several Gentile related artifacts as confirming that Bethsaida had a mixed population (1999, 80-84). Arav also suggests that the findings "support a conclusion of a significant Hellenistic presence at the site" (1999, 87). Indeed, according to Bockmuehl archaeological excavation has not yielded anything distinctively Jewish about Bethsaida (2005, 74). The least that could be concluded therefore was that Bethsaida had a significant population of Gentiles during Jesus' time. Consequently, whether there were one or two Bethsaidas, and if there was one, even with a mixed population, the notion of Bethsaida as Gentile space would have contributed to the conceptualization of the voyage to the area as a Gentile mission.

#### 4.2.4.2.2 The Second Sea Crossing as a Gentile Mission

The question is however not that simple; for, even if Jesus regarded Bethsaida as Gentile space, can it also be determined that the purpose of the second sea crossing was for a Gentile mission, and if so how does this consideration affect the understanding of the Jesus-disciples interaction during the crossing? Against a possibly

Gentile mission for the sea crossing of Mark 6 is the fact that the group, together with Jesus did not arrive at Bethsaida (Mk 6:53). Instead they disembarked at Gennesaret, a Jewish territory on the western shore, and where Jesus proceeded with a successful ministry (Mk 6:53-56).

Various explanations have been offered to elucidate this apparent geographical discrepancy, some of which nevertheless regard the initial intention of the sea crossing as a Gentile mission. To start with, interpretations which postulate Mark's rearrangement of his sources as responsible for the misplacement of Mk 6:53-56 to the present location in the Gospel (e.g. Achtemeier 1970, 265–291; Fowler 1981, 66) are ultimately unsatisfactory for dealing with the text in its present form. Other interpreters argue that the boat was basically blown off course by the squall to Gennesaret (cf. Smith 1996, 351-352; Donahue and Harrington 2002, 212). In support of this view is the sense that πρὸς Βηθσαιδὸν (Mk 6:45; literally, “toward Bethsaida”) could also be taken to mean that the disciples were ordered to head “in the direction of Bethsaida”, and not necessarily to enter Bethsaida; in which case the intended destination was not clarified by Jesus.

However this explanation is also inadequate given that the “direction of Bethsaida” was eastwards and the storm ceased when Jesus boarded the boat. One would therefore not have expected the party to have ended up on the west bank, if even the idea was to head in the direction of Bethsaida. Hence, whether the aim of the sea crossing of Mk 6:45-53 was “in the direction of”, or “to”, the Gentile space; the reason why they eventually ended in Jewish space is unexplained by this second approach.

A number of arguments have been advanced in support of a third view that the voyage was purposed as a Gentile mission to be independently commenced by the disciples. Firstly, the journey was specifically intentioned by Jesus to be completed by the disciples. It is stated in Mk 6:45, that after the feeding, Jesus “*made* his disciples get into the boat and go on ahead to the other side, to Bethsaida”, indicating a purposed sending of agents on a mission. The strength of the word ἠνάγκασεν (literally, “compelled, forced, urge strongly or made”) has generated some differences of opinion

among interpreters regarding the circumstances of their departure. Based on the suggestion that the five thousand fed men in Mk 6:40 are depicted with military qualities, France postulates that they may have been insurrectionary and Jesus compelled the disciples to leave as a way of protecting them from being influenced by this militaristic zeal (2002, 270-271; cf. Lane 1974, 234-235). This explanation may well be correct; since John indicates the desire of the people to take Jesus by force and make Him King (Jn 6:14-15). However, it does not fully account for why Jesus stayed behind, or why He wanted the disciples to “go ahead” of Him specifically to Bethsaida, as an escape from the zealots.

As will shortly be discussed, a number of other interpreters take ἡνάγκασεν to mean that Jesus had to *force* the disciples to head to Bethsaida on the mission because they were resistant to go in the first place (cf. Boring 2006, 188; Gundry 1993, 335; Myers 1988, 196; Malbon 1984, 370; Gibson 1986, 31-47; LaVerdiere 1999, 1.178). I shall argue against this view for its lack of evidence. On the contrary, the urgency conveyed by ἡνάγκασεν, taken together with other indicators in the account, suggests that Jesus intended the sea crossing of Mk 6:45-53 as a Gentile missionary assignment for the disciples. This mission was to serve as the Gentile counterpart of their earlier successful independent missionary work among the Jews recorded in Mk 6:7-13 and 30.

A second reason supporting a Gentile mission as the purpose of the sea voyage is Mark’s use of προάγειν (literarily, to go ahead) in Mk 6:45. It depicts the disciples as forerunners of Jesus sent by the embodied Divine Council to minister ahead of Him. The third reason is Jesus’ time of secluded prayer on the mountain after sending the disciples (Mk 6:46). It is likely that Jesus spent several other periods of secluded prayer; but Mark chooses to underline three such periods in His narrative (Mk 1:35, 6:46, 14:32). Since all three occur during the night before significant events in Jesus ministry, Mk 1:35, the first, should shed light on Mk 6:46. As stated earlier, Jesus’ isolated prayer in Mk 1:35 occurred just before He embarked on a major expansion of the mission in the region of Capernaum. Hence Jesus’ secluded prayer on the mountain at the time that the disciples embarked on the sea voyage suggests a mission of similar proportion as that intimated in Mark 1. The difference was, whereas in Mk 1:35, the mission was

an expansion from Capernaum to a wider Galilean region, in Mk 6:46, this was an expansion to a Gentile area. Thus there are enough reasons to regard the second sea-crossing as a designated Gentile mission in which the disciples were to be forerunners.

#### 4.2.4.2.3 Isaiah 43, the Markan Sea Crossings, and the Formation of the Disciples

If it is true that Mark conceived of the sea crossing to Bethsaida, and for that matter, the other crossings from west to east, as Gentile mission, then a legitimate question arises as to what the theological precedent(s) for this conceptualization were. This question is particularly relevant for the present purposes because it could shed light on how Mark understood the formation of the disciples during such missions. In this regard, it is important to observe that recent discussions on the Gentile mission during Jesus' ministry have underlined the immense influence of Isaiah, especially Isa 40-55 in both second temple Jewish reflections on Israel's role in missions and the subsequent appropriations of this by Christians (e.g. Watts 1997; Moore 1995; Moore, 1997, 389–399; Bird 2006, 128; Vermes 1995, 112; Scobie 1992, 283-305; Grisanti 2002, 63-92).

Given the considerable influence of the Isianic new exodus imagery on Mark's account, it is prudent to look for the answer to this question in that imagery, though a detailed examination of this trajectory cannot be pursued because of the limitations of space. For the purposes of the present project however, the dramatic depiction in Isa 43 of the role of Israel in the evangelization of the nations, while at the same time being "created", "formed", "redeemed" and "made" by Yahweh is significant. In this portrayal, Israel is said to undergo a spiritually formative experience as it crosses the waters—"When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you; for, I am the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Saviour" (Isa 43:2-3). The chapter goes on to narrate how Egypt, Ethiopia, Seba, Babylon, the Chaldeans, "the peoples" and "the nations" would consequently be given to "Jacob", "the people whom I formed for myself so that they might declare my praise" (Isa 43:21).

The historical echoes of the first Exodus in such imagery are apparent enough (cf. Grisanti 2002, Watts 1997, 48). Yet, if as is most likely, Mark's conceptualization of the sea crossings as Gentile Mission was influenced by the second part of Isaiah, then the language of recreation, redemption, call and spiritual formation during the crossing of "waters" and "rivers" and "fire", which is explicit in the Isaianic new exodus prophecy, would also have influenced Mark's understanding of the formation of the disciples during the sea crossings of Jesus' ministry. The disciples were after all regarded as representatives of the Messianic eschatological community. Accordingly, the sea crossings in Mark should not just be understood as aimed at Gentile mission, but also as opportunities for the spiritual formation of the disciples. The question of the exact nature of the formational lesson(s) and experience(s) now needs addressing.

#### 4.2.4.2.4 The Intended Formational Lesson(s) of the Second Sea-Crossing

By making the disciples go out by sea to Bethsaida, Jesus was not just dictating the destination of the Gentile mission, but He was also orchestrating the manner by which the disciples were to get there. Gentile missionary work in Bethsaida was therefore meant to be the culmination of other objectives for the journey. Firstly, given the experience of the disciples on the sea, it is apparent that another dimension of the disciples' task was to exercise the authority Jesus had given them to deal with the opposing cosmic forces they were to encounter on their way to Bethsaida. Dealing with the storm on their own, without the physical presence of Jesus should therefore be regarded as part of the task of this Gentile mission. Such an expectation from Jesus was not unreasonable; since He had rebuked the storms on the same sea and followed it with a lesson on faith, thus teaching by example and explanation how they were to deal with such spiritual oppositions. His planned absence was the opportunity for the disciples to put these lessons into practice.

Secondly, the disciples had just returned from a mission, albeit a Jewish one, in which they exercised Jesus' power and authority in performing miracles and exorcisms in His absence. The voyage on the sea was their opportunity to exercise the same authority

over the spiritual forces on the sea while on their mission to the Gentiles of Bethsaida. One therefore agrees with Henderson's account of the second objective of the journey,

[T]he narrative's measured, frame-by-frame account of Jesus' deliberate removal from the disciples combines with the insistence that they "go ahead of" him suggest that this second sea-crossing story also constitutes the second "missionary journey" of the disciples. In the first [i.e., 6:7–13], they have laid claim to God's dominion within the human sphere, where they have preached, healed, and cast out demons; now they go forth to assert God's dominion by subduing the adverse spiritual powers associated with the sea [2006, 219-220]

Yet, this was not an exercise only in overcoming the demonic forces of the sea. The main objective was to complete the journey to Bethsaida and begin the second league of the Gentile mission, "ahead" of Jesus. The two lessons were integral to each other. As I now also discuss, considering Mark's philosophy of educational formation, the failure of the disciples during the second sea crossing, should not be construed in overly pessimistic terms.

#### 4.2.4.2 5 Reasons for Failure to Arrive at Bethsaida

The voyage did not disembark at Gentile Bethsaida, but rather at Jewish Gennesaret. As noted earlier, attempts to textually explain the geographical problem by postulating editorial or redactional misplacement of the account are ultimately unsatisfactory. The text as is now constituted means that the mission to Bethsaida was aborted. Yet, the challenge is to establish why this occurred and its significance to the formation of the disciples. As also observed earlier, the suggestion that the boat was blown off course is possible but unlikely, given that the squall ceased after Jesus boarded the boat.

In addition, the notion that the disciples resisted the whole idea of going to Gentile Bethsaida from the beginning and hence aborted the journey is not supported by the evidence in Mark's Gospel. Proponents of this "resistance to Gentile mission" theory largely retroject the later reluctance of sections of the early Church to admit Gentiles into the fold, as indicated in Acts of the Apostles and Paul's letters, back into Jesus'



ministry. Yet, there is no such evidence in Mark's Gospel, and for that matter, the other Gospels, of a *resistance* on the part of the disciples to Gentiles (cf. Boring 2006, 188; Gundry 1993, 335; Myers 1988, 196; Malbon 1984, 370; Gibson 1986, 31-47; LaVerdiere 1999, 1.178). In addition, the only textual basis upon which the theory hinges is the strongly negative reading of ἡνάγκασεν in Mk 6:45 postulating that Jesus had to *force* His reluctant disciples to head for Bethsaida against their wills. As observed earlier, there are perfectly valid alternatives to this reading of ἡνάγκασεν.

Three other reasons may be advanced for rejecting the "resistance to Gentile mission" theory. Firstly, if Mark wished to highlight this element, he had ample opportunities to have explicitly done so, given his focus on the disciples in most of the materials, and several aspects of Jesus' Gentile mission in the third division of the Gospel. On the contrary, where the opportunity arose, Mark portrays the Jewish disciples in increasingly non-traditionalist roles, such as plucking of the grain on the Sabbath and especially eating without washing hands "as the Pharisees, and *all the Jews*" did (Mk 7:3). Since Mark does not even hint at the discomfort of the disciples in such roles, this cautions against employing the resistance to Gentile mission theory to explain the behaviour of the disciples during the second sea crossing.

Secondly, the disciples *did* accompany Jesus to Gentile regions before and after this sea crossing incident, undermining the suggestion that they opposed a Gentile mission. Thirdly, since according to the Gospel of John, three of the disciples—Philip, Peter and Andrew—hailed from Bethsaida (Jn 1:44), it is difficult to imagine that they would *resist* a missionary journey to their hometown. It is true that Jesus was earlier rejected from His home town (Mk 6:1-6). However, this would not be sufficient reason for the disciples to resist going back to their own towns on missions for fear of being rejected.

A preferable solution, which explains why the mission to Bethsaida was aborted during the second sea crossing, is suggested by the *emotions* of the disciples after Jesus joined the boat. Mark comments in Mk 6:51-52 that the disciples "were utterly astounded, for they did not understand about the loaves, but their hearts were hardened". To a certain extent, the astonishment of the disciples was a natural

response to the theophany that they had just experienced, of Jesus walking on water. Elsewhere in Mark (e.g. Mk 1:22, 27, 2:12, 5:15, 20, 42) the crowd similarly respond to Jesus' display of divine identity and power with fear. The disciples had also responded to the stilling of the storm by being filled with "great awe" (Mk 4:41). In contrast to the "great awe" of Mk 4:41 however, "utterly astounded" in Mk 6:51 should be taken in the negative sense (contra Dwyer 1996, 131-134). Mark explains this with the difficult γάρ clause that the astonishment derived from a "hardness of heart" that prevented them from understanding the significance of the miracle of loaves.

Interpreters have rightly observed that the charge of "hardness of heart" is directly related to the parable of the Sower with its echo of Isa 6:10. That charge had also been levelled against Jesus' opponents (Mk 3:5; cf. France 2002, 273, Donahue and Harrington 2002, 214; Stein 2008, 327). And its Old Testament antecedents (e.g. Ex 7:13, 14, 22; 8:15, 19, 32) indicates imperviousness to divine revelation. It is evident therefore that whatever was expected of the disciples in response to the miracles of feeding and then walking on the water, "utterly astounded" was not adequate. Like the feeding of the five thousand, the miracle of walking on water demonstrated Jesus' divinity, just as in the Old Testament and literature of Second Temple Judaism, Yahweh is also depicted as the one who rides on the chaotic seas to rescue His people (e.g. Job 9:8; Ps 77:19–20; Isa 43:16–17; 51:9–10; Hab 3:12–15; Sir 24:5–6; Wis 10:17–18).

The key to this failure on the part of the disciples therefore is Mark's reference to the miracle of the loaves in Mk 6:52; for, the point of the feeding miracle is the effectual co-operation between Christology and Discipleship—in Mark's account, the miracle both serves to demonstrate Jesus' divinity as the One who fed Israel in the wilderness, as well as the disciples' partnership with Him as co-agents in performing this miracle. Hence the reference to the loaves of Mk 6:52 point to their dual failure—the disciples failed to grasp the revelation not only of the divinity of Jesus in feeding the five thousand and walking on water, but also of their own participation in the divine power acting through them for effecting His dominion over the powers of the sea.

Faced with the contrary storm, which in Mark is depicted in demonic fashion, the disciples should have, with faith, effectuated the divine power made available to them over the opposing forces. And confronted with further overwhelming power of the theophany of Jesus walking on water, their response of deepened sense of failure and inadequacy was, to Mark, a sign of hard-heartedness. Rather than recognizing Jesus as the divine Lord of the seas walking to them to rescue them, the disciples instead misinterpreted the *de novo* revelation for a ghost and cried out. Without the faith response, the disciples could not exorcise the opposing spiritual forces, nor interpret the revelation. They failed as agents of divine power and of revelation (Blomberg 1986, 327-359).

The failure of the disciples during the sea crossing of Mark 6 was therefore in exactly those two areas for which they were being formed. This was a fundamental failure, which Mark underlines as hardheartedness. And it is hereby suggested that the second sea crossing was aborted exactly because of the fundamental nature of this failure. More needed to be done to rescue the disciples from decline and prepare them for the next stage of their development as Jesus' co-agents.

This interpretation is supported by the parallel account of the walking on the sea in Matthew. Even though absent in Mark's account, Peter's failure to imitate Jesus' control over the sea by walking on it in Matt 14:25-33, illustrates not just the divine-human gulf, but the disciples' inadequacy of faith that was responsible for the aborted mission. That Jesus rescued them however again shows that this failure was not terminal, but constituted part of Mark's overall conceptualization of failure in educational formation. In that sense, the "spiritual formation" promised in the Isaianic new exodus imagery was apparently being fulfilled through the agonizing failures of the disciples.

#### 4.2.5 The Jesus-Disciples Interactions on the Way to Jerusalem

For several reasons, Mark 8:27-10:52 constitutes a major discipleship section of the Gospel. Firstly, the division serves as the beginning of the second half of the Gospel. As stated earlier, Peter's confession of Jesus as the Messiah is depicted by Mark as a

watershed in Jesus' ministry, so that the public missions in the regions around the Galilean Sea in the first half are replaced with the determined journey of Jesus to Jerusalem and several private instructions to the disciples. Secondly, Mk 8:27-10:52 is a well designed literary section on its own, focused on the journey of Jesus and His entourage from Caesarea Philippi through Galilee and Judea, and southward to Jerusalem. The outline of the narrative after Mk 10:52 distinctively changes to focus on Jesus' ministry in Jerusalem and the Passion. However, the journey of Jesus is presented as much more than a travelogue. Mark also portrays Jesus' movement as a theological fulfilment of the Isaianic new exodus prophecy of Yahweh travelling with His people *in the way* to Zion (e.g. Isa 42:16; 43:19; 51:9-11; 52:12). Consequently, in terms of the formation of the disciples, this division of Mark is best characterized as "the formation of the Lord's co-warriors in the Way".

Table 4.10: The Rhetorical and Literary Structure of Mk 8:27-10:52

	First Cycle	Second Cycle	Third Cycle
Location	Caesarea Philippi	Galilee through Judea	Outskirts of Jerusalem
Passion Prediction	Mk 8:31 Jesus will suffer, be rejected and killed	Mk 9:30-32 Jesus will be delivered to Jewish leaders, be killed and rise again	Mk 10:32-34 Jesus will be delivered to Jews and Gentiles, scourged, killed and rise again
Disciples' Failure	Mk 8:32-33 Peter's misunderstanding	Mk 9:33-34 Dispute over "the greatest"	Mk 10:35-37 James' & John's undue request
Jesus' Teaching	Mk 8:34-9:1 Discipleship is self-denial and cross carrying in following Jesus	Mk 9:35-10:31 Assorted lessons on Discipleship, including humility and clarification on divorce	Mk 10:38-45 Discipleship is imitating Jesus through service to the point of martyrdom

Thirdly, Mark presents the material in the division in an intricate literary structure, made up of three cycles of discipleship materials, each with a threefold pattern (table 4.10). Each cycle contains a pericope in which Jesus predicts His passion, followed by an error on the part of the disciples and then instructions by Jesus in correcting the error and making further clarifications on the nature of discipleship (cf. Robbins 1981, 97-

114)<sup>41</sup>. The end result is an interwoven teaching complex of predictions, errors, and instructions on the nature of discipleship and its relationship with the passion of Jesus. Accordingly, interpretation of the formation of the disciples during this phase must reckon with (a) the implications of Mark's theology of "the way", to discipleship, (b) the relationship of the passion predictions to the ethical dimensions of discipleship to Jesus, and (c) the role that Mark envisaged the failures of the disciples in their formation.

#### 4.2.5.1 *The Theology of "the Way" in Mark's Gospel: Ethical or Christological?*

Even though Mk 8:27-10:52 narrates the movement of Jesus and His entourage towards Jerusalem, the six repetitions of the phrase ἐν τῇ ὁδῷ in the division (Mk 8:27; 9:33-34; 10:17, 32, 52), together with the references to the ὁδόν word group (e.g. Mk 10:21, 46) appear to indicate that Mark shaped the travelogue to also fit a particular theological paradigm related to the notion of discipleship as a journey "in the way" (cf. Acts 9:2; 16:17; 18:25-26; 19:9; 23; 22:4; 24:14; 22). This is even more so given that this journey is the only one Jesus makes to Jerusalem in Mark's Gospel.

There are three other reasons underpinning this conclusion. Firstly, the phrase ἐν τῇ ὁδῷ appears to be programmatic in the manner in which Mark uses it in the division. So, Peter's pivotal confession of Jesus as the Messiah is for example made "on the way" (Mk 8:27). The dispute among the disciples regarding who was the greatest occurs "on the way", even though it was corrected by Jesus "in the house" (Mk 9:34). Indeed, the repetition of the phrase in a redundant fashion in Mk 9:33-34 to highlight the fact that the dispute occurred "on the way", underscores Mark's apparently double-voiced use of the phrase. A similar redundant language is used in the case of the rich young ruler. He came to Jesus while the later is said to be ἐκπορευομένου αὐτοῦ εἰς ὁδόν (Mk 10:17; literally, travelling out *into the way*). This may well be an effort to highlight the rich man's

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<sup>41</sup> The place of the transfiguration, the discussion about Elijah and the failure to exorcise the demon in the deaf and convulsing child (Mk 9:2-29) in this structure is debated. On its own, it appears to contain the similar pattern of revelation, errors and correction. But these are of quite different categories from the above structure. Yet, its placement fits in very well with the surrounding pericopae—Mk 8:27-34 relates to

failed attempt to be a disciple of Jesus “in the way”. Furthermore, Bartimaeus’ final act of commitment, which also closes the division, was to follow Jesus “on the way” (Mk 10:52)—a description which would otherwise be unnecessary, since Jesus was in any case in motion. Thus at the same time as the division underscores a physical movement of Jesus and His entourage to Jerusalem, it concurrently portrays this movement as a metaphor of discipleship.

Secondly, Mark’s use of the ὁδὸν word group in the rest of the Gospel also suggests a tendency towards a theological nuance. Before Mk 8:27-10:52, it is used in Mk 1:2-3, 2:23, 4:4, 4:15, 6:8 and 8:3, where there are reasons to believe that several of these have theological nuances. As observed in the previous chapter, Mk 1:2-3 is a programmatic quotation establishing the Evangelist’s theological agenda of narrating the beginning of the fulfilment of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God (§ 3.2.1.2). There, the Baptist is depicted as a preparer of the way of Jesus, the Lord, who comes to fulfil God’s eschatological mission. There are two references to the way in the parable of the Sower (Mk 4:4 & 4:15), but these also serve a theological point related to God’s eschatological kingdom. In Mk 2:23 and 6:8, the uses of ὁδὸν no doubt refer to physical motion; even though its use in Mk 6:8 as the missionary journeys of the disciples indirectly relates it with Jesus’ mission. And in Mk 8:3, the use of ὁδὸν in reference to the crowd could also have a theological nuance (cf. Best 1981, 192-193).

The three uses of ὁδὸν after Mk 10:52 (twice in Mk 11:8 and once in 12:14) clearly have added theological nuances. Accordingly, a number of interpreters have proposed that the concept of “the way” may be employed for structuring the Gospel (e.g. Heil 1992, 18; Swartley 1980, 78-79). Though such an approach appears to overstate the significance Mark attached to the word itself, there is certainly a recurrent theological use of ὁδὸν in the Gospel. Consequently, its higher frequency in Mk 8:27-10:52 supports the conclusion that it has theological relevance for Mark (cf. Marcus 1992, 32; Watts 1997, 124).

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the transfiguration through Peter’s confession and the passion prediction; and the Elijah discussion also fits in very well with the transfiguration.

Thirdly, the use of “the way” theme in this division fits very well into Mark’s Isaianic new exodus apocalyptic eschatology. As noted in the previous chapter, the second part of Isaiah influenced the theological nuances of Mark’s Gospel (cf. Isa 35:1-7; 40; 42:10-16). That being the case, in addition to the theme of “the way” being also prominent in that portion of Isaiah, there is an added reason for considering the frequent use of the *ὁδὸν* word group in Mk 8:27-10:52 as indicating an authorial theological emphasis. In this respect, one agrees to some extent with Watts’ (1997) observation regarding the influence of the Isaianic new exodus motif on Mark’s Gospel. He postulates that the Isaianic motif had three broad themes—(a) Yahweh heals and delivers His exiled people, (b) Yahweh leads His spiritually blind people in a return journey to Zion, and (c) Yahweh arrives in Zion in victory (1997, 4). Watts then advances the argument that Mk 8:22-10:52 corresponded to the second theme of Yahweh’s journey with His people.

Though innovative, Watts appears to overemphasize the influence of Isaiah in Mk 8:27-10:52 to the point that the disciples become proxies for depicting the fulfilment of Isaiah’s prophecy (1997, 222). It is my contention however, that though the Isaianic new exodus theme underlines the broad theological outline of Mark’s construction of the travelogue of Mk 8:27-10:52, the account is so nuanced in presenting the Jesus-disciples interaction as to limit the extent to which the new exodus motif should control the exegesis of the section. In other words, Mark may have understood the movement of Jesus and His entourage to Jerusalem as a fulfilment of Isaiah’s prophecies of the new exodus in broad terms. However this framework does not necessarily transfer to the specific nature of the descriptions of the interactions between Jesus and the disciples. Certainly, Mark’s account was much more grounded in the approaching Passion of Jesus, and how it was related to the formation of the disciples.

If Mark employs “the way” theme in this fashion, especially with connotation of Isaianic new exodus motif, in what sense did he envisage the theme affecting the formation of the disciples? Specifically, is the way theme related to the objectives of Jesus’ mission, or the manner in which disciples were to conduct themselves in relation to this mission? Two broadly contrasting approaches to this question have been put forward by interpreters—one, ethical, and the other, Christological; depending on whether one

takes the genitive *kupíou* of *τὴν ὁδὸν κυρίου* (the way of the Lord) subjectively or objectively. Drawing his inspiration from how the phrase was used among the Qumran Essenes (especially 1QS 8:12-16; 9:17-20), where it emphasized human ethical and moral actions and conduct, Snodgrass has suggested that much of the metaphorical use of the term in the Synoptic tradition, and therefore in Mark's Gospel, refers to godly ethical behaviour in response to God's revelation (1980, 30; cf. Davis 1996, 64).

This interpretation is supported by the frequent use of "way" in the OT to refer to the moral-ethical course of action one takes (e.g. Gen 18:9; Judg 2:22; 1 Kgs 15:26, 34; 16:2; Ps 1:1, 6; 119:33; Prov 2:8, 20; 8:20). The several ethical instructions that are taught by Jesus in this division of Mark (see below) also reinforce this trajectory of interpretation. Having initiated the disciples into the dynamics of revelation and power of the eschatological kingdom which He has inaugurated, Jesus' private instructions to the disciples after Mk 8:27 re-orient them from an ethic based on the Jewish ritual laws to one based on Jesus Himself and especially, His death, and in some respects, would also demand the disciple's ultimate sacrifice with his or her life.

The problem with this ethical interpretation of the theology of the "way" in Mark's Gospel however, is that it anthropologically grounds the performance of the ethical conduct in the disciple, albeit reinforced by Jesus' example and exhortations. Furthermore, such a purely ethical interpretation of the way projects Jesus' death as an ethical example rather than as the source of power for the disciple's ethical behaviour; for, as will shortly become clear, there is no doubt that the section couples kingdom ethics with the death of Jesus. Moreover, the emphasis that Jesus' death was salvific in that it atoned for the sins of the disciples is also lost in this ethical reading of "the way"

Marcus has therefore argued against this ethical interpretation of the *τὴν ὁδὸν κυρίου* theme in Mark. He follows Lohmeyer (1951, 13-15), Kelber (1970, 109) and Swartley (1980, 78-79) in regarding *kupíou* in the phrase as objective genitive, so that the emphasis on "the way" in Mark's Gospel, is not so much about human ethical actions, but rather God's actions, or God's way (1992, 31). The *ὁδὸν* in Mark, in the view of Marcus, describes God's creation of the Kingdom through the eschatological actions of



Jesus—it is “about God’s way, which is his βασιλεια, his own extension of kingly power” (1992, 33). Taken this way, the disciples in the division should be regarded as invited into participating in the forward momentum of this βασιλεια. Like Watts, Marcus heavily relies on the Isaianic new exodus theme in this interpretation, and in so doing demonstrates how the holy war motif is reinterpreted by Mark in this travelogue as the effectuation of God’s rule through Jesus’ action. Accordingly, the triumphant procession of Jesus, “in the way” to Jerusalem, enacts the return of Yahweh to Zion described in Isaiah (Marcus 1992, 35). Yet, Marcus also admits to an ironic twist in the manner in which the return of Yahweh is interpreted by Mark; for, the victorious holy war of Isaiah is now depicted as the suffering, rejection and death of Jesus in Jerusalem (1992, 41).

This insight from Marcus is very helpful in refocusing the role of Jesus in the notion of τὴν ὁδὸν κυρίου. However, to my mind, there is no need to separate the two trajectories of interpretations of “the way” in Mark as if “God’s way” may not be appropriated into an “ethical way” that is lived out by the disciple. Τὴν ὁδὸν κυρίου is clearly, and primarily, God’s way. But Isaiah portrays this way as one that Yahweh would *share* with His exiled people, who accompany Him. The company of Yahweh are therefore depicted as sometimes behind (e.g. Isa 1.11; 42:16; 44.26; 45.13; 52.7-8) and other times in front of Yahweh (e.g. Isa 52:12). This matches the depiction in Mk 11:9 where some of Jesus’ followers during the “triumphal entry” were ahead, and some also behind. As co-travellers with the embodied Divine Council, His agents share His holy war spiritual and ethical agenda as they head to Zion with triumphal music.

Accordingly the notion that τὴν ὁδὸν κυρίου is the ethical way of the Lord fulfilled by His human agents is valid, but only in so far as it is understood that there is no room for an independent ethical human conduct. Interpretations such as Davis’ (1996, 64) which effectively regard “the way” as good ethical conduct “upon” which God would visit His people is inadequate since it divorces the twin aspects of the way of the Lord. Entering the kingdom of God, as Jesus describes it, is impossible for mortals, “but not for God; for God, all things are possible” (Mk 10:27). The way therefore, is clearly the Lord’s, but it is shared with, and appropriated by His followers. As will be shortly emphasized the

role of the Passion of Jesus is to make this union of Jesus and His disciples possible in the kingdom ethics of τὴν ὁδὸν κυρίου.

The twin interpretation of “the way” as Jesus’ way that is appropriated by the disciples as co-agents is demonstrated when each of the three groups of ethical instructions in the division are analyzed according to either perspectives. As table 4.11 shows, in each group of ethical instructions the disciples’ ethical actions “in the way”, are coupled with Jesus’ actions, so that the two may not be separated. This inseparability is not so much because Jesus is presented as the ethical example to be imitated by the disciple; but, more so that the disciple’s ethical actions are to be based on, and derived from Jesus’ actions. In other words, the ethical actions of the disciple *in the way* are defined, instituted and enabled by Jesus’ action.

Table 4.11: The twin features of the Ethical Instructions of Discipleship “in the way”

Passage	Disciple’s Perspective	Jesus’ Perspective
<b>Mk 8:34-9:1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Those who want to save their life will lose it...those who are ashamed of me and of my words ... of them the Son of Man will also be ashamed (8:35-38)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Son of Man will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels (8:38)</li> </ul>
<b>Mk 9:35-10:31</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Whoever wants to be first must be last of all and servant of all... whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me (9:35-37a)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Whoever welcomes me welcomes not me but the one who sent me (9:37b).</li> <li>Whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because you bear the name of Christ will by no means lose the reward (9:41).</li> </ul>
<b>Mk 10:38-45</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant whoever wishes to be first among you must be slave of all (10:43-44)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many (10:45)</li> </ul>

#### 4.2.5.2 The Relationship between Kingdom Ethics and Jesus’ Passion

This relationship between kingdom ethics and Jesus’ actions throws significant light on the relationship between Jesus’ triple predictions of His passion and the formation of the disciples. Firstly, the predictions inseparably connect Jesus’ death and resurrection to discipleship “in the way”. As Mark 10:45 states it—the disciple serves because “the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, *and to give his life a ransom for many*”. It is true that this verse is one of the most disputed in Mark’s Gospel (cf. Medley 1994, 5-22;

Scaer 2008, 227-242; Bolt 2001, 1-17; Lindars 1982, 292-295; Gundry 2002, 123-139). However, as Stein rightly points out, much of the dispute emanate from the hermeneutical presuppositions of interpreters, and not from any major exegetical difficulties that it represents (2008, 487).

It is clear that Jesus describes His forthcoming death as λύτρον ἀντὶ πολλῶν (literally, “ransom in the place of many”). The disputed question is whether it is plausible that Jesus would have espoused such an atonement theology before His death. Yet, the mounted arguments are investigator dependent, and ultimately difficult to prove or, for that matter, refute. Given the influence of the Isaianic new exodus motif in the whole Gospel, there is no reason to suppose that Isa 53 would not have served as background to Jesus’ self-understanding and self-characterization as the Servant whose life becomes a “ransom for many” (cf. France 2002, 420; Scaer 2008, 227-242; Bolt 2001, 1-17). Added to this are the several contemporary interpretations of atonement theology with which Jesus would have been familiar and so maintained this self-understanding (e.g. Ex 13:13-16 LXX, 1 Mac 2:50, 6:44; 2 Mac 7:37-38, 4 Mac 6:27-29; 17:21-22; 1QS 5:6; 8:3-10; 9:4). Be that as it may, it must be concluded that kingdom ethics in “the way” are presented as ethical actions which are enabled by Jesus’ atoning death on the cross. Without His death, “the way” would not be created, and disciples cannot live the ethical standards of the inaugurated kingdom.

Secondly, the passion predictions firmly link kingdom ethics with cruciform living (cf. Brower 2007, 177-201; Pickett, 2005, 436). Mark 10:45 underlines the fact that Jesus’ death was meant to be His alone—He, the Son of Man, was the only one to give “His life a ransom for many”. As the final division of Mark will repeatedly underline, the disciples were not expected to share in this particular phase of the mission (contra Manson 1955, 231-232). Yet, in so linking kingdom ethics with His death, Jesus enjoins the disciple to live out the example of His death through their service and obedience. As France points out, “It is not the λύτρον ἀντὶ πολλῶν that [the disciples] are expected to reproduce; that was Jesus’ unique mission. But the spirit of service and self-sacrifice, the priority given to the needs of the πολλῶν, are for all disciples” (2002, 421).

Thirdly the passion prediction underlines the ultimate price and prize for living in obedience to Jesus as His disciple. Imitation of the obedience of Jesus by His disciple may ultimately lead to the disciple's martyrdom. "If any want to become my followers", Jesus lays down the condition, "let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me" (Mk 8:34). The imagery of one bearing their own cross to their crucifixion even before the time of Jesus' death, was portrayed by Plutarch in terms of bearing shame as well as death (Plutarch, *De sera numinis vindicta* §554b). Though the concept of carrying one's cross may therefore also be understood metaphorically, for some of Mark's first readers, and certainly some of the disciples who heard the words spoken by Jesus, it literally meant martyrdom (cf. Mk 10:38). Kingdom ethics for the disciples must therefore be lived not only in the light of Jesus' death, but also the disciple's own death, whether metaphorical or actual death. Bonhoeffer was therefore correct to make the insightful statement that, "When Christ calls a man, He bids him, come and die" (1959, 79).

#### *4.2.5.3 The Failures of the Disciples and the Elenchus Phenomenon*

A striking feature of this division is the recurrent failures of the disciples. This feature of the Gospel has been a major pre-occupation of scholars since the 1970s and several explanatory theories have been advanced—ranging from polemical (Weeden 1971; Kelber 1973; Crossan 1973; Horsley 2001; Yang 2004), socio-rhetorical (Donahue 1983; Hutardo 1995; Danove 1998; Shiner 1995), theological (Wrede 1901; Radcliffe 1987), pedagogical (Tannehill 1977; Best 1981; Kingsbury 1989; Malbon 1986; Malbon 1983) or feminist (Schierling 1980).

Whereas some suggestions throw significant and helpful light on the rhetorical designs of the Gospel, the fundamental problem with some of the others is that they conflict with the genre of the Gospel. It is apparent that since Mark's project was to write a biography of Jesus, and not of the disciples, it would not have been his aim to idealize the disciples. After all, in so presenting the failures of the disciples the way he has done, Mark is no different from the writers of the Old Testament who were also not minded to excuse or "cover-up" the failings of the patriarchs, prophets and kings of Israel. There is

no reason why Mark should have taken his task of presenting the interactions of the human agents with the embodied Divine Council any differently.

Table 4.12: The Failures of the Disciples in Mk 8:27-10:52

Passage	Failure of Disciples	Jesus' Correction
<b>Mk 8:31-38</b>	Peter misunderstands and rebukes Jesus about suffering Messiah	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Jesus rebukes Peter for setting his mind on human things</li> <li>2. Jesus teaches that discipleship is cross-bearing and life-losing</li> </ol>
<b>Mk 9:14-29</b>	Disciples fail to exorcise a boy with unclean spirit	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Jesus rebukes the "faithless generation"</li> <li>2. Jesus challenges the boy's father to believe</li> <li>3. Jesus teaches the disciples about prayer</li> </ol>
<b>Mk 9:33-37</b>	Disciples argue concerning who is the greatest	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Jesus teaches that leadership is service</li> <li>2. Jesus links hospitality to humility</li> </ol>
<b>Mk 9:38-41</b>	John attempts to ban the non-following exorcist from exorcising in Jesus' name	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Jesus corrects John and clarifies the basis of fellowship</li> <li>2. Jesus warns about the dire consequences of putting "stumbling" block before other believers</li> </ol>
<b>Mk 10:13-16</b>	Disciples prevent little children from being brought to Jesus	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Jesus was "indignant"</li> <li>2. Jesus teaches about the necessity of childlike faith in the kingdom</li> </ol>
<b>Mk 10:17-31</b>	The rich young man refused to give up his wealth to follow Jesus	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Jesus loved him</li> <li>2. Jesus teaches about the difficulties created by riches to the disciple</li> <li>3. Jesus reassures the disciples of rewards</li> </ol>
<b>Mk 10:35-40</b>	The inordinate request of James and John	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Jesus challenges them about their request</li> <li>2. Jesus sets His suffering as the standard of the suffering of the disciples</li> </ol>
<b>Mk 10:41-45</b>	Disciples are angry with John and James	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Jesus corrects the disciples regarding the nature of leadership in the kingdom</li> <li>2. Jesus links the service of the disciple to His "service" on the cross</li> </ol>

That said however, there is a residual question as to whether it was possible that Mark found the failures of the disciples as fitting into a certain pattern and how that pattern was related to the formation of the disciples. At stake in this question is not an attempt to decipher Mark's motive in highlighting the failures of the disciples, even though there is a sense in which that enquiry may itself be useful. The more fundamental issue is Mark's philosophy of educational formation. To put the question another way, how does the pattern of the failures of the disciples in Mark's Gospel relate to their formation as agents of Jesus?

As table 4.12 shows, each of the failures of the disciples depicted by Mk 8:27-10:52 is set in the context of Jesus' teaching ministry. In each case, the failure becomes a platform for Jesus' rebuke or correction. However, these corrections are always followed by extra teaching on the subject matter and as is often the case in Mark, linked to Jesus' example and in some cases, His death. In a number of instances, the failure of the disciple is related to an initial challenge. So, for example, Peter's rebuke of Jesus follows his misunderstanding of Jesus' revelation of the nature of His messiahship. Similarly, the failure of the disciples to exorcise the boy with unclean spirit follows a challenge and is in turn followed by Jesus' rebuke and clarification on the need for prayer. Also, the disciples' failure with regard to the children (Mk 10:13-16) follows a challenge when, contrary to the ancient Jewish practice of keeping children away from adults in discussion, certain parents brought their children to Jesus (cf. Stein 2008, 463). Consequently, though this does not occur in all instances, the failures of the disciples, at least in this division, are presented as part of a pattern of challenge—confusion—failure—correction—further lessons.

There are reasons to believe that this pattern has parallels with the maieutic educational philosophy of the ancient Greco-Roman world. As an educational process, maieusis is most commonly associated with and was popularized by Socrates (as portrayed in the earlier parts of Plato's *Dialogues* and *Thaet.* 148E-151D). However, precursors of the approach go back beyond his time and were also widespread in various adaptations in other non-Greek speaking cultures (cf. Scott 2002, 2; Vlastos 1982, 711-714; Vlastos 1994; Judson and Karasmanēs 2006, 88; Rorty 1998, 157-178). The maieutic educational process was underpinned by the two basic philosophical ideas of the *Elenchus* and *aporia*. Essentially meaning "refutation" or "testing", the aim of the *elenchus* was to challenge the pupil in an oppositional manner so as to demonstrate that their beliefs, either about themselves or others, were wrong, or at best inadequate. The process succeeded if the student is brought to the point of *aporia*, or confusion, characterized by a sense of failure, perplexity and even despondency. This leads the pupil to seek the more correct knowledge.

The concept of *elenchus* itself did not originate with Socrates but was commonly used in the Homeric literature to describe shame, humiliation or disgrace, especially that emanating from failure of valour in the battlefield (e.g. *Il.* XI.313-315; *Od.* XXI. 424-425). Indeed, regarding the Homeric literature, and according to Leshner, “In nineteen passages in which either the noun or the verb appears, the idea of the *elenchus* is consistently linked with a failure in a military or athletic mission or contest” (2002, 23). Outside the Homeric literature, *elenchus* was similarly used to describe disgrace by Hesiod (*Theogony* 26-27; *Theognis* 1011), Tyrtæus 6.9 and Pindar in the context of failure in athletic contest (*Pythian* XI.49; *Olympian* VIII.19). Similar phenomena have also been described in the training of rabbinic pupils, suggesting a possibly widespread conceptualization of “failure” as part of a positive educational development of pupils (cf. Neuser 1997).

Among contemporary classicists, there continues to be a debate as to whether the strategy of *elenchus* in Socrates was aimed at humiliation *per se*, or mere refutation of the pupil’s strongly or loosely held false beliefs (cf. Scott 2002, 2; Robinson 1971:19-20; Gotz 2000, 84-92; Gonzalez 1998). However, though it is probable that both humiliation and refutation were composite parts of the process, it must be remembered that these were not the final aims of the maieutic process. The eventual end point of the strategy of *elenchus* was to induce crisis so that the pupil, now brought to the state of *aporia*, would reject their falsely held beliefs and come to the knowledge of the truth. The teacher’s role was to guide the maieutic process to achieve these aims. At least, it enhanced the credentials of the teacher to have induced adequate enough challenge leading to the crisis of failure necessary for the learning cycle to be completed.

It is possible that a variation of this phenomenon may help explain the highlighted pattern of failure of the disciples in Mark’s Gospel. It is widely held by interpreters that the first readers of Mark were most probably Greco-Roman believers in Rome or its environs (cf. Stein 2008, 12; France 2002, 38; Lane 1974, 13; Donahue and Harrington 2002, 42; Iersel 1996, 244-263; Dowd and Malbon, 2006, 271-297; Beavis 1989). If this is correct, the likelihood is that the audience would have interpreted the failures of the disciples through this educational philosophy that grants some positive developmental

roles to failure. Even though Mark's overriding philosophical influence is derived from the Old Testament and Second Temple Judaism, this does not exclude the possibility of some Greco-Roman influence in his educational philosophy. At least, he would expect his Greco-Roman audience to have seen the failures of the disciples in the context of their formation. Moreover the failures of the disciples would have been interpreted as reflecting Jesus' credentials as a good trainer who brought His disciples to the point where failure was acknowledged and corrected (cf. Wink 1988, 277-290).

#### 4.2.6 Mark's Passion Narrative and the Formation of the Disciples

The passion narrative of Mk 14:1-16:8 is a self contained and well crafted literary unit (cf. Broadhead 1996, 3-28; Heil 1992, 331-358; Stein 2008, 628). The death of Jesus had been intimated as early as Mk 2:20, and predicted on several occasions during the journey section. Yet, the passion narrative proper begins with the plot by the Jewish leaders in collusion with Judas. This account is suitably sandwiched and contrasted with the extravagant act of love by the woman who anointed Jesus. Accordingly, the first episode of the Markan passion narrative introduces representatives of the main actants of the forthcoming drama.

Even though several questions are posed regarding the roles and actions of the disciples during the passion week, the main issue of relevance to the present project may be stated in this fashion—in what ways did Jesus' death and resurrection as described in Mark's Gospel contribute to the formation of His disciples as His agents?

Despite the vivid nature of the account, the number of explicit statements by Mark linking the formation of the disciples to Jesus' death and resurrection in Mark are limited. Yet, two important features of the passion narrative appear to provide the keys for answering the question at stake—(a) the manner in which the narrative contrasts Jesus with His disciples, and (b) Jesus' explanations of the significance of His death.

With regard to the first issue in which Jesus appears to be contrasted with the disciples, the narrative makes it plain that Jesus had pre-knowledge of the events which were to



occur in fulfilment of scripture and therefore, God's purposes (cf. Mk 14:21, 27). Thus despite the anguish and the apparent temptation, Jesus is faithful to His Father to the very end. On the other hand, the faithlessness and betrayal of the disciples is not only predicted but repeatedly underlined in contrast to Jesus' faithfulness. Furthermore, the disciples' λυπεῖσθαι (Mk 14:19; anguish and distress), as they are confronted with the prediction of their disloyalties is contrasted with Jesus' περίλυπός (Mk 14:34; deeply grieved) as He prays in submission to the Father's will. In the garden of Gethsemane, Jesus' persistence in prayer and watchfulness during the final hours of temptation, are clearly contrasted with the "fleshy weakness" and lack of vigilance of the disciples' (Mk 14:38). While Jesus faces the arresting band with dogged confidence and abandonment to God's will, the disciples on the other hand desert Jesus and flee from the scene (Mk 14:50) and Peter follows "at a distance" (Mk 14:54). Besides, Jesus' courageous and faithful witness before the Jewish authorities is sandwiched and contrasted with Peter's cowardice in denying knowledge of Jesus in the courtyard below (Mk 14:72).

The end result of such a complex interplay of prediction and fulfilment, together with contrast between Jesus and His disciples underline the fact that the failures of the disciples during Jesus' passion should never be seen in isolation but always in direct relation to the passion (cf. Stein 2008, 648; Huizenga 2008, 405-412; Strickert 1996, 416-420; Senior 1984; Brown 1985, 116-126; Nickelsburg 1980, 153-184; Culpepper 1978, 583-600). Accordingly, Mk 14:72 is crucial to the correct conceptualization of the formation of the disciples during the passion, "Then Peter *remembered* that Jesus had said to him, 'Before the cock crows twice, you will deny me three times.' *And he broke down and wept*". In a society in which honour and shame were the most cherished cultural values, Peter's (and the disciples') failure of valour under the challenging circumstances represented a catastrophic collapse in their discipleship to Jesus.

Yet, the prediction of the failures and the emphasis on their scriptural precedents (cf. Mk 14:18, 27) served the function of also inducing repentance in the disciples *after* their failure. The contrast with Jesus no doubt has the effect of literarily heightening the failures for Mark's first readers. Yet, it would also have been equally dramatic in inducing the repentance of Peter. The contrasts therefore illustrate the preparation of

the disciples to experience the redemption and the “ransom for the many” which the death and the resurrection represented. It could therefore be said, that Peter’s abysmal failure induced an *elenchus* crisis of shame and regret to the degree that only a direct encounter with the risen Jesus could redeem and restore. Accordingly, the contrasts indicate the role of the passion in inducing shame in the disciples, followed by their repentance and encounter with the resurrected Jesus.

The second key to establishing the role of the Passion on the formation of the disciples according to Mark is Jesus’ predictive promises in the narrative. The institution of the Lord’s Supper “on the night that He was betrayed” (1 Cor 11:23) is one such example. In so describing the bread as representing “the covenant, which is poured out for many” (Mk 14:24), not only did Jesus underline His death as a “ransom” for the many, but also as a new covenantal relationship with God through Himself.

A similar account of the function of the death and resurrection of Jesus in the formation of the disciples is provided by Jesus’ prediction of Peter’s denial in Mk 14:27-28. There, Jesus not only characterizes His disciples as sheep, and Himself as the Shepherd who would be “struck”, but only momentarily. Jesus also assures Peter that “after I am raised up, I will go before you to Galilee”. And after His resurrection, this promise is repeated by the man in the tomb to the women, “go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going ahead of you to Galilee; *there you will see him*, just as he told you” (Mk 16:7). Accordingly, the narrative of Mark focuses on the predictive promises of Jesus as an indication of the transformation of the disciples that would be induced by the Passion and resurrection (cf. Pickett 2005, 434-444; Cook 2004, 86-100; Bara 2003, 9-22; Bolt 2001, 1-17).

Mark’s account of the relationship of the formation of the disciples with the death and resurrection of Jesus nevertheless leaves a number of historical and theological questions unanswered. The debate regarding the “correct” ending of Mark itself possesses a scholarly life of its own (e.g. Thomas 1983, 407-419; Hester 1995, 61-86; Williams 1999, 21-35). If it is however taken that Mark’s Gospel ended at Mk 16:8, as most interpreters do believe; then there is no account of a post-resurrection encounter

between the disciples and Jesus. Though the reader is assured that Jesus had forgiven the disciples, through the prediction that Jesus would go before the disciples to Galilee and its repetition after the resurrection by the man in the empty tomb, Mark does not provide an account of post-resurrection encounter between the disciples and Jesus.

As a result, several questions are not explicitly answered. Was the promise of restoration fulfilled? Did the disciples experience the forgiveness and transformation that was to result from Jesus' death as the ransom for many? Was the gift of the μυστήριον completed, so that the incomprehension and miscomprehension of the disciples "cured", granting them the capability to interpret Jesus' words, symbols and actions in the correct manner? These questions, along with others are not explicitly answered by the abrupt nature of Mark's ending. However, there is adequate indication in Mark's account suggesting that the formation of the disciples received its completion through the redemption and restoration that Jesus' death secured.

#### 4.2.7 Summary and Conclusions: The Formation of the Disciples in Mark

Mark's project of setting forth "the beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God" entailed a detailed account of Jesus as the embodied Divine Council whose mission included the formation of the disciples as His agents. This chapter has shown that Jesus had a large followership, many of whom were transformed through their interactions with Him to fulfil discipleship functions. Of this large group, He called twelve, labelled by Mark as "the disciples", who were to keep His company and perhaps play leadership roles in the new community, even though this leadership function is not a major emphasis by the Evangelist. Because of their constant presence and active interactions with Jesus, description and analysis of the formation of the disciples as agents of Jesus provide significant insight into Christian origins.

In terms of the processes and outcomes of the formation of the disciples in Mark's Gospel, the account may be summarized as follows (table 4.13). The first phase of Jesus' mission in Galilee (Mk 1:16-3:12) emphasized the authority and power of God's reign which Jesus had inaugurated. Jesus exhibits the arrival of God's dominion through

His presence by performing several miracles, exorcisms and authoritative teachings. In this phase, the disciples follow, accompany, observe, learn and assist Jesus in this mission, and soon participate in His ἐξουσίαν by plucking the grain on the Sabbath.

Table 4.13 Summary of significant Events and Processes in Formation of the Disciples

Phase of Jesus' Ministry	Significant Events	Significant Processes
<b>Phase 1 Galilean Ministry</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Inauguration of Capernaum ministry</li> <li>2. The plucking of the grain on the Sabbath</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Revelation of Identity, authority and mission of Jesus</li> <li>2. Participation in Jesus' power and authority</li> </ol>
<b>Phase 2 Galilean Ministry</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The call of the twelve</li> <li>2. Teaching on parables</li> <li>3. First Gentile mission</li> <li>4. Calming of the sea</li> <li>5. Independent missions of the disciples</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Insiders receive gift of μυστηριον</li> <li>2. Revelation of Jesus divinity at sea</li> <li>3. Teaching on faith and appropriating Jesus power</li> </ol>
<b>Mixed Area Ministry</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Second and third Gentile missions</li> <li>2. Two feeding miracles</li> <li>3. Walking on Water</li> <li>4. Rebuke by Jesus</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Participation in the feeding miracles</li> <li>2. Failure during the second Gentile mission</li> <li>3. Rebuke for hardheartedness</li> </ol>
<b>On the Way to Jerusalem</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Confession of Peter</li> <li>2. Transfiguration</li> <li>3. Passion predictions</li> <li>4. Ethical lapses on the part of the disciples</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Revelation of Identity of Jesus</li> <li>2. Revelation on the unique mission of Jesus</li> <li>3. Rebukes and Correction on Ethical lapses</li> </ol>
<b>Ministry in Jerusalem</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The triumphal entry</li> <li>2. Cleansing the temple</li> <li>3. Eschatological Address</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Revelation of Jesus as the Messiah</li> <li>2. Several teachings, especially on faith</li> </ol>
<b>Passion of Jesus</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Anointing</li> <li>2. The Lord's Supper</li> <li>3. Death and Resurrection</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The desertion of the disciples</li> <li>2. The redemption of the disciples</li> </ol>

In the second phase of the Galilean ministry (Mk 3:13-6:13) the disciples progress further from being assistants and participants in Jesus' ministry to become independent partners, who are sent out to preach and exercise the dominion of God over evil forces. During this phase also, Jesus underlines the nature of His revelation as double edged—the same revelation reveals and yet at the same time conceals, depending on the faith of the recipient. In this regard, the disciples are gifted with the “μυστήριον of the kingdom of God” (Mk 4:11) the function of which was to enable them comprehend the revelation from Jesus. The third phase of Jesus' ministry (Mk 6:14-8:26) was dominated

by missions to Gentile territories, even though it also involved missions to purely Jewish territories. The three sea crossings provided an important backdrop in developing the disciples as agents of divine power and revelation, and in fulfilment of Isa 43. Also crucial to the formation of the disciples in this phase were their partnership with Jesus in the feeding miracles, and their failure of comprehension and execution of the power put to their disposal.

The particular emphases on Jesus' mission from Mk 8:27 changes, and so also the emphases on the formation of the disciples. The approaching death of Jesus becomes the focus, as well as the ethical demands of discipleship. So, the Jesus-disciples interactions in the final chapters of Mark are characterized by several failures of the disciples. The chapter has rejected the idea that Mark may have focused on these failures as part of his agenda of discrediting the disciples whom he opposed. Instead it has been proposed that the focus on the failures is part of Mark's program of presenting the disciple-making credentials of Jesus. Borrowing from the Greco-Roman concept of the *elenchus*, it has been suggested that the emphasis on the failures of the disciples should be seen as part of the successful program of forming disciples who would perpetuate His mission. And the examination of how the Passion and resurrection of Jesus impacted the formation of the disciples confirms this understanding of the failures of the disciples during the final weeks of His ministry.

Based on the above, three conclusions may be made regarding the formation of the disciples in Mark's Gospel. Firstly, though Mark does not directly label certain actants as disciples, their characterization and functions indicate that they fulfilled discipleship functions. These non-conventional disciples are no doubt distinguished from the conventional ones. However, rather than juxtaposing the two, Mark's account suggest that the two complement each other in providing a complete picture of the formation of the disciples. The conventional disciples were close companions of Jesus, but there is no evidence to support the view that they constituted a different category of discipleship from the non-conventional disciples. Indeed, given their failures in the final chapters of the Gospel, and the complementary roles played by a number of non-conventional disciples, the demarcation ought to be regarded with a degree of fluidity.

Secondly, it appears evident that there is a close association between the objectives of the formation of the disciples and the particular emphases on Jesus' mission. Thus whereas the first part of Mark's Gospel focuses on Jesus' mission to begin and extend the βασιλεια of God, the second part focuses on Jesus' death by which this βασιλεια is consummated. Similarly, whereas in the first part, the close association between Jesus and the disciples are emphasized, in the second part, there is distancing between Jesus and the disciples, so that only Jesus consummates the βασιλεια. The disciples nevertheless share in the life of the βασιλεια by following after Jesus.

Finally, it would appear that the formation of the disciples occurred in a reverse direction to how the formation of disciples may be approached post resurrection. The disciples who continued Jesus' mission after the resurrection straddled the two dispensations, on the one, before Jesus' death and the other related to Jesus' death. Thus the process of their formation appears to have occurred in a reverse manner as one would expect of a believer today. The disciples of Jesus begin by responding to a call, following, observing, learning, participating and partnering Jesus in His mission, Ethical issues are raised at the second stage of the progress, and constantly related to the death of Jesus. The death and resurrection finally follows which then serves as the means of the redemption of the disciple. This reverse direction of formation will need to be taken into consideration in any formulation of contemporary pastoral implications of the study.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **THE FORMATION OF THE DISCIPLES AS AGENTS OF THE EMBODIED DIVINE COUNCIL IN THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN**

“The modern student cannot but feel that to turn from the Synoptics to the Fourth Gospel is to breathe another atmosphere, to be transported to another world” (Jackson 1918, 80). With this important quote from Latimer Jackson, T W Manson justified his methodological choice of confining his examination of the teaching ministry of Jesus to the Synoptic Gospels (1955, 6). The clearly different literary, semantic and theological idioms of John’s Gospel were judged as insurmountable obstacles to the task of comprehensively describing and analysing the training of the disciples so as to help explain Christian origins. John’s Gospel, Manson concluded, was much better “set apart as a special and highly complex problem on its own account” (1955, 6).

It is fair to state that much of New Testament scholarship since the time of Jackson adopted not only the sentiment that he so eloquently articulates above, but also the resultant methodological approach which segregated John’s Gospel from making significant contributions to understanding Christian origins. This has regrettably led to what has been described by Anderson as the scholarly “de-Johannification of Jesus” (2007, 2)—a phenomenon whereby the portrait of Jesus and His ministry that is expounded by the scholarly guild is often unreflective of what is depicted in John’s Gospel. An attendant but similarly adverse consequence of this approach could be labelled as the “de-Johannification of the disciples of Jesus”. It is one of the basic tenets of this project that this dislocation of John’s Gospel from the Synoptics has disadvantaged the enterprise of comprehensively describing and analysing the formation of the disciples in its historical, theological and pastoral dimensions.

It must be acknowledged however, that there is a kernel of wisdom in Manson' stance. His instincts that the best methodological approach is to engage John's Gospel "on its own account", when taken as the starting point of the investigation of the formation of the disciples of Jesus, is much more preferable than an unnuanced study of parallel pericopae of the gospels. Such direct comparisons of passages without considering the nuances made by the individual Evangelists might prove premature and unlikely to yield a full understanding of the subject. At least an initial engagement of John's portrayal of the formation of the disciples of Jesus could have the potential of providing answers to some of the questions raised by Mark's account as noted in the previous chapter.

Indeed isolated studies of discipleship in John's Gospel, "on its own account", has already yielded significant insights. Perhaps spurred on by the plethora of studies on Markan discipleship from the early 1970s, Johannine scholarship has also examined several facets of discipleship as portrayed in John's Gospel. These facets include (a) delineating the Johannine conception of discipleship to Jesus (e.g. Moreno, 1971, 269-311; Schnackenburg 1968-1982: 3:203-217; de Jonge, 1977, 1-27; Collins 1990; du Rand 1991, 311-325; van der Merwe 1997, 339-359; Köstenberger 1998; van der Watt 2000; Chennattu 2006), (b) theories on the form, socio-historical background and dynamics of the "Johannine community" and ecclesiology (e.g. Dahl 1962, 124-142; Pancaro 1970, 114-129; Culpepper 1971; Meeks 1972, 44-72; Brown 1979; Martyn 1979; Giesbrecht 1986, 101-119; Rensberger 1989), and (c) the characterization of the Johannine disciples, including individual disciples (e.g. Siker-Gieseler 1980, 199-227; Culpepper 1983; Segovia 1985, 76-102; Bassler 1989, 635-646; Pazdan 1987:145-148; Eller 1987; Kurz 1989, 100-107; Whitters 1998, 422-427; Hillmer 1996, 77-97; Schneiders 2002, 189-209; Blaine 2007).

Unfortunately however, systematically focused analyses of the formation of the Johannine disciples are rare in the English Language literature. The few published works have tended to examine the formation of the Johannine disciples with the primary purpose of exploring the contours of Johannine characterization by itself (e.g. Culpepper 1983, 99-14; Koester 2003, 33-76; Blaine 2007) or establishing the social dynamics of the Johannine community (e.g. Segovia 1985, 76-102; Martyn 1979), rather



than seeking to illuminate Christian origins. In Fernando Segovia's (1985, 76-102) contribution for example, he concludes that the apparent contrast that the Gospel makes between the disciples of Jesus and His detractors, followed in the farewell discourse by the emphasis on love and peace among the disciples, was a projection from "a Christian community or group of communities engaged in a process of self-definition and self-assertion over against a much larger Jewish world" (1985, 91). Such a conclusion does not however fit the literary genre of the Gospel as the *bioi* of Jesus (cf. Stein 2008; Burridge 1998; 2005, Hengel 2000; Blomberg 2001; Keener 2003; Bauckham 2007). Furthermore, how the clearly "controversial" ministry of Jesus, especially in Judea, influenced the formation and internal dynamics of these "communities" during Jesus' time and the likelihood that the Evangelist may well be reflecting these historical realities in his emphases appear not to have been a serious consideration in Segovia's otherwise helpful analysis of the passages. Accordingly, a lacuna in the examination of the formation of the Johannine disciples exists, which the present chapter hopes to help plug.

There are at least four other reasons why it may be safely assumed that John's Gospel has significant contributions to make to the overall conceptualization of the formation of the disciples of Jesus. Firstly, John's Gospel makes more references to disciples than any other Gospel. The term μαθητῶν occurs seventy-eight times in John's Gospel, compared with the forty six times in Mark, seventy-three times in Matthew, and thirty-seven times in Luke. The Johannine narrative therefore holds the potential for making some contribution to the enterprise.

Secondly, in addition to the Galilean ministry, John describes missions of Jesus to Judea and Samaria at which several interactions relevant to the conceptualization of the formation of the disciples are recounted. A study of these interactions is therefore likely to widen the understanding of Jesus' formational activities generated from the Synoptics and relevant to understanding Christian origins as a whole. Thirdly, and as will shortly become apparent, Johannine characterization is much more complex and multi-dimensional than that of Mark. Thus one may rightly assume that examination of the Jesus-disciples interactions in John's Gospel will yield significant additional insights on

the formation of the disciples. Finally, the Evangelist makes the claim of being an eyewitness of at least some of the events which he records (Jn 19:35; 21:24). It is therefore reasonable to also assume that significant aspects of the emotional exchange involved in the Jesus-disciples interactions, and which an eyewitness would be more adept in depicting, would be conveyed by the Johannine account. Such a perspective is likely to enhance the portrait of the Jesus-disciples interactions generated from the Synoptics.

It is with these and other reasons in mind that the present chapter approaches the study of John's Gospel. The objective here is similar to that of the previous chapter—to describe and analyze the formation of the disciples as portrayed in John's Gospel in a manner that will help shed light on Christian origins. With regard to the structure of the Jesus-disciples relationship in John's Gospel, the examination of the first Jesus-disciples interaction in John in chapter three (§ 3.3.4) indicated that “agents of the embodied Divine Council” is the best descriptor for the Johannine disciple. Jesus is portrayed as the embodied Λόγος, Σοφία and Νόμος, and the disciples are recruited as His apprentice agents. With regard to the projected outcome(s) of the formation, the key emphasis in Jn 1:35-51 was μαρτυρίαν (witness), a function vividly played by the Baptist as prototype disciple, and some of the first disciples of Jesus (Jn 1:7-8, 19-20, 32, 36, 40-42, 45-46). It was also indicated in chapter three (§ 3.3.4) that this function of witnessing is further elaborated as confessing, harvesting and bearing fruit. With regard to the process of formation, this may be summarized under the twofold rubric of receiving (or believing) divine revelation (indicated by the metaphors of sight and hearing) and experiencing divine hospitality (indicated by the metaphor of dwelling).

This chapter will examine how these dimensions of formation of the disciples are further elaborated in the rest of John's Gospel. In the first of three sections, the main actants in John's Gospel who may be regarded as Johannine disciples will be identified and characterized. The second section will examine how the interactions between Jesus and one of the prominent non-conventional disciples in John's Gospel sheds light on Johannine conception of formation of disciples and of Christian origins in general. The third section will examine the formation of the conventional disciples.

## 5.1 Who is a Disciple of Jesus in John's Gospel?

Unlike Mark's Gospel, John uses the term "disciple" much more freely, referring for example to "disciples" of the Baptist (Jn 1:35; 3:25) and of Moses (Jn 9:28). That some in the first century could claim that they were "disciples" of Moses suggests a conception of discipleship which appears to be less tight than in the Synoptic Gospels. Moreover, with regard to the followers of Jesus, John explicitly uses the term "disciple" in four different scenarios—(a) for the conventional disciples (e.g. Jn 2:2), (b) for named and anonymous characters not within the inner core of Jesus' group but who nevertheless perform discipleship functions (e.g. Jn 19:38-39), (c) as a general term for people who believed on Jesus and "continue in my word" (Jn 8:31) and (d) for some members of the ὄχλος (crowd), a wider group of followers who believed on Jesus, but whose allegiance to Jesus was not certain and some of whom murmured when they did not understand Jesus' teaching and eventually deserted Him (Jn 6:61-66).

From the above list, it would appear that some nominal followers of Jesus are described as disciples, while allowing for several different degrees of spiritual and emotional commitment to Jesus. Such a wide spectrum in the use of the term no doubt creates some difficulties to the project at hand. Careful attention must therefore be paid to the manner in which each group or individual person is characterized before any conclusions are made regarding their discipleship to Jesus. Accordingly, the distinctive theoretical attributes of Johannine characterization need summarizing before investigating the characterization of the specific Johannine actants.

### 5.1.1 Distinctive Attributes of Johannine Characterization and Characters

Bal's observation that "No one has yet succeeded in constructing a complete and coherent theory of character" (1985, 80), although was made more than two decades ago, is nevertheless still true of John's Gospel in particular. Indeed, a comprehensive theory of how John characterizes the actants in the narrative is still awaited. Johannine scholarship however owes Alan Culpepper an enormous debt of gratitude for pioneering the move to bring some of the insights from the discussions on the theory of

characterization from Literary Criticism to bear on the study of John's Gospel (1983, 99-148). Culpepper himself is heavily reliant on the work of E M Forster (1927) which categorized characters in a novel into "round" and "flat" kinds, depending on their technical functions in the narrative. Flat characters are defined as static, do not change much throughout the narrative and constitute types embodying a single idea or quality. On the other hand, "round" characters change and are "complex in temperament and motivation" (1927, 73).

Building on this foundation, Culpepper argued that most of the Johannine characters, apart from Jesus, fall into the sub-category of "flat" characters described as *ficelles*—i.e. "typical characters easily recognizable by the readers. They exist to serve specific plot function, often revealing the protagonist and may carry a great deal of representative or symbolic value" (1983, 104; cf. du Rand 1985, 18-36). As *ficelles*, the particular individuality of the Johannine characters are solely determined by their responses on encountering Jesus, the protagonist. In this regard, the characters are often employed by the Evangelist as foils for revealing the Person of Jesus and the varieties of responses to Him.

With this setting in mind, Culpepper developed a taxonomy of seven different character types in John's Gospel, representing a continuum of responses to Jesus "which exemplify misunderstandings the reader may share and responses one might make to the depiction of Jesus in the Gospel" (1983, 104)<sup>42</sup>. This classification implies that judging whether an actant in John's Gospel is characterized as a "disciple" must be done with care and attention to the potential complexity of the responses they make to

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<sup>42</sup> Johannine characters, in Culpepper's classification, (a) may be unreceptive to, or flatly reject Jesus, or (b) may secretly accept Jesus without making any open commitment (e.g. Jn 12:42-43, 19:38-40), or (c) may accept Jesus as a worker of miracles and yet Jesus did not trust their belief (e.g. Jn 2:23-25, 6:66, 9:22-23), or (d) may understand and so believe in Jesus' words (e.g. Jn 4:39), or (e) may believe and openly commit themselves to Jesus despite continued misunderstandings (e.g. Jn 2:11; 16:30-31), or (f) may be a paradigmatic or "ideal" disciple who believes, abides, perceives and bears witness to Jesus—i.e. the Beloved Disciple (e.g. Jn 20:20, 21:24) or (g) may believe and commit to Jesus but subsequently defect by leaving the fellowship (e.g. Jn 6:70; Culpepper 1983, 145-148).

Jesus. Certainly, the responses to Jesus in John's Gospel is much more nuanced than Brown's twofold "belief" versus "unbelief" classification (1970, 197); or Staley's "with Jesus" versus "against Jesus" categorization of the Johannine characters (1988, 106). Based on Culpepper's classification, allowance must also be made for some characters developing further in their faith and commitment to Jesus even if the narrative does not explicitly proceed to chart their subsequent responses to Jesus.

Unsurprisingly therefore, Culpepper's contribution has exerted significant influence in Johannine studies of recent years (e.g. Conway 1999; Tolmie 1998, 57-75; Petersen 1993; Thompson 1993, 177-204; Stibbe 1992; Beck 1993, 143-158). The idea that Johannine characters were meant to be representative types has also been taken up and developed in Koester's seminal work, *Symbolism in the Fourth Gospel*, in which he argues that some of the characters are presented by the Evangelist as symbolic representative figures (2003, 33-76). Nicodemus is for example regarded as representative of people who believed in Jesus because of the signs as well as "humanity estranged from God" (2003, 46; cf. Rensberger 1988, 41-55). Similarly, the man born blind is presented as symbolic of "Christians living at the time the Gospel was written" and at another level, representing humankind in general (2003, 63-64).

A variant of this approach to characterization in the Gospel of John, which albeit did not depend on Culpepper's insights, was Brown's (1979) reconstruction of the membership of the putative "Johannine community" by regarding the Johannine characters as representative types of the constituent sub-groups within the community. There are good reasons to question this conclusion which is quite circular in its methodology. Even so, it is apparent that by focusing on key features of the characterization of actants in the narrative, interpreters have been able to draw out some of the literary and rhetorical designs of the Gospel aimed at serving its evangelistic and pedagogical intentions.

Despite the elegance of Culpepper's contribution, a number of elements in his approach limit their full application to the project at hand. Firstly, and as Culpepper himself acknowledges (1983, 105-106), his aim was to treat the Gospel at a purely literary level

without considering the historical issues at the background of the narrative. Given the genre of the Gospel however, literary and rhetorical effect would hardly have been the Evangelist's sole motivation for characterizing the actants in the Gospel (cf. Shiner 1995, 3; Merenlahti and Hakola 1999, 13-48; Rhoads and Syreeni 1999, 268; Stibbe 1992, 76). Characterization in a text such as the Gospel of John is both mimetic (it is meant to represent real historical persons), as well as textual (it aims to reveal information for the benefit of the reader). To minimize or even neglect the mimetic functions of characterization in the Gospel of John, as Culpepper appears to have done, results in inadequate appreciation of the author's communication (cf. Rashkow 1993, 106). Accordingly application of Culpepper's insights to the project at hand must be refined by taking serious account of the socio-historical events and circumstances that the narrative was aimed at representing.

Secondly, and following on from the first, though John may well have had a stereotypical manner of characterizing the actants, Culpepper's typology of responses to Jesus can only be taken to a certain limited extent. Specifically, it must be borne in mind that in recounting eyewitness experiences, the Evangelist was not as constrained to portray characters as "ethical" types as much as individuals and personalities who interacted with Jesus. Indeed, contrary to Culpepper's maxim that most Johannine characters act as *ficelles* in the narrative, Bennema has recently demonstrated that most of the Johannine actants are actually "round" characters with individual features resembling historical personalities (Bennema 2009, 401; cf. Stibbe 1992, 67). Even if Bennema has overstated the situation in the Gospel, his intervention nevertheless counterbalances a categorical identification of most Johannine characters as *ficelles*.

A number of interpreters have also questioned Culpepper's reliance on Forster's foundational classification of characters, given that it was strongly disputed among literary theorists of the time and in anycase applied to novels and not other dissimilar literary genres (e.g. Beck 1997, 6; Stibbe 1992, 68). Allowance must be made for the likelihood that some Johannine characters and in certain points of the Gospel, are presented as "flat" characters; for, the narrator may well have deployed contemporary "ethical" typology in his account for literary and dramatic effect. On the whole, however,

the depiction of the Jesus-disciple interaction should be taken on their individual merits with attention to the likelihood of different combinations of “flat” as well as “round” features. Another implication of such a refinement for the project at hand is that even though attempts at psychologically analyzing the Johannine characters are fraught with dangers and must be resisted as much as possible, the Evangelists’ own points of view must be taken as guide in evaluating the speeches and actions of the characters as they interact with Jesus.

Thirdly, even though Culpepper acknowledges influences of Hebrew models of characterization in John’s Gospel, most of his foundational assumptions were heavily indebted to Greco-Roman models, in which, unlike the Hebrew models, characters are in a static state of being (1983, 103 cf. Scholes and Kellog 1966, 123). Such an approach does not consider characters as undergoing a process of change during the narrative. Yet, and as will become evident in the next section, several characters in John’s Gospel are depicted as undergoing changes. A number of recent authors have therefore emphasized that characterization in John is much more akin to the Hebrew model than the Greek model (e.g. Staley 1991, 55-80; Bennema 2009, 389; Stibbe 1992, 24; Berlin 1983, 23-32; Beck 1997; Darr 1992). Certainly there is more influence of the Hebrew model of characterization in John’s Gospel than Culpepper assumed. The implications of this to the project at hand is that rather than regarding characters as static personalities, the reader must make allowance for the likelihood that characters become transformed through their repeated interactions with Jesus. Such transformation may not always be positive, and in some cases, the encounters result in the hardening of their opposing positions, which as will become clear, the Evangelist regards as evidence of the judgment which Jesus brought to the unbelieving world.

Two further attributes regarding Johannine characterization need to be noted before proceeding to identify the characters. Firstly, unlike Greek narratives in general, and to some extent Hebrew narratives, many of the anonymous characters in John’s Gospel are significant (cf. Beck 1997, 9-35; Staley 1991, 58). Not only are they given disproportionately more space by the narrator, they also function in positive manner in depicting the nature of discipleship to Jesus. Rather than creating distance between the

reader and the character, as some anonymous characters in the Old Testament appear to do (cf. Reinhartz 1993, 117-142), a number of Johannine anonymous characters are more closely identifiable with the reader. Careful attention must therefore be paid to the narrative function of the characterization of these anonymous characters.

Secondly, on several occasions, John's writer uses ambiguity in characterization as a communicative strategy in order to draw the reader into taking part in completing the characterization through the reader's evaluative processes. Though this phenomenon also occurs with the other Gospels, it is much more heightened in John's Gospel, which does not give the reader ample room to be an objective "bystander" (cf. Beck 1997, 3). Characters in John's Gospel may be evaluated differently depending on the reader's own responses to the central character, Jesus. In so doing the Gospel also acts as a means of dynamic revelation to the reader, designed to bring the reader to faith (Jn 20:31; cf. O'Day 1986, 95). The process of constructing a Johannine character is therefore much more complex and is influenced by the reader's presuppositions. The focus of the examination that follows is however aimed at identifying the shape of the earliest foundational community of the Christian movement and the nature and consequences of their interactions with Jesus. Accordingly, whereas the effects of my personal reading stance cannot be denied, its influence on the eventual conclusions is most likely limited.

With regard to the Johannine characters themselves, Appendix C identifies the actants in each pericope of the Gospel. The prominent characters of John's Gospel may be conveniently organized into seven groups—(a) the conventional disciples (i.e. members of "the twelve"), (b) the non-conventional disciples who are explicitly identified by John (e.g., Joseph of Arimathea), (c) non-conventional disciples who are not explicitly identified as disciples but who nevertheless are characterized as disciples (e.g., the Samaritan woman and the blind man), (d) members of Jesus' family, (e) the opponents of Jesus (consisting of "the Jews", the Pharisees, the chief priests, temple police, soldiers and Roman authorities), (f) the crowd (a rather complex group of people sometimes depicted negatively, but other times, positively or in neutral indecisive states with regard to Jesus) and (g) a miscellaneous group of actants who are ambiguously



characterized (e.g., the lame man of Jn 5, the blind man's parents, and Malchus). As I now demonstrate, there are reasons to believe that Jesus made disciples from among each of these sub-groups of characters.

### 5.1.2 The Characterization of the Conventional Disciples in John's Gospel

The conventional disciples of Jesus are identified as “disciples” on some occasions, especially when “disciples” is accompanied by αὐτοῦ <sup>43</sup> (either as “the disciples” or “His disciples”<sup>44</sup>), and on a few others, as “the twelve” (Jn 6:67, 6:71; 20:24; cf. Schnackenburg 1966-1970, 3.207-8; Quast 1989, 23). On a number of occasions, and as in Mark's Gospel, John focuses on sub-groups of the twelve rather than the whole group (e.g. Jn 21:1-3). No disciple of Jesus is however identified by John as an apostle. Instead, John's gospel uses cognates of the word ἀποστόλοις (apostle) to designate the functions of the disciples. In John 4:38 for example, Jesus tells His disciples, “I sent (ἀπέστειλα) you to reap”. In Jn 20:21, this sending motif is paralleled with Jesus' mission in the world—“As the Father has sent me, I am sending you” (Jn 20:21).

Hence like Mark, John also regarded apostleship as functional, and certainly not of a different category of discipleship. He also appears to hold an egalitarian view of the inner circle of Jesus' group of followers, preferring to describe all of the followers as “disciples”, while also noting Jesus' special choice of “the twelve” (Jn 6:70). Accordingly, even though John does not use the phrase “the twelve” that often, the following discussion will employ that term as coterminous with the conventional disciples and so distinguish them from the other disciples of Jesus in the Gospel.

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<sup>43</sup> Jn 6:22, 24, 9:2; 11:7, 8, 54; 12:4, 16; 13:5, 22, 23; 16:17, 29; 18:1, 2; 20:18, 19; 20:25, 26.

<sup>44</sup> Because of the fluidity with which John uses the term, it is difficult to be absolutely certain when John is using “His disciples” for only the conventional disciples. The following passages may refer to the conventional disciples with or without other disciples—Jn 2:2, 11, 12, 17, 22; 3:22; 4:2, 8, 31; 6:3, 8, 12, 16, 22, 24; 9:2; 11:7, 8, 12, 54; 12:4, 16; 13:23; 16:17, 29; 18:1, 2, 19, 25; 20:26, 20:30; 21:2, 14. The phrase “the disciples” is used in Jn 4:33; 6:11; 13:5; 13:22; 20:10, 18, 19, 20; 21:1, 4, 12.

### 5.1.2.1 *The Characterization of “the Twelve” in John’s Gospel*

Even though the Gospel of John makes reference to them on four occasions (Jn 6:67; 6:70; 6:71; 20:24), thus recognizing their historicity, it does not contain a formal list of “the twelve” comparable to what is found in the Synoptics. In addition to the named four of the five disciples in the first chapter (Peter, Andrew, Philip and Nathanael<sup>45</sup>), Thomas is also explicitly identified as “one of the twelve” (Jn 20:24). Judas is identified as one of Jesus’ disciples (Jn 12:4; 13:2, 26; 18:2) and also as one of the twelve (Jn 6:71), and the one who kept the common purse of the group (Jn 12:6; 13:29). Judas (not the Iscariot, Jn 14:22; cf. Lk 6:16, Acts 1:13) is named in a manner suggesting the first readers’ familiarity with him as a member of the twelve. It is also likely that if the list in Jn 20:21 refers to some of the members of “the twelve”, then the sons of Zebedee were also regarded by John as members of the group. If as we have argued in chapter three (§ 3.3.3.3), the anonymous disciple of John 1 is most likely the Beloved Disciple, and the same as John the son of Zebedee, John’s Gospel provides information on nine of “the twelve”.

This non-synoptic-like approach to identifying the twelve in John’s Gospel has not escaped the attention of interpreters, some of whom have offered varying explanations. So, even though he does not elaborate, Barrett is of the view that John “probably had a non-synoptic list of the Twelve” (1978b, 465). Collins goes further to suggest that “the twelve” “represent a group among Jewish Christians” (1990, 81) whom John negatively characterizes in comparison to how they are viewed in the Synoptics. In John’s Gospel, Collins surmises, “the corporate faith of the twelve is somehow inadequate” (1990, 83). Wolfgang Bauder on the other hand thinks that John uses the term “the twelve” for purely technical theological and symbolic reasons, without an implicit commentary on their competence or faith (1976, 480-494). On the other hand, though he does not offer

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<sup>45</sup> It is assumed that Nathanael was the same as James the son of Alphaeus (cf. Hill 1997, 45-61) or Bartholomew (cf. Westcott 1954, 26; Schnackenburg 1982, 1.314); in either of which case he must be regarded as one of the twelve. Suggestions that he could be Matthew as proposed by Bultmann (1971, 103 n.4), by virtue of the fact that both names have similar meanings (gift of God/Yahweh) though interesting, are unlikely.

a plausible reason, Hillmer concludes that John “shows little interest in “the Twelve” as a group” (1996, 79; cf. Meier 1997, 652).

Such conclusions however appear to read too much into the paucity of references to “the twelve” in John. If, as it is apparent, “the twelve” was known to John’s first readers, and the Evangelist writes on his own authority as an eyewitness, a formal list of “the twelve” would not have been necessary for endorsing his eyewitness testimony as the list appears to function in Mark’s Gospel (cf. Bauckham 2006, 96; Shiner 1995).

The uses of the term “the twelve” itself occur within two pericopae. The first pericope describes the desertion of large numbers of disciples, at which Peter pledges allegiance to Jesus on behalf of the twelve (Jn 6:67-71). The second occurrence incidentally identifies Thomas as “one of the twelve” (Jn 20:24). Given the context of Jesus’ heated debates with “the Jews” in Jn 5 and 6, it appears that the thrice repeated identification of the twelve in Jn 6 is meant to contrast “the twelve” with “the Jews” who resist, reject and defect from Jesus. If that is the case, and a number of interpreters believe this is so (e.g. Köstenberger 1998, 147; Bauder 1976, 489), then like Mark’s Gospel, John also regarded “the twelve” as the seed representatives of the eschatological Messianic community. Certainly, the portrayal of “the twelve” in John 6 is one of positive allegiance and commitment to Jesus, despite the warning of Judas’ impending disloyalty.

Furthermore, what may also be confidently concluded is that John appears to be much more interested in characterizing several members of the twelve, rather than the group as an entity (contra Haenchen 1984, 224). This is unlike Mark’s Gospel in which Peter is dominant and “the three” and “the four” are mentioned on isolated occasions. This distinctive feature of John’s Gospel has led Malina to place the Johannine community in the sociological category of weak group/low grid quadrant of his social-scientific classification of ancient communities (1985, 9). The significance of Malina’s classification may be debated; but for the present purposes, the focus on several of the individual members of “the twelve” offers further opportunity to examine the formation of a number of individual conventional disciples. The more likely historical scenario would have been that Jesus related to “the twelve” (and other disciples for that matter) on such

an individual “one-on-one” basis that they each had “significant moments” in their interactions with Jesus. John’s Gospel therefore presents an equally plausible depiction of the individuality of the formations of the disciples.

#### *5.1.2.2 The Functions of the Disciples in John’s Gospel*

To be able to identify the projected outcomes for the formation of the Johannine disciples, a search through the Gospel for all the activities that the disciples are involved in or predicted or instructed to be involved in, was conducted and the data analyzed. At this stage the distinction between the pre-Easter functions and post-Easter functions were not made. The most prominent observation from the exercise was that a distinctive feature of the functions of the Johannine disciples is presented through the prism of the Gospel’s overall theology of revelation. Indeed, functions related to performing miraculous works are interpreted as serving to reveal the Person and glory of Jesus (Jn 14:12-13).

Furthermore, in John, Jesus is *the* Light of the world (Jn 8:12, 9:5); but the Baptist is also a “burning and shining light” (Jn 5:35) and the disciples are “children of light” (Jn 12:36)<sup>46</sup>. The disciples in John share in the glory which the Father has given to Jesus (Jn 17:22). Just as Jesus’ death is expressed in revelatory terms, as the glorification of the Father and the Son of Man whom He sent, so also are specific activities performed by the disciples, especially when they are focused on the death of Jesus, deemed as revelatory. This is akin to the revelatory activities performed by prophets (cf. Buss 1981, 9-30). In John, revelatory activities include witnessing (e.g. Jn 4:39), giving testimonies (e.g. Jn 1:29-36), interpreting Jesus’ words, symbols and signs (Jn 16:13), loving one another (Jn 13:35; 15:15-17) and martyrdom (Jn 11:16; 21:19). In addition, certain actions of disciples are directed at assisting Jesus in His mission (e.g. buying food for Him 4:8; hosting Him 12:2 and anointing Him 12:3).

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<sup>46</sup> The Jews regarded the various agents of God as “lights” or “lamps” (Moses—2 Bar 18:1-2; *Memar Marqah* 1:2, 5:3-4, 6:2; Aaron—Sir 45:17; Samuel—*Biblical Ant.* 51:6; Ezra—4 Ezra 12:42; Priests and Sages—*Biblical Ant.* 23:7, Sir 24:32; 1QSb IV 27; 1QH IV 27; and Rom 2:19.

In terms of being agents of revelation, the most important function of the Johannine disciple is to be a witness. In the context of the lawsuit motif of John's Gospel, in which the embodied Divine Council is depicted as conducting a lawsuit against the world, the disciples act as one of the prime witnesses, alongside the Baptist, the Scriptures, Jesus' works and words, the Father and the Holy Spirit (cf. Trites 1977, 79; Lincoln 2000; Lincoln 2002, 3-26). The witness function of the disciples is indicated by the Johannine emphases on "seeing", "hearing", "remembering" and "confessing". John highlights the "seeing" of signs performed by Jesus as fundamental to the formation and subsequent functions of the disciples (e.g. Jn 2: 11; 20:30). The disciples are also promised "seeing" of apocalyptic or eschatological nature (e.g. Jn 1:50; 3:3; 12:21; 17:24). In seeing Jesus for example, the disciples also "see" the Father (e.g. Jn 14:7), thus being exposed to such an apocalyptic vision. Similarly, the blind man "sees" the Son of Man (Jn 9:37). Words for revelation are also emphasized in relation to the resurrection (e.g. Jn 19:35; 20:1; 5-9).

In addition, the disciples observe the actions of Jesus and hear His words as He continually explains and teaches them (e.g. Jn 4:42; 13:1-13). Of note is the Voice from heaven (Jn 12:28-30) reaffirming Jesus' impending glorification. There is also a repeated emphasis in John's Gospel on the memory of the disciples (e.g. Jn 2:17; 22; 12:16; 13:7; 15:19-20; 16:4). John consistently links this memory function with Scripture (e.g. Jn 2:17-22; 20:9) so that the Scriptures, as co-witnesses with the disciples, collaborate in their witness function (cf. Maccini 1996, 245-246; Vanhoozer 1995, 366-387). Similarly, it is promised that the Holy Spirit, also a Co-witness, will help in this memory as the disciples bear witness under His influence (Jn 15:26-27).

Further details of how the disciples were formed into eyewitnesses will be discussed in the third section of the present chapter. However, not all interpreters accept that the emphases on eyewitness functions of the disciples should necessarily be understood in literal terms. Lincoln for example argues that much of the terminology for "seeing" and "testifying" in the Gospel is metaphorical and hence the witness language in John is largely a literary device to fit in with the author's theological strategy of elaborating the

lawsuit motif. In his view therefore, “the attribution [of the Gospel] to the Beloved Disciple's witness has to be seen as a fiction” (2002, 4).

Lincoln is partly correct in stating that some of the references to “seeing” in John’s Gospel need not be taken literally (e.g. Jn 1:7-8, 9:39). However, it must be countered, that John’s language is often delivered in a *double entendre* style and therefore should also not be radically dichotomized into a literal versus metaphorical distinction (cf. van der Watt 2005, 45-48). In John, mere physical sight, though critical; did not necessarily make one a competent eyewitness. A correct interpretation of the object of sight through faith was necessary to turn the physical sight into a spiritual revelation. Indeed, for some characters (e.g. the Pharisees in Jn 9:39-41), because of the lack of faith in interpreting what was seen, the physical sight leads to spiritual blindness. As will shortly be noted while discussing the role of the Johannine signs with regard to faith, physical sight is not dismissed by John as irrelevant. Yet, without the correct interpretation and the faith response from the observer, physical sight was in itself insufficient. Thus the disciples serve as eyewitnesses of Jesus, not only because they literally saw Jesus’ signs; but, more importantly, they correctly interpreted what they saw in the light of God’s revelation and believed in Jesus (Jn 20:30). The claim that the disciples in John’s Gospel serve as eyewitnesses is therefore both a historical as well as theological statement (cf. Ricoeur 1980, 130-142; Byrskog 2000; Bauckham 2007, 105). The two cannot be separated as Lincoln seeks to do.

The actions of the Johannine disciples may also be categorized in three—those directed towards Jesus in facilitating His mission (Jn 4:8; 11:2; 12:2; 3:26; 19:26-27), those directed towards others in bringing them to Jesus (Jn 1:42; 1:45; 4:42) and future predicted functions (Jn 14:12; cf. Köstenberger 1995, 36-45). Of particular emphasis in John is the discipleship function of bearing fruit or reaping (Jn 4:38). Furthermore, John stresses an additional dimension to the actions of disciples (compared to that in Mark’s Gospel) in terms of community formation—the Johannine disciples are to love (Jn 13:14) and receive one another (Jn 13:20).

Unlike Mark's Gospel, the disciples in John, like John's Jesus, do not perform or attempt performing any exorcism. Furthermore, though the disciples in John are promised greater "works" (Jn 14:12) and included in sharing Jesus' "work" (Jn 9:4), they do not independently perform or attempt performing any "signs". As defined by Köstenberger, a sign in John's Gospel is "a symbol-laden, but not necessarily 'miraculous', public work of Jesus selected and explicitly identified as such by John for the reason that it displays God's glory in Jesus, who is thus shown to be God's true representative, even the Messiah" (1998b, 63). In this sense therefore, the disciples cannot have been expected to perform any signs in John's Gospel. On the other hand Köstenberger defines "works" as a broader term encompassing signs and words related to God's activity in and through Jesus and His followers (1998b, 73). It is at least promised that the disciples would share in the works of Jesus.

Table 5.1 Parallels between the Functions of Jesus and of the Disciples in John

Comparable Functions of Jesus in John	Functions of Disciples in John
Jesus is the Father's Agent (5:17; 19:30)	Disciples are Jesus' Agents (4:38; 12:26; 17:18; 20:21)
Jesus testifies (4:42; 8:18)	Disciples testify (4:42; 19:35)
Jesus does the Father's works (9:4)	Disciples share in the Father's work (9:4)
Jesus is sanctified and sent by the Father (10:35-36)	Disciples are sanctified and sent (17:17-19)
Disciples repeat Jesus' example (13:15)	Disciples repeat Jesus' example (13:15)
Jesus bears fruit (17:5-8)	Disciples bear fruit (15:1-2)
Jesus does the Father's will (4:34)	Disciples do Jesus' will (15:13-15)
Jesus was persecuted (15:19-20)	Disciples are going to be persecuted (15:19-20)
	Disciples baptize (4:2)

Despite the limited emphases on performing miraculous works, and just as in Mark, the Gospel of John portrays the disciples as agents of Jesus. And their functions are depicted in parallel with those of Jesus in an imitative manner. In other words, Johannine discipleship is in a number of respects depicted as a reflected Johannine Christology. Several images employed to depict Jesus in John are also reflected unto the Johannine disciples. Even images that are related to Jesus' divine origins, such as sonship (e.g. Jn 1:12 vs. 1:14), holiness (Jn 6:69; 10:36 vs. 17:17-19; cf. Bauckham 2007, 253-269) and light (Jn 8:12, 9:5 vs. 12:36) are transferred from Jesus to the disciples in such a manner as to underline Johannine discipleship as a reflected

Johannine Christology (cf. Zimmermann 2006, 40-41). Jesus' apostolic function as the One sent by the Father is similarly reflected unto the disciples as agents "sent" by Him (Jn 13:16; 20:21). In addition, receiving the disciple as an agent of Jesus is equivalent to receiving Jesus (Jn 13:20). The disciples also share in the work and aspects of Jesus' mission (Jn 9:4; 14:12).

Remarkably, Jesus' power to forgive sin is also reflected unto the Spirit endowed disciples as agents of God's forgiveness (Jn 20:23). In fact, in John 7:37-39, there is an ambiguous combination of Christology with discipleship, so that both Jesus and the disciple are said to be *the* source from whom will "flow rivers of living water" (cf. Marcus 1998, 328-330; Cortés 1967, 75-86; Daise 2003, 687-699). Given John's theology of the union or oneness of the disciple with Jesus (Jn 15), this apparent blending of Christology with Discipleship is not at all out of place (cf. Borgen 2000, 83-95). Consequently, the Markan phenomenon whereby the functions of the disciples are paralleled with that of Jesus in a mimetic fashion is also evident in John's Gospel. Moreover, in John, this mimesis is underpinned by a consistent and explicit theology of the union of the disciple with Jesus.

### *5.1.2.3 The Emotional Exchanges in the Formation of the Johannine Disciples*

Another feature of the Gospel of John is that it highlights the emotional factor in the interactions between Jesus and the disciples, and with one another. Like Mark, the disciples in John also exist in the constant presence of Jesus. However, John underlines from the beginning how the first disciples experienced Jesus' hospitality when they went to Jesus' home and stayed overnight (Jn 1:39). By making Jesus' hospitality prominent from the beginning, John sets an agenda of portraying the theology of divine hospitality through Jesus' actions and statements right through the Gospel. Jesus' close and deep friendship with the Bethany family (Jn 11:36), the emotional exchange with the Beloved disciple (Jn 13:23) and Peter (Jn 6:68; 13:9; 21:15-17) and the whole emotional tone of the "Farewell discourse" also illustrate the pervasiveness of the emotional factor in their formation (e.g. Jn 13:1). Such an



emphasis should be expected from an eyewitness account as John's Gospel is and from a clearly perceptive author as its writer.

Furthermore, John also highlights several positive inter-disciple interactions—e.g. the evangelistic efforts of Andrew and Philip in Jn 1:40-47, the co-operation between Philip and Andrew (Jn 12:21-22), Thomas' exhortation of his colleagues to commit themselves to martyrdom and share in Jesus' death (Jn 11:16), the interesting interactions between Peter and the Beloved disciple in Jn 13:23-24 and 20:4, the co-operation between Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus in organizing Jesus' burial (Jn 19:38-42), the discipleship community's efforts to restore faithless Thomas (20:24-25) and the close relationship of the disciples with post-Easter Peter (Jn 21:3). In this respect, John highlights the significant emotional environment for the nurture of the disciples. Indeed, disciples in Johannine context are distinguished by their communal love for one another (Jn 13:35). Unsurprising therefore, that in praying for the functioning of future believers, Jesus' concern was for a loving relationship to exist among them (Jn 15:10-17). Further exploration of these features of the characterization of the formation of the conventional disciples will be taken up in the examination of the passages in the third section of the present chapter.

### 5.1.3 The Characterization of the Non-Conventional Disciples in John

John's Gospel is similar to Mark in charting the interactions between Jesus and several other people who were not His conventional disciples. Unlike Mark however, John explicitly designates several of these people as disciples. Moreover there are some actants who clearly fulfil discipleship functions, and yet, are not explicitly labelled as such. As has already been stated, the use of the term "disciple" in John is fluid enough to caution against restricting Johannine discipleship only to those characters explicitly labelled as such. Indeed some of the members of the groups that opposed Jesus also appear to exhibit discipleship qualities at certain points of the narrative.

Furthermore, on a number of occasions, the characterization of certain actants is ambiguous. As I now show, John appears to leave room for the possibility that some of

these characters later developed in their commitment to Jesus. This phenomenon is similar to the fluidity of the “insider” / “outsider” distinctions in Mark’s Gospel. It is true that John also presents commitment to Jesus dualistically in terms of the “elect” and “non-elect”. However, like Mark, the appositions are not cast in stone but rather contain “shades of grey” (cf. Volf 2008, 21). What now follows is an attempt to identify the manner of characterization of some of the non-conventional disciples and how these inform the shape of the earliest Christian movement that was formed by Jesus.

#### *5.1.3.1 Named and Explicitly Labelled Non-Conventional Disciple in John’s Gospel*

Joseph of Arimathea (Jn 19:38) is an example of a named character who is also explicitly labelled as a disciple. In Mark, Joseph of Arimathea is not explicitly labelled as a disciple, but characterized as such. John, on the other hand, notes that Joseph “was a disciple of Jesus, though a secret one because of his fear of the Jews” (Jn 19:38; Matt 27:57 similarly qualifies him as a disciple). Though not identified as a member of the Sanhedrin in John (he is so identified in Mark), the reference to his secrecy “for fear of the Jews” and his association with Nicodemus suggests that John and his readers knew this information (cf. Lincoln 2005, 484). After Jesus’ death, Joseph, together with Nicodemus, comes out of his “secret” commitment not only to secure Jesus’ body but also perform a royal Jewish burial for His Lord (cf. Malina and Rohrbaugh 1998, 275; Moloney 1998, 511; Gench 2007, 125).

The statement in Jn 19:38 that Joseph feared the Jews and hence lived as a “secret disciple” has been taken by a number of interpreters as a severe censure by the Evangelist, especially when compared with Joseph’s characterization in the Synoptics. There are grounds for such an interpretation; for, the other Johannine reference to “secret” disciples in Jn 12:42-43, clearly censured those among the authorities who despite believing in Jesus did not publicly confess Him because of their fear of being excommunicated from the synagogues. The real reason for such fear, as John’s explicit commentary states, was that—“they loved human glory more than the glory that comes from God” (Jn 12:43).

Accordingly, several interpreters have taken the view that any follower of Jesus who was also qualified with secrecy was being severely censured by the Evangelist. In Brown's opinion for example, "John has contempt for [secret disciples] because in his judgment, they prefer the praise of men to the glory of God" (1979, 71-72; cf. de Jonge 1970-71, 337-359; Grayston 1990, 34-35; Bassler 1989, 635-646; Zangenberg 2007, 15-35). Similarly, Esler and Piper believe that even at the stage of Joseph's burial of Jesus, the Evangelist is at best ambivalent about Joseph and certainly suspicious about his commitment to Jesus (2006, 73). In their reckoning, the label "disciple" in John's Gospel was reluctantly conferred on Joseph by the Evangelist because earlier traditions had already done so. Joseph's importance in the Gospel traditions is therefore downgraded by John; so that the real burial ritual, in the eyes of the fourth Evangelist, was performed by Mary who anointed Jesus (Jn 12:1-11). Esler and Piper surmise that in reality, John had no choice but to retain Joseph's role in Jesus' burial because it is more plausible for Pilate to hand over Jesus' body to a Sanhedrinist than to enthusiastic members of Jesus' group such as Lazarus or Jesus' family (2006, 72-73).

There are good reasons, however, for tempering such stridently negative assessment of Joseph for remaining a *κεκρυμμένος* (hidden or secret) disciple during Jesus' earthly ministry. Firstly, the Evangelist's attitude to secrecy *per se* is much more complex than a straightforward condemnation, and depends more on the motivation for secrecy. As a matter of fact, of all the other occasions that the word *κρύπτω* (hide; Jn 8:59, 12:36) and its cognate *κρυπτός* (secret; Jn 7:4, 10; 18:20) occur in the Gospel, they are used with reference to Jesus' behaviour<sup>47</sup>. For example, when His brothers goad Him to "go to Judea so that your disciples also may see the works you are doing; for no one who wants to be widely known acts in secret" (Jn 7:3-4), Jesus refuses to take the bait, but nevertheless, *secretly* goes to the festival later. His reason for such a clandestine behaviour was—"my time has not yet come" (Jn 7:6). On other occasions when

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<sup>47</sup> *Λαθρα* is used in Jn 11:28 for Martha's discreet sounding of Mary about the presence of Jesus in their vicinity. It may however be rightly interpreted as a clandestine act of secrecy (so Keener 2003, 845), designed to prevent the agents of the Pharisees who were present from knowing that Jesus was in town. If so, this buttresses the point that secrecy in John in itself was not as despicable as the motivation for it.

opposition was intense, Jesus withdrew and hid Himself from His opponents, rather than continue the confrontation (e.g. Jn 8:59; 12:36). Hence the impression is that acting in secret or evading the authorities was in itself not necessarily as despicable as the motivation for doing so (cf. Jn 7:13). It was also a matter of choosing the correct timing to be open. Indeed, in his examination of the motif of secrecy in John's Gospel, Neyrey (1998, 79-109) finds the Johannine emphases on secrecy as fitting into a Mediterranean socio-historical and cultural pattern in which secrecy played both positive and negative roles in the society.

Evidently, a distinction has to be made between the secrecy of Joseph and that of Jesus, based on their respective motivations. Joseph's secrecy was "for fear of the Jews"; whereas Jesus' was because "my time has not yet come" (Jn 7:6). Secrecy in the circumstances involving Jesus was therefore borne out of restrained courage and discerning wisdom, rather than cowardice. That of Joseph derived from cowardice, if even it could be argued that the timing in his case was also important. The two cannot certainly be equated. Even so, the comparison between Joseph and Jesus helpfully illuminates the former's behaviour. On the whole, secrecy in John's Gospel, though certainly a negative quality when applied to a Johannine disciple who refuses to confess Jesus when given the opportunity to do so, should not be taken as necessarily a terminal condition.

Secondly, though secrecy and "fear of the Jews" was clearly an inadequate response from a disciple of Jesus, John's comment in Jn 19:38 is made in the context of Joseph's acquisition of Jesus' body for burial. In the ancient Mediterranean setting, burying the dead in the face of dangers was regarded by Dio Cassius as a model of courage (Dio, *RH* 57.18.1). Thus apparently unfazed by the prospect of being publicly identified with an executed "criminal" accused of setting Himself against the emperor, that is, sedition (Jn 19:12), Joseph in Jn 19:38 is clearly no longer a timid and secret disciple. Moreover, in organizing a burial suited only for a royal, Joseph was not just exhibiting his courage but breaking all the cultural norms in order to express His discipleship to Jesus (cf. Carson 1991, 629; Keener 2003, 1161). Hence John appears to indicate a transformation in Joseph after Jesus' death. This also paradoxically contrasts with the

conventional disciples, who by then had deserted Jesus, and in the couple of days would in turn behave as secret disciples, locked behind closed doors “for fear of the Jews” (Jn 20:19). Moreover, this occurs after hearing the announcement about Jesus’ resurrection (cf. Morris 1995, 729; Keener 2003, 1157; Beasley-Murray 1987, 358).

Accordingly, like Mark, John regarded Joseph’s actions in a positive manner. Moreover, John indicates a progression in Joseph’s discipleship to Jesus. In “Jesus’ lifetime, he had paid him little honour...now he was presented with his last opportunity” to publicly declare his commitment (Morris 1995, 729; cf. Carson 1991, 629). And he took it. Rhetorically and pastorally therefore, the Evangelist may well have been presenting Joseph as an example for his immediate readers who probably felt intimidated by the politics of the synagogues. Jesus’ salvific death is a time of transformation even for timid believers cowered by the threats and bullying around them. Historically, however, the account of the eventual public declaration of discipleship by Joseph of Arimathea demonstrates that Jesus’ transformational influences reached far into the hierarchy of the Jewish authorities of His time. The foundational members of the earliest Christian movement included aristocratic and courageous Sanhedrinists such as Joseph. Perhaps there were many more like him.

#### *5.1.3.2 Named Characters Implied as Non-Conventional Disciples in John’s Gospel*

Among the named characters in John’s Gospel, several of them are implied as disciples of Jesus without being explicitly labelled as such. These are the Bethany family, Mary Magdalene and Nicodemus. Nicodemus also belongs to two other sub-groups—as a disciple among Jesus’ opponents and an ambiguous character.

##### *5.1.3.2.1 The Bethany Family as Disciples*

The Bethany family was clearly dear to Jesus, to the Evangelist and perhaps to the Johannine community (cf. Esler and Piper 2006; North 2001; Robertson 2004, 175-177; Culpepper 1983, 140). In the Johannine context, where it is usually the anonymous

characters who receive such extensive focus, the very fact that the family members are named must be taken to imply a vital role in the plot of John's Gospel.

#### 5.1.3.2.1.1 Lazarus as a Disciple

Lazarus is described by his two sisters as "he whom you [Jesus] love" (Jn 11:3), and by Jesus Himself as "our friend" (Jn 11:11). It is also emphasized by the Evangelist that "Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus" (Jn 11:5). The observing Jews also comment, "See how he loved him" (Jn 11:36). Jesus' anger and emotional turmoil on arriving at Bethany also demonstrate this love and affection, both for Lazarus and the family as a whole (Jn 11:33, 35, 38). This love was clearly reciprocated by the family, evidenced at least, by the extraordinary devotion of Mary (Jn 12:1-11). Elsewhere in the Gospel, Jesus uses the designation "friend" for His disciples (Jn 15:15), those described as loved by Him are underlined as His "own" (Jn 13:1), and in calling the dead Lazarus by name and who in turn responds in being revived (Jn 11:43), Jesus, the Good Shepherd, shows that Lazarus was His "own sheep" (Jn 10:3). All such details indicate that Lazarus was within Jesus' close circle of followers and could be rightly described as a disciple of Jesus (cf. Burkett 1994, 209-232).

Bultmann is partially correct in cautioning that the triple references to Jesus' love for Lazarus (11:3, 5, 36) should be regarded as denoting an ordinary "human relationship" (1971, 397n.2; cf. Brown 1966, 427; Robertson 2004, 175); presumably as against a divine-human relationship. Yet, the details of the narrative in John 11 clarifies that this was no ordinary love, but rather the ultimate love from a Friend who was about to lay down His life for Lazarus (John 15:13; cf. North 2001, 49-50). It is for example, emphasized that Jesus' decision to eventually respond to the call from the Bethany sisters was ultimately also the proximate earthly decision to lay down His life on the cross (11:8). The presence of some of the Jews who acted as agents of the Pharisees at the time of the miracle, as well as the subsequent banquet (11:46; 12:9-12) highlight this ominous tone associated with Jesus' response to the urgent call of His friends.

Another indication of the discipleship of Lazarus is the testimony he is depicted to have borne to Jesus' divinity after being raised from the dead. It is true that Lazarus does not make any open confession in the Gospel of John. However, there are reasons to believe that the miracle of Lazarus' resurrection was one, if not the epitome, of the Johannine signs (Jn 12:37; cf. Koester 2003, 116-123; Köstenberger 1998b, 60; Howard 2006, 64). If so then the mere presence of the revived Lazarus constituted a testimony to Jesus' divinity and a means of drawing people to believe in Jesus (Jn 11:25). By acting as a bridge between Jesus' earthly ministry and the Passion, the whole miracle, and Lazarus himself, are invested with immense theological significance comparable to the Johannine signs (cf. Zimmerman 2008, 75-101).

Consequently, because of Lazarus, the Pharisees had reason to fear that "the world has gone after [Jesus]" (Jn 12:19). Lazarus' presence indeed caused several Jews to believe in Jesus (Jn 11:45), and follow Him during the triumphant entry (Jn 12:11-12). In the words of the Evangelist, it was "on account of [Lazarus] that many of the Jews were deserting and were believing in Jesus" (Jn 12:9). More ominously for Jesus' opponents, "The crowd that had been with him when he called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised him from the dead *continued to testify*" (Jn 12:17). Lazarus therefore became a living "sign" of Jesus' divine power and presence. Not only was he a means of drawing others to Jesus, but also embolden them to openly testify.

The description of Lazarus as ἰδεὶς ὃν φιλεῖς (one whom you love), has led several interpreters to suggest that he may have been the Beloved Disciple (e.g. Brownlee 1972, 192-193; Sanders 1957, 82; Stibbe 1996, 149; Kysar 1986, 173; Charlesworth 1995, 288-291). Proponents of this theory argue that the first explicit appearance of the Beloved Disciple in the Gospel (Jn 13:23) occurs after Lazarus had also been described in a similar fashion, suggesting a deliberate intra-textual reference by the Evangelist. In addition, similar to the Beloved Disciple, Lazarus is depicted as close to Jesus and reclines at table with Him (Jn 12:2 cf. 13:23). Another argument in favour of this association is the access that the Beloved Disciple appeared to have had to the high priest's residence (Jn 18:15-16); since Lazarus was a prominent, or at least well known Judean resident (Jn 11:19; cf. Edwards 2003, 20).

However, the association between Lazarus and the Beloved Disciple is undermined by the fact that, as argued in chapter three, the Beloved disciple is depicted as a member of the twelve; which Lazarus was clearly not. If as already argued, the Beloved Disciple was the anonymous disciple of Jn 1:35-39, then he could not have been Lazarus who died and was resurrected by Jesus. Furthermore, the anonymous disciple was a Galilean, whereas Lazarus was a Judean. Also undermining this association is the fact that Lazarus is named, while the Beloved Disciple is anonymous throughout the narrative. Given the strategic rhetorical use of anonymity by the Evangelist, it is unlikely that he would have named and then later anonymize the same character. Also, it has to be borne in mind, that the love of Jesus is explicitly noted to have been expressed to more than one person in the Gospel (e.g. Jn 11:5; 13:1). Hence the Beloved Disciple, though clearly identified as such, could not be the only one. Lazarus and his sisters could legitimately also be labelled as “beloved”.

Be it as it may, the Johannine characterization of Lazarus as a disciple of Jesus highlights several prototypical features of the security but also the subsequent destiny of any disciple of Jesus, both in its historical, as well as rhetorical and pastoral dimensions. Like Lazarus, a disciple should be confident of Jesus’ sacrificial love and deep emotional commitment to his or her wellbeing. Even the disciple’s suffering could yet be the platform for the exhibition of God’s glory (cf. Keener 2003, 839, Howard 2006, 76). Yet, the disciple must also not be under any illusion that It is only in Jesus’ own manner and timing that miraculous interventions occur (Jn 11:1-4; cf. Wuellner 1991, 113-132; Koester 2003, 65). Furthermore, the disciple should be assured that “to believe in Jesus is to possess eternal life that death cannot vanquish” (North 2001, 130; cf. Schneiders 1987, 44-56; Byrne 1991, 43). An additional lesson from the narrative is that the Johannine disciple, like Lazarus, is called to be a witness. And this witness ultimately makes him or her a target of hostility, plotting and perhaps martyrdom, as was Jesus (cf. Jn 12:10).



#### 5.1.3.2.1.2 Martha and Mary as Disciples

Like Lazarus, Mary and her sister Martha are not only loved by Jesus but exhibit certain characteristics of discipleship. A number of interpreters make much of the alternation of the order of their names in the chapter (Jn 11:1, 19, 20) as evidence of differences in John's redactional sources (so Bultmann 1971, 395n.4) or in their ages (so Malina and Rohrbaugh 1998, 199), or in their relative degrees of prestige (so Keener 2003, 845) or even relative levels of faith and relationship to Jesus (so Howard-Brook 2003, 252). Yet, as in modern literature, sequences of names in ancient times were equally not always invested with significance. And even if this were so, by varying the order, the Evangelist may well be pressing his desire to resist such stereotypical manner of interpreting the sequences of names. Moreover, there is a sense in which John 11 and 12 contrast the two sisters in order to exemplify the different dimensions of discipleship to Jesus rather than to set one sister in competition against the other (cf. Esler and Piper 2006; Yamaguchi 2002; Howard 2006, 63-78; Chung 2004, 9-16). Though they are clearly different in temperament, each exhibits both positive and negative features of disciples, making them round and authentic historical characters.

This said, interpreters nevertheless vary in their assessment of John's characterization of these women. In line with his belief that the Bethany family is "portrayed in a way that reflects the experience of Christians living at a later time", Koester regards the sisters as representing two faces of grief, each of which has a place in the Christian community (2003, 65-66). Sandra Schneider also believes that Martha's confession—"Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world" (Jn 11:27)—"was the highest expression of Johannine faith and the equivalent to the Petrine confession in Matt 16:15-19" (1999, 106; cf. Seim 1987, 71). North is equally convinced that Martha represents the "ideal of Johannine faith" (2001, 43-44). And in Alan Culpepper's view, "Martha is the one with discerning faith" (1983, 141).

In support of these highly positive assessments of Martha is the fact that her confession is almost the same as the confession of faith that the Evangelist desired his first readers to have made—"these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God" (Jn 20:31). In making her confession therefore, Martha voiced

the Evangelist's preferred declaration of faith. Given that this confession is also made in response to Jesus' words and prior to seeing the sign about to be performed by Jesus, Martha's faith is indeed exemplary. Added to her belief in Jesus as "Messiah, the Son of God", and her open confession of it, is Martha's discipleship quality of hospitality and service to Jesus. Temperamentally, she may well have been a practically minded person (e.g. her reference to the stench of Lazarus' body in Jn 11:39; cf. Esler and Piper 2006, 59; Malina and Rohrbaugh 1998, 200). All the same, her extension of hospitality to Jesus (Jn 11:20, 28; 12:2) is underlined by the Evangelist in a manner to highlight it as a positive feature of her discipleship to Jesus.

On the other hand, there are interpreters who detect several faults in the character of Martha. In the view of Moloney for example, Martha's confession should not be invested with as much significance as has just been made. He believes that the confession was incidental and not a direct answer to Jesus' question, suggesting a possibly superficial regurgitation of previously known titles, rather than a more considered and in-depth growth in her faith (1996, 162). In addition, even if her confession were deeply held belief, Martha yet demonstrates at the graveside that, like Peter in the Synoptic Gospels, she had not grasped the full significance of Jesus. In protesting to the opening of the tomb (Jn 11:39), Martha displayed her inadequacy of faith, and hence instigated Jesus' rebuke (Jn 11:40). Similarly, Minear criticizes Martha's seemingly evasive response to Jesus in Jn 11:27—"She is unable to say, "Lord I believe that whoever lives and believes in you shall never die...[she] did not believe that Jesus is himself the resurrection and the life" (Minear 1977, 119; cf. Howard-Brook 2003, 259).

These radically different assessments of a Johannine character demonstrate some of the limits of the reader's construction of character from the text. Could it also be that these differences are evidence of aspects of psychological reading of the literary characters rather than a straightforward exegesis of the passages? Be that as it may, and for the purposes of the project at hand, it may be confidently concluded, that even if Martha's confession was not as significant as it appears on the surface, on the whole, her characterization as a disciple of Jesus in John's Gospel, who believes, confesses and serves Jesus is not in doubt.

Similar to Martha, interpreters disagree on how to assess Mary. Moloney believes that the narrative portrays Mary's posture of kneeling at Jesus' feet as a sign of worship and hence Mary portrays the full features of Johannine faith (1996, 166). It is true that Mary would be commended for a clearly dramatic act of love and devotion in John 12. Thus Culpepper concludes that Mary "represents the response of devotion and uncalculating, extravagant love, and in contrast to her sister never verbalizes her faith to Jesus" (1983, 141-142). However, there is no evidence that the posture in Jn 11:32 should be taken as an act of worship. It may equally be taken to be a mark of respect or even desperation. In addition, there is an interesting contrast between Jesus' response to Martha's complaint in Jn 11:21 compared to Mary's similar complaint in Jn 11:32. To the former, Jesus responds by promising and encouraging her to believe that her brother would be revived. With regard to Mary however, Jesus reacts with ἐνεβριμήσατο τῷ πνεύματι καὶ ἐτάραξεν ἑαυτόν (literally meaning, "He was indignant in the spirit and He troubled Himself" Jn 11:33).

Do these different shades of responses from Jesus indicate a more intense disapproval of Mary's complaint compared to Martha's? Opinions are divided among interpreters in the way they answer this question, depending mostly on how they view the emotional turmoil exhibited by Jesus in Jn 11:33. Keener points out that the word ἐνεβριμήσατο is meant by John to be a colourful and figurative expression of Jesus' emotional turmoil rather than the uncontrollable agitation it literally implies (2003, 846). Koester, on the other hand notes that Jesus' reaction was commensurate to how Mary appeared to have taken her brother's death (2003, 67). To the apparently rational and practical Martha, His response was to remind her about the correct theological and pastoral response of a disciple and so draw her to deeper commitment and faith. To the clearly overwhelmed Mary however, Jesus' response to her complaint was a commensurate grief and turmoil. The indignation was therefore not directed at Mary but to death itself and the pain and suffering it caused to Jesus' own. Other interpreters have suggested that Jesus' anger may have been directed at some of the Jews who were present with Mary, for their unbelief and resistance (cf. Brown 1966 425-426). Whichever way it is taken, it is apparent that John sensitively narrates the care and attention of Jesus in

dealing with the two sisters and consequently sustained their faith and discipleship. There is no doubt that Mary exemplifies devotion to Jesus which the Evangelist commended to his first readers.

#### 5.1.3.2.2 Mary Magdalene as a Disciple

The accounts of Mary Magdalene's presence at the foot of the cross (Jn 19:25) and the Easter morning encounter with the resurrected Jesus (Jn 20:1-18) no doubt establish her as a key eyewitness disciple in John's Gospel. She saw Jesus die (Jn 19:25), was the first person to have seen the stone removed from the entrance of Jesus' tomb (Jn 20:1), the first to have seen the resurrected Lord (Jn 20:15-16), and she was the first to have received the post-Easter apostolic commission to announce the resurrection to the disciples (Jn 20:17), a commission which she duly fulfilled (Jn 20:18).

Yet, on their own, and in Johannine terms, these credentials were insufficient to have made Mary into a fully fledged eyewitness of Jesus. Though it is repeatedly emphasized that Mary saw several clues indicating that Jesus had resurrected (Jn 20:1, 12, 14); on each occasion, she misunderstands and misinterprets what she saw. She misinterprets the rolled away entrance stone as evidence that Jesus' body had been taken away. The sight of the angels in the tomb, "sitting where the body of Jesus had been lying, one at the head and the other at the feet" (Jn 20:12) did not resolve her confusion. Neither did the initial sight of the resurrected Jesus. It was only when Mary heard her name mentioned by Jesus that she grasps what had happened. Becoming an eyewitness of Jesus, as previously noted, was not just a matter of physical sight, but also required the correct interpretation and response of faith to amount to divine revelation. In this sense therefore, it could be argued that Mary Magdalene compares less favourably to the Beloved Disciple as eyewitness; given that the latter is said to have "believed" when he entered the tomb and saw that Jesus' body was not there (Jn 20:8; cf. Brown 1966, 1045-1046; Byrne 1985, 83-97).

Taking these qualifications into consideration, Koester regards Mary Magdalene's representative quality as "being called by name" (2003, 69), rather than as an ideal

eyewitness. Much more positively, Lee concludes that Mary represented the “struggle for understanding and coming to Easter faith” (1995, 38). A number of positive evaluations appear to overstate Mary’s role in the Gospel or the Johannine community as a whole. For example, Justino (1998) has made an unconvincing argument for regarding Mary Magdalene as the author of the fourth Gospel; whereas de Boer (2000) has gone further to suggest, rather implausibly, that Mary was the Beloved Disciple. On the opposite extreme are those interpreters who have taken less sympathetic view of Mary’s characterization in the Gospel. Bultmann for example points to “her foolishness” amounting to the “foolishness of misunderstandings of 7:35; 8:22” (1971, 686). Similarly, Minear criticises “the obsessiveness of her grief and her befuddlement over graves” (1976, 129). And Witherington comments on her “blunders” (1988, 179). Culpepper equally notes that “witnessing each of the key moments of the passion story gives her no advantage or insight” (1983, 144).

Perhaps Lee’s approach helps resolve aspects of this impasse concerning the characterization of Mary Magdalene in John’s Gospel (1995, 42). She compares Mary to Thomas as they are portrayed in John 20 and notes that the Evangelist brings the two characters together in the chapter to explore two different dimensions of post-Easter faith. Whereas Mary represented faith borne out of hearing Jesus’ words, so that seeing was clearly inadequate, Thomas was the direct opposite. The two types of faith—sign based and word based, as will shortly be discussed—are held by the Evangelist as complementing each other rather than in competition. This consideration throws Mary’s slowness in grasping the evidence of Jesus’ resurrection into sharp relief (cf. Bonney 2002, 28). The key aspect of Mary’s characterization must however not be missed—she is characterized as a disciple of Jesus, and a key eyewitness, who persists in her search until she receives revelation from the resurrected Jesus and proceeds to become an apostolic agent to the other disciples.

### 5.1.3.3 *Anonymous Characters Implied as Non-Conventional Disciples in John*

Among the anonymous Johannine characters, the Royal Official, the Samaritan woman, and the Blind man are implied as non-conventional disciples. The characterization of the Blind man will be discussed in the second section where his formation will be the focus.

#### 5.1.3.3.1 The βασιλικὸς of Capernaum as a Disciple

The βασιλικὸς of Capernaum is implied to be a disciple of Jesus, since he not only exercises a healing-related faith, but much more, he “believed, along with his whole household” *after* the miracle (Jn 4:53). The actual designation and ethnic origin of the βασιλικὸς is debated by Johannine scholars. Most believe that he was one of the Herodian officers, who were usually of Idumean extraction (e.g. Koester 2003, 52; Keener 2003, 630). In harmonizing the story with that of the Roman centurion in Matt 8:5 and Lk 7:1, other interpreters believe that he must have been a Roman official (e.g. Moloney 1993, 182; Mead 1985, 69-72; Lincoln 2005, 185). The royal pedigree of the title appear to favour a link with the Herodian dynasty, even though a centurion in royal service could also be vaguely designated as a βασιλικὸς. In fact, it is also possible that the ethnicity of the officer may not have been relevant to John, since, as compared to Nicodemus or the Samaritan woman for example, no other indication as to which group he may have been representing is given. What perhaps mattered to John was the societal rank of the suppliant.

Be it as it may, in prefacing the miracle with “Unless you see signs and wonders you will not believe” (Jn 4:48), it has been construed that Jesus was indicating that the official’s faith should be categorized as a “sign based faith” (so, Bultmann 1971, 207). This would in itself not be altogether discreditable, given that the disciples had similarly believed in Jesus as a result of a sign in Cana, as John observes at the beginning of the pericope (Jn 4:46). Yet, it must also be noted that the official had initially “believed the *word* that Jesus spoke to him”, and this, *before* the sign occurred (Jn 4:50). Thus Culpepper is being more positive in categorizing the official as exemplifying “those who believe because of the signs but show themselves ready to believe the words of Jesus” (1983,

137). Koester clarifies the situation better when he opines that the official's faith was "confirmed by a sign, not based on a sign" (2003, 52).

Indeed the whole premise for hierarchically ranking the various types of faith in John's Gospel so that a sign-based faith was in itself regarded as defective and therefore inferior to a word-based faith (e.g. Bultmann 1971, 696; Tenney 1975, 343-357; Culpepper 1988, 417-432; Koester 1989, 327-330) must be questioned. In this view, and to borrow Culpepper's explanation, "one cannot understand Jesus by the signs alone; they require the interpretation supplied by the discourses that contain Jesus' claims. The readers, moreover, who may not witness signs, are therefore not disadvantaged because they still have the words of Jesus, which are more effective, even than the signs in eliciting faith" (2008, 259). Also cited in support of the defectiveness of sign-based faith are passages such as Jn 2:23-25, 4:46-50, 20:24-29.

However such evaluations of the signs and their relationship with faith and discipleship to Jesus must be tempered with the fact of the extremely high value that the Gospel itself places on the signs. Indeed in a recent assessment of their functions in the Gospel, Larsen concludes that the Johannine signs are regarded as "exposures of that mark of Jesus' true identity which the "we"-voice of the prologue claimed to have seen (*doxa* 1:14)" (2006, 108). In other words they play the role of revealing Jesus, even though like all Johannine revelatory encounters, correct interpretation and faith response are required before the revelation is complete. If the signs were therefore critical to John's plot, as most recent evaluations of the Gospel appear to suggest (e.g. Larsen 2006; Culpepper 2008, 251-260; Brant 2004, 50-57), then an internal contradiction is created if faith resulting from a sign were dismissed as intrinsically deficient.

Furthermore, and as will be discussed below, though the passages cited in support of the negative view of sign based faith censure those who demand a sign as precondition for faith, and those who despite their sign based faith do not wholeheartedly commit themselves to Jesus, they do not dismiss sign based faith in itself. It is true that some of the signs are followed by discourses designed to explain them. Yet, in this particular

case (and also that of the Cana miracle with which it is linked), the sign is preceded by a brief discourse and not after. And in both cases, the disciples and the royal official believe without receiving explanatory discourses of the miracle. Besides, in John's Gospel, misunderstandings occur with regard to both the signs and the words of Jesus. Both often require further explanations and revelation to bring the interlocutor to faith or otherwise. Thus while acknowledging that any faith in John's Gospel may be defective and need further encouragement, revelation and explanations to grow; it will be a mistake of category to dismiss sign based faith in itself as the source of the defect. What is certain in John is that each individual character is presented with both positive and negative features. Hence, an externally imposed scheme of hierarchical levels of types of faith appears to be artificial (cf. Bonney 2002, 21).

All said therefore, Jesus' statement in Jn 4:48 need not be taken as specifically downgrading the official's forthcoming faith. It is also possible that it was meant as a general rebuke to the Galilean population (Jn 4:45; so Keener 2003, 630), or the Herodian hierarchy, or perhaps the Roman Gentile authorities that the βασιλικὸς may have represented, or even more directly, the official and his household; for, ἴδητε (you might see) and πιστεύσητε (you might believe) in Jn 4:48 are both in the plural. If, as is likely, Jesus' statement was meant to be a rebuke directed at the official and his household, then it may have served to transform an initial tentative faith of the royal official (similar to that held by Nicodemus at the beginning of his interaction with Jesus), to a higher degree of faith. In this respect, the official's faith is similar to that of Mary, mother of Jesus, who despite an initial rebuff, persists in her faith and so receives a miraculous sign from Jesus. John's reminder concerning the Cana miracle in Jn 4:46 certainly appear to invite this comparison with Mary (cf. Keener 2003, 630; Moloney 1993, 177).

Whichever way the official's faith is evaluated, it certainly cannot be taken that he made his request for the healing of his son as a precondition for believing in Jesus. He had previously heard about Jesus (Jn 4:47) and came to Him because he believed Jesus would heal the son (Jn 4:49). Without demanding to see the miracle first, the official then believed even more the *word* that Jesus spoke (Jn 4:50), and abandoned his terms



of request in order to obey Jesus (Jn 4:50). Moreover, he further believed, “along with his whole household” *after* the miracle occurred (Jn 4:53). These multi-dimensional features of his faith qualify him as an exemplary disciple of Jesus.

#### 5.1.3.3.2 The Samaritan Woman as a Disciple

The Samaritan woman is one of the most magnetic characters in the Gospel of John. The extensive secondary literature on her demonstrates the communicative power of John’s account (cf. Botha 1991; Maccini 1994, 35-46). The numerous theological (e.g. MacDonald 1964), intertextual (e.g. Dockery 1988, 127-140; Neyrey 1979, 419-437), geo-political (e.g. Bligh 1962, 329-346; Bull 1975, 54-59), socio-cultural (e.g. Bridges 1994, 173-176; Neyrey 1994, 77-91), and gender related (e.g. Eslinger 1987, 167-183; Schottroff 1998, 157-181) examinations of the passage are also evidence of the several interesting questions and lessons it raises. Added to these attractions is the extremely positive manner in which the character endears herself to the reader. She is after all a morally dubious character, who despite her pride in her ethnic roots confidently engages in a revelatory dialogue with Jesus that resulted in her transformation into a witnessing disciple. Her extraordinary success as a witness who confesses Jesus to her city so that they believe both her word and Jesus’ sets her apart as an exemplary disciple. Because of her witness, a whole Samaritan city believes in Jesus and offers Him hospitality. Thus the Samaritan woman is portrayed as a disciple of Jesus.

#### 5.1.3.4 Non-Conventional Disciples among “the Jews” in John

The ubiquitous presence of the phrase, “the Jews” throughout John’s Gospel may appear on the surface to be setting them in contrast to Jesus’ disciples. Labelled as οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι or just Ἰουδαῖοι on seventy occasions in the Gospel, compared with the sixteen times in the Synoptics altogether, it appears to be used as a nebulous term to describe (a) ethnic Judeans (e.g. Jn 5:1; 6:4; 7:1), or (b) the Jewish authorities including the Pharisees and chief priests who were theologically opposed to Jesus (e.g. Jn 1:19; 2:18, 20; 5:10; 7:2), or (c) ὁ ὄχλος (the crowd) or common people which may sometimes refer to the crowd of Jerusalem (e.g. Jn 8:31), but on other occasions, to the Galilean

crowds (e.g. Jn 6:41, 52), or (d) as a non-specific theological term for those who reject Jesus (e.g. Jn 13:33) (cf. Ashton 1985, 40-75; Culpepper 1983, 125; 1987, 273-288; Motyer 1997; Lincoln 2005, 70-81; Hakola 2005). Yet, as Culpepper (1983, 126) points out, John does not always distinguish which of these categories of people he is referring to by the term οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι or the crowds or even “the great crowd of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι” (Jn 12:9). Thankfully, identifying the sub-group which the Evangelist is referring to in each instant is not as critical to the project at hand as forming a general view of how some of them are characterized. Hence the discussion which follows will employ οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι as the term for any of the sub-groups.

Table 5.2 Discipleship Qualities of Some of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι

Passage	Referents	Positive and Negative Discipleship Qualities
Jn 2:24-25	“Many” at the Passover festival in Jerusalem	They believed in His name because they saw the signs, but Jesus did not trust them
Jn 6:60-71	The Jews of Capernaum	They misunderstand Jesus’ teaching, complain, become offended and defect from Jesus
Jn 7:31	“Many” in the Jerusalem crowd	They believed in Jesus and confessed, “When the Messiah comes, will he do more signs than this man has done” (Jn 7:31)
Jn 8:30-59	“Many” of the Jerusalem Jews in the temple	They believed in Jesus as He was speaking. Some ceased to believe and did not μείνητε in Jesus’ word.
Jn 11:45	“Many” of the Jews at Lazarus’ funeral	They believe in Jesus. But some reported Him to the Pharisees
Jn 12:17	The Bethany crowd	They witnessed Lazarus’ resurrection and “continued to testify”
Jn 12:42-43	The Jewish Authorities	They believed in Jesus but did not confess for fear of being excommunicated

The multi-dimensional and sometimes vague use of the term should also caution against a blanket characterization of the referents in terms of their responses to Jesus. Certainly, though many of the references to οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι in the Gospel characterize them negatively, and on occasions in severely polemic exchanges with Jesus, the charge that John’s Gospel is in some way anti-Semitic is untenable (cf. Keener 2003, 215; Lincoln 2005, 79). Jesus, the Gospel underlines, was Himself a Jew (Jn 4:9), and was ironically crucified as “the King of the Jews” (Jn 18:33, 39; 19:3, 19, 21). In fact it is only over half of the references to οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι in John that appear negative or hostile, indicating that while the term is used in a rather ill-defined manner, the Evangelist nevertheless had no specific gripe against the particular racial group, to which, it must be remembered, he

belonged. Manifestly, the sometimes fierce debate in John's Gospel has more to do with intra-racial Jewish exchanges rather than a Jewish versus non-Jewish polemic. Much more, the claim of the Gospel that salvation emanates from "the Jews" (Jn 4:22) severely undermines any charge of anti-Semitism (cf. Balfour 1997, 369-372; Lea 1994, 103-123).

Indeed on a number of occasions, some of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι are characterized with qualities of discipleship to Jesus. As table 5.2 shows, several passages indicate that some of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι believed in Jesus, thus exhibiting discipleship qualities, even if they cannot be described as disciples in the same sense that the twelve were. Certainly, in Jn 6:60-71, some of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι in the Capernaum synagogue are explicitly labelled as Jesus' disciples. However, when they were subsequently challenged by Jesus' claims, some complained, became offended and then defected from following Him.

Table 5.3 Parallels between the Twelve and some of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι in Jn 6:60-71

	The Twelve	Some of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι
<b>Misunderstanding</b>	Many of his disciples heard it, they said, 'This teaching is difficult; who can accept it? (Jn 6:60)	His disciples were complaining about it (Jn 6:60)
<b>Challenge from Jesus</b>	So Jesus asked the twelve, 'Do you also wish to go away? (Jn 6:67)	[Jesus] said to them, 'Does this offend you? (Jn 6:61)
<b>Jesus' Insight into their Commitment</b>	For Jesus knew from the first who were the ones that did not believe, and who was the one that would betray him (Jn 6:64)	But among you there are some who do not believe. For Jesus knew from the first who were the ones that did not believe (Jn 6:64)
<b>Defection</b>	Did I not choose you, the twelve? Yet one of you is a devil (Jn 6:70)	Because of this many of his disciples turned back and no longer went about with him (Jn 6:66)
<b>Confession of Allegiance</b>	Simon Peter answered him, 'Lord, to whom can we go? You have the words of eternal life.	

Remarkably, Jn 6:60-71 also creates a conceptual parallel between the discipleship of some of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι with that of the twelve (table 5.3). So for example, those of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι who did not believe are paralleled with "the one that would betray him" (Jn 6:64), whereas those who believed are paralleled with the rest of the twelve. The passage goes further to underline that just as those of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι who believed found

Jesus' claims challenging, so were the twelve challenged. The difference between the two groups was that while the twelve confessed and maintained their allegiance to Jesus in the face of the offence, the believers, from among οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι who were initially labelled as "disciples" (Jn 6:60) defected from Jesus, offended by His hard sayings. The two groups then shared the attribute of misunderstanding Jesus' teaching and actions, which John repeatedly notes throughout the Gospel. Though there is clearly a difference between the two groups of disciples, the passage clarifies that it was a difference of degrees of faithful commitment to Jesus. Even though it could be reasonably argued that lack of allegiance is also evidence of unbelief, it is better to take John's characterization of some of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι as "disciples" at face value and accept that they did initially believe but then defected as a result of lack of allegiance.

That this interpretation is correct is confirmed by examining some of the deficiencies in the alternative approaches adopted by a number of interpreters to explain how it is that some of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι could be labelled as disciples. Generally, three different non-redactional approaches<sup>48</sup> are adopted—(a) redefinition of the sense in which the word "disciple" is applied to οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι, (b) redefinition of the sense in which the word "believe" is applied to the οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι, or (c) redefinition of the historical referents for οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι as representing defected Christians of the Evangelist's own time against whom he was polemicizing, rather than historical contemporaries of Jesus.

In the first category of explanations a number of interpreters redefine John's use of the designation, "disciples", so that it has a different meaning when applied to οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι than to "the twelve". Keener, for example substitutes μαθητῶν in Jn 6:60 for "Jesus' hearers" (2003, 694), thus creating a sharp distinction between "the disciples" as committed followers on the one hand, and Jesus' interlocutors in that verse on the other hand. Also to Morris, οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι, who are labelled as disciples, represent "those who have attached themselves loosely to Jesus, but without giving much consideration to

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<sup>48</sup> Brown (1966), Bultmann (1971) and others put the apparent discrepancies regarding the characterization of the οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι down to different stages of redaction.

the implications of their act” (1995, 338). Similarly, Carson, argues that “such a ‘disciple’ is not necessarily a ‘Christian’, someone who has savingly trusted Jesus and sworn allegiance to Him” (1991, 300). Carson employs Jn 8:31 to underline that believing in Jesus *per se* was inadequate as a marker of a disciple. “Only those who *continue* in His words are *truly* His disciples” (1991, 300; emphases his cf. Keener 2003, 277).

If by these explanations it is meant that Johannine characters who are said to believe *begin* a journey of faith that should progress to deeper levels of commitment to Jesus, then there is much to commend this view. As noted in chapter three, the Johannine disciple responds to Jesus by believing as well as (μεινῆτε) dwelling or abiding in a constant relationship with Jesus. The first must be supported by continuing in the second. Beasley-Murray’s explanation is astute, “Μεινῆτε signifies a settled determination to live in the word of Christ and by it, and so entails a perpetual listening to it, reflection on it, holding fast to it, carrying out its bidding” (1987, 133). Clearly, in this sense, οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι in Jn 8:31 did not continue to abide in Jesus’ word, as the perfect past tense indicates.

Yet, such a view should not overstretch Jn 8:31 to be demanding that an initial belief in Jesus, as was clearly expressed by οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι (Jn 8:30) did not count for anything. The key word ἀληθῶς (truly), employed by Jesus to qualify discipleship in Jn 8:31, should not be taken to mean that prior to continuing in Jesus’ word, or “dwelling” in Jesus, the believer could not be described as a disciple. The tense of Jn 8:31b requires that Jesus be understood to be saying that if the believer continues in His word, “ἐστε (you are) my disciple”, and not, *will be* my disciple (cf. Morris 1995, 404-405). In John, persistence in the word of Jesus is a never ending journey, began by an initial step of believing in Jesus. So also is the growth of discipleship that comes with it.

As will be discovered in the third section of the present chapter, the faith of the conventional disciples also grew as Jesus’ ministry progressed and as the disciples continued in His word (e.g. from Jn 2:11, through 6:49 and 16:30-33). This model applies also to all who believed in Jesus. Furthermore, the parallel that Jn 6:64 creates between the defected οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι and Judas illuminates the situation; for, Judas, like οἱ

Ἰουδαῖοι would also not continue in Jesus' word, despite being labelled as His disciple and one of the twelve (Jn 6:70-71). Accordingly, ἀληθῶς (truly) in Jn 8:31 refers to exhibiting the full and mature features of discipleship to Jesus. And Jesus' statement was a plea to οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι to persevere further in their discipleship to its full maturity despite their difficulty with understanding Him (cf. Moloney 1998, 275; Ashton 1985, 40-75). Clearly, some of the disciples from among οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι in Jn 6:60-71 did not do that.

In the second alternative explanation to how some of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι could be labelled as disciples, it is postulated that when John uses πιστεύητε (believe) or its cognates to describe οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι, it should not be taken in the same sense as he uses it for the conventional disciples. Morris for example, argues that two different meanings of believe are implied in the two uses in John 8:30-31. The first in Jn 8:30 describes the faith of "genuine believers" whereas in Jn 8:31, it refers "to those who did no more than make an outward profession...it is easy enough to be superficially attracted to Jesus, but the test is 'abiding'" (1995, 404). Also offered in support of this view is the dative use of πεπιστευκότας in Jn 8:31 (believed Him), rather than the usual Johannine "believe *in* Jesus" of Jn 8:30.

Though in a general sense, it is factually correct that a distinction must be made between mere intellectual assent to a set of doctrines, and faith; there is no warrant for reading this principle into Jn 8:30-31. Apart from the differences in tenses, there is little ground for distinguishing ἐπίστευσαν in Jn 8:30 from πεπιστευκότας in Jn 8:31. And the dative in Jn 8:31 is also used elsewhere in the Gospel where it clearly refers to committed faith (e.g. Jn 4:21; 8:45; 10:38; cf. Brown 1966, 354). Hence, though faith in Jesus must grow, the uses of the different words in the passage do not indicate different types or qualities of belief by different groups of people.

As noted earlier, there may be some bases for distinguishing a sign based faith from a word based faith, not necessarily in terms of degree; for, both types of faith require correct interpretation and continuing in relationship with Jesus in order to grow. Yet, there is no foundation for distinguishing different types of faith based purely on the different groups of people who exercise it. Clearly, there were other sub-groups of οἱ

Ἰουδαῖοι who were so incensed by Jesus' words that they attempted stoning Him for blasphemy (Jn 8:59). Yet, it is matter of disagreement among interpreters as to whether this sub-group was the same people who had earlier believed in Jn 8:30 or those who believed and then defected in Jn 8:31 or more likely, those of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι who never believed. On the whole however, less interpretive problems are created if the word "believe" in John retains its meaning regardless of which group is said to exercise it.

The third alternative theory for explaining how it could be that some of the crowd or οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι were labelled as disciples is postulated by interpreters who read the Gospel as a "two level drama". In this approach, it is argued that these instances constituted a literary retrojection of the circumstances of the Evangelist's own time in which some of his contemporary Jews who initially believed in Jesus subsequently backslid from the Christ movement (so e.g., Lincoln 2005, 72; Howard-Brook 2003, 209) or remained in the movement but rejected the Evangelist's high Christology (so e.g., de Jonge 2001, 121-139). Yet, this manner of reading the Gospel is fraught with methodological difficulties, does not fit with the genre of the Gospel and is often circular in reasoning.

Accordingly, it must be concluded that there is no warrant for redefining John's use of believe for οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι as if it were initially of a different quality. Neither should John's characterization of some of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι as disciples be dismissed as non-consequential. Rather, the point must be established that in the Johannine scheme, no individual's faith could be said to have been complete before Jesus' "hour". As pointed out by Witherington, "none of the potential converts portrayed in this Gospel up to the crucifixion are portrayed as models of Christian faith and confession but as those who are on the way to a fully fledged faith in Jesus—which is possible only when they incorporate the lifting up/exalting of the Son of Man into the equation" (1995, 175-176). This being so, the defection of those among οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι who were disciples parallels with the eventual defection of Judas.

For the purposes of the present project, the fact that Jesus made disciples from among οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι is a crucial historical point that helps explain Christian origins. In many respects this confirms the Markan phenomenon whereby many of "the crowds" are

similarly depicted with discipleship qualities. The likelihood that some of the disciples from among οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι continued in Jesus' word, and others who had defected repented, were restored and rejoined the Jesus movement, just as Joseph of Arimathea did, does not require a significant leap of the historical imagination. After all, a similar defection and restoration occurred with regard to the twelve.

#### *5.1.3.5 The Characterization of Jesus' Relatives in John's Gospel*

The interesting characterization of Mary in John's Gospel in which, despite not being named by the Evangelist, she nevertheless features at the first sign (Jn 2:1-11) and at the cross (Jn 19:25-27) has attracted several different symbolic and allegorical interpretations. The proposals range from Mary representing "Judaism, Jewish Christianity, the new Eve, and the Church" (Culpepper 1983, 133). By their nature many of these allegorical interpretations are difficult to confirm or refute (cf. Dodd, 1953, 428). For the purposes of the present project however, it is important to observe the discipleship qualities with which Mary is characterized in the Gospel of John. She first believes that Jesus could perform a miracle and came to Him with the request for one, aimed perhaps at averting shame and dishonour of their hosts (Jn 2:3). She then persists in her belief despite what may appear to have been a rebuff by Jesus. And she expresses her belief, and indirectly confesses it by instructing the servants to obey Jesus' instructions (Jn 2:5). Though her role at the cross is passive, she is characterized as an eyewitness of Jesus' death, both by her mere presence and her association with the Beloved Disciple (cf. Brown 1979, 196; Lieu 1998, 61-77; Keener 2003, 509).

In contrast to His mother, Jesus' brothers, who had been with Jesus and His disciples during the first sign, and later traveled together to Capernaum (Jn 2:12), can only be seen in the negative light (Jn 7:3-10). Specifically, they do not appear to be sympathetic to Jesus' cause. Instead, with dubious motives, they demanded that Jesus should perform signs in order to become popular (Jn 7:3-4). It is also categorically said that they did not believe in Jesus (Jn 7:5) and so "the world cannot hate" them (Jn 7:7). At the close of the Johannine narrative, Jesus' brothers were no longer insiders; His



disciples were now His real brothers (Jn 20:17). Though it is apparent that Jesus' family subsequently became converted and joined the Christian movement, this is not recorded in the Gospels. In this respect John's Gospel mirrors Mark's, even though John appears to clarify that Jesus' mother believed and continued in His company till the cross.

#### *5.1.3.6 Ambiguously Characterized Actants with Qualities of Discipleship in John*

John's ambiguous characterization of certain actants means that judging whether some of these characters should be regarded as non-conventional disciples cannot be done in a conclusive fashion. Yet, identifying these characters has significant historical as well as pastoral-theological relevance. Historically, rather than undermining John's account, ambiguous characters give the narrative a considerable aura of realistic portrayal of people and the events; for in reality, human nature is often ambiguous. Certainly, not all characters who interacted with Jesus responded to Him with clear and fully fledged faith and discipleship. Moreover, and pastorally-theologically, ambiguous characterization must have served a significant function of engaging John's first readers. Thus Conway is right in observing that while some of the minor and ambiguous characters of John's Gospel exhibit the complexity of the life of faith, they are also relentlessly employed by the Evangelist to push the reader toward a decision regarding Jesus (2002, 324). Within the group of ambiguous characters one may distinguish some of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι and individuals such as Nicodemus<sup>49</sup>.

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<sup>49</sup> The invalid of Bethzatha (Jn 5:1-16), and the parents of the man born blind (Jn 9:18-23) were evaluated as potential members of this category but rejected for insufficient evidence of discipleship. It is not at all clear if the invalid could be described as a disciple in any shape or form. He may have exercised healing related faith in obeying the command of Jesus to rise up and walk on the Sabbath. Yet, his subsequent behaviour does not suggest any faith or commitment to Jesus—it is not even evident that he wanted to be healed in the first place (Jn 5:7). Subsequently, he fails to identify Jesus as his Benefactor (Jn 5:11). When Jesus goes out of His way to find him in the temple and to warn him to stop sinning (Jn 5:14), this man reports Jesus to the Jewish authorities, who then begin persecuting Him (Jn 5:16). These features create enough doubts to exclude him as a disciple (contra Staley 1991, 64; Thomas 1995, 3-20). With regard to the parents of the man born blind, the fact that they were intimidated and bullied by the Pharisees elicits the readers' sympathies, quite in contrast to the invalid. Yet, none of their statements at the hearing could be evaluated in adequately positive manner suggestive of their support for their son, or

#### 5.1.3.6.1 Nicodemus as an Ambiguous Disciple?

The three passages in which Nicodemus appears in the Gospel of John (Jn 3:1-10; 7:50-52; 19:39-42) provide a tantalizing depiction of the qualities of an “ambiguous disciple”. It is unsurprising therefore that scholarly opinion has been divided between those who believe he is characterized in a positive manner, and those who mostly see the characterization as negative (see Renz 2006, 438-455 of an up to date list). Several of the most recent evaluations have tended to categorize Nicodemus in an ambiguous group (e.g. Bassler 1989, 635-646; Hakola 2009, 438-455; Renz 2006, 255-283; Neyrey 1981, 115-127; Schneiders 1987, 189-196; Suggit 1981, 100-101). However, I share the view that despite the ambiguous features of this character, he is eventually characterized in a positive manner. In that sense Nicodemus illustrates the idea that some of the Johannine characters progressed in their faith and discipleship to Jesus.

When he first comes to Jesus “by night” he is designated as a Pharisee, a ruler of the Jews and a teacher of Israel. He therefore appears to play a function of representing at least, a section of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι. However, his politeness towards Jesus suggests that he was perhaps not in the hostile category as some of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι were. Yet, the close association of him with the “night” (Jn 3:2; 7:50; 19:35), even if interpreted literally, as it is more likely that some rabbinical debates took place in the night, nevertheless retains a hint of metaphorical darkness and even secrecy with the character (cf. Barrett 1978b, 204-205; Keener 2003, 536; Brown 1966, 130). Furthermore, he makes a confession that suggests that he probably had a sign based faith (Jn 3:2), which as has been observed above need not in itself be dismissed as inconsequential. On the other hand, Jesus’ immediate response was one of a solemn rebuff and a direct demand for Nicodemus to be “born anew” and/or “from above”, a demand that startles and confuses Nicodemus. Could it be that Nicodemus is one of those described in Jn 2:23-25—those who trusted in Jesus, but Jesus did not trust them?

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even more for Jesus who healed their son. In this sense, they could not be classified even as crypto-believers.

As the discussion continues, Nicodemus' misunderstanding is laid bare by more revelations from Jesus. The encounter closes with a stinging rebuke from Jesus, that such a learned teacher of Israel did not understand the simple tenets of the revelation of God. This no doubt leaves the reader with much uncertainty as to whether Nicodemus' misunderstanding was ever dispelled and replaced by Jesus' revelation at this first meeting. Nicodemus' final statement, "How can these things be?" (Jn 3:9; Cotterell 1985, 237-242) may well suggest that the first encounter closed with him remaining in the darkness of ignorance, misunderstanding and unbelief. However, this conclusion is not certain, for Jesus proceeds to testify of the heavenly things that those who are born anew will see. It is Jesus who had the "last word", and so could it be that this was enough to lead to the transformation of Nicodemus?

The second time Nicodemus is named; the account appears to suggest, at least superficially, that there is a more positive progression in his character. By appealing to the law, he openly petitions his colleagues on the council for fair minded judgment about the claims of Jesus—"Our law does not judge people without first giving them a hearing to find out what they are doing, does it?" (Jn 7:51). This statement may have served as a defence of Jesus, or acted as a restraint on his colleagues to be open minded and follow the due process of the law. His choice of words<sup>50</sup> related to divine revelation such as κρίνει (judge or discern), ἀκούσῃ (hear) and γινῶ τί ποιᾷ (know His works), tend to support the view that Nicodemus was making more than a neutral statement about the procedure of the law. Judging by the rebuke from his colleagues (Jn 7:52), it does appear that they detected sympathies towards Jesus in Nicodemus. His putdown by his colleagues as a Galilean was certainly designed to silent Nicodemus' feeble witness, if witnessing was his intention. Shortly, Jesus would repeat the essential sentiments of Nicodemus' words by calling upon the οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι not to "judge by appearances, but judge with right judgment" (Jn 7:24). Hence there are some positive indications of commitment to Jesus from Nicodemus during this second appearance.

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<sup>50</sup> A legitimate technical point as to whether the choice of words was John's or Nicodemus' need not detract from this point. It is certain that John's intention was that the first readers should regard the words as Nicodemus'.

On the other hand however, the statement by Nicodemus does not in itself constitute a full and open confession of Jesus; certainly, not in Johannine terms. In fact it could be rightly countered that Nicodemus was merely concerned that the correct procedure be followed in the gathering of evidence for Jesus' arrest, a suggestion which was eventually ignored. It could be reasonably argued that his concern was not for Jesus *per se*. One is therefore left with the impression that Nicodemus had spurned an opportunity to witness about Jesus, if indeed he was a disciple at this point. Like Joseph of Arimathea and other crypto-disciples, what matters in assessing their discipleship, were their motivation and the timing of their speech and actions. Nicodemus' motivation in his statement is unclear; but on the whole, he feebly let pass the opportunity to witness. Could it also be said of him, that he "loved human glory more than the glory that comes from God" (Jn 12:43)?

When Nicodemus appears on the third occasion in the Gospel, he joins Joseph of Arimathea to bury Jesus. It is my judgment that this was a very positive sign and implied an open commitment of discipleship to Jesus. Firstly, his association with Joseph, who is explicitly labelled as a disciple, indicates Nicodemus' willingness to come out of his secrecy and be openly associated with other disciples. Secondly, it is said that Nicodemus brought a rather large quantity of burial spices, fitting only for a royal burial. This may represent a token of the measure of his belief in Jesus. Thirdly, even though the reader is yet again reminded that Nicodemus had previously come to Jesus during the night, now he openly comes out in the day, bearing Jesus' body for a royal burial in a tomb in a garden. Could it not be that at long last Nicodemus had come out of the metaphorical darkness?

Several interpreters however take a different view and note that the ambiguity over Nicodemus persists in this final appearance, leaving the character unresolved or worse still, in the negative light (e.g. Esler and Piper 2006, 72-73; Lincoln 2005, 485; Culpepper 1983, 136). It is noted for example that it is Joseph of Arimathea who is explicitly labelled as a disciple, and a secret one at that—perhaps contrasting the two rather than associating them. The contrast is also suggested when it is clarified that it was Joseph alone who came out of his secrecy to boldly ask for the Body of Jesus from

Pilate, Nicodemus joining him only after the bold act by his Sanhedrinist colleague. In fact for some interpreters (e.g. Culpepper 1983, 136), the association of Joseph with Nicodemus is one of negativity; for, they are censured by the Evangelist as secret disciples. It is further noted that the expression that Nicodemus “also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes” (Jn 19:39) appears to accord him a secondary and passive supportive role to Joseph, perhaps indicating less enthusiasm on his part. Furthermore, it has been pointed out that Nicodemus’ procurement of large quantity of burial spices need not be seen positively. It may well be an ironic note from John on the futility of secrecy; for, Nicodemus brings these spices too late with the pathetic intention of fulfilling the Jewish law that he had held so dearly and in order to embalm or even encase the Body of Jesus that could not be so held by death. For John, the real preparation of burial had been done a week earlier by Mary (cf. Koester 2003, 228).

These differences in assessment of the characterization of Nicodemus appear to be influenced, as already pointed out, by the value systems of interpreters. The point must be agreed though that Nicodemus has both positive and negative features. How much these are weighed in terms of their relative values may remain difficult to resolve. In this respect, Nicodemus is an ambiguous character. Yet, several of the positive features indicate that he was, at the very least, an ambiguous disciple.

#### 5.1.4 Who is a Johannine Disciple? Summary and Implications

The above examination of the characterization of several of the actants in John’s Gospel who have qualities of the disciple, has established a number of important points which will influence the investigation of their formation. Firstly, it is clear that while Mark uses the designation “disciples” for those in the inner circles of Jesus’ company, John uses it much more widely. Infact, in certain circumstances a number of scholars have tended to regard John’s use of the designation to equate to ordinary interlocutors and even listeners to Jesus’ teaching rather than people who believed in Him. This approach has been rejected in favour of regarding John’s view of discipleship as uniformly applied to those who believe in Jesus. It has however also established that John regarded belief

in Jesus in degrees, so that some who believed subsequently defected from Jesus and did not continue in the path of discipleship.

Moreover, and compared to the previous chapter, the preceding examination, has also shown that when the methods of characterizing actants by both Evangelists are taken into consideration, Mark and John both have a similar approach to depicting disciples. In both, they acknowledge Jesus' closest group of followers whom they designate as disciples or the twelve. Even though he regards this group as emissaries of Jesus, John does not use the title "apostles" for them, unlike Mark who uses it functionally on a few occasions. It is also evident that John locates several individuals and groups of people outside Galilee, especially Judea and Samaria, who came to faith in Jesus. Study of the characterization and formation of these individuals will most likely help broaden the understanding of the shape and dynamics of the earliest Christian movement.

Secondly, and contrary to some of the recent approaches to characterization in John, the preceding discussion has shown that many Johannine characters who are depicted as disciples also have round features. In addition, and far more evident in John's Gospel than in Mark's, the characterization of several of these characters change from episode to episode. On several occasions, the changes actually occur during the same episode. And this applies to both conventional and non-conventional disciples. Thus within a single or a number of successive pericopae, the changes in the views and beliefs of a character as they interact with Jesus may be detected. This has been shown in the case of a number of non-conventional disciples such as Nicodemus, the Samaritan woman, the royal official and some of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι. The implications of this finding to the present project are immense; for, identifiable changes in round characters enable the formation of the character as s/he interacts with Jesus to be charted. Accordingly, John's account makes it possible to describe and analyze the progressive formation of individual characters as well as groups of characters. This will be taken up in the next section with the analysis of the formation of the man born blind, and in the third section with the analysis of the formation of the twelve.

Thirdly, it is clear that, as in Mark's Gospel, the disciples in John also function as agents of Jesus' power and revelation. By far however, the emphasis in John's Gospel is more on revelation and in particular the disciples as witnesses of Jesus. In this regard, Jesus' signs and discourses are aimed at instilling, developing and strengthening the faith of disciples so that they grow to fulfil these functions.

Table 5.4 Discipleship Qualities of Some Johannine Non-Conventional Disciples

Disciple	Discipleship Qualities	Comments
<b>Joseph of Arimathea</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Changed from opposing Jesus</li> <li>• Secured Jesus' Body from Pilate</li> <li>• Gave Jesus a royal burial</li> </ul>	Secret disciple "for fear of the Jews"
<b>Lazarus</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loved by Jesus</li> <li>• Friend of Jesus and the twelve</li> <li>• A living testimony of Jesus' divinity</li> <li>• Subject of persecution and plotting by Pharisees</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some propose he was the Beloved Disciple. Unlikely</li> </ul>
<b>Martha</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loved by Jesus</li> <li>• Confessed Jesus as Messiah</li> <li>• Service and Hospitality to Jesus</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Practicality meant she struggled to grasp Jesus' teaching</li> </ul>
<b>Mary of Bethany</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loved by Jesus</li> <li>• Devotion and love to Jesus</li> <li>• Prophetic anointing of Jesus for burial</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No confession of faith</li> </ul>
<b>Mary Magdalene</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eyewitness of death and resurrection</li> <li>• Fulfilled apostolic commission</li> </ul>	Misinterpreted resurrection signs until she heard Jesus call her name
<b>βασιλικός of Capernaum</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• He heard about Jesus</li> <li>• Believed in Jesus after the sign</li> <li>• Believed without receiving discourse explaining the sign</li> <li>• He obeyed Jesus' command</li> <li>• Believed with his household</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Was Jesus' prior rebuke directed at the official?</li> </ul>
<b>Samaritan Woman</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revelatory dialogue with Jesus</li> <li>• Believed in Jesus</li> <li>• Transformed by Jesus</li> <li>• Confessed Jesus</li> <li>• Witnessed and reaped harvest</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Morally dubious background</li> <li>• Several discussions on OT traditions involved in formation</li> </ul>
<b>Mary, Mother of Jesus</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Persistent faith</li> <li>• Eyewitness of crucifixion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initial rebuff as part of Jesus strategy of formation</li> </ul>
<b>Nicodemus</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Buried Jesus</li> <li>• ?Tentative faith</li> <li>• Ambiguous disciple</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Secret Disciple</li> <li>• Neutral defence of Jesus to colleagues</li> </ul>

Yet, faith alone is not adequate for growth of the disciple, and an ever deepening relationship with Jesus, which is described as dwelling or abiding in Him, is also necessary. Those disciples who persist in faith and continue to abide grow and function as witnesses of Jesus. Those who don't may fall away into unbelief. The object of witnessing is to bring others to a similar encounter with, and faith in Jesus, a process which John sometimes labels as reaping and bearing fruit. How these processes of formation function in the cases of individual disciples and for the group of disciples will be tested in the next two sections. I will now examine how these features occur in the formation of a non-conventional disciple.

## **5.2 The Formation of the Man Born Blind as a Disciple**

The account of the healing of the man born blind and his subsequent ordeals at the hands of his acquaintances and the Pharisees, along with his progressive growth in spiritual insight in contrast to the equally progressive blindness of the Pharisees, is one of the pivotal sections of the Gospel. Narratologically, the account has extensive links with the healing of the invalid of Bethzatha in Jn 5, carrying forward several important themes in that pericope such as, the chronic nature of the debilitating disease, the hostility of the Pharisees, Jesus' Sabbath disputes with them, the undercurrent element of the effects of sin, the Johannine water symbolism and Jesus' intentional formational activities. These themes and others are further advanced in the healing of the man born blind and the subsequent discourses on the Good Shepherd (cf. Staley 1991, 50-80; Collins 1976, 26-46; 118-132; Brown 1966, cxliv; Countryman 1987, 41; Lieu 1988, 83-95; Kysar 1984, 34; Martyn 1979, 37-62; Haenchen 1984, 1.247; Painter 1986, 31-61; Asiedu-Peprah 2001).

In addition to its dramatic features, a number of the themes which were central to Jesus' controversial debates with the Jerusalem Jews in the temple area (Jn 7-8), as well as some of the symbols of the feasts of Tabernacles and Hanukkah which provide the temporal setting for those controversies, are also featured in the miracle (cf. Painter 1986, 31-61; Brown 1966, 376-377). Furthermore, there are apparent links with the purificatory symbolism in the footwashing of John 13 (cf. Asumang 2009b). The



disproportionate space given to the anonymous blind man also serves as a powerful means of attracting the reader into sharing the formational journey of discipleship with him, in its Johannine conceptualization. Accordingly, and for the purpose of the present project, the account is likely to provide several important insights on how Johannine theology impacts on the interactions between Johannine Christology and Discipleship.

Indeed majority of Johannine scholars from the late 1960s till the middle of the present decade accepted Martyn's hypothesis that this story depicts significant aspects of the history of the Johannine community which has been superimposed on a miracle performed by Jesus—thus began what is commonly known as the “two-level drama” method of reading the Gospel (1968). Martyn based his theory mostly on the temporal sense of Jn 9:4a—“We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day”—suggesting that the “we” refers to both Jesus and the Johannine community whose continuing co-operation in working “the works of God” is featured within the narrative. A further supposed evidence for his theory was the situation depicted in Jn 9:22—“the Jews had already agreed that anyone who confessed Jesus to be the Messiah would be put out of the synagogue”. He argued that the practice of excommunication from synagogues was unlikely to have occurred during Jesus' lifetime.

Instead, Martyn postulated that the *Sitz im Leben* implied by Jn 9:22 fitted a later period after the meeting of the hypothetical Rabbinic Synod of Jamnia sometime between AD 80 – 115 at which the procedure for excommunication were agreed, along with the detailed malediction or *birkat-ha-minim* to be read out on the excommunicants, most of whom were Christians. Martyn proposed that it was some of the experiences of these excommunicants that are portrayed in John 9. In such a reading, the Johannine community is represented by the man born blind, and the chapter sought to encourage the members of the community to persevere as did the man till Jesus' return (1979, 59-62). Taking a leaf out of this theory, Brown proceeded to hypothesize on the probable socio-cultural make up and detailed history of this community (1979; cf. Painter 1986, 31-81). Until a few years ago therefore, John 9 was generally regarded by interpreters as an important window through which to understand the socio-historical circumstances behind the writing of the Gospel, as well as aspects of Johannine ecclesiology.

Several recent studies have however seriously undermined the foundational assumptions underpinning this interpretation of the passage, as well as the method of reading the whole Gospel on two levels that supports it (e.g. Horbury 1982, 19-61; Beasley-Murray 1987, 153-154; Hengel 1989, 114-115; Carson 1991, 360-361; Bauckham 1998; Hagerland 2003, 309-322; Watson 1998, 195-217; Keener, 2003, 194-214). Chief among the objections are the lack of any evidence supporting the idea of a distinct historical time when excommunication of Christians from synagogues started, the fact that no such similar genre of literature in antiquity has been discovered, the circularity and often allegorical tendency of the methodology itself, and the availability of better alternatives for interpreting the “we” of Jn 9:4. Horbury has also argued with some persuasion that the more likely *Sitz im Leben* for the *birkat-ha-minim* was the presence of non-Jews in some synagogues, rather than what may have pertained during John’s time of writing the Gospel (1982, 51-53).

The lack of any historical evidence of essentially closed or isolated Christian communities in the first century, and the fact that the little evidence available rather supports fluid networking of Christian churches also severely weakens Martyn’s approach. In any case, the idea of believers in Jesus being thrown out of synagogues is not unique to John’s Gospel, but also occurs in the Synoptics and with Paul (cf. Beasley-Murray 1987, 154; contra Barrett 1978b, 361). Thus the very fundamental tenets of the “two-level-drama” approach are problematic. This of course is not to say that, while writing the Gospel, the Evangelist may not have had several churches in mind as his first readers and so selected his emphases in a manner as to achieve his rhetorical and pedagogical aims. He may well have had such considerations; but his primary concern was to present the *bios* of Jesus, so that the readers would believe, and so have eternal life (Jn 20:31). John’s aim was not to immortalize the history of his readers.

What Martyn and others detected in the passage, but took it in the direction they did, is the significant interactions between Johannine theology, Christology and discipleship which it portrays. Specifically, the chapter effectively charts the formation of a non-conventional disciple in a progressive manner, culminating in his vision of the Son of

Man, whom he finally worships. It may be recalled, that the vision of the Son of Man on whom angels ascend and descend was what Jesus promised one of His first disciples at the beginning of His public ministry in Jn 1:35-51. This intra-textual allusion therefore invites a closer scrutiny of the formation of the man born blind. And it is this interesting feature which also motivates the exegesis that now follows. Firstly, the boundaries and the literary structure and form of the passage will be outlined. This is followed by a narrative theological exegesis of the passage. A concluding analysis of the overall dynamics of the formation of this disciple will close the section.

### 5.2.1 The Literary Boundaries and Structure of the Passage

There are good reasons to believe that the literary unit extends from Jn 9:1 to Jn 10:21, made up of the two subunits, Jn 9:1-41 and 10:1-21. Firstly, a definite change of scene is indicated in Jn 8:59 when Jesus escapes the mob who attempted to stone Him in the temple and proceeds into hiding. John 9:1 on the other hand begins with Jesus walking along, clearly in distinction from being in hiding. Secondly, the narrative space and time remains the same throughout Jn 9:1 to 10:21. Thirdly, the Amen, Amen formula in Jn 10:1 links the discourse of Jn 9:41 to 10:1. Indeed, the discourse of Jn 10:1-21 continues to address the Pharisees (or the Jews; cf. Jn 10:19) who in Jn 9:40 had queried whether Jesus regarded them also as blind (cf. Brown 1966, 388).

Fourthly, the reference to the healing of the blind in Jn 10:21 indicates that the preceding discourse that it concludes should also be regarded as part of Jesus' commentary on the whole event involving the man born blind. John 10:22 begins another narrative in the setting of a different feast and place, even though the metaphor of sheep, as well as the controversy with the Jews continues through to the end of Jn 10 (cf. Schnackenburg 1970, 2.275; Thatcher 1999, 53-77). This illustrates the fact that the whole of Jn 5-10 forms a literary super-structure, with several interlocking themes distributed throughout the section. However, the distinct breaks between Jn 8:59 and Jn 9:1 at the beginning, and Jn 10:21 and Jn 10:22 indicate that Jn 9:1-10:21 may be regarded as one single unit.

Mlakuzhyil has countered that there are differences between the vocabulary and metaphors of Jn 9, where the concerns are mostly on epistemology, and of Jn 10, where the Shepherd and sheep metaphors dominate (1987, 208). This is essentially correct; since there clearly is an abrupt change of topic with Jn 10:1. However, the corresponding contents between the two sub-units also affirm that a theological relationship nevertheless exists between Jn 9:1-41 and Jn 10:1-21. As will shortly become obvious, the situation of the blind man who is excommunicated by the Pharisees, only to be sought and found by Jesus to whom He surrenders, is not unlike that of the sheep at the peril of the thieves and bandits, but who also could count on the personal care and attention of the Good Shepherd in Jn 10. This suggests that the two subunits ought to be studied together, while at the same time appreciating their distinctive differences as well as their links with the surrounding units.

Table 5.5: The Literary Structure of Jn 9:1-10:21

Passage	Title
<b>Jn 9:1-5</b>	Jesus Interacts with His Disciples
<b>Jn 9:6-7</b>	Jesus Heals the Blind Man
<b>Jn 9:8-13</b>	Blind Man Witnesses to his Acquaintances
<b>Jn 9:14-17</b>	Blind Man's First Witness to the Pharisees
<b>Jn 9:18-23</b>	Blind Man's Parents Interrogated by Pharisees
<b>Jn 9:24-33</b>	Blind Man's second Witness to the Pharisees
<b>Jn 9:34-38</b>	Jesus Reveals Himself to Blind Man
<b>Jn 9:39 – 10:21</b>	Jesus' Concluding Discourse

With regard to the literary structure, Martyn's suggestion that Jn 9:1-41 is a drama with seven scenes has much to commend it (1979, 26-27; cf. Beasley-Murray 1987, 152). Each scene is played by only two active groups of characters on the stage, thus breaking up the passage into a seven-part structure followed by Jesus' concluding discourse (table 5.5; cf. Moloney 1998, 290-291). In addition, most of the sub-divisions are controlled by an epistemological discussion, with the interlocutors assuming various stances as to what they know and don't know. Though it is not prominent in all of the scenes, Christology plays a major role as the subject of the epistemological discussion, allowing the blind man to articulate his progressive growth in perception which continues to occur as he is interrogated, while acting as Jesus' witness.

With regard to its literary form, the several interrogations constituting the bulk of Jn 9 lend a tone of legal procedure to the chapter, either of a trial, lawsuit, or at least, a juridical controversy of some sort<sup>51</sup>. Opinions, however, differ among interpreters regarding certain aspects of the details of this juridical form. Based on the similarities between the account and Jn 5, Asiedu-Peprah has put forward a number of arguments to suggest that the chapter is best read as a Sabbath related juridical controversy akin to Old Testament juridical controversies (2001, 3-5; cf. Neyrey 1996, 107-124). In that sense, the dispute over the Sabbath would be the controlling factor in the chapter, supported by issues related to Jesus' identity and authority for breaking the Sabbath.

Asiedu-Peprah is correct to argue that the Sabbath plays a key role in instigating the controversy. Jesus' introductory reference to working while it is day (Jn 9:4), and the thematic and literary links between Jn 5 and Jn 9 also support this view. However, the spotlight in Jn 9 is mostly on epistemology and the ever shifting Christological debates from one scene to another. The Sabbath infringement therefore appears to serve as the initial reason for the conflict which then becomes more focused on the identity of Jesus and the basis for establishing that identity. Indeed the judicial issues raised in the whole Gospel tend to have an admixture of disputations over fact-finding, definitions, the status of the Mosaic Law, whether blasphemy has been committed and the identity of Jesus.

It is therefore more prudent to approach the passage with openness to the possibility of such networking of issues rather than a specific legal point in dispute (cf. Johns and Miller 1994, 523; Charles 1989, 71-83; Trites 1977, 78-127; Pancaro 1975). Accordingly, one may not be far from correct in assuming that the literary form of the passage more likely follows the trial or lawsuit motif. Lincoln has taken exactly this view with regard to John 9 and suggested that the lawsuit motif with its emphases on truth, witness and judgment serves as an extended metaphor, not only for interpreting Jn 9 but for the Gospel as a whole (1994, 3-30; cf. Watt 2004; Lincoln 2000). Given that the

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<sup>51</sup> Jeffrey Staley's (1991, 65) suggestion that the statement in Jn 9:3-5 indicates that the form is a pronouncement story is not wholly persuasive.

motif with its seven witnesses<sup>52</sup> also occurs in other parts of the Gospel, it is likely that it also serves as an extended metaphor controlling the form of the passage.

Table 5.6 Theology, Christology and Discipleship in John 9

Section	Christology	Discipleship	Theology
<b>Jn 9:1-5</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Light of the World</li> <li>• The Sent One</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agents of Jesus</li> <li>• Vehicles of Revelation</li> <li>• “We” must work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sin</li> <li>• Works of God</li> </ul>
<b>Jn 9:6-7</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Charismatic Healer</li> <li>• Jesus the Creator</li> <li>• Messianic fulfilment of Isaiah</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Faith</li> <li>• Obedience</li> <li>• Breaking the Sabbath as Messianic agent</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mosaic Law on Sabbath</li> <li>• Spittle for anointing</li> <li>• Kneading as recreation</li> <li>• Siloam symbolism(s)</li> </ul>
<b>Jn 9:8-13</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Man called Jesus</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Witnessing to Acquaintances</li> <li>• Transformation from blindness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indeterminate Assessment of Jesus and σχίσμα</li> </ul>
<b>Jn 9:14-17</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prophet Christology</li> <li>• “Of God” Christology</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Witnessing to Pharisees</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sabbath theology</li> </ul>
<b>Jn 9:18-23</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Messiah Christology</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ? Were Parents crypto-believers?</li> </ul>	
<b>Jn 9:24-33</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greater than Moses Christology</li> <li>• “Of God” Christology</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Witnessing to Pharisees</li> <li>• The reviled him</li> <li>• Excommunication</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sin</li> </ul>
<b>Jn 9:34-38</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Son of Man Christology</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seeing and hearing the Son of Man</li> <li>• Believing</li> <li>• Confessing</li> <li>• Worshipping</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revelation</li> </ul>
<b>Jn 9:39-10:21</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good Shepherd Christology</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disciple as Jesus’ sheep</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Judgment of the Jews</li> </ul>

If this is so, then the key question to answer is who was on trial in Jn 9—was it the blind man, his parents, the neighbours, the Jews or Jesus? Though he admits that in his lawsuit conceptualization of the plot of John’s Gospel, Jesus acts as both judge and accused, Lincoln nevertheless regards Jesus, and therefore, by surrogate, the blind man as the one on trial in John 9 (1994, 7). Yet, the concluding statements by Jesus in

<sup>52</sup> The witnesses are the Father (e.g. Jn 12:28), the Son (Jn 8:14), Jesus’ works (Jn 5:36), the Holy Spirit (Jn 15:26), Scripture (Jn 5:39), the Baptist (Jn 5:33-35) and the disciples (Jn 15:27; cf. Tenney 1975, 229-241). Another point in support of the lawsuit motif is the pervasiveness of the motif in Isaiah 40-55, given the influence of other themes from this portion of Isaiah on the Fourth Gospel.

Jn 9:39 turns the table on the heads of the Pharisees, making them the accused (cf. Köstenberger 2005, 33-62; Matson 2003, 126-128; Smothers 1988, 545-554; Neyrey 1987, 509-541; Ito 2000a, 361-371; Ito 2000b, 373-387). As I now show, as a vehicle of divine revelation, the blind man acts as agent of Jesus, by whose witness the Pharisees are condemned as under sin and in darkness. In addition, while fulfilling this function, the blind man himself is further transformed, grows in his perception of Jesus and eventually sees and hears the Son of Man, the embodied Divine Council.

## 5.2.2 Narrative-theological Analysis of the Formation of the Man Born Blind

### 5.2.2.1 *Working the Works of God: Jn 9:1-5*

The account begins with a theological discussion between Jesus and His disciples regarding the relationship between sin and illness. Seemingly brushing aside the apparently abstract rabbinic-like interest of the disciples regarding whose sin was culpable for the plight of the man born blind, Jesus raises the more important question of the man's predicament in the face of divine revelation and God's work—like Lazarus in Jn 11, the man “was born blind so that God's works might be revealed in him. We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming when no one can work” (Jn 9:3-4). As will become evident, the issue of sin will nevertheless remain a key element of this account. In the meantime, and with this pronouncement, Jesus refocused His disciples' attention on His mission and the disciples' participation in it. Given that the miracle that followed was performed on the Sabbath, the reference to “work” evokes an important theological issue of Jesus' identity and authority. The pronouncement also sets an agenda for the healing of the blind man, as well as his subsequent witness as Jesus' agent. Like the disciples, the man born blind also became a vehicle of the God's revelation.

Jesus' pronouncement raises a number of key questions that affect how the rest of the chapter is exegeted—(a) what did Jesus mean by “God's works”, (b) who are the referents for the “we” in Jn 9:4, and (c) what aspects of “God's works” are shared by the

respective members of the “we”? Together with the σημεῖα (signs), the ἔργα are distinctively employed by the Evangelist to describe Jesus’ “missionary” task as the Sent One. By definition, only Jesus performs a sign in the Gospel of John. “Works” is on the other hand, a much wider term, which in relation to Jesus, also incorporates the signs, and is defined as all the actions and speeches of Jesus done as means of performing the task that the Father sent Him. Indeed in John, “Jesus’ works are God’s works performed by and through Jesus” (de Jonge 1978, 121).

Unlike the signs, the works are shared by others in the Gospel (contra Bultmann 1971, 331; who does not distinguish the two here). While majority of the ἔργα statements in the Gospel therefore relate to Jesus, some relate to the disciples (e.g. Jn 3:19-21; 6:27-30; 8:39-41; 14:12) and to the Father (e.g. Jn 4:34; 5:17-20; 6:29; 10:37). And the disciples as His agents share in aspects of this apostolic mission of Jesus. Dodd’s suggestion that the “we” of Jn 9:4 could simply be part of a proverbial saying which Jesus here uses (1976, 186), is possible, even though the notion of the disciples’ sharing in aspects of Jesus’ mission also occurs elsewhere in the Gospel (e.g. Jn 14:12; 20:21). As observed earlier Louis Martyn’s theory that John’s use of the apparently self-referential plural pronoun, ἡμεῖς (literally, “us”) in Jn 9:4 is indicative of the Evangelist’s move to combine the history of the “Johannine community” with that of Jesus’ ministry is untenable. If anything, it may be that John is including himself in the “we” here or stating the notion that he and his readers shared in aspects of Jesus’ mission. Accordingly, the immediate referents for the “we” in Jn 9:4 is most likely Jesus, the Father, and also the disciples (cf. Carson 1991, 362; Keener 2003, 779; Beasley-Murray 1987, 155; Lincoln 2005, 281). John 9:4 states in a succinct form the co-operative nature of the participation of disciples in the mission of God and of His Christ.

What interpreters, however, appear to have missed in this discussion is the possibility that the “we” may also include the man born blind. There are several reasons for at least considering this option. Firstly, the pronouncement by Jesus is made while declaring the role of the man’s illness in fulfilling God’s mission—“he was born blind so that God’s works might be revealed in him. *We* must work the works of him...” Thus though the “we” includes Jesus’ immediate interlocutors, at least theoretically, there is



no reason to exclude the would-be recipient of the miracle in whom “God’s works” was going to be revealed.

Secondly, and as will shortly become evident, the man may himself have broken the Sabbath in his act of obedience to Jesus. If this was so, then Jesus was stating the partnership between Him and the blind man in working “the works of Him” on the Sabbath. Metaphorically, the night and day in Jn 9:4 also refer to Jesus’ death, and the question of the limits of a disciple’s “work” in relation to Jesus’ work in that context will shortly be discussed (cf. Poirier 2006, 113-120). Yet, by working on the Sabbath, both Jesus and the blind man will serve a purpose in God’s mission, and that may have been part of the intention for employing the “we” in Jn 9:4. Thirdly, the rest of the narrative places the man at centre stage in performing the task of witnessing on behalf of Jesus, hence suggesting that in Jn 9:4, Jesus may be indicating the shared ministry of disciples in acting as agents of revelation. Fourthly, John’s use of anonymity as a rhetorical strategy may be an attempt to draw his first readers into sharing the journey of faith of the blind man in this passage. Including the man born blind in the “we” may therefore have served the Evangelist’s communicative strategy<sup>53</sup>.

Now, if it is true that the man born blind was included in the “we” of Jn 9:4, then it is necessary to also delineate which aspect of Jesus’ mission he, and for that matter, Jesus’ disciples were called to share. Specifically, the question is asking, which aspect of “God’s works” that Jesus did that His disciples could not do? This question is relevant, not only as a control for exegeting the rest of the chapter, but also for demarcating the functions of disciples in participating in “God’s works” vis-à-vis that of Jesus.

Among interpreters, there is a considerable debate regarding this question. The problem basically emanates from how the overall ἔργα of Jesus is conceived in the Gospel before defining the role of the disciples in it. Interpreters such as Bultmann

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<sup>53</sup> Such a consideration would also appear to support the patristic symbolic interpretation of the man born blind as representing humanity born with the blindness of sin (cf. Koester 2003, 64). The numerous variants in extant manuscripts indicate the exegetical challenge of the “we” of Jn 9:4.

understand ἔργα through the prism of revelation (2007, 2.54), so that Jesus' ἔργα in this world is simply to reveal; for, the basic problem of humanity is ignorance caused by their sinful nature. Viewed this way, the death of Jesus is deemed relevant, only as it is conceived of as a revelation of God's glory and as a staging post in Jesus' primary mission of revelation. Thus to Forestell for example, Johannine soteriology "does not consider the death of Jesus to be vicarious and expiatory sacrifice for sin" (1974, 2; cf. Fortna 1988, 227; van der Watt 2007, 56). This follows on the theory by Bultmann that in John's Gospel, it is belief in the incarnation which was the means of salvation, rather than belief in the atonement (1951, 40). If such a view is taken as representing the core of "God's works", then by being a vehicle of revelation, the blind man and hence the disciples' participation in Jesus' mission amounted to witnessing to Jesus as the Revealer.

Yet, such a view of how salvation is portrayed in John 9 and the whole Gospel, and hence the believer's participation in "God's works" is inadequate. Other important themes such as the cultic elements of Jesus' death, often portrayed through the imageries of the Gospel (e.g. Jn 1:29; 3:16; 13:10; 19:14-17, 29, 36), ought to be considered in this scheme. Furthermore, the question of sin, as John presents it in John 9 and the whole Gospel, is clearly wider than ignorance or rejection of divine revelation. Besides, the theologies of atonement and cleansing, though perhaps muted, and certainly less prominent than in Pauline theology for example, is nevertheless not completely absent from John's Gospel (cf. Turner 1990, 99-122). As Grigsby notes, "Salvation in the Fourth Gospel is presented not only as the bestowal of eternal life, but also as a state of existence wherein sin is eliminated and judgment is escaped...there are sufficient hints throughout the Gospel to suppose that the Evangelist endorsed such a rationale" (1982, 52; cf. Carey 1981, 97-122; Köstenberger 1998b, 81).

The fact therefore is that the two approaches to soteriology in John—revelation and atonement from sin—should not be set in contradistinction against each other as if they were mutually exclusive (cf. Köstenberger 1998b, 80). Elsewhere in the Gospel, the disciples share in the mission of Jesus by harvesting (Jn 4:38), believing (Jn 6:28), bearing fruit (Jn 15:8, 16), and witnessing (Jn 15:27). They are also predicted to perform

“greater works” (Jn 14:12) and under the power of the Holy Spirit, to forgive sins (Jn 20:23). Though the question of how exactly these functions are or will be performed by the disciples will need to be investigated, these examples suggest that there is a derivative sense in which the disciple, in total dependence on Jesus, may share in certain aspects of Jesus’ task. Yet, the disciple cannot be a sacrifice for the sin of others—only Jesus would (Jn 1:29). As will shortly become apparent, the symbolism of Siloam in John 9, as well as the nuanced references to sin in the chapter, point to a Johannine inter-penetration of revelation and atonement theologies in such a manner that while Jesus fulfills both aspects of “God’s works”, the disciple performs the aspect of revelation as His agent.

#### *5.2.2.2 Washing in Siloam to Receive Sight: Jn 9:6-7*

The second scene narrates the miracle in a straight forward and typically brief Johannine style of miracle description. Jesus uses spittle and mud to knead a clay paste with which He anoints the blind man’s eyes. He then instructs the man to go to the pool called Siloam to wash. The man duly obeys, washes in the pool and returns seeing. Though it is sometimes assumed by interpreters that the man was situated somewhere around the temple area where he could beg (e.g. Moloney 1998, 290), it is nevertheless not at all certain whether the distance he travelled to and from the pool did not contravene the Sabbath law. The Evangelist notes that the man ἀπῆλθεν (went off) and ἦλθεν (he came back), suggesting the possibility that this involved some distance of travel. And if as is suggested by Keener, the pool of Siloam was most likely part of the wall of Jerusalem during Jesus’ time (2003, 781), then there is the probability that the blind man broke the Sabbath (cf. Whitacre 1999, 241). In addition, given the manner in which he was hurled before the Pharisees, it is probable that his neighbours believed he had done something wrong, along with his Benefactor who has healed on the Sabbath (contra Carson 1991, 366). Certainly, the invalid of Bethzatha in Jn 5 with whom the blind man is paralleled broke the Sabbath in carrying his pallet in obedience to Jesus. Therefore, if the blind man also broke the Sabbath, then he indeed shared in Jesus’ “work” on the Sabbath.

Though the account of the miracle is brief, there is the suggestion that the Evangelist also aimed to communicate through symbolism. Bultmann's instinct is that the interpretation of Siloam as "sent" in Jn 9:7, especially since it is a strained interpretation, "raises the symbolism of the narrative to the level of allegory" (1971, 333). Even though it should not be taken in the negative connotation that Bultmann implies, he is essentially correct if by "allegory" he meant the author's desire to make his theologizing more explicit. That the Evangelist employs symbolism as an effective communicative strategy is an enduring attribute to the power of the Gospel. And identifying them is key to understanding the theological purpose of the Gospel (cf. van der Watt et al. 2006). For the present purposes, two symbols may be noted in the second scene, one implied, and the other more explicit—(a) kneading the clay and (b) washing in Siloam.

#### 5.2.2.2.1 Kneading the Clay Paste

The manner in which Jesus' kneading of the paste of clay is described appears to imply an attempt to communicate also through symbolism. It certainly indicates Jesus' breaking of the Sabbath, since kneading was forbidden as a Sabbath activity (cf. *m. Shabbat* 7.2). However, the suggestion by Irenaeus that through its similarity with Gen 2:7, the act of kneading of clay and applying the paste to the eye was symbolic of the recreation of the man's sight has much to commend it (*Adv. Haer.* 15.2). This also fits in well with the allusion to recreation in the healing of the invalid of John 5 with which it is paralleled (cf. Keener 2003, 780; Culpepper 1998, 175; Carson 1991, 364; Morris 1995, 427). The use of ἐπέχρισεν (anoint) for the application of the paste may also support such a view of spiritual transformation associated with the act, even though this need not imply recreation (cf. Carson 1991, 364). If as I shall later suggest, there is an element of commissioning in this scene, then the symbolism of the anointing may well be significant.

#### 5.2.2.2.2 The Symbolism of Washing in Siloam

The idea that the application of the kneaded clay to the man's eyes symbolized recreation or spiritual transformation is further supported by considering the symbolism of Siloam in this story. The Evangelist explicitly interprets the Hebrew name Siloam as "Sent". In the context of what has just been said two verses earlier about Jesus' mission, it should be taken that the Evangelist equates washing in Siloam with washing in the Sent One, Jesus. This is more so given that the writer strains the meaning of the word Siloam. As noted in chapter three of the dissertation, one of the powerful ways in which believing in Jesus is depicted in the Gospel is through the concept of divine hospitality in which God is depicted as a Receptacle who received believers into ever increasing and deeper fellowship (§ 3.3.3.2.5). Even though the blind man was not instructed to drink the water, but to wash in it, the washing could still be interpreted in terms of a deeper relationship with Jesus. At the least, going to Siloam depicts entrance into a believing relationship with Jesus, the embodied Divine Council.

The symbolism of washing of Siloam is, however, much wider than believing in Jesus. In Isa 8:6, the peoples' rejection of the "gently flowing waters of Shiloah" is cited as a reason for God's displeasure, for which He threatens sending floods from the Euphrates River. Later Rabbinic interpretation of this passage invested the "waters of Shiloah" with cultic and ritual powers (*Pesiq. R.* 16:6) so that by the time of Jesus, it was described as a "living well" and reputed to be very effective means of purification and a place for the immersion of proselytes (cf. Jeremias 1975, 320; Carson 1991, 365). Specifically, during each one of the seven water ceremonies of the festival of Tabernacles, pilgrims carried water from Siloam in a ceremonial march into the temple (*M. Sukkoth* 4:9-10).

Some Rabbinic exegetes also regarded the drawn water from Siloam as "water of expiation" (*M. Par* 3) and as a "fountain of Living Water" (*Tg. Song.* 4:15). A Messianic interpretation of Gen 49:10 was also associated with Siloam (cf. Beasley-Murray 1987, 156). And Davies has put forward persuasive arguments to show that the water was employed in the red heifer sacrificial rituals (1974, 315; cf. Grigsby 1985, 227-235 for more on rabbinic symbolism of Siloam). In fact the symbolism of Siloam continues in

present day Palestine—“even to this day, the pool is linked to the *mikveh* of the high priest Ishmael” (Keener 2003, 781).

Though John clearly regarded Siloam in symbolic fashion, how much of the above interpretations would have been in his mind is difficult to ascertain. Given that the literary context suggests that the healing of the blind man occurred during the feast of tabernacles, the symbolism of ritual purification, cleansing and “living water” would certainly have been evoked in the minds of John’s competent first readers. Furthermore, water in itself constitutes a pervasive, albeit complex, symbol in the Gospel. It has soteriological (e.g. Jn 3:5; 4:14; 19: 34), pneumatological (e.g. Jn 7:37-38) and eschatological overtones (e.g. Jn 2:1-11; cf. Ng 2001; Attridge 2006, 52-55). Yet, because in several passages, water is associated with cleansing or purification, as in references to baptism and its associations with purification (Jn 1:26, 31, 33, 2: 22-27) and in the footwashing in Jn 13, the idea of washing in Siloam, in contradistinction to drinking the water, would support a view that the most likely symbolism of Siloam is related to expiation and purification. Given the prominent expiatory and sacrificial overtones of the final and most explicit water symbolism in the Gospel (Jn 19:34), cleansing from sin would have been one of the key symbolisms denoted by washing in Siloam. As with most Johannine symbols, which are networked and forward looking, washing in Siloam acted in a proleptic fashion to anticipate the washing in the water and blood that would flow from Jesus’ side from the cross.

Accordingly, there is much to be said in support of Grigsby’s conclusion that the symbolism of Siloam in John 9 is multifaceted and may be understood in three main ways—(a) the drinking of “Living Water” to receive eternal life motif, (b) cleansing from sin and (c) Messianic eschatological overtones (1985, 232-235). Though his conclusion that there are baptismal elements in the Siloam symbolism probably takes the symbolism further than what the Evangelists may have intended, the presence of the sin motif in the chapter supports the conclusion that in sending the blind man to Siloam, Jesus was not just dealing with the healing of the man, but also cleansing him from sin, but in a proleptic fashion in anticipation of His death (cf. Carson 1991, 365). The

revelatory and sacrificial symbolisms in Johannine soteriology is beautifully illustrated in Siloam, an interaction which also occurs during the foot washing of Jn 13.

#### *5.2.2.3 Witnessing to Acquaintances: Jn 9:8-13*

The transformation in the blind man was immediately noticed by his neighbours and others “who had seen him before as a beggar” (Jn 9:8). Even though Howard-Brook (2003, 218) attempts to make a fine distinction between the “neighbours” who knew the man as born blind, and the “others” who had previously seen him as a beggar, it more likely appears that the Evangelist regarded both as under one category of the people who were acquainted with the man as a blind beggar. Three paradoxical responses to the healed man raise several interesting theological questions of relevance to the Evangelist’s conceptualization of the nature and functions of discipleship—(a) reversal of “sight” between the man and his acquaintances, (b) σχίσμα (division) among the acquaintances, and (c) delivery to the Pharisees by the acquaintances. In addition, the man’s confession in this scene begins a series of progressive insights into Jesus’ identity that is worth exegeting.

##### *5.2.2.3.1 Reversal of the “Sight” of the Acquaintances*

For reasons that are not immediately clear, the acquaintances fail to recognize the healed man. Evidently, the material transformation in the man was profound. However, was it just a material transformation from his blind beggarly status to a confidently sighted man that prevented the acquaintances from recognizing him? Beasley-Murray believes so—the acquaintances found it “difficult to believe that the man who stood among them really was their neighbour, formerly so pitiable in his helplessness and poverty” (1987, 156). So also are the assessments of Howard-Brook (2003, 219), Carson (1991, 366) and Karris (1990, 48); and there is no reason to dispute this interpretation. If the man took sometime before reappearing in his neighbourhood, his physical transformation would be that significant as to create confusion regarding his identity. In that situation it is quite likely that former acquaintances would have been

unsure if he was the right man. Who could have believed that a man born blind would be made to see (cf. Jn 9:32)?

However, the disbelief that is implicit in the inability of the acquaintances to recognize the man pointedly hints at the theological significance that John saw in what happened; for, unbelief is at the root of lack of insight and spiritual discernment in the Gospel. In this respect, the contrast between the formerly blind man and his acquaintances that is heightened between Jn 9:7c and Jn 9:8 is significant—the man “came back able to see”, while his acquaintances “who had *seen* him before as a beggar” could now not recognize him. Whether this poignant contrast was intended by John is difficult to judge; but, given that the healed man was a token of the sign just performed by Jesus, there is no reason why such an interpretation may not have been in the mind of the Evangelist.

In the theological rubric of revelation in John’s Gospel, exposure to divine revelation causes spiritual blindness in those who oppose Jesus so that they fail to see what may have been obvious to those who have faith (cf. Jn 12:36-41). Given that these acquaintances were Jerusalemites, and hence in the larger context of how the Jews relate to Jesus in the Gospel, among those who refuse to accept Jesus, the possibility of negative connotations regarding the behaviour of the acquaintances are strong indeed (cf. Keener 2003, 783). In acting as a witness to Jesus, the blind man became the vehicle of Jesus’ revelation so that, like Jesus, the spiritual and physical transformation in the man acts as a means of judgment and a source of *σχίσμα* (division) on the world. Bultmann’s instinct that “the typical motive of witnesses is employed” by John in Jn 9:8 is therefore apt (1971, 333). And Jesus’ concluding statement that “I came into this world for judgment so that those who do not see may see, and those who do see may become blind” (Jn 9:39) should be regarded as applying not only to the Pharisees, but also the acquaintances who failed to see and believe the man’s witness in his mere presence and also words.



#### 5.2.2.3.2 Σχίσμα among the Acquaintances

Though John does not directly use the word σχίσμα to describe it, the confusion among the man's acquaintances as they debate the identity of the formerly blind man makes for an impressive dramatic effect. At least it denotes the extraordinary change in the man; for, it was typical in the ancient Mediterranean world for people of importance to evoke confusion regarding their identity in their observers (cf. Xenophon *Eph.* 1.2; Chariton 5.4.1-2). However, this confusion puts the shared "work" between Jesus and the healed man into clearer perspective when it is compared with the similar reactions by the crowd to Jesus in John's Gospel (e.g. Jn 7:25-43; 9:16; 10:19; 12:42-43). This also indicates why the "we" of Jn 9:4 included the healed man. Together with Jesus, the "we" became an offence that caused division among observers. It is fair therefore to echo Blank's conclusion at this point, that in effect, "it is not the healed man who stands in the centre of the discussion; he is only the occasion and the stone of offence; in the centre stands Jesus; he is in the entire narrative, although outwardly he is absent, yet as present as he alone can be" (1964, 255).

#### 5.2.2.3.3 Delivery of the Formerly Blind Man to the Pharisees

The delivery of the man born blind by his acquaintances to the Pharisees is a puzzling feature of the account. Why did they deliver him in the first place, and specifically to the Pharisees? Carson volunteers a plea for giving the benefit of doubt to the acquaintances regarding their behaviour. In his view, they brought the man to the Pharisees because they needed to clarify the religious significance of the miracle. At the local synagogue level, as the story appear to have been set in, no other authorities but the Pharisees could have established this religious significance (1991, 366; cf. Bultmann 1971, 334; Morris 1995, 430).

Though it is possible that the acquaintances were indeed innocent, the sense carried by αγωσιν in Jn 9:13a (literally, they brought) indicates that at least it began an informal judicial enquiry by the Pharisees than Carson allows for. Even though αγωσιν is used in a positive sense in a number of instances in the Gospel (e.g. Jn 1:42; 10:16), there are several more instances in which it is negative and adversarial (e.g. Jn 7:45; 8:3;

18:28; 19:4, 13). This suggests that the action in Jn 9:13 should be read negatively. In addition, that not a word of amazement or praise to God is expressed by the acquaintances for the miracle would hint at the Evangelist's disapproval of their actions.

Howard-Brook's view of the characterization of the acquaintances therefore appears much more apposite—"if we were unsure of the perspective of the neighbours and fellow observers from their questions, the fact that they respond by bringing the man to the Pharisees casts a shadow over their character" (2003, 220). When the Evangelist explains that the miracle had occurred on the Sabbath, the acquaintances behaviour does not at all appear innocent. Thus Witherington has good grounds to suggest that it was precisely because the acquaintances discovered that the man had been healed on the Sabbath that they brought him to the Pharisees (1995, 183). The response of hurling the man to the Pharisees therefore carries ominous overtones (cf. Lincoln 2005, 282; Keener 2003, 784). Should a disciple, and agent of Jesus, who faces such responses as Jesus also encountered be cowered?

#### 5.2.2.3.4 The Confessions of the Healed Man to His Acquaintances

Unbowed by the negative turn of events, the formerly blind man makes two confessions in this scene which further buttress not only his role as a vehicle of Jesus' revelation, but more so demonstrate his own increasing progress in faith. Firstly, the confession that "I am that man" (Jn 9:9) is not only an open admission which would result in his own excommunication, but is also typical of the confession of the true witnesses of John's Gospel. As noted in chapter three of the dissertation (§ 3.3.2), the Baptist's testimony similarly begun with an open admission of his own identity—"he confessed and did not deny it, but confessed" (Jn 1:20). The blind man likewise kept protesting that he indeed was the man; he would not refuse to acknowledge the transformation that had occurred in him.

Secondly, his choice of words in the first confession again reinforces the narrative's aim at closely associating the man with the "we" of Jn 9:4. The exact words he employed was, according to the Evangelist, Ἐγώ εἰμι (Jn 9:9; literally, I am), a self identification

found only on Jesus' lips elsewhere in the Gospel (cf. Jn 4:26). Theologically, how far the Evangelist intended these words to be taken is not completely certain, and the interpreter must be wary of reading too much into this (cf. Barrett 1978b, 359; Morris 1995, 429 n.25). However, and as noted in chapter two of this dissertation (§ 2.6.1.2), Peder Borgen offers evidence to show that at least some of the ancient rabbis subscribed to the notion of the judicial mystical union between the sender and the sent so that not only the authority but specific qualities of the commissioner are shared with the sent (2000, 85). If this notion is present, and there are sufficient indication elsewhere in John to show such mystical union between the Sender and sent agent, then shouldn't this reply be regarded as another indication that the man born blind was one of the "we" of Jn 9:4? Be it as it may, in the context of the passage, the least one could observe is the obvious echo of the man's words with Jesus' words five verses earlier—"I am the Light of the world" (Jn 9:4). Whether the statement again illustrates the mystical union of an agent with his Sender, even though possible, cannot be said for certain. At least it can certainly be said, that once again there is an indication of the shared "work" of the blind man in Jesus' mission to the world (cf. Lincoln 2005, 282).

Thirdly, the confession of the man regarding the identity of his Benefactor reveals, not only his intention to witness about Jesus, but also further gaps in His own spiritual growth. By identifying "the man called Jesus" (Jn 9:11), the healed man makes both positive and negative statements. His statement that Jesus was a "man" need not be taken negatively, even if it does not capture His full essence. Barrett is correct in noting that the healed man "has much to learn" (1978b, 359; cf. Morris 1978, 429). Yet, calling Jesus a "man" served an important positive confessional from the Evangelist's point of view; for, John was keen to remind his first readers that it was God who became flesh and lived among people who then saw His glory (Jn 1:14). Identifying Jesus as "a man" was therefore no way negative in of itself, albeit an inadequate assessment of His full Person. It was definitely also positive that the man knew Jesus' name, much more positive than the situation of the invalid of Bethzatha (Jn 5:13).

The man's admission that he did not know Jesus' whereabouts is difficult to evaluate. It should be taken as an honest statement, in which case, it still exposes the limits of his

knowledge, as all human beings are. On the other hand, if the Evangelist intended the admission to carry a theological connotation, then the best that can be said is its echo with the recurrent theme in the Gospel in which characters admit to not knowing where Jesus was from and was going (e.g. Jn 1:38-39; 6:62; 7:11, 34, 36; 8:19; 12:26; 14:3; 17:24). In fact, later on in the chapter, the Pharisees would also admit that “we do not know where he comes from” (Jn 9:29). If any theological motif is intended by the Evangelist, then in view of Jn 12:26—“where I am, there will my servant be also”—it may be that John was highlighting this man’s limitations as a disciple. There was more room for growth, and subsequent, interrogations by the Pharisees will paradoxically serve to increase his growth in insight so that he will eventually be found by Jesus Himself, and he will in turn see and worship Him, thus being where He is.

#### *5.2.2.4 Witnessing to the Pharisees I: John 9:14-17*

The healed man’s witness to the Pharisees proceeds in two stages, interrupted by an interlude in which his parents are also interrogated. In the first, the Pharisees were apparently interested in establishing the exact circumstances of the miracle; but the result, as it was with the case of the acquaintances, was σχίσμα (Jn 9:16). Whereas some of the Pharisees focused on the Sabbath violation and so concluded, rather prematurely, that Jesus was a sinner; others were willing to withhold judgment because of the “sign” that stood in front of them (Jn 9:18). The healed man therefore continues to fulfil his function as vehicle of the revelation of the embodied Divine Council—his presence becomes the means of judgment on an unbelieving world. Further interrogation of the man leads him to another confession, but one which much further advances upon his previous one. Confronted directly that he ought to express his opinion; for, “it was your eyes he opened”, the man promptly replies, προφήτης ἐστίν (Jn 9:17; literally, “prophet, He is”).

#### 5.2.2.4.1 Jesus, “a Prophet” or “the Prophet”?

This use of the anarthrous in the man’s confession leaves the interpreter with the challenging choice as to whether he meant to characterize Jesus as “a prophet” or as “the prophet”. As Domeris has shown, interpreting how the term “prophet” itself was employed in various books of the NT is always fraught with difficulties (1983, 135-143). An additional set of problems are introduced when the term is used in an anarthrous fashion. Two possible interpretive options present themselves—in the first option, “a prophet”, the confession could be categorizing Jesus as “an extraordinary man” with miraculous power (Brown 1966, 373), or an “unusual person, who excites wonder and respect” (Barrett 1978b, 360; cf. Bultmann 1971, 338; Carson 1991, 368; Malina and Rohrbaugh 1998, 172; Asiedu-Peprah 2000, 134), or even that “it recognizes that Jesus is ‘of God’ in the sense that would have been posited of Jewish prophets, namely that he has God’s approval of his mission” (Lincoln 2005, 283). The Samaritan woman’s confession in Jn 4:19, where she also employs an anarthrous προφήτης, is along similar lines of recognizing the extraordinariness of Jesus, and one with miraculous power of insight.

A further improvement in this category could be that the healed man was comparing Jesus with some of the Old Testament prophets. In other words, he meant that Jesus was “a prophetic figure”. Elijah and Elisha were the only Old Testament prophets who also performed extraordinary *healing* miracles. And the intertextual relationship between John 9 and Naaman’s healing (2 Kgs 5) could support a view that such a comparison was being made, even though it is not possible to positively ascertain this. At least almost all the major translations opt for translating προφήτης ἐστίν as “He is a prophet”. If so, characterizing Jesus as “a prophet” would still constitute an improvement on the man’s insight into the identity of Jesus. In Jn 4:44, Jesus positively appeared to accept that title, even though He clearly thought of it as an inadequate assessment.

The second alternative, with the definitive article, “the prophet” or “that prophet”, also occurs elsewhere in John’s Gospel (Jn 1:21, 25; 6:14; 7:40) and the possibility that the healed man was characterizing Jesus as such needs to be evaluated. When explicitly used, the title designates the fulfilment of the promise in Deut 18:15-18 of an

eschatological prophet of Messianic status, sometimes called the Prophet-like-Moses, characterized by extraordinary miracles at par with those of Moses' (cf. Beasley-Murray 1987, 157; Keener 2003, 436). In the most extensive and ground-breaking study into this subject, Meeks (1967) identifies this as the major Christological theme in John, especially in its association with kingship and the Mosaic traditions of early Judaism.

Though space will not allow a thorough examination of several aspects of his proposal, some of which may be queried, it suffices to note his general point that, the prophet and kingship categories inter-penetrate and illuminate each other. Other interpreters identify a substrain of prophet-like-Elijah tradition in John, but this is difficult to prove (cf. Domeris 1983a, 153). In addition, and on a number of occasions in John, there is no direct identification of Jesus as a prophet as such, but the narrative implies at least a contrast with the notion of Jesus as the prophet or "that prophet" (cf. Domeris 1983a; Martyn 1979, 107; Baylis 1989, 171-184; Johnston 1970, 39; Reinhartz 1989, 3-16). Could it be that the blind man and hence the Evangelist had this second category in mind?

Most interpreters believe that this second option was not what was intended in Jn 9:17. However, there are several reasons for withholding full judgment until investigation of other aspects of the "Prophet" Christology in John 9 is completed. Firstly, a Tannaitic Midrash on Deut 18 had speculated that the eschatological prophet would suspend a commandment of Moses, just as Elijah did (*Sipre Deut* 175.13). Given that the Pharisees and the healed man had both just established that Jesus had broken and thus "suspended" the Sabbath law in performing the extraordinary miracle in Jn 9:16, there is reason to pause before making a full judgment. Even if it cannot be proven that this interpretation of Deut 18 was common enough to have been shared by the healed man, the mere presence of such speculations, even if uncommon, cautions against a premature dismissal of the second option.

Secondly, it is evident that the Evangelist draws attention to the "prophet-like-Moses" concept at important points of the Gospel, even if to discard or suggest that this was an inadequate category to characterize Jesus. Moreover, this often occurs in the context of

intimidating questioning and opposition to Jesus. The Baptist was the first to have been confronted in an adversarial fashion by emissaries of “the Jews” with the question as to whether he was “that prophet” (Jn 1:21-25). The Baptist’s emphatic denials underscore the key importance that the Evangelist attached to this issue. Later in Jn 6:14, and after the feeding miracle, certain beneficiaries of the miracle believed that Jesus was “the prophet”, and attempted to forcibly enthrone Him as king. Then in Jn 7:40, the issue becomes the centre of dispute among the Jews as they ponder the identity of Jesus. Indeed, Keener is of the view that “it is possible that the segment of Judaism from which much of John’s community and/or its opponents sprang laid emphasis on the eschatological prophet” idea (2003, 437). If this were correct, could it also be that the discussions among the Pharisees in Jn 9:16 stimulated the healed man’s opinion to categorize Jesus as “the prophet”?

Thirdly, in the next interrogation by the Pharisees (Jn 9:28-29), at least part of the discussion focuses on Moses, in which the Pharisees labelled themselves as “disciples of Moses” in contrast to the healed man as a disciple of Jesus. As has already been noted above regarding the prophet-like-Moses traditions, and will shortly also be elaborated, at the centre of the comparison between Jesus and Moses in the second interrogation was the important theological question of the efficacies of the prophetic missions of Moses and Jesus. Indeed Meeks maintains that the issue at stake in both John 5 and 9 is “whether Jesus is the true or false prophet predicted in Deuteronomy 18” (1967, 294). If Meeks is correct, could it then be that the man’s confession of Jesus as “prophet” in the first interrogation meant Jesus as “the prophet” and so provided the impetus for the later contrast between Jesus and Moses?

One main attraction to accepting the view of most interpreters that the healed man meant Jesus as “a prophet” in Jn 9:17 is the notion that the man’s insights and confession regarding the identity of Jesus progressively increased. Put in a succinct manner by Morris, the man “passed from thinking of Him as “‘the man they call Jesus’ (v. 11) to seeing Him as a prophet (here). Then he advances to the thought of one to whom allegiance may fitly be given (vv. 27-28), then to one “from God” (v. 33) and finally he comes to believe in the Son of Man to whom worship should be given (vv. 35-

38)” (1995, 432). Therefore, if, as is most likely, such a hierarchical progression of the man’s confessions occurs in the chapter, then a difficulty arises if one were to choose the second option—it would suggest that the “prophet-like-Moses” Christology was low on the Johannine Christological “ladder”. Is this difficulty however insurmountable?

The temptation to be ambivalent about which option was intended by the healed man, and therefore the Evangelist, should however be resisted. The statement by the man is meant by the Evangelist to constitute a definite confession, so that it must have had a clear meaning in the context. Yet, the choice will also depend on understanding the relative values that the Evangelist placed on the various confessions of the healed man, vis-à-vis the overall Christology of the Gospel. Thus the judgment must be suspended until all the other characterizations by the healed man have been examined. For the time being, the least that can be said is that the man had progressed in his insight to regard Jesus as an extraordinary man with miraculous power and perhaps more than that.

#### *5.2.2.5 The Interrogation of the Healed Man’s Parents: Jn 9:18-23*

For some reasons, the Pharisees would not believe the man’s testimony that he was born blind. Faced with the choice of accepting that Jesus had performed an extraordinary miracle on the Sabbath and so addressing the inevitable question of His identity, the Pharisees rather chose to deny the testimony, at least for now. The blind man therefore continues to act as agent of Jesus’ revelation and a “sign” of the judgment He brought—“this is the judgment, that the light has come into the world, and people loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil” (Jn 3:19). Rejecting the testimony of the healed man, the Pharisees turn rather to his parents.

An interesting question may be raised as to why the Pharisees called the parents. After all, the man was not a minor, as the parents’ retort in Jn 9:21 to the Pharisees indicated. At its innocent best, this implies thoroughness on the part of the Pharisees to establish the facts of the case before pronouncing their theological opinion on the issue. Howard-Brook also thinks that given the earlier reference to the parents at the beginning of the



chapter, the theme of the sins of the parents is still present within the narrative at this stage. In his view therefore, the Pharisees summoned the parents in order to give them “an opportunity to be redeemed by speaking the truth when questioned” (2003, 222; cf. Staley 1991, 68). However, if even it was for that purpose, then what the Evangelist may be pointing to was the difference between Jesus and the Pharisees—Jesus knew that the parents were not culpable; for, he had already exonerated them, whereas the Pharisees did not.

The motivation of the Pharisees is certainly much more sinister than open minded thoroughness in investigation. The tone of intimidation, which the Evangelist eventually clarifies in Jn 9:22, suggests that their purpose for interrogating the parents of the healed man was not innocent. The healed man had already stood his ground as he testified before the Pharisees; long enough to confess Jesus as “prophet”. Indeed the reference to Messiah in Jn 9:22 suggests that open admission that Jesus had indeed performed such a miracle, in the light of Isa 29:18, would be tantamount to declaration of Jesus as Messiah. When the Pharisees therefore turn their attention on the healed man’s parents, these parents were being confronted with a much bigger question as to whether they thought of Jesus as Messiah (cf. Rensberger 1988, 47). The threatening tone of the Pharisees’ questions was therefore aimed at limiting the spread of belief in Jesus as Messiah.

If this was so, then the readers’ sympathy for the parents, which may be initially aroused, cannot be sustained. Certainly, the response of the parents shows them in a negative light. They feared the intimidation of the Jews in the face of the overwhelming miracle they had witnessed wrought in their son (cf. Beasley-Murray 1987, 157). Without making any profession of faith, they cannot even be equated to the crypto-believers among the authorities (cf. Jn 12:42-43). Their apparently offhand reply with which they disappear from the story—“He is of age; ask him”—could also imply betrayal on their part, though one may be psychologically reading too much into the characterization at this point. It could on the other hand be also interpreted as a bold riposte in the face of the intimidation (cf. Malina and Rohrbaugh 1998, 173). For our purposes, it is adequate to establish that the parents did not defend their son because

they themselves were at risk of being ostracized from the religious community. So was the environment within which discipleship to Jesus was nurtured in the first century. The bravery of their son, who models discipleship, is thereby put in a positive light.

#### 5.2.2.6 Witnessing to the Pharisees II: Jn 9:24-34

The second interrogation of the healed man was the most antagonistic and ended with the excommunication of the healed man. The exchanges are charted in table 5.7 and indicate a consistent witness of the healed man regarding his own experience, and what he therefore believed about Jesus' identity. Not only was the verbal riposte intense, the witness was keen to move the discussion from theoretical speculations to the realities of his experience of Jesus and what that implied in the light of the Scriptures. Here, the healed man stands his ground, entrenched but always increasing in his belief in Jesus.

Table 5.7: The Exchanges between the Pharisees and the Healed Man in Jn 9:24-34

The Pharisees	The Healed Man
Give glory to God! <b>We know</b> that this man is a sinner (9:24)	<b>I do not know</b> whether he is a sinner. <b>One thing I do know</b> , that though I was blind, now I see (9:25)
What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes (9:26)	I have told you already, and you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you <b>also</b> want to become his disciples (9:27)
Then they reviled him, saying, 'You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. We <b>know</b> that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, <b>we do not know where he comes from</b> (9:28-29)	Here is an astonishing thing! <b>You do not know</b> where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes. <b>We know</b> that God does not listen to sinners, but he does listen to one who worships him and obeys his will. Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind. If this man were not from God, he could do nothing (9:30-33)
You were born entirely in sins, and are you trying to teach us (9:34)	

On the other hand, the Pharisees remain also resistant to the man's witness, equally entrenched in their disbelief, and constrained by their interpretation of the Law. Thus, in John's narrative scheme, this scene serves in a dramatic fashion to draw together the

two main threads of the dialogues that have so far been pursued—(a) the identity of Jesus, and (b) the correct epistemological process for its determination.

#### 5.2.2.6.1 Ever Heightening Christology

In Jn 9:24-34, the confessions of the healed man increases in its estimation of the identity of Jesus and hence his own allegiance to Him. The debate between him and the Pharisees concerned three areas—(a) whether by breaking the Sabbath law, Jesus was a sinner, (b) whether Jesus could be compared with Moses and hence demand allegiance from “disciples”, and (c) whether therefore Jesus could be regarded as “from God”, in other words as an agent of God. In view of the questions posed above regarding progression in the healed man’s Christological insight, it will be important to determine whether these issues were related in a hierarchical Christological manner with increasingly insight, or they belong to different features of a particular characterization of Jesus.

Firstly, in their continuing interrogation, the Pharisees command the healed man with a solemn oath to repent (so “give glory to God”; cf. Keener 2003, 790; Beasley-Murray 1987, 158) and proceed to declare Jesus as a sinner for breaking the Sabbath. This demand should be taken as part of a technical judicial procedure, for there is no doubt in their minds that Jesus had broken the Sabbath Law as was interpreted (cf. Asiedu-Pepurah 2000, 136; Barrett 1978, 362). In adjuring the healed man to also denounce Jesus as such, they were asking him to live by the dictates of the Law with which they condemned Jesus. If he were therefore to agree, not only would the healed man be taking sides with the people of the Law, but more so distancing Jesus from God.

The man refused; in the process, ironically giving God the glory by rejecting their basis for judging Jesus to be a sinner (cf. Jn 12:42-43). Given that he had confessed Jesus as “prophet” and he would subsequently claim that “God does not listen to sinners”, his stance that he did not know whether Jesus was a sinner should not be taken negatively. It should rather be understood in the light of the common Mediterranean rhetorical device of “feigned ignorance” in which instead of explicitly disputing or denying a

position, an interlocutor rather pretends to be agnostic in order to move the discussion to more relevant issues (cf. Keener 2003, 789; contra Bultmann 1971, 336). At least, in refusing to charge Jesus as a sinner, the healed man was implicitly countering the Jewish religious authorities and suggesting that the worse that could be said of Jesus who had broken the law was that He was beyond the Sabbath Law (cf. Barrett 1978b, 362). In that context, Jesus could not be distanced from God.

Secondly, having failed to get a confession that in breaking the Sabbath, Jesus should be categorized as a sinner; the Pharisees ask more questions about the method of healing. Given that these questions had been asked before, the healed man now queries the motives of his interrogators. Their motive in this case was probably to trip the man into contradicting himself; for, he had earlier described how Jesus healed him, or perhaps to gather more evidence to confirm their own prejudice that Jesus was a sinner (so Howard-Brook 2003, 226). Whatever their motives, his query provoked the Pharisees to declare their hands—their allegiance was after all to Moses and they could not figure out how Jesus, who appeared to have suspended the Mosaic Law, fitted into their scheme of religious understanding.

The mention of Moses in *contrast* to Jesus then suggests that the discussion remains in the realms of the Mosaic Law and who could transcend it (cf. Keener, 2003, 791). If his question in Jn 9:27—“Do you *also* want to become his disciples?”—were not to have been spiced with a tinge of sarcasm, one could have concluded that he was inviting the Pharisees to join him as disciples of Jesus. Even so, this indicates that his own allegiance was now established, and that he could confidently regard himself as one of the “we” of Jn 9:4 (cf. Jn 9:31). On the other hand, if by comparing the prophetic credentials of Moses with Jesus in Jn 9:29, the Pharisees were questioning the implied parity between the two agents, then by refusing to admit that Jesus was a sinner, wasn’t the healed man on the other hand hinting that Jesus was a greater prophet than Moses?

The answer to this question is made more evident by the healed man’s “lecture” in Jn 9:30-33. Rather than admitting to the implied paring of Jesus with Moses, the healed

man makes the claim that Jesus was no sinner because God heard Him. More so, Jesus had performed a miracle which “since the world began”, no one else, presumably including Moses, had performed. Hence Jesus must have come from God. In other words the man was making the claim that Jesus must be greater than Moses. The healed man could have equally quoted Jn 1:17 to the Pharisees—“The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ”. He had experienced the grace (his symbolic wash in Siloam), and the truth (his eyesight). The Law could not compare to that. Like elsewhere in the Gospel, “the Evangelist has made use of traditions linking Jesus and Moses, but has used them critically so as to enhance the status of Jesus at the expense of the status of Moses” (Domeris 1983a, 154).

It therefore appears that the Christological component of the debate between the healed man and the Pharisees during his second interrogation was centred on whether Jesus was greater prophet than Moses. The witness of the healed man was that judging by His experience of Jesus and the miracle that He had performed on the Sabbath, Jesus must be greater-than-Moses. If this interpretation is correct, then the man’s earlier reference to προφήτης in Jn 9:17 should be taken to mean “the prophet” rather than “a prophet”; for, the subsequent confession in Jn 9:24-34 goes beyond Jesus being “the prophet-like-Moses”.

#### 5.2.2.6.2 Johannine Epistemology in Jn 9:24-34

Given that the healed man had not yet seen Jesus or even spoken to Him, the question arises as to how he could progress through such profound spiritual insights, especially in the face of the intimidation. The importance of this question is further underlined when it is highlighted that the debate between the healed man and his interrogators repeatedly allude to what was known and could or could not be known. The key epistemological term, οἶδμεν (know) for example, occurs some eleven times in the chapter. And the issue of epistemology is raised in various forms through the notions of blindness and sight, light and darkness, knowledge and ignorance, allegiance to the Mosaic Law or Jesus and experiential knowledge against theoretical interpretation of

the law. How does the passage illuminate our understanding of the nature of Johannine conceptualization of epistemology, especially in its relationship to disciple formation?

Apart from the Christological contrast between Jesus and Moses, the passage also hints at two contrasting forms of epistemology—one based on the prevailing interpretation of the Torah, labelled elsewhere in the Gospel as flesh-based epistemology (cf. Jn 6:63), and the other based on an experience of Jesus (Spirit-based epistemology). Thus even if it were supposed that the Pharisees were sincere in their interrogation of the blind man, they were nevertheless locked in a closed interpretation of the Torah that made them unable to perceive the sign in the light of what God was doing. Their confident claim that Jesus was a sinner, based on their understanding of the Sabbath law (Jn 9:24), contrasts sharply with the healed man's admission, if not feigned, that he didn't know this to be the case (Jn 9:25). In the end it was the healed man who made progress in his estimation of the identity of Jesus. He had experienced the healing touch of Jesus and was, as a result, willing to grant a better interpretation of the Scriptures (cf. Keener 2003, 784; Culpepper 1998, 177).

Yet, this must not be taken to mean that Johannine epistemology elevated experience above Scripture. In the Johannine context, Scripture itself is a witness to Jesus (Jn 5:39). The problem with the Pharisees then was not that they adhered to Scripture and were hence led astray by it. Rather, in wrongly interpreting the Torah, the Pharisees increasingly showed themselves as lacking divine revelation while the healed man is increasingly drawn into the light of the embodied Torah, paradoxically through the debate with Jesus' opponents. The epistemological problem of the Pharisees therefore was one of hermeneutics—the Pharisees wrongly interpreted Scripture and yet, arrogantly and rigidly held on to those interpretations in the face of what God was doing through His Agent Jesus. By contrast, the healed man had an irrefutable experience of Jesus that left him open to re-examine his interpretation of the Scriptures. Thus Johannine epistemology cannot be separated from its Christology—Jesus the embodied Torah is above the letter that the Pharisees relied on for their epistemology.

Furthermore, this emphasis on epistemology in John 9 illustrates the inseparability of Spirit-inspired hermeneutics from revelation. It was explained in chapter three of the dissertation that by the first century AD, revelation was thought of in terms of two closely inter-related streams—on the one hand it referred to fresh *de novo* information received from God which cannot be acquired by any other means (§ 3.1.1.4.2). On the other hand, it also applied to the special gift of wisdom to interpret God's revelation and apply it to the present prevailing circumstances (Brown 1958, 423). Thus God reveals Himself to His agent not only through giving him/her a miraculous sign, but also through the humble and faithful process of interpreting an incongruous sign.

The healed blind man experienced both aspects of this revelation—first, his eyes were opened, and he will shortly “see” and worship Jesus in an encounter of epiphanic proportions. But secondly, he also underwent a maieutic process of interrogation as he testified to the intimidating Pharisees and so acquired an increasing depth of knowledge of the identity of Jesus. Specifically, the “misunderstanding” and incongruity created by Jesus’ healing on the Sabbath was the sign that needed interpreting for the revelation of God to be made clear. In their pride, and unbelief, the Pharisees failed to see; whereas in his openness and faithfulness, the healed man grew in faith and knowledge of Jesus (cf. Culpepper 2008, 251-260; Staley 1991, 51-80).

#### *5.2.2.7 Seeing, Hearing and Worshipping the Embodied Divine Council: Jn 9:35-10:21*

In the final scene, the healed man is excommunicated from the synagogue, is found by Jesus, who on challenging the healed man to faith, reveals Himself as the Son of Man. The healed man then expresses belief in Jesus and worships Him. As in other parts of the Gospel, divine revelation comes as a challenge, which if responded to by humble admission of need and openness by faith, is rewarded by further revelation—“You have seen him, and the one speaking with you is he”. The scene therefore brings to a climax the journey of progressive Christological insight of the healed man beginning with Jesus as the healer, to Jesus the Man, then Jesus the prophet, and Jesus the prophet-greater-than-Moses and now Jesus the Son of Man, the embodied Divine Council worthy of the worship of His disciple. The subunit closes with Jesus’ commentary, identifying the role

of sin in the light of divine revelation. In a follow on discourse, Jesus reveals Himself further as the Good Shepherd. For the present purposes, the key question to examine is how the encounter of the healed man with Jesus fitted into his formation as a disciple.

#### 5.2.2.7.1 The Johannine Son of Man as the Embodied Divine Council

In chapter four of the dissertation, it was observed that even though Mark often uses the Son of Man title in reference to Jesus' humanity, there are a number of occasions (e.g. Mk 2:10, 28, 8:28; 13:26; 14:62) when it is used in the divine sense (§ 4.2.2.2.2). It appears that in John's Gospel the two categories of uses are always combined so that a neat distinction cannot be made in each use as to whether it referred to Jesus' humanity or divinity, certainly, not in the way that it is often done with regard to Mark. The phrase occurs twelve times in John, and only on the lips of Jesus. As has been observed by most interpreters, it is used in the same sense as Son of God is used (cf. Lincoln 2005, 287; Smith 1995, 131-133; Keener 2003, 795; Burkett 1991; Pryor 1991, 341-351; Meeks, 1972, 44-72). The healed man's address to Jesus as "Lord" then, should be taken as addressing Jesus as divine, just as Son of Man does. And his worship of Jesus should be seen as at par with Thomas' at the end of the Gospel (cf. Lincoln 2005, 287; contra Carson 1991, 377; Beasley-Murray 1987, 159).

Furthermore, on a number of occasions in the Gospel, Son of Man signifies specific functions of Jesus; and in the present case, it may be related to Jesus' function as One who brings judgment from God (Jn 9:39; cf. Jn 5:27; 6:27), and as the Revealer of God (Jn 9:5; cf. Jn 1:51; 3:13; 6:62; 8:28). In addition, on one occasion in the Gospel, the Son of Man who brings the Light into the world is at least contrasted with, if not equated with, the Torah (Jn 12:34-35; cf. Barrett 1978b, 364). Given that a similar phenomenon whereby Jesus the Light of the world supersedes the Torah occurs in John 9, the title Son of Man suitably summarizes the highest Christology of the Chapter—as Son of Man, Jesus is revealed as the Λόγος, Σοφία and Νομός. When the healed man finally sees, hears and worships Jesus, he was worshipping in the presence of the embodied Divine Council. Carson's explanation of the use of Son of Man in this context is worth quoting—



“Jesus is inviting the man to put his trust in the One who is the revelation of God to man...Jesus is himself the Word incarnate, the one who uniquely reveals God. Indeed, in the context of ch. 9, the fundamental conflict is between the view that Jesus must be interpreted in terms of the law (as understood by the Pharisees), and the view that Jesus is the ultimate divine self-disclosure by whom the deepest significance of the law can be discerned” (1991, 376).

Two other reasons support the view that theologically, the Son of Man in Jn 9:35 represents the embodied Divine Council and hence the second encounter between the Jesus and the healed man should therefore be interpreted as such. Firstly, it is stated that Jesus sought and εὑρὼν (found) the man, and invited him to believe in the Son of Man. This divine activity of searching, finding and inviting human agents to believe, as noted in chapter three of the dissertation (§ 3.3.1), is one of the key means of depicting the embodied Σοφία in Her interactions with humanity. So for example in Wis 6:16, Wisdom is depicted as “going about seeking such as are worthy of her, showing herself favourably unto them in the ways, and answers them in every thought”. It is this which is also depicted in Jn 9:35.

Secondly, Jesus emphasizes not only what the healed man could now see, but also that he could hear—“You have seen him, and the one speaking with you is he” (Jn 9:37; cf. Cory 1997, 95-116). As explained in chapter three, seeing and hearing are two of the main processes that occurred when a human agent was admitted into the presence of the Divine Council (§ 3.1.1.1). The question therefore arises as to how the second interaction between the healed man and Jesus ought to be interpreted in the light of his formation as a disciple of Jesus.

#### 5.2.2.7.2 Does John 9:35-38 Depict a Conversion or a Re-Commissioning?

If the second encounter between Jesus and the healed man was an admission of a human agent into the presence of the embodied Divine Council, how does this fit into the process of the man’s formation as a disciple of Jesus? In answering this question,

most interpreters regard the second encounter as a conversion experience. In Keener's opinion for example, "the man's loyalty to Jesus set him on the right road, but did not yet confirm him as a disciple...It is in 9:35-39 that the healed man moves to a more Christologically adequate confession of Jesus' identity" (2003, 794; cf. Barrett 1978b, 364; Köstenberger 1999, 121).

Similarly, and in line with his proposal of interpreting John's Gospel as an evangelistic manual to be employed for bringing others to Jesus, Witherington proposes that the second encounter, and indeed the whole chapter "could be used as a paradigm to reveal the progress of a soul and so lead others in the same direction" (1995, 184; cf. Martyn 1979, 16). Also interpreting the encounter as a conversion experience, Beasley-Murray parallels the healed man with the Samaritan woman who, as a result of the revelation "runs to her village to proclaim the advent of the Messiah", whereas the man "prostrates himself before Jesus" (1987, 159). Likewise, after admitting that the healed man's confession of faith in Jn 9:35, should actually be categorized as coming to "decisive and knowledgeable faith", Carson nevertheless suggests that the encounter holds "important lessons for readers who are on the verge of conversion" (1991, 375).

There are cogent reasons for supporting this reading of the second encounter between the healed man and Jesus as a conversion experience. Firstly, John 9:35-38 is the first time that the idea of faith or believing is explicitly associated with the healed blind man. Infact Jesus confronts Him with the question about his belief in the Son of Man, and the man honestly admits that he didn't know Him; apparently supporting the view that before then, he couldn't be described as having the correct faith.

Secondly, it was only at this second encounter that the healed man came to full understanding of the divine identity of Jesus, believed in Him and worshipped Him. As Keener describes it, until the second encounter the man could stand only on the experience of healing that he had received from Jesus, but no more (2003, 795). Now that he has put His faith in Jesus, he could now be described as converted. Thirdly, given that he was thrown out of the synagogue, before Jesus the Good Shepherd found him, it may be reasonable to conclude that the second encounter marked a clean break

from the Mosaic Law to “grace and truth” in Jesus. The Evangelist may therefore be depicting a conversion from Judaism to Christian faith (cf. Schnackenburg 1968, 2.254).

Yet, there are a number of confounding questions to consider before making the full judgment as to whether the encounter should be categorized as a conversion. Firstly, and as has already been explained above, the man demonstrated his faith in obeying Jesus during the first encounter. It is true that this could be described as a “healing-related” faith. However, the man’s loyalty to Jesus afterwards would appear to underline a growing faith before he met Jesus the second time. Secondly, and as has been explained, washing in Siloam was at least a proleptic act of being cleansed by Jesus. Thirdly, the man shared with Jesus the function of performing the act of breaking the Sabbath, the act which became the means of offence to the Pharisees. Fourthly, and as has already been argued, the healed man functions in many ways as Jesus’ agent and witness—as one of the “we” of Jn 9:4.

Finally, the progression in the healed man’s Christological insight is also paralleled in the conventional disciples. So for example, even though it was said on several occasions that the disciples had believed in Jesus, it was only after Easter that Thomas, “one of the twelve”, came to the full Christological confession of Jesus as Lord and God and worshipped Him. Similarly, even though he most probably believed in Jesus at some earlier point, the Beloved Disciple was explicitly said to have “believed” only after he saw the empty tomb (Jn 20:8). Thus the word conversion may not be a fitting terminology to describe the second encounter between the healed man and Jesus, based on the idea that it was the first time that he was explicitly associated with the word “believe”.

Furthermore, even though one cannot be confident about it, a plausible argument may also be made in support of the view that the first encounter between the healed man and Jesus as described in Jn 9:7 was a commissioning—“Go, wash in the pool of Siloam’ (which means Sent). Then he went and washed and came back able to see”. Firstly, the sending motif is evidently strong in the verse—it indicates a commissioning designed not just to heal the man, but to break the Sabbath and instigate the judgment

of the Pharisees (cf. Jn 9:39). Secondly, the anointing motif, as already noted, is not as obvious; but if it is present, supports the view that the man was being commissioned by Jesus.

Finally, without explicitly indicating the destination of the man's return, ἦλθεν βλέπων (literally, he came seeing) creates an ambiguity which could have been deliberate, if the Evangelist meant to indicate that the blind man was being sent as Jesus' agent. On the one hand, it would be natural to understand the phrase to indicate that "eventually the man came back to Jesus seeing"—i.e. Jn 9:7 looks ahead to Jn 9:35. Such a reading would also support the view that the healed man acted as Jesus' agent in witnessing and bringing judgment on the Pharisees. On the other hand, it is also equally appropriate to understand the phrase as indicating that the man returned to his home seeing (so, NIV). The fact that the narrative moves on to the healed man's neighbourhood in the next verse would appear to make this second option perhaps more likely. So, the idea of commissioning at the first encounter, and re-commissioning at the second encounter, cannot be proven in a cast iron manner.

The fact is, and as explained in chapter two of the dissertation (§ 2.3.4), though it is easy to understand and apply, the category of conversion is always fraught with difficulty when discussing the interactions between Jesus and a human agent *before* the Easter event. Accordingly, whereas "conversion" may well fit the description of the second encounter between the man and Jesus, inasmuch as it appears to signal a break of the healed man from the authority and influence of the Pharisees, it appears not to describe in full terms the spiritual transformation he underwent. Perhaps a fuller description of what happened during this second encounter could be both conversion *and* re-commissioning, indicating the continuing transformation of the man and yet also acknowledging the momentous nature of the encounter with the embodied Divine Council.

### 5.2.3 The Formation of the Man Born Blind: A Summary

The preceding exegesis has uncovered important concepts relevant for understanding the formation of disciples in John's Gospel. The significant interaction between Johannine Christology, Discipleship and theology that are portrayed in John 9 serves as an important prism for understanding the formation of the disciples. Firstly, regarding Johannine Christology, the study has demonstrated that one important measure of growth during formation of the Johannine disciple is an ever increasing depth of insight into the identity of Jesus. The blind man went through stages of increasing perception of Jesus, as a healer, a man called Jesus, the prophet, prophet-greater-than-Moses, and from God. Each one of these titles is correct; and yet, inadequate estimation of the identity of Jesus. It was only when his eyes and ears were opened further and he saw and heard the Son of Man that he worshipped Him as Lord.

In addition to the Christological titles, the story of the formation of the man born blind also develops several other aspects of Jesus' identity. He is portrayed as the Light of the world who, together with His disciples witness to a world in darkness and brings God's judgment to it. He is also the Sent One who comes on a mission that was commanded by the Father. He is the Creator and Charismatic healer, who through His miraculous work fulfil the Isaianic prophecies of the Messiah. He is the Good Shepherd who seeks and protects God's flock, in contrast to the Jewish leaders who acted like thieves and bandits. And he is the embodied Divine Council who is God's supreme Representative. Hence the narrative demonstrates that the identity of Jesus is itself invested with significant mystery that takes constant faith and openness to the Spirit's revelation to grasp. To any disciple of Jesus who responds in faith, there is more of Him to be known.

Secondly, and regarding Johannine discipleship, the chapter has demonstrated the closer unity with which Jesus works with the disciple to fulfil His mission. The main task of the disciple is to witness, but this is done in union with Jesus so that the disciple does not act as an independent witness of Jesus. As a witness, the result could be judgment on the world or revelation and salvation for those who believe. This reflects the result of Jesus' work as part of fulfilling the mission of God. The work of witnessing exposes the

disciple to several dangers as the healed man's ordeals in the hands of his acquaintances, relatives and the Pharisees demonstrate. And yet, the narrative shows that the disciple grows in spiritual insight and commitment through this crucible of tribulations.

Thirdly, the predominance of revelation as a theological theme has been demonstrated. In Johannine terms, revelation indeed serves as both the purpose as well as the means of forming the man born blind. In terms of purpose, the healed man became a witness of Jesus. His transformed presence in his neighbourhood and to his acquaintances was a sign that brought judgment and division, the kind of judgment that Jesus' signs brought. His words to his acquaintances and later to the Pharisees were also a witness and a means by which Jesus spoke to the Pharisees. On the other hand, it was also in the process of performing these functions as a vehicle of divine revelation that the healed man grew in faith and insight.

Revelation is however not the only theological theme evident in the formation of the man born blind. The issue of sin is raised from the beginning and recur throughout the narrative. Even though it is related to the revelatory motif in the passage, the theology of atonement is also present in the symbols. It is granted that this is muted, and conveyed much more in the symbolisms, suggesting that the Evangelist takes it for granted that his first readers would have been very familiar with this, and as such he develops the themes in a further direction. This is most likely the historical scenario. The view that the Evangelist saw the theology of revelation as transcending that of atonement is unlikely to be the case, even though this judgment will be further tested in the next section, to which we now turn.

### **5.3 The Formation of “the Twelve” in John’s Gospel**

At the beginning of the section of His “High Priestly” prayer that is devoted to praying for the disciples, Jesus summarizes His achievements as a disciple-maker with five claims (Jn 17:6-8)—(a) He received the disciples from the Father, (b) He revealed the Father’s “name” to them; that is, He made the Father’s nature and qualities known to them, (c)

He manifested His close relationship with the Father to them, (d) He gave them the Father's words, and (e) He led them to the point of believing that He was the Father's Agent. Given that the prayer was the final private moment between Jesus and His disciples before His death, this summary appears also to serve an important function for the Evangelist (cf. van der Merwe 2003, 169-190; Black 1988, 141-159; Wong 2006, 374-392). It summarizes Jesus' achievements as a disciple-maker before His death, while pre-empting the role of His death and resurrection in the formation of the disciples.

Accordingly, for the purposes of the project at hand two questions should be delineated in relation to the formation of the twelve in John's Gospel. Firstly, can an account of how the above achievements were accomplished during Jesus' earthly ministry be given? And secondly, in the light of the emphases that the Gospel places on the death and resurrection of Jesus, in what ways does the Passion of Jesus relate to the Johannine conception of the formation of the disciples? These two questions will be the focus for the following investigation of the formation of "the twelve". Before then however, the relationship between the literary structure of John's Gospel and the formation of the twelve needs commenting on.

### 5.3.1 The Literary Structure of John and the Formation of the Twelve

Regarding the literary structure of John, most commentators subscribe to the scheme which divides the Gospel into two parts—the Book of Signs (Jn 1:19-12:50) and the Book of Glory (Jn 13:1-20:31), supplemented by a prologue (Jn 1:1-18) and an epilogue (Jn 21:1-25). In this structure, the Book of Signs charts Jesus' public ministry, whereas the Book of Glory gives an account of the events around the Passion and the resurrection. Even though the evidentiary bases for this demarcation are admitted by interpreters to be doubtful, this structure nevertheless suitably separates Jesus' public ministry from the private ministry and the Passion (cf. Brodie 1993, 34-46; Silva 1988, 17-29; Mlakuzhyil 1987; Culpepper 1983; Kysar 2005). In addition, since Jn 13-17 forms a theological entity on its own, the Book of Glory may be further sub-divided into two parts, the Farewell Discourse (Jn 13-17) and the Passion proper (Jn 18-20). In view of

the fact that the “epilogue” makes a substantial contribution to understanding the post-easter formation of the twelve, this is added to the preceding section, producing a three division structure of the Gospel (table 5.8)<sup>54</sup>.

Table 5.8 The Literary Structure of John’s Gospel and the Formation of the Twelve

Phase of Formation	Significant Events and Activities during Formation
<b>The Making of Eyewitnesses in the Book of Signs Jn 1:19-12:50</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Gathering of the disciples Jn 1:35-51</li> <li>2. Coming to Faith at Cana Jn 2:1-11</li> <li>3. Observing Jesus Cleansing of Temple Jn 2:12-25</li> <li>4. Baptize Jn 3:22-36</li> <li>5. Fetch food for Jesus Jn 4:1-42</li> <li>6. Harvest food after miracle Jn 6:1-15</li> <li>7. See Jesus walking on water Jn 6:16-21</li> <li>8. Discuss cause of blindness Jn 9:1-41</li> <li>9. Visit Lazarus’ grave Jn 11:1-57</li> <li>10. Observe anointing by Mary Jn 12:1-11</li> <li>11. Observe triumphal Entry Jn 12:12-19</li> <li>12. Introduce Gentiles to Jesus Jn 12:20-50</li> </ol>
<b>The Making of God’s Friends in the Farewell Discourse Jn 13-17</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Footwashing</li> <li>2. Divine Hospitality</li> <li>3. The High Priest Prayer</li> </ol>
<b>The Making of God’s Agents in the Passion and Resurrection Jn 18-21</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Peter’s Denial</li> <li>2. The Beloved Disciple</li> <li>3. Post-Resurrection Restoration of the twelve</li> </ol>

When the processes and events that the disciples are involved in during each sub-division are closely examined, it becomes obvious that the divisions also demarcate three phases of their formation. In the Book of Signs, the emphases on their formation appear to be the making of eyewitnesses. The Farewell discourse is solely focused on the twelve and functions among other things to prepare them for continuing the work and mission of Jesus after His departure. If the various themes are collated, the idea of divine hospitality appears prominent. Thus although the eyewitness function is also

<sup>54</sup> Segovia’s proposed four stage structure—(a) the Gathering of the Disciples Jn 1-3, (b) the Movements of the disciples Jn 4-12, (c) the Farewell to the Disciples Jn 13-14, and (d) the Vindication of the Disciples Jn 18-20—is also attractive but excludes key passages from consideration (1985, 79-80).



present in Jn 13-17, the emphases there are more on building deeper relationship with Jesus, the Father and the Spirit-Paraclete, as well as preparing them for their future functions. In the division covering the Passion and Easter, the failures of the twelve during that period are narrated, with more nuances and explanations. The post-Easter restoration of the disciples is also described in more detail (table 5.8). Each of these phases of formation will now be analyzed.

### 5.3.2 Making Eyewitnesses: The Formation of the Twelve in Jn 1-12

After describing the recruitment of five disciples in some detail from the beginning of Jesus' public ministry in Jn 1:35-51, the Evangelist appears to displace them from the centre of the rest of the narrative in the Book of Signs. The conventional disciples are only briefly mentioned in most of the pericopae, the focus mostly placed on the non-conventional disciples. In a number of cases, such as in the stories of the Samaritan woman and the man born blind, the conventional disciples appear to play the minor role of onlookers as these non-conventional disciples become the centre of attention.

As already noted, it is at least premature to interpret this feature as John's lack of interest in "the Twelve". The Johannine focus on the non-conventional disciples plays crucial rhetorical and pedagogical functions, and the contrast between the conventional and non-conventional disciples enhances this objective. Even so, and in comparison with the Gospel of Mark, the twelve in John's Gospel ostensibly appear "passive". This "passivity" is however only apparent; for, as I now show, the Fourth Evangelist is more keen to highlight the formation of the twelve as eyewitnesses whose immediate functions were to "see", "hear", "interpret" (i.e., "misunderstand" and be corrected) and so perceive, believe and therefore confess and witness. Thus "the twelve" in John are predominantly being formed into agents of Jesus' revelation.

As table 5.9 shows, the disciples are explicitly mentioned in three categories of circumstances in the Book of Signs—(a) their presence at a "work" performed by Jesus, (b) their activities as rabbinic pupils, and (c) as interlocutors or "foils" for Jesus'

revelatory discourses. All three categories of functions play important roles in their formation as eyewitnesses.

Table 5.9: The Roles of the Twelve in the Book of Signs

Presence at Jesus' Work	Rabbinic Pupil Activity	Interlocutors with Jesus
Wedding at Cana (2:11)	Baptize (3:22)	Food is God's Work (4:31)
Cleansing of Temple (2:17)	Fetching Food For Jesus (4:8)	Healing of Blind Man (9:2)
Feeding of 5000 (6:3-12)	With Jesus in Capernaum (2:12)	
Walking on Sea (6:16)	Ministry in Ephraim (11:54)	
Healing of Blind Man (9:2)	Introducing Gentiles (12:22)	
Raising Lazarus (11:7)		
Anointing of Jesus (12:4)		
Triumphal Entry (12:16)		

### 5.3.2.1 *The Roles of the Works of Jesus in the Formation of the Twelve*

As already stated, I adopt Köstenberger's definition of a Johannine sign as "a symbol laden, but not necessarily "miraculous" public work of Jesus selected and explicitly identified as such by John for the reason that it displays God's glory in Jesus, who is thus shown to be God's true representative, even the Messiah" (1998b, 65). With the definition agreed however, the identification of the signs, and which of Jesus' works may be exactly labelled as a sign, remains an area of disagreement among interpreters. Even though there is no explicit warrant in the Gospel, majority of interpreters believe there are seven signs, and many agree with Larsen's list—the wedding at Cana, the healing of the official's son, the healing of the man at the pool of Bethesda, the feeding of the five thousand, the walk on the water, the healing of the man born blind, and the raising of Lazarus (2006, 107-108; cf. Culpepper 2008, 251-260; Johns and Miller 1994, 519-535; Morris 1995, 23). Where interpreters disagree with any of the above, they have tended to replace them with others. So, for example, Köstenberger excludes the miracle of walking on water, but includes the cleansing of the temple (1998b, 71). Some interpreters include the triumphal entry and the footwashing as signs. Others, perhaps rightly, argue against restricting the "signs" to Jn 1-12, so that the Passion and resurrection are also regarded as signs (cf. Carson 1991, 103; Keener 2003, 275-279).

The problem basically emanates from the fact that whereas the Evangelist emphasizes the crucial role of the signs in relation to faith, and makes the explicit claim that Jesus did perform several other signs than he had chosen to record, he does not appear to label every event which may well fulfil the function of a sign as such. Thankfully, for the present purpose a full resolution of the problem is unnecessary. Since the Evangelist regarded the signs performed by Jesus in Jn 1-12 also as “works”, all the miraculous occasions at which it is stated that the disciples were present may be grouped into a category called miracles and signs; i.e. Jesus’ works. As table 5.10 shows, this criterion captures most of the events that are regarded as signs in Jn 1-12. The healing of the invalid in Jn 5 does not belong to this category, since even though it may well be that the disciples were present; this is not explicitly stated in the narrative.

That the works of Jesus played the function of stimulating, affirming and increasing faith has been widely discussed by several interpreters (cf. Moloney 1978, 817-43; Koester 1989, 327-348; Thompson 1991, 89-108). For the purposes of the present project however, it is their function as witnesses to Jesus which need highlighting—“The works that the Father has given me to complete, the very works that I am doing, testify on my behalf that the Father has sent me” (Jn 5:36; cf. 10:25, 37-38). In other words, the works are basically Christological.

It is therefore instructive that on most of the occasions when Jesus’ works occur, the Evangelist also highlights the presence of the disciples, and in such a manner as to superficially appear superfluous. Indeed, apart from the healing of the invalid of Bethesda (in which the disciples may well have been present) and the healing of the son of the βασιλικός (which was in *absentia*), the disciples are underlined as present at all the other miracles in the Gospel. Moreover, and unlike Mark, the miracles do not occur in the presence of a selection of the disciples, even though one ought to be cautious since John uses the word “disciples” without clarifying the number present. All the same, the above feature shows that their presence at a “work” performed by Jesus is a key characteristic of the eyewitness disciples. Seeing and hearing the work and words of the embodied Divine Council is the basic qualification of the agent of the

Council. In this sense, the disciples function in similar ways as the prophets of the Old Testament, but much more.

Table 5.10: The Effects of Jesus' Works on the Twelve

Work	Effect on the Twelve
<b>Turning Water to Wine</b>	"Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee, and revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him" (2:11)
<b>Cleansing of Temple</b>	"His disciples remembered that it was written, 'Zeal for your house will consume me...After he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this; and they believed the scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.'" (2:17-22)
<b>Feeding of 5000 (6:3-12)</b>	"Simon Peter answered him 'Lord, to whom can we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe and know that you are the Holy One of God'". (6:68-69)
<b>Walking on Sea</b>	"They were terrified...Then they wanted to take him into the boat" (6:19-21)
<b>Healing of Blind Man</b>	"Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God's works might be revealed in him. We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day" (9:3-4)
<b>Raising Lazarus</b>	"Lazarus is dead. For your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him" (11:14-15)
<b>Anointing of Jesus</b>	"The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (the one who was about to betray him), said, 'Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii and the money given to the poor?'" (12:3-5)
<b>Triumphal Entry</b>	"His disciples did not understand these things at first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things had been written of him and had been done to him" (12:16)

As table 5.10 shows, on all of the eight occasions of the performance of Jesus' works at which the disciples were present, the Evangelist makes explicit comment on the effect of the work on the disciples. On two occasions (turning water into wine, and the feeding of five thousand), the work stimulated and strengthened faith. On another occasion (walking on water) it terrified the disciples, indicating the theophanic revelatory nature of the miracle. On at least three occasions (the temple cleansing, the feeding, and

triumphal entry), the immediate result was mystification and “misunderstanding”. Critically, the Evangelist comments on two of these three occasions that the disciples finally understood the implications and meaning of these works *after* the resurrection and only in addition to the witness of Scripture (Jn 2:17-22; 12:16). On these occasions, the hermeneutical nature of divine revelation is expounded. The combination of a misunderstanding of a revelatory event, the discourses or action by Jesus, the revealing mystery of the Passion of Jesus, human memory and Scripture altogether served as the key that expounded the original revelatory event, thus shaping the disciples into eyewitnesses (cf. Dewey 2001, 66). As noted earlier, just the sight or sound of an event did not make one a competent eyewitness of Jesus.

On another occasion (the anointing), the result is typical of the witness effect of Jesus’ signs—it brought judgment on Judas, whose negative reaction to the house being filled with “the fragrance of the perfume”, in other words, the fragrance of Jesus’ impending death, betrayed his hypocrisy. On two of the occasions (the healing of the man born blind and the raising of Lazarus), the effect is pre-empted by Jesus before the sign occurs. Thus even though the exact effect of the revivification of Lazarus on the twelve is not stated, Jesus precedes the miracle by clarifying that it was for their sakes that He was not there before Lazarus died, “so that you may believe” (Jn 11:15). Clearly, one of the purposes of the miracle was for the benefit of the disciples as eyewitnesses.

Similarly, the healing of the man born blind is preceded by Jesus’ comment on the disciples’ participation in Jesus’ work. Indeed, Culpepper has recently demonstrated that in several of the Johannine signs, the preceding discourses of Jesus hold as much key to their interpretations in the discourses after (2008, 251-260). Hence, it may be surmised that the discourses between Jesus and the disciples before the occurrence of these works illustrate the importance Jesus attached to their witness functions.

What these data illustrate is the critical eyewitness functions of the twelve. They see Jesus’ works, interpret them and believe in Him, or misinterpret them but are subsequently corrected, by Jesus, the Scriptures and the Spirit, so that they believe, confess and become witnesses. However, the full implications of what they see and

hear are only fully unlocked by Jesus' death and resurrection (cf. Jn 20:8-9). It is these ingredients together that made them into eyewitnesses (cf. Dewey 2001, 59-70; Dunn 2003; Bauckham 2006; Head 2001, 275-294; Lincoln 2002, 3-26). Accordingly, what superficially appear to be "passive" roles of the twelve in John's Gospel are clearly not passive. The Johannine disciples function as key eyewitnesses of Jesus, whose testimonies served as the basis of Christian origins.

#### *5.3.2.2 The Johannine Disciples as Rabbinic Pupils*

Several other roles played by the twelve in the Book of Signs, confirm Köstenberger's point that the Johannine disciples, perhaps more than in Mark's Gospel, are portrayed as rabbinic pupils (1998a, 97-128). They kept Jesus' company, served and provided food for Him, and participated in His ministry as He directed. On several occasions, they also act as interlocutors. And the reference to Jesus' testing Philip in Jn 6:6 indicates features of training akin to those of rabbis. That the feeding miracle was meant also to be a sign, as will be discussed in the next chapter, indicates that Philip and his colleagues, was being thus induced as a witness.

Indeed, a number of interpreters have argued that in many ways the Johannine disciples serve as "foils" for Jesus' teaching, and for that matter, for the Evangelist (e.g. Henderson 2001, 13; Culpepper 1983, 117). Thus for example, by raising the question of the man born blind, the disciples enable Jesus to give a more clear-cut teaching on the specific question they raised, but also lead on to the larger issue of the miracle and its significance. This is all well and good, provided it is understood only at the literary level. It should not however be taken that at the historical level, no such interlocution and apparently erroneous misunderstanding occurred with regard to the formation of the disciples. Given that such interlocution was the mainstay of rabbinical education (cf. Neusner 1997); there is no reason to dispute the likelihood that similar questions were raised by the disciples of Jesus. That Jesus Himself was a mystery to His disciples should also not be a surprise. In the face of such overwhelming and inscrutable mystery, human misunderstanding should be expected.

For the purpose of the present project however, the portrayal of the Johannine disciples in rabbinical fashion underlines some of their roles as agents of revelation. If they acted as witnesses, and rabbinic pupil, then given what is now known about pupils during the era, as Gerhardsson has shown, they would have ensured the faithful and accurate collection, commitment to memory, recollection, conservation, and transmission of the works and words of Jesus for the benefit of the earliest believers, thus ensuring a solid foundation to Christian origins (1961; cf. Bultmann 1963, 50).

### 5.3.3 Making God's Friends: The Formation of the Twelve in Jn 13 – 17

John 13-17 is in many ways a unique piece of work in the whole New Testament. In terms of its literary limits, it is clearly demarcated from the preceding and following passages (cf. Barrett 1978b, 449; Keener 2003, 893). Moreover, even though it contains descriptions of the actions and speeches of Jesus in the usual Johannine fashion, the actions are mostly restricted to the first few verses. Yet, any conclusion that it is completely self-contained will be misleading (cf. Tolmie 1995; Moloney 1998, 370; Beasley-Murray 1987, 222-227). In theological outlook for example, it takes over several preceding themes from Jn 1-12, develops them further and links them in an integrative fashion to the Passion narrative that follows it. In that respect it parallels the discourse of Mark 13 which also precedes the Passion (cf. Keener 2003, 897; Beasley-Murray 1987, 222).

The chapters are nevertheless unique, and much debate continues among interpreters regarding the historicity, literary genre and form of the section, and its theological role within the Gospel's narrative, and in relation to "the Johannine community". Also challenging is the fact that several of the topics and themes within the discourse are repeated, sometimes in a fashion that appears to break the flow of thought. In recent years however, most interpreters have abandoned the earlier source-critical and redaction-critical approaches to resolving this challenge. They rather see the section as an integrated whole that plays a crucial function in the Gospel (cf. Tolmie 1995, 3-5; Reese 1972, 321-331; Moloney 1998, 43-66; Segovia 1991). Given the setting, and the

manner and amount of repetitions elsewhere in the Gospel itself, there is currently little support for the theory that the passages are amalgamation of different pieces of work from sources composed at different stages. Repetitions are well known rhetorical strategies of teachers of both antiquity and modern times, and would certainly have served the pedagogical and rhetorical purposes of both Jesus and the Evangelist.

The exalted language in the chapters may also convey the theological impression of realized eschatology, so that Brown has commented that in these chapters, Jesus is “speaking from heaven...His words are directed to Christians of all times...it is meant to be read after he had left the earth” (1970, 582). Gail O’Day has similarly opined that the manner in which narrative time and space are handled in these chapters result in bringing “the future and the present together in one narrative moment” (1991, 156).

Yet, in the context of the Christology and eschatology of the Gospel, this exalted language need not be taken to imply that they were not uttered by the “historical” Jesus and hence had no role to play in the formation of the disciples. As elsewhere in the New Testament, the “realized” eschatology in these chapters is combined with a “futuristic” eschatology (cf. Keener 2003, 934-936; Maritz 2007, 112-130). Moreover, and in the light of the proleptic nature of prophetic language in both the Old and New Testament, utterances by Jesus at this point, hours before His death, should be expected to transcend time and space (cf. Van Belle 2001, 334-347; Reinhartz 1989, 3-16; Hill 1982, 133-135). Thus the tendency to question the historical authenticity of the section by some interpreters has limited bases. Certainly, the Evangelist intended that his first readers should read the record of the actions, sayings and prayer of Jesus as having occurred in the presence of the disciples and designed to shape their future mission and ethics of the community (cf. Carson 1991, 478; Morris 1995, 542; Bruce 1983, 278; Köstenberger, 1999, 148).

For the purposes of the project at hand therefore, the question to be answered is how the chapters enable the conceptualization of the formation of the Johannine disciples, especially in the light of the five achievements that Jesus outlines in Jn 17:6-8. In answer to this, it must be observed that on the whole the five chapters make two major



contributions to understanding the formation of the disciples in John's Gospel—(a) they summarize the nature of the formation of the Johannine disciple by employing the idea of divine hospitality, and (b) they explain how this formation would continue *after* Jesus' death and resurrection.

With regard to the first contribution, the foot washing, the several revelations regarding the union of the disciples with Jesus, and the indwelling of the Godhead in the disciples emphasize the mystical dimensions of the moulding of disciples as agents of the embodied Divine Council. Accordingly, there is an apparent transformation of the statuses of the disciples from the predominant picture of eyewitnesses and rabbinic pupils in Jn 1-12 to being friends of Jesus, and of God in John 13-17. With regard to the second contribution, the teachings of the chapters on the work of the Holy Spirit and ethical dynamics of love and unity within the fellowship of disciples emphasize aspects of the formation, past and future, which are not highlighted in Mark's Gospel (cf. Domeris 1989, 17-23; Carson 1979, 547-566; Russell 1987, 227-239; Aloisi 2004, 55–69). Thus, in both areas, John makes significant contributions to understanding the dynamics of the creation of the movement of Christ followers and of Christian origins.

Since these subjects are rather wide ranging, and require detailed examinations on their own, a task that space will not allow, the following discussion will basically attempt to argue that the concept of divine hospitality is much better suited to the form and content of the chapters and how they are related to the formation of the disciples. It will then suggest that the footwashing at the beginning of the five chapters serves as an important context for interpreting the features of the divine hospitality within the rest of the "farewell discourse". In addition, the foot washing brings together some of the major themes of the formation of Johannine disciples which have already been highlighted with regard to the man born blind—of purification, revelation and union of the disciple with Jesus. In so doing, the foot washing makes for an effective summarative symbol of the formation of the Johannine disciples.

### 5.3.3.1 *The Genre of Jn 13-17, Divine Hospitality and the Formation of the Disciples*

A key to exegeting Jn 13-17 is to establish its genre and literary form within the overall biographical genre of the Gospel. Once the genre is established, the main theological points can be isolated in that context, and then the question of how the chapters reflect the formation of the disciples can be duly tackled.

#### 5.3.3.1.1 The Literary Genre of Jn 13 – 17

Unfortunately, there is no scholarly agreement on the literary genre of Jn 13-17. A minority of interpreters opt for reading the passages as a covenant renewal ceremony similar to Josh 24 or Deut 29-34 (e.g. Chennattu 2006; Smith 1999; Lacomara 1974, 65-84). The covenant theme, though present, is however limited and appears to be subsumed under a larger theological motif. On the other hand, there is little support for the idea that the speeches in the chapters should be read as pre-holy war battle cry from Jesus. While there are individual statements encouraging the disciples to persevere (e.g. Jn 14:31; 16:33), these cannot be read in any shape of form as a call to join Jesus in the battle on the cross (cf. Dodd 1965, 465). As the passion narrative would emphasize, Jesus ensured that the disciples were excluded from His arrest, thus making clear that His death was His alone. Certainly, any misconception that Peter had with respect to his role in the holy war on the cross, was immediately rebuked by Jesus (Jn 18:11, 36; cf. Longman III 1982, 303). That said, an attraction of the holy war approach is that it highlights the idea of preparation of the disciples for future martyrdom in relation to the footwashing.

Perhaps the most popular approach among interpreters regards the five chapters as a Testament or Farewell of Jesus to His disciples, prior to His departure to the Father (cf. Broan 1966, 598-600; Segovia 1991; Kasemann 1968; Lincoln 2005, 362; Malina and Rohrbaugh 1998, 221-222; O'Day 1995, 737-738). There is strong biblical support for this approach. Farewell or testamental speeches occur in the Old Testament (e.g. Gen 47: 29-49:33; Deut 31:1-33:29; Josh 23:1-24:30; 1 Kgs 2:1-10), inter-testamental Jewish literature (e.g. Jub 36:1-11; 4Q542; Testament of the Patriarchs) and the New

Testament (e.g. Paul's Miletus speech in Acts 20:18-35, perhaps 2 Peter). The following elements present even if in slightly modified form in Jn 13-17, are generally also thought to be features of the testamental genre—(a) announcement of imminent departure, (b) sorrow, (c) instructions to remember to keep key commands (d) love and unity among the “children” being left behind, (e) future fate of the relations left behind, (f) promise and reassurance of God's presence, and indication of the successor (cf. Howard-Brook 2003, 291). Thus there is considerable support for regarding Jn 13-17 as a modified Last Testament.

There are, however, a number of ways in which parts of these five chapters do not fit the testament paradigm. There is for example, a complete absence of instructions on burial and funeral ceremony, very little predictions of future, except that the Paraclete is the One who, it is promised, would predict and lead the disciples into the future. There is also absence of oaths of allegiance from the listeners of the testament in Jn 13-17, excluding perhaps Peter's in Jn 13:36-38. In addition, in form, the five chapters appear to combine three genres—a narrative (Jn 13:1-30) is followed by a discourse (Jn 13:31-16:33) and then a prayer (Jn 17:1-26). Indeed, in his analysis of the farewell motifs in these chapters, Segovia identified seven of the nine key features of ancient testament motifs in these chapters (1991, 5-20). Hence it appears that either a significant adaptation of the testamental form has occurred in Jn 13-17, an approach, not unknown in antiquity; or more likely, the testament of Jesus is only a component of the larger structure, with extra elements have been added to it (cf. Keener 2003, 897).

In that case, Witherington's approach offers significant advancement on the testament genre and is very attractive. Based on the fact that the chapters occur in the context of a meal (Jn 13:2), and is quite similar to Paul's description of the Lord's Supper in 1 Cor 11-14, Witherington proposed that Jn 13-17 should be read as similar to a “Greco-Roman banquet complete with a closing *symposium* in which Jesus acts as the sage who offers the teaching, and the religious rites associated with such meals” (1995, 231-232; cf. Smith 2003). Clearly, this allows for the testamental paradigm to be also included but only as part of a banquet symposium setting. Given the likelihood that John's first readers would have been familiar with similar symposia, and the fact that the

traditional Jewish setting of Passover meals also had extended periods of discussions after the main meal, this proposal has much to commend it.

Another advantage of this approach is that it focuses more on the immediate historical setting of the narrative and discourses as occurring during a banquet hosted by Jesus for His friends. On the surface, Laufer's suggestion that in that case, the discourses in Jn 13-17 amounted to a commentary on the Passover meal that preceded it, is also attractive (1995, 147-160). However, on further reflection, such a view takes the relationship between the discourses and the meal too far and restricts how the rest of the chapters ought to be exegeted. It is also not evident that John viewed the Passover as playing a crucial role during this meal, not as much as it does in relation to Jesus' death. Accordingly, regarding Jn 13-17 as a record of what happened during a symposium makes allowance for combination of different genres, including Jesus' testament, prophetic statements, repetitions and shifts in the focus of the discourses while at the same time firmly placing the chapters in their socio-historical setting.

#### 5.3.3.1.2 The Disciples as Jesus' (and God's) Friends

Within the context of a symposium, the relationship between Jesus and His disciples portrayed by Jn 13-17 is at its most intimate. This should not be surprising given the predominance of the family imagery for depicting Johannine discipleship from the beginning (Jn 1:12; cf. van der Watt 2000). As table 5.11 shows, Jn 13-17 depict the disciples in varied but very close relationship with Jesus, ranging from servants and children to as high as friends and sharers in Jesus' inheritance. The idea of the disciples as friends of Jesus, and therefore, of God, is another important contribution by John, even though the term is also used of the disciples by Jesus in Lk 12:4. In John, it is first applied to the Baptist who, as has been pointed out, acts as a prototype disciple in that he witnesses to Jesus (Jn 3:29). It is then applied again to another prominent Johannine witness, Lazarus, who Jesus describes as a mutual friend of the disciples (Jn 11:11). Its use in Jn 15:13-15 appears to be the highest pinnacle of the closeness of the relationship between Jesus and the disciples.

Table 5.11: The Relationship between Jesus and the Disciples in Jn 13-17

Relationship of Disciples to Jesus	Implications
Loved by Jesus (13:1, 34; 14:21-23; 15:9, 12)	Sacrificial love (13:1)
Sharers in Jesus' Inheritance (13:8)	Union with Jesus (13:20)
Teacher and Lord of disciples (13:13)	Imitate Him (13:14-15)
Servants of Jesus (13:16; 15:20)	Knowing and Obeying (13:17)
Agents of Jesus (13:16, 20)	Sent on His mission (13:16)
Chosen ones (13:18; 15:16, 19)	To bear fruit (15:16)
Little children (13:33; 14:18)	Loved one another (13:34)
Branches of the true Vine (15:2-5)	Abide or dwell in the Vine and bear fruit (15:5)
Friends of Jesus (15:13-15)	Beneficiaries of His death, obey Jesus (15:14),

The ancient Greco-Roman and Jewish backgrounds of the use of the category of “friendship” to describe the Jesus-disciples relationship have been thoroughly investigated by researchers (cf. Puthenkandathil 1993; Ringe 1999; Keener 2003, 1004-1014; Mitchell 1997, 225-260; Adams 2006, 291–292). It places the relationship between the disciples and Jesus at par, if not beyond that respectively between Yahweh, and Noah, Abraham and Moses. Given the sapiential background of John's Gospel, however, the closest parallel is the depiction of close friendship with *Σοφία* in passages such as Sir 37:2, 5, 15; Wis 7:27; 8:18.

Indeed in Wis 7:27, the friendship is so close that *Σοφία* enters into the soul as a means of transforming the human agent to become a friend of God. Again the mystical union between the agent and the Sender is indicated through this idea of friendship. And it is exactly this picture of union between Jesus and His friends that transforms them, which is emphasized in the farewell discourse. In revealing Himself as the embodied Divine Council to His disciples, and demonstrating His love for them through His sacrificial death, Jesus transformed the relationship into one of friendship and sharing in His inheritance.

#### 5.3.3.1.3 Divine Hospitality as a Paradigm for Exegeting John 13-17

If in terms of the genre and setting of John 13-17, the idea of an after-dinner symposium at which Jesus also gives His testament is the best option, and if the ever closer relationship between Jesus and the disciples is a major theme of the narrative and discourses, then perhaps the concept of divine hospitality could be a very useful

paradigm for exegeting the chapters (cf. Swanson 1994, 241-263; Neyrey 2006, 155-163).

Table 5.12: Divine Hospitality in the Gospel of John

<b>Dwelling in Jesus</b>	<b>Peculiar Terminologies</b>	<b>Jesus as Host/Food/Drink</b>
The Son in the house sets free (8:34-36)	Believing <i>into</i> Jesus (1:12; 2:23; 3:18; 4:39, 41)	Jesus hosts the first disciples (1:37-39)
Jesus the Gate for the sheep (10:9)	Work for the Son of Man's food (6:27)	Providing Wine at Wedding (2:1-11)
My servants will be where I am (12:26)	Where I am coming from and going (8:14)	Giver of Living Water (4:13-14)
Abide in my love (15:9)	You cannot come where I am going (8:14; 13:36)	Jesus feeds 5000 (Jn 6:1-11)
Come to me for Eternal life (Jn 5:39-40)	I am in the Father (14:10)	Jesus is Bread from Heaven (6:48-51)
	Every branch in me that bears fruit (15:1-3)	Eating Jesus' flesh (6:53-58)
		Come to me and drink (8:37-39)
		Jesus washes feet of disciples (13:1-5)
		Giving a piece of morsel to Judas (13:26)
		Friendship with God (15:13-16)

The idea of divine hospitality as a paradigm of how the disciples are formed suffuses the Gospel. It may be recalled that in chapter three of the dissertation (§ 3.3.3.2.5), it was intimated that the idea of divine hospitality is manifest in three main ways in John's Gospel—(a) through the metaphorical or symbolic use of concepts such as *μεωεις* (dwelling or abiding) in Jesus or God, (b) through the peculiar use of prepositions and other similar words which imply Jesus or God as a Place or Receptacle into whom human beings put themselves or their faith, and (c) through the portrayal, both narratively and metaphorically, of Jesus (or God) as Host who provides food or drink, and also sometimes is the Food or Drink, that is ingested to give life to the human agent. As table 5.12 shows, this concept is pervasive in the whole Gospel and is carried over and heightened in Jn 13-17 (cf. Webster 2003; McKinlay 1996, Ringe 1999; Hodges 1995; Laney 1989, 55-66). In this respect John provides an important theological paradigm for understanding the close relationship and union between the disciple and Jesus, which lies at the heart of the growth and progress of the disciple.

Table 5.13: Themes Related to Divine Hospitality in Jn 13 – 17

<b>Passages</b>	<b>Specific References to Divine Hospitality</b>
<b>Footwashing (13:1-38)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Washing of Feet</li> <li>• Where I am going, you cannot follow me now; but you will follow afterwards (13:36)</li> </ul>
<b>The Father's House Discourse (14:1-14)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In my Father's house there are many dwelling-places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? (14:2)</li> <li>• Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own; but the Father who dwells in me does his works (14:10)</li> </ul>
<b>Promise of Holy Spirit (14:15-31)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you. In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live. On that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you (14:18-20)</li> <li>• 'Those who love me will keep my word, and my Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them (14:23)</li> </ul>
<b>The True Vine (15:1-17)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing. (15:4-5)</li> <li>• No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father (15:13-15)</li> </ul>
<b>Hatred in the World (15:18-27)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Because you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world—therefore the world hates you. (15:19)</li> </ul>
<b>The Spirit's Work (16:1-24)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you (16:7)</li> </ul>
<b>Benediction of Peace (16:25-33)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The hour is coming, indeed it has come, when you will be scattered, each one to his home, and you will leave me alone. Yet I am not alone because the Father is with me. I have said this to you, so that in me you may have peace. (16:32-33)</li> </ul>

Table 5.13, which summarizes passages in Jn 13-17 with themes related to divine hospitality demonstrates that, taken in its three varied forms, the idea of divine hospitality is versatile for describing the interactions between Jesus and His disciples in a formational manner. In addition, several other themes that are highlighted in the five chapters, such as love, unity, friendship and peace are closely related to the concept of hospitality in the ancient Mediterranean cultural milieu. Given the frequency of the concept of divine hospitality as an expression of the relationship between Jesus and disciples in the whole Gospel, there may be significant mileage in employing the

concept as a means of identifying how these chapters portray the formation of the disciples. As I now show the footwashing brings together the various concepts of disciple formation, including purification, revelation, imitation, eyewitness and hospitality. In that sense it acts as a summarative symbol of the formation of the disciples.

### *5.3.3.2 The Footwashing as Summarative Symbol of the Formation of the Disciples*

The footwashing incident in John 13 continues to baffle interpreters for the several questions of historical, textual<sup>55</sup>, literary and theological relevance that it raises. Perhaps the key question remains what the exact meaning of the symbolism as Jesus intended it to be. Clearly, this question is of utmost importance, because not only were the disciples expected to imitate the meaning of the act—"you also ought to wash one another's feet" (Jn 13:14)—but, Jesus also insisted that it was in some way the means by which the disciples could become sharers in His inheritance (Jn 13:8). And herein lies the difficulty; for, whereas Jn 13:6-11 interprets the footwashing as a soteriological symbol of the purification and participation of the disciples in Jesus, Jn 13:12-16 interprets it as a moral/ethical symbol of humble self-sacrificing love.

Moreover, the whole chapter raises other questions such as the relationship between the emphases on the impending death of Jesus, revelation, martyrdom and the themes of hospitality which naturally provided the setting for the footwashing. The act of Jesus, the embodied Divine Council, in stooping down to wash His disciples' feet in a slave-like manner was so puzzling to Peter, and indeed acknowledged as such by Jesus Himself (Jn 13:14). Unsurprisingly, interpreters are rightly faced with the difficult but inescapable challenge of answering the simple question of the meaning and implications of the

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<sup>55</sup> The significant textual problem of 13:10, in which several ancient manuscripts differ in having longer or shorter readings, is well known (cf. Thomas 1987, 46-52; Haring 1951, 355-380). Furthermore, the actual limits of the pericope are also debated among commentators; some opting for Jn 13:1-20 (e.g. Lincoln 2005), most for Jn 13:1-30 (e.g. Brown 1970; Barrett 1978b; Howard-Brook 2003; Keener 2003), and yet others, for Jn 13:1-38 (e.g. Moloney 1998, 371; Borchert 2002). The argument favouring Jn 13:1-38 appears most persuasive.



footwashing. Evidently, the answer is also of extreme importance for the purposes of the present project; for this passage is the only moment in the Gospel that Jesus touches His conventional disciples (apart from the giving of the bread to Judas). The attraction to see the footwashing as a key formational encounter is therefore strong.

Among interpreters, four categories of approaches have been employed in an attempt to resolve the question of the role of the footwashing in the Gospel—(a) single moral-ethical interpretation, (b) redaction-critical approach which sees several interpretations as derived from different sources, (c) a two tier Christological-Discipleship approach, and (d) polysemous interpretation approach.

A number of interpreters (e.g. Köstenberger 1999, 145-149; Belsterling 2006, 77-92) recognize a single interpretation—that given directly by Jesus in Jn 13:12-16. In this sense, the footwashing represented a call on the disciples to imitate Jesus in humility and love as they serve one another in a sacrificial manner. It was “an object lesson, a visual, practical demonstration of what Jesus’ teaching looked like in action...an example of the kind of attitude [Jesus] sought to promote” (Köstenberger 1999, 147). The basis for this interpretation is clear, and captures the important stress that Jesus gives to the act in Jn 13:12-16.

The problem with the single interpretation approach, however, is that it fails to account for the soteriological dimension of the footwashing made explicit by Jesus in Jn 13:6-11. Indeed, the chapter sets the act in the context of Jesus’ impending death by emphasizing Jesus’ love for His own, His ascent and descent, and the ominous foreboding of Judas’ betrayal (Jn 13:1-3). Furthermore, the canonical placement of the account at the beginning of the passion narratives, together with its apparent relationship with the anointing of Jesus’ feet by Mary (Jn 12:1-8) and the absence of the Lord’s Supper in the Fourth Gospel establishes a firm link between the footwashing and Jesus’ death (cf. Schneider 1981, 81). Moreover, Jesus’ indication to Peter that his continued participation in sharing Jesus’ inheritance depended on being washed, and the suggestion that by some means, some of the disciples became clean during the act

(Jn 13:10), all caution against dismissing the soteriological aspect of the interpretation of the footwashing.

The second approach to the footwashing postulates that the apparently different but not contradictory interpretations were derived from various sources or different stages of the development of the Johannine community. Bultmann for example argues that the above two interpretations derived from different sources, one with polemical intentions against Jewish purificatory rites, and the other attempting to replace these with the practices and ethics of the Johannine community (1971, 466-472). Also subscribing to multiple sources, Segovia has put forward the proposal that the various stages of growth of the Johannine community is responsible for different nuanced understandings of the act by Jesus (1982, 31-51; cf. Brown 1970, 2.560-562).

These redactional and source-critical approaches have however lost the significant influence in Johannine scholarship that it previously exerted. Not only have the putative “sources” not been proven to exist, let alone identified and agreed upon, it is now difficult to imagine, given what is known regarding manuscript technology at the time, that such intricate weaving of different literary sources together in a coherent manner could have been achieved, at least without leaving some trace of incomplete source manuscripts elsewhere. In addition, and as Barrett has astutely cautioned, appealing to different sources as solution to the problem of apparently different interpretations only postpones it and in any case “does not exhaust the expositor’s task” (1978b, 437).

The third approach, which interprets the above two interpretations in a two tier Christological-Discipleship manner, holds significant sway among a number of interpreters (e.g. Koester 2003, 14; Keener 2003, 899). It is argued that the two tiers of interpretation represent a typical Johannine style in which images are made to span two levels—there is a Christological level which, in the case of the footwashing, is the soteriological purification and participation interpretation, and a Discipleship level which is the moral/ethical interpretation. This approach is very attractive, for it takes account of both interpretations and links them in a non-contradictory manner. The Christological level sees the footwashing as looking forward to the death of Jesus and the issue of

water and blood from His side as a means of proleptic purification of the disciples. Through the atoning act, Jesus, the Suffering Servant brings His own to share in His inheritance and so cause them to participate in Himself. The Discipleship level on the other hand, regards the self sacrifice of Jesus as a moral-ethical example that the disciples are to imitate. However, the two interpretations are not contradictory—the disciples can only act in true obedience to Jesus' command only when they have experienced the purification and participation that His death would bring.

A subsection of interpreters who subscribe to the two tier interpretation also see a sacramental element to the footwashing, whether in baptismal terms (e.g. Craig 1939, 36-37; Lightfoot 1960, 261-263; Schnackenburg 1968-82, 3:21-22; Moloney 1998, 378), Eucharistic terms (e.g. MacGregor 1963, 112-114; Suggit 1985, 64-70), or an extra sacrament (e.g. Correll 1958, 72; Bacon 1931-32; Neyrey 1995, 198-213). A further sub-section extends this sacramental reading to a quasi-sacramental interpretation such as the “cleansing from post-baptismal sin” theory (e.g. Thomas 2004; Dunn 1970, 247-252).

These sacramental readings are however difficult to justify from the text. It is manifest that it was the *meaning* of the footwashing which was being reflected from Jesus unto the disciples and not the physical act of washing itself. Witherington is therefore quite correct when he insists that John consistently encourages his readers “to read the story at the level beyond the material one and to look for the spiritual significance behind or within them” (1995, 237). In any case, even if the footwashing was meant to be a sacrament, a convincing explanation of the mechanism by which a footwashing sacrament may simultaneously invoke participation, purification and a humble self-sacrificing service of love is still awaited (cf. Macchia 1997, 239-249).

Furthermore, and on a general level, the two-tier system of interpretation fails to account for other theological themes that emanate from Jesus' act—especially the revelatory, martyrdom and hospitality motifs which set the scene for the footwashing in the first place. With regard to the revelatory motif, there is a pervasive reference to the idea of revelation throughout the passage. And even though the limits of the chapter

may be debated, an account of the meaning of the foot washing that does not reflect the presence of the revelation motif does not appear satisfactory. The beginning of the chapter, depicts Jesus as knowing, loving and acting (Jn 13:1-5), and the rest of the chapter amplify this triple theme. So, Jesus is portrayed as knowing the arrival of “the hour” (Jn 13:1), of knowing His inheritance, as well as His destiny (Jn 13:3), of knowing His betrayer (Jn 13:11), and those He had chosen (Jn 13:18), and of knowing the exact timing of the Son of Man’s glorification (Jn 13:31-32). Jesus’ love is expressed not only in His self-giving sacrifice, but also in the friendly act of offering the dipped morsel to Judas, His would-be betrayer. Thus the theme of revelation is closely intertwined with the Christology of the chapter.

In line with the imitative nature of Johannine discipleship, the theme of revelation is similarly associated with the disciples in Jn 13. So, like Jesus, the disciples are enjoined to know (Jn 13:12, 17), to love (Jn 13:34) and to act (Jn 13:15-17). In Jn 13:17, the knowing and acting are put together—“If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them”. Again in Jn 13:34-35, “loving” and “knowing” are put together and reflected from Jesus’ loving and revelation unto the disciples—“I give you a new commandment”, Jesus says, “that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another” (cf. Culpepper 1991, 133-152; Moloney 1998, 374-376). The revelatory motif therefore spans both the Christology and discipleship of the chapter. Interpretations which diminish the theme of revelation in John 13 will accordingly fail to resolve the question of the role of the footwashing in the formation of the disciples.

Regarding the martyrdom motif, the setting of the footwashing in the context of the impending death of Jesus, and the concluding conversation between Jesus and Peter with regard to martyrdom (Jn 13:36-38) gives some credence to the possibility of martyrdom overtones to the act. Given that the chapter previous to the footwashing had depicted the washing of Jesus’ feet “in preparation for my burial” (Jn 12:7), there is some mileage in at least considering this. Moreover, Jesus stresses that the humble sacrificial love that was expected of His disciples is one that is, like His own, willing to die for the others (Jn 13:34-36).

If this is so, then the idea that the footwashing somehow signified preparation for martyrdom cannot be completely ruled out. Indeed, and as Culpepper has successfully shown, Jesus' use of the word, ὑπόδειγμα in Jn 13:15 to describe the example that He sets for His disciples draws attention to its use in the first century to exhort the faithful to commit themselves to martyrdom (2 Mace 6:28, 31; 4 Mace 17:23; Sir 44:16; cf. Culpepper 1991, 147). Weiss has also postulated that the washing of feet was one of the ritual acts of preparation for martyrdom in the Johannine community (1979, 298-325). Even if no evidence exists to prove it, the possibility of martyrdom as a related theme to the footwashing cannot again be avoided.

With regard to the hospitality motif, the fact remains that Jesus conducted the footwashing of His disciples in the context of hospitality. Furthermore, the rest of the Old (Gen 18:4; 19:2; 24:32; 1 Sam 25:41) and New Testament (e.g. Lk 7:44; cf. Thomas 2004, 35-50), mostly referred to footwashing in the context of hospitality. It is true that in many other ways, the Fourth Evangelist was keen to go beyond and expose further dimensions of what were accepted norms and to give further interpretations of Old and New Testament symbols. But as in many of these cases, he does not completely annihilate previous interpretations, but develops them further. Accordingly, hospitality may well have been an underlying feature of the symbolism of footwashing, now being invested with much more profound interpretation related to the death of Jesus. Accordingly, the construal of the footwashing as symbolizing welcome reception into God's household, as postulated by Coloe (2004, 400-415) or as an act of "eschatological hospitality" as put forward earlier by Hultgren (1982, 541) may not be dismissed outright, even if they are not held as the most important interpretation of the act.

Given the above considerations, the possibility that the footwashing was meant by Jesus and hence the Evangelist to be polysemous becomes real indeed. Schneider's suggestion that in terms of the actions of Jesus in the Gospel, in which several are clearly symbolic and some as signs, there is little reason why the footwashing should not be seen as a prophetic act invested with multiple meanings (1981, 81). It is obvious that there are inherent dangers in this stance, as the comment on the

sacramental interpretation above has indicated. The Evangelist did not mean to leave the meaning(s) of the footwashing so open-ended that any interpretation would suit it. It is safer to say that even if the footwashing were regarded as polysemous, it must have had a limited number of meanings which must be restricted to the text as constituted before us.

Indeed, recent discussion of the interpretation of Johannine imageries indicates that the phenomenon of the polysemous symbols is not restricted to the footwashing, but is a general literary strategy through which the Evangelist communicates the mystery of the Christ event. Interpreters have now come round to accept that in line with literary conventions of his time, Johannine imagery is polysemous, and the several different apparent interpretations do not necessarily indicate different levels, but rather a networked inter-relation of images aimed at enhancing the communicative effectiveness of the symbols (cf. Frey et al 2006; Koester 2003; Zimmermann 2006, 30-36; Culpepper 2006, 369-402; Borowski 2003). If that be the case, then it may well be that several of the above interpretations were intended by Jesus, and so by the Evangelist. And as table 5.14 shows these polysemous interpretations of the act reflect various aspects of the formation of the disciples. Thus the footwashing should be regarded as the summarative symbol of the formation of the formation of the disciples.

Table 5.14: Footwashing as Summarative Symbol of Formation of the Disciples

Category	Description
<b>Soteriological</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Proleptic Redemptive Cleansing of the Disciples</li> <li>2. Incorporation, union and participation of Disciples in Jesus</li> </ol>
<b>Moral-Ethical</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Disciples to imitative Jesus' humble self sacrifice</li> <li>2. Disciples to love one another as Jesus loved them</li> </ol>
<b>Revelation</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Disciples are cleansed through Jesus' revelation of word and deed</li> <li>2. Disciples to put revealed knowledge into practice</li> <li>3. Disciples are made competent eyewitnesses</li> </ol>
<b>Martyrdom</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Prepared the Disciples for ultimate sacrifice in obedience and love</li> <li>2. The disciples share in Jesus' mission</li> </ol>
<b>Hospitality</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Disciples as members of God's Household</li> <li>2. Jesus receives His own into intimate union and partnership</li> <li>3. Proleptic inauguration of the eschatological household of God</li> </ol>

Clearly the question of how and which aspects of these meanings are transferable to the formation of future generation of disciples needs to be investigated, but not in the present context. Specifically, the question of how footwashing by today's Christian, regardless of how footwashing is envisaged, functions in the Christian community is crucial, but will only have to be broached in a general manner in the final chapter of this dissertation. It suffices to say however, that the polysemous approach would appear to support several passages in the first epistle of John in which an apparent link is made between these interpretations (e.g. 1 John 1:7-10; 2:1-2; 5:16-18; cf. Asumang 2009b).

#### 5.3.4 The Role of the Passion in the Formation of the Disciples

The fact that the Fourth Evangelist explicitly refers to the death and resurrection of Jesus as early as during the Baptist's witness to the first disciples (Jn 1:29) implies that the Passion overhangs the whole Gospel from beginning to end (Senior 1991; Neyrey 1994, 113-137; Koester 1991, 84-91; Grigsby 1982, 51-80; Pfitzner 1977, 10-21; Brown 1975, 126-134; Haenchen 1970, 198-219; Dennis 2006, 331-363). It is present in the several symbols that are highlighted by the Evangelist, in the interpretation of the signs and works of Jesus, and in the revelatory discourses which accompany them. In addition, there are specific passage where the idea of the death of Jesus is inserted in an apparently "unwarranted" manner, as if to remind the reader to interpret the narrative in the light of the forthcoming death of Jesus—the so-called "hypertexts" (e.g. Jn 6:51; 10:11, 15; 11:50, 51, 52; 15:13; cf. Dennis 2006, 335-339).

Accordingly, and as is often the case with the other theological themes of John's Gospel, the Passion is interwoven with the other themes of the Gospel. This poses the caution that a restricted study of the passion narrative of John's Gospel (Jn 18-21) is unlikely to give the fullest picture of how John portrays the role of the Passion of Christ in the formation of the disciples. Moreover, it demands that the fullest answer to the question of the relationship between the Passion and the formation of the disciples must take into consideration how the whole Gospel portrays the Passion within the interaction between Jesus and the disciples.

For the purpose of the present project, space will allow a summary of the contribution that John makes to understanding the role of the Passion in the formation of the disciples. Three main points may be made in this direction—(a) the eternal salvation of the disciples, (b) the restoration of the failed disciples, and (c) the confirmation of the disciples as eyewitnesses (cf. Draper 2002, 63-76; Perkins 1992, 31-41). Regarding the relationship between the death and resurrection of Jesus and Johannine soteriology, the point has already been established that the view that John excludes atonement as part of soteriology, as postulated by Stevens (1899), Bultmann (1951, 40), Kummel (1974), and Ladd (1974, 254-269) among others, do not accurately reflect the soteriology of the Gospel (cf. Turner 1976, 271-277). While it is true that John emphasizes belief in Jesus as the Revealer of God, and a deeper experiential relationship with, and participation in Him; it cannot be asserted that the death of Jesus is not understood as vicarious and a means of cleansing from sin. Perhaps the strongest indications that the death of Jesus is viewed as a means of salvation of the disciples in the Gospel is the soteriological dimensions of the footwashing as explained in the previous section. What is evident is that the Evangelist has developed this dimension further with due consideration to other theological themes.

Another important feature of the Passion narrative of John's Gospel is the emphasis it makes on the restoration of the twelve after their failures during the Passion. In John, Jesus is in total control of His arrest by the temple police to the extent that the police were thrown back to the ground in response to His question (Jn 18:6-8). John further records that Jesus instructed that He alone ought to be arrested and his disciples exonerated (Jn 18:8). "Though Jesus' disciples may betray, deny, or abandon Him, He remains faithful to them" (Keener, 2003, 1081). John's record also appears to lesson the appearance of severe disloyalty that the Markan Passion account evokes. In John's Gospel, the disciples fled the scene, but with Jesus' foreknowledge and understanding.

Another indication of this apparent attempt to rehabilitate the failed disciples is John's naming of Peter as the disciple who cut off the servant's ear (Jn 18:10). While this act was clearly misguided, its sentiment of loyalty in the light of Peter's impending denial suggest that the Fourth Evangelist, being an eyewitness, is painting a less negative



picture than otherwise emerges from the parallel account about Peter in the Synoptic Gospels (cf. Blaine 2007, 89; Keener 2003, 1083; contra Droge 1990, 307-311). Peter's subsequent failure is narrated by the Evangelist, but so also is his restoration after the resurrection. Certainly, in comparison with Mark, the Johannine account provides a more satisfactory resolution of the Passion narrative—Mary Magdalene reports the resurrection to the disciples, the disciples see the evidence for themselves, they meet Jesus who restores those still struggling to believe, and Peter is restored as the lead shepherd (Jn 20-21). This scene of the rehabilitation and reinstallation of Peter (Jn 21:15-19) is perhaps the epitome of what the death and resurrection of Jesus achieved in the transformation of the disciples. With this restoration, the disciples, empowered by the Holy Spirit (Jn 20:22; cf. Pretlove 2005, 93-101), were formed and ready to continue the mission of Jesus.

## 5.5 The Formation of the Disciples in John's Gospel: Summary

This chapter has attempted to describe and analyze the formation of the disciples of Jesus in a manner that may help explain Christian origins. The approach adopted has been one of focusing on the Gospel in its own right as a way of appreciating its historical, theological and pastoral contribution to the subject. Based on the foregoing, four main conclusions may be drawn. Firstly, because of the complexity of characterization in the fourth Gospel, a careful attention to the detailed characterization is required in order to ascertain who is depicted as a disciple in the Gospel.

That said, a disciple in Johannine terms believes, and dwells or abides in Jesus. Contrary to some suggestions, the foregoing has emphasized that the signs of Jesus play a positive role in faith, just as His words. These two however complement each other and should not be seen as in anyway antithetical. When a disciple believes s/he must confess or witness and so bring others to Jesus. Following the analysis, the hypothesis that Johannine disciples should be conceptualized as agents of the embodied Divine Council, and who also function as vehicles of divine revelation, has been accepted.

When these characteristics are used as criteria for the Johannine disciple, it becomes clear that the Gospel describes several different round characters, and in a manner which indicate the large followership of Jesus. The foregoing has for example observed a number of the positive portrayals of some of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι, a situation which not only mollifies the tendency of some interpreters to regard the characterization of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι in John in overly negative terms, but also parallels the similar portrayal of the crowds in Mark's Gospel.

Secondly, and perhaps much more than Mark, John focuses on a number of key non-conventional disciples and through that demonstrates the formation of such characters. This chapter has shown that most of the characters have positive and negative features. By anonymizing some of the non-conventional disciples, the Evangelist employs them for rhetorical and pedagogical effect for his first readers. One such character is the man born blind, whose story of movement from blindness to full physical and spiritual sight and worship of Jesus as Lord, it has been shown, pictorially also charts the formation of disciples in vivid but effective manner. In this account, perhaps John makes the largest contribution to our understanding of the formation of disciples before Jesus' death; for, the idea of purification or cleansing from sin is sustained, but in a proleptic manner in anticipation of Jesus' salvific death. The idea of divine revelation as the means of formation as well as the purpose is heightened; but, it does not obliterate the idea that believers are transformed through the atoning sacrifice of Jesus.

Thirdly, the analysis of the formation of the conventional disciples has demonstrated that the theme of divine hospitality which is raised in the first introduction of the disciples to Jesus continues to play a central role in their formation. This theme is transformed in a symbolic metaphorical fashion, so that the goal and means of transformation of the disciple is an ever increasing and closer relationship and mystical union of the disciple with Jesus. This theme is most explicit in John among the Gospels, and yet provides quite an effective means of explaining how it was that the association of disciples with Jesus transformed them to become the foundational pillars of the Church.

Finally, the chapter has established that the footwashing appears to be a very effective symbolic summary of the Johannine conception of the formation of agents of Jesus to be vehicles of His revelation. Its purificatory and participation in Jesus interpretation show that the disciple of Jesus was formed and transformed but in proleptic manner and in anticipation of the death of Jesus. The moral-ethical interpretation emphasizes the imitative aspect of the formation of the disciples, while the emphasis on revelation, preparation for martyrdom and divine hospitality all highlight the roles these play in the formation of disciple. With this picture therefore an effective conceptualization of how Jesus made disciples, in the Johannine presentation may be attained.

The presentation of John also leaves the interpreter with a number of questions unanswered. It is striking that no single incident of healing performed by a disciple is recorded by John. This clearly distinguishes John from Mark in which by the middle of the narrative the disciples were actively exorcising and healing. It is true that there is a reference to the disciples performing “greater works” in John. Yet, no record of miraculous actions of the disciples is given in John. In mitigation it may be countered that John’s Gospel recognizes the disciples as having participated in a mission in which they “harvested” in areas they had not sown (Jn 4:36-38). Whereas this is correct, it does not describe miracles being performed as part of this harvesting. In comparison with Mark’s Gospel, this raises some interesting questions about the Johannine conceptualization of the formation of the disciples.

Clearly, this question must be set in the larger context of the relationship between the Gospels of John and Mark, an endeavour which is outside the remit of the present project. For now, it is apparent that whereas John focuses much more on the disciples as agents of divine revelation, Mark focuses more on the disciples as agents of divine power. One way of testing this hypothesis is to examine how the Jesus-disciples interactions are portrayed in some of the instances which are described by both John and Mark. And it is to this task that we now turn.

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE FORMATION OF THE DISCIPLES IN MARK AND JOHN'S GOSPELS**

When God gave the Church the four canonical Gospels, He also gave her a humbling problem. It is a humbling problem because the revelatory nature of these Gospels demand a prerequisite attitude of humility before they declare their gems of information to the enquirer. This being so, careful attention to method and humble reflection on the nuances that the Evangelists make are demanded when a historical-theological question, such as what has engaged the present project, is asked of the Gospels.

So far in this dissertation, the conceptualization of the Jesus-disciples relationship as one between the embodied Divine Council and His agents has significantly aided the fulfilment of some of the objectives. The task of comprehensively describing and analysing the formation of the disciples of Jesus in a manner that will help explain Christian origins has been approached through a parallel investigation of the Gospels of Mark and John. Each has presented a convincing account of the Jesus-disciples interactions, providing information on the key characters, the expected outcomes and the important processes and events which went into forming the disciples as agents of the embodied Divine Council. In each, analysis of the dynamics within the Jesus-disciples interactions has shed significant light on the causal link between the formation of the disciples and the resultant foundational Christian community. Yet also, each Gospel has left a number of questions unanswered, together with a number of divergent nuances by the Evangelists.

The remaining task, which will now be engaged in this penultimate chapter, is to compare the two accounts in order to arrive at as close an understanding of the formation of Jesus' disciples as possible, while also underlying the nuances that both Evangelists brought to bear on the subject.

To achieve this objective, the present chapter will be divided into three sections. In the first section, a brief summary of the various available options for comparing and contrasting the two Gospels will be outlined. This issue goes to the heart of the question of the relationship between John's Gospel and the Synoptics. And it must be admitted that this dissertation is not the place to attempt solving this question. Nevertheless, an argument will be put forward in favour of a complementary relationship between Mark and John. In addition, it will be underlined that historically and theologically, the complementary theory is the most fruitful approach to investigating Christian origins using the two Gospels as source materials. The second section will provide a summary of the similarities and differences between the two accounts of the formation of the disciples. Based on the implications of the complementary relationship between Mark and John, the section will conclude by enumerating a number of hypotheses on how the two accounts complement each other. The final section will validate some of these hypotheses by briefly examining two stories involving interactions between Jesus and the disciples in which Mark and John overlap.

## 6.1 The Relationship Between the Gospels of Mark and John

The majority of interpreters now take it for granted that Mark was the first among the canonical Gospels to have been written and John was the last (cf. Stein 1987:49; Thomas 2002). Though this view is still questioned in some circles (e.g. Nineham 1963, 39; Sim, 2007: 283-299; Bolt 2004, 392; Farnell 2002, 226-309), and lacks external support from the earliest Church traditions<sup>56</sup>, it is so widely held that an examination of the relationship between Mark and John could reasonably begin from this foundation.

A broad comparison of the two Gospels also demonstrates striking similarities between them, and yet, significant differences, making them comparable. For example, both

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<sup>56</sup> The quotation of Papias, Bishop of Hierapolis (60-130 AD) by Eusebius in *Ecclesiastical History*, 3.39.15-16 is the pivotal external evidence in favour of Matthean priority. Yet, because this quotation itself poses exegetical problems, as well as several questions regarding the sources of the information, enough doubts remain on this single evidence thus undermining Matthean priority. The internal evidence are grossly in favour of Markan priority.

Gospels have had roughly similar reception histories. Papias' reported claim that Mark's Gospel, though accurate, was not "an ordered account of the oracles of the Lord" (Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 3.39.15), was the dominant assessment of that Gospel during the first few centuries of the Christian era. Similarly, the universal acceptance of John's Gospel was also delayed largely because of the purported favour it enjoyed among the Gnostics<sup>57</sup>. Furthermore, just as the fortunes of Mark have been completely reversed in the last half century, so also are there signs that a similar reversal of the fortunes of John's Gospel is also underway (cf. Anderson 2007; Bauckham and Mosser 2008; Klink III 2007; Wills 1997).

Internally, there are affinities between Mark and John which have contributed to their parallel reception histories. Both Gospels are broadly similar in outline. They have similar beginnings—the Baptist plays a major role from the beginning of Jesus' ministry, even though each Evangelist chooses a different slant as to what this role was. Whereas Matthew and Luke present considerable ethical teachings of Jesus, Mark and John unrelentingly focus on the Person of Jesus and peoples' responses to Him. When the respective idioms through which the two Evangelists write are taken into account, there are several corresponding sayings and verbatim agreement between them (cf. Anderson, 2007:131). There are differences in the style of the discourses and the miracles; yet, in the few miracle stories which are repeated by both Evangelists, there are remarkable similarities in the narration, though, once again there are differences in emphases and their interpretations. And as will shortly be shown, in some passages, it could be reasonably claimed that John appears to be alluding to Mark. Moreover, there are marked resemblances in the Passion accounts in both Gospels, with occasional parallel phrases. In addition, both John and Mark describe two separate mysterious figures associated with the Passion narratives, figures that have also been traditionally

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<sup>57</sup> This commonly held view of John as a favourite of the Gnostics has been recently challenged in a convincing treatment by Hill who describes the "consensus" as a "figment of the modern, critical imagination" (2004:152). He also concludes that, "The extent of John's early use has been routinely underestimated, and its reception among the Gnostic schools largely (and surprisingly) misunderstood" (2004:160).

linked to their respective authorships—the naked young man of Mk 14:51-52 and the Beloved Disciple of John.

There are a number of apparently significant differences between John and Mark. On the surface, the Jesus of the first half of Mark's gospel is reticent about making His identity known. On the other hand, the Jesus in John openly and consistently declares His own identity, pre-existence and His relationship to the Father. John's Gospel describes a temple cleansing near the beginning of the narrative, whereas Mark describes one near the end. Mark appears to describe only one Jerusalem visit of Jesus, whereas John describes at least three visits (Jn 2:13; 5:1; 7:10). Mark emphasizes the primacy of faith as pre-requisite for miracles, to the point that Jesus could not do any miracles in His hometown because of their unbelief (Mk 6:5). On the other hand, the signs of Jesus in John's gospel are geared towards engendering faith, rather than, at least on the surface level, requiring faith before their performance.

Furthermore, whereas Mark elaborates the Lord's Supper, John does not directly describe the rite; but instead, uniquely elaborates another intimate symbolic act of Jesus with His disciples—the footwashing. Whereas Jesus performs several exorcisms in Mark, John does not relate any exorcism, even though he refers to the influence of the devil in this world. Unlike Mark, there are no clear-cut parables in John. In its place the Jesus of John speaks in riddles and extended metaphorical analogies, which are like parables but not fully blown ones. The question then is—what is the best way of accounting for this data in such a manner as to enable a synthetic historical-theological understanding of the ministry of Jesus?

### 6.1.1 A Brief History of Scholarship on the John-Mark Relationship

The history of scholarship on this question is littered with varying and often conflicting answers. During the Patristic period, the natural urge in some quarters was to harmonize all four canonical Gospels into one narrative, the most evident example being Tatian's (120 – 185 AD) *Diatessaron*. Though quite a feat, with the final harmony just in excess of seventy percent of the summation of all the four Gospels, the

*Diatessaron* made important choices that eliminated crucial nuances of the individual Gospels. It is unsurprising therefore that majority of the earliest Christians rejected Tatian's harmonization approach. This rejection is even more remarkable given the fact that during the second and third centuries, several opponents of Christianity ridiculed the fourfold character of the canonical Gospels (Irenaeus' *Adversus Hereses* III.11.8.9; cf. Skeat 1992: 194-199; Cullmann 1956:37-54).

Be it as it may, it is also important to observe that the chronology of John's gospel dominated Tatian's reconstructed harmony of the life of Jesus. Furthermore, the harmonization approach appears to have been inspired by the assumption that John wrote his Gospel in order to supplement the Synoptics. And this *Supplementation theory* was also held to explain some of the glaring omissions in the fourth gospel (Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 3.24.7-13).

On the other hand, other Patristic theologians such as Origen (180-254 AD), argued that the differences between the Gospels were hermeneutical by divine intent and should therefore be held in tension and unresolved. With his allegorical interpretive scheme, Origen preferred a method in which John was regarded as an "*anagogical*" *interpretation* of the Synoptics—and the apparent discrepancies served as a hermeneutical tool leading to pastoral-spiritual messages for people's edification (cf. Schaff 1986; Mackay 2004, 10; Smith 2001, 8).<sup>58</sup> Similarly, in rejecting harmonization, Irenaeus (?125 – 202 AD) maintained that the number "four" had a mystical significance representing the four living creatures of the Apocalypse. This method of arbitrary mystical interpretation may be faulted by the modern investigator; yet, the fact that ancient scholars went to these lengths to defend a fourfold Gospel against determined opponents is worth reflecting on.

All the same, these two approaches to the John-Mark relationship—harmonization as against theological/mystical/allegorical interpretation without historical resolution existed

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<sup>58</sup> The sceptical extreme in the third century was that of Gaius of Rome who rejected John's gospel as heretical together with perhaps, the mysterious group called Alogoi of the third or fourth century whose existence is now disputed by scholars (cf. Hill 2004, 172-205).



side by side and in different degrees for well over nineteen centuries. Some distinguished theologians, such as Augustine and Calvin pursued limited harmonization with occasional allegorization, whereas others adopted various degrees of allegorical interpretation of John's Gospel. By and large, the traditional view that all the Gospels were independent eyewitness testimonies also influenced the direction of these reflections.

The beginning of the historical-critical paradigm in New Testament scholarship introduced radically different approaches to the question of the relationship between John and Mark. It started with the assumption that John knew and used the Synoptic Gospels in writing his account. This *Literary Dependence Theory* quickly flourished, thanks also to the growth of source critical methodologies that dominated the guild. In this theory, John was regarded as a product of various sources, most of which were from the Synoptics. In Jülicher's words, "It is almost universally regarded as certain that John was a later production because the Synoptics are all utilized by it" (1904, 396; cf. Bacon 1910; Streeter 1924). This change from supplementation to literary dependence also led to contradictory conclusions by various groups of scholars. On the extreme sceptical end of the spectrum, Strauss viewed John as so derivative of the synoptics that it amounted to their mythological interpretation and was therefore inferior (1846, 150). Similarly, Baur made four major conclusions which subsequently dominated Johannine scholarship, at least during the fifty years straddling the nineteenth and twentieth centuries—that John was very late, thoroughly theological, a product of Hellenistic environment, and dependent on the Synoptics (1847, 239-315).

At the moderate centre of the spectrum were those scholars who maintained the traditional supplementary view while at the same time arguing for literary dependence of John on Mark. Moffat's assessment of the relationship between John and Mark was typical of this group—"The Fourth Gospel, like his two immediate predecessors, thus bases on Mark's narrative, but diverges from it repeatedly; these divergences are in some cases accidental, in others due to preference for Matthew or Luke, or for both combined, and in other cases, again the result of some independent tradition" (1914, 546).

On the other extreme, and starting also from the presumption that John knew Mark, Windisch came to a different conclusion regarding John's purpose. Construing the differences between the two Gospels as significant, Windisch concluded that John's aim was not to supplement Mark, but to *correct and displace* Mark—*Displacement Theory* (1929, 59). Around the same time, the form critical work of Gardner-Smith introduced another complicating nuance in the John-Mark relationship. Gardner-Smith proposed that the similarities and differences between John and the synoptics could be explained, not by literary dependence, but rather as a derivation from the same or similar oral traditions. The Gospels were therefore to be regarded as *Literarily Independent* but derived from similar oral traditional sources (1938). This view was roughly shared by Dodd, who further proposed that John's independence was derived from a separate oral tradition (1963). Hence even when John and Mark were considered as literarily independent, their original oral traditional forms could have been dependent (so, Gardner-Smith 1938) or independent (so, Dodd 1963).

This view that John was literarily independent from Mark has held sway in Johannine scholarship in the last five or more decades. In the period, there have been several different understandings and applications of the nature and extent of this independence. Some regard independence as *cognizant non-dependence*, i.e. John knew Mark but did not depend on or use Mark while writing. On the other hand there are several scholars who interpret the independence of John as also indicating lack of knowledge or awareness of Mark, both in the oral and literary phases—*complete independence*. This later approach has also been influenced by the trajectory of scholarly interpretation which regards John as a product of an isolated and sectarian community (e.g. Martyn 2003; Brown 1979; Meeks 1972:44-72; Dunn 1983).

Despite the almost universal acceptance of "literarily independent and orally separate" Johannine and Markan traditions in scholarly circles, a few renowned scholars continued to maintain the supplementation theory with or without literary relationship. Perhaps, the most prominent scholar in this group is Barrett who argued that John knew and used the Synoptics, especially Mark, as means of augmenting their witness (1978b; cf. Lindars 1971; Smith 1992). Assuming a prolonged oral and literary compositional

phases of both Gospels, others have proposed different mediating but complex positions (table 6.1). Boismard for example, believing that a prolonged period of gestation existed between the productions of both Gospels, has argued that John both influenced and was influenced by Mark (1977; cf. Anderson 2007). Similarly, Dauer has argued that even though John was independent of the Synoptics, its oral sources contain traces of the Synoptics (1984). Indeed one would be creating a false dichotomy to imagine interpreters as divided into static alternative “literarily independent” and “literarily dependent” camps. And the fact remains that interpreters oscillate between camps, while others continually modify their nuance of the probable relationships.

Table 6.1 Summary of Theories on the John-Mark Relationship

<b>Theory on the Relationship</b>	<b>Theory on John's Intention</b>
<b>John is Literarily Dependent on Mark</b>	Interpretation of Mark
	Replacement of Mark
	Displacement of Mark
	Supplementation of Mark
	Midrashic Development of Mark
<b>John is Independent and Incognizant of Mark</b>	Both Derived separately from similar oral source(s)
	Both Derived from different oral sources
<b>John is Independent but Cognizant of Mark</b>	Interpretation of Mark
	Complementation of Mark
	Replacement of Mark
	Supplementation of Mark
	Displacement of Mark
<b>John is Independent of, but interacts with Mark at various stages of the development of the traditions</b>	Inter-influential Interaction between Mark and John
	Parallel Midrashic Development of Mark
<b>John was Prior to Mark</b>	No relationship between the two
	Mark complements John

The plethora of theories nevertheless illustrates the extent of the problem and hence calls for discretion in their assessment. The fact is the evidence supporting one or the other of these views are sparse and quite often, their interpretations depend on the presuppositions of the scholars. Therefore, even though all the above options are plausible hermeneutical stances from which to examine the two Gospels, it is clear that any assumed stance significantly affects the conclusions that are made in studying the two Gospels. Due reflection on the assumptions and their presuppositions that the

researcher brings to bear on the data are therefore vital. One of these basic presuppositions is the researcher's conception of the inspiration of the Scriptures. Furthermore, explicit statements on methodology, as well as explanations of the rationale behind the choices that are made are necessary in order to enhance the utility of the answers that are provided.

Given the above caveats, a number of conclusions may be made with a degree of assurance. Firstly, since the exact verbal correspondences between John and Mark are limited, certainly in comparison to what pertains between Mark and Matthew or Mark and Luke, it is difficult to sustain the argument that John was literarily dependent on Mark<sup>59</sup>. Even if it did, no explicit procedure will be solid enough to identify any verbal changes that the fourth Evangelist could have made to Mark's Gospel. Accordingly, it is fair to conclude that if at all John used some of Mark's words, he has so transformed them that it could be reasonably stated that he was literarily independent of Mark.

Secondly, one may assume that the fourth Evangelist's claim to have been an eyewitness would not have prevented him from borrowing some of Mark's words, if he had access to Mark. This eyewitness credential therefore necessitates that John be regarded as independent of Mark's account. Thus if at all John is thought to have used the words of Mark, he would have done so as an independent writer shaping a narrative of which he himself has had personal experience. This would make any theory of John's literary dependence on Mark a mere theory but of little practical relevance in terms of influencing how we read either Gospel.

On the other hand, even though the possibility that John was chronologically prior to Mark should not be prematurely dismissed (cf. Coakley 1988, 241-256; Robinson 1985; Hofrichter 1997; Matson 2001), such a theory practically implies that the two Gospels were completely unaware of each other; for, Mark does not show traces of awareness of John's Gospel. Moreover, John's final statement that if every one of Jesus' signs

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<sup>59</sup> Of Mark's 11,025 words, 97% are exactly repeated in Matthew's 18,293 words and 88% in Luke's 19,376 words. This contrasts sharply with the meagre 153 (17.6%) of John's 868 verses having similar parallels in Mark (cf. de Solages 1979, 98-99).

were written down, “I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written” (Jn 21:25) appears to suggest that he was aware of other books in existence at the time of writing which record the words and works of Jesus. Though this does not necessarily indicate that John knew the exact contents of such books, it nevertheless indicates the admission that his account was not the first. Indeed Jn 21:25 may well be inviting the reader to evaluate other accounts in comparison with John’s. Even if this interpretation presses the implications of Jn 21:25 too far, it certainly makes the priority of Mark a more likely scenario than the priority of John.

Thirdly, the theory which postulates a period of interactions between traditions in Mark and John until their written form has a lot to commend it. As the Acts of the Apostles indicates, the Christian fellowships of the first century AD, and their leaders, extensively networked and communicated with each other through travels, messengers and letters to have facilitated such interactions between their stories of Jesus, even if the period of such interactions were not as prolonged as is sometimes assumed by scholars (cf. Thompson 1998, 49-70). In that case, the recent theory advanced by Anderson postulating an “inter-influential” relationship between John and Mark (2001; 2007) has much to commend it<sup>60</sup>. By the same token, the theory of a Midrashic development of some of the Markan narratives in John’s Gospel is not implausible, even in the face of the Evangelist’s statements that he was an eyewitness of Jesus’ ministry. In any case, it could be argued with some justification that it is exactly because he was an eyewitness that the fourth Evangelist could have taken the authority upon himself to develop in a Midrashic manner, augment and complement Markan traditions.

However, the problem with these interactional theories is that because it is virtually impossible to isolate with certainty how these interactions occurred, the theories do not provide adequately firm practical basis for comparing the Gospels. Accordingly, though the interactional theories are plausible hypothetical stances, they do not in themselves

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<sup>60</sup> Anderson’s reasons for this proposal include (a) the linguistic similarities such as the translations of Aramaic terms, references to times of the day, distances walked etc., (b) some of John’s explicit emphases, such as his insistence that the first two signs were done in Cana of Galilee, are probably attempts by John to fill out important details of the earlier part of Jesus’ ministry omitted by Mark, and (c) John’s attempts at correcting Mark’s chronology.

direct how the two Gospels should be exegeted, compared and contrasted. What they however do is this—they support the view that John’s Gospel in some ways complements Mark’s Gospel.

### 6.1.2 The Complementary Relationship between Mark and John

The complementary view of the relationship between John and Mark states that even though he knew Mark, John wrote independently and with readers who also knew Mark in mind, in order to complement Mark’s Gospel. Complementation in this sense is a combination of supplementation, augmentation and clarification. The most recent argument in support of this theory has been succinctly advanced by Richard Bauckham (1998), and a summary of his proposal will suffice for our purposes.

Bauckham puts forward three groups of arguments to support the complementary relationship between John and Mark’s Gospel. Firstly, he argues that some of the parenthetical explanations that John gives at various points of his narrative—two in particular, Jn 3:24 and 11:2, “were intended specifically for readers/hearers who also knew Mark’s Gospel” (1998, 151). Bauckham suggests that Jn 3:24, which reminds the reader that, at that point of the narrative, the Baptist was not yet in prison, was designed to “relate John’s chronological sequence to Mark’s” (1998,151). This parenthetical explanation helps the reader to place Jn 1:19-4:43 between Mark 1:13 and Mk 1:14. The other parenthetical explanation in Jn 11:2, which identifies Mary as the one who would anoint Jesus, served to name an anonymous character known to Mark’s readers.

Secondly, the broadly similar narrative sequence between Mark and John appears to indicate John’s knowledge of Mark. “For readers/hearers already familiar with the narrative sequence and characters of one of these *bioi* of Jesus, the differences and overlaps would strike them much more immediately than the resemblances and differences in theological interpretation, especially as the differences both in narrative content and in prominent characters in the two Gospels are very striking” (1998, 151; cf. Bauckham 2001, 101-111).

Thirdly, Bauckham notes that the manner in which the narrative of Jesus' trial in Jn 18:13-28 dovetails with that in Mark suggests a complementary relationship. Whereas Mark states that Jesus was brought to the high priest and the "chief priests" and other officials (Mk 14:53), John observes that there were two high priests, the reigning Caiaphas and the powerful ex-high priest by name Annas, thus appearing to clarify Mark's account. Furthermore, John's elaboration of the narratives of Jesus' appearance before Annas (Jn 18:24) without further explanation of what happened before Caiaphas appears designed to explain Mark's point about "chief priests" at Jesus' trial.

Bauckham warns that the idea of his approach is not to return to the traditional form of harmonization of Gospels such as what was practiced by Tatian. He also cautions against a simplistic view of supplementation, as if John's Gospel or Mark's Gospel were incomplete on their own. Each gospel was adequate; John in particular writes in such a way that prior knowledge of Mark was not required to achieve his purpose. However, if the readers knew Mark, a point which John assumed that most of his readers would have, then John writes in such a way as to complement Mark. John's reflective approaches would have also provided the reader of Mark with an interpretive tool for understanding the significance of Jesus' miracles in both Gospels. Bauckham however points out that there are two points in which John sets out to correct the chronology of Mark's gospel—the "cleansing" of the temple and the anointing at Bethany—are moved from their place in Mark's sequence to an earlier point" (1998,159).

Not all scholars have welcomed Bauckham's interventions, and some have questioned a number of details of his argument (e.g. North 2003, 449-468; Sim 2001, 3-27; Esler 1998, 235-248). While some of these objections may have some validity in assuaging a number of the implications of Bauckham's points, they do not fully contradict Bauckham's conclusions. The significant support in several quarters for the view of complementary relationship between the two Gospels is therefore justified (e.g. Gilliam 2006, 1-8; Matson 2001, 54-56; Bowe 2000, 295; Dvorak 1998, 201–213; cf. Glasswell 1985, 99-115).

Moreover, the complementary theory has considerable utility as a heuristic device for answering historical-theological questions such as the one posed in this dissertation. For a start, it allows the Evangelists to make their own nuanced contributions to understanding the formation of the disciples, while at the same time enabling a conceptual synthesis of the accounts. Furthermore, it enables a fuller explanation of the causal links between the Jesus-disciples interactions and Christian origins. Where discrepancies are found between the two accounts, possible reasons may be sought in differing authorial intentions as well as an attempt by John to complement Mark. Where no such discrepancies are shown, and the accounts are compatible, it is most likely that John is enabling a fuller appreciation of the nature of the dynamics of the formation of the disciples. It may be concluded therefore, that the complementary theory is the most persuasive, pragmatic and appropriate theoretical option fitting the genre of the Gospels as the *bioi* of Jesus. With it in the background, I shall now proceed to compare the formation of the disciples in Mark and John.

## **6.2 Comparison of the Formation of the Disciples in Mark and John**

There is little doubt that Mark and John wrote from similar perspectives regarding the cause of Christianity. They both make the claim in their respective introductory prologues that Jesus as the embodied Divine Council came into the world in fulfilment of God's mission. And though this mission is couched in different theological terminologies, they essentially relate to the restoration of the divine-human relationship. Moreover, in both Gospels, Jesus' task as God's supreme Agent is couched in similar categories—He performs acts of divine power and of revelation, dies on the cross, and rises from the dead.

Both Evangelists also emphasize that a major aspect of Jesus' task was the gathering of disciples to Himself, with whom He interacted in a formational manner. These disciples are conceptualized in both Gospels as agents of the embodied Divine Council, even though there appear to be significant nuances in the manner in which their functions are emphasized. All the same, at the close of both Gospels, it is concluded



that the death and resurrection of Jesus, the embodied Divine Council, constituted the unique cause of Christianity that ensured the continuation of the functions of the formed disciples. There are enough grounds therefore, for comparing the two Gospels with regard to how they conceptualize the formation of the disciples and its causal relationship to Christian origins. This comparison will be conducted by focusing on the dimensions of the “formation” of agents—the significant characters, projected outcomes, and the key processes and events involved in the formation.

### 6.2.1 The Key Discipleship Characters in Mark and John

Both Gospels use the term “disciples” to represent believers in, and followers of Jesus. Mark explicitly uses the term only for the closest group of followers, whom he also calls “the twelve”, even though, as has been argued in chapter four, he characterizes several other followers of Jesus in the narrative as implicit “disciples”. In contrast, John uses the term in a more liberal manner and calls several others who were not members of “the twelve” as “disciples”. The question has been raised in the previous chapter as to whether the Johannine use of the term “disciples” on some occasions, especially when it is applied to some of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι, is less indicative of “believers” or metaphorical “followers” of Jesus in the way that he uses it for the conventional disciples and as Mark employs it (§ 5.1.3.4). It has been shown, however, that these occasions in John still describe people who believed in Jesus but some of whom defected from the faith. Accordingly, this Johannine phenomenon parallels and complements Mark’s characterization of some of “the crowds” who similarly exhibit discipleship qualities but who also later defect from Jesus. John’s use of the term clearly widens the net of followers of Jesus.

Mark uses the term “apostles” on one occasion and in a functional manner for “the twelve”, after their return from an evangelistic mission. On the other hand, John never uses the title, but indicates the apostolic functions of the disciples as agents sent by Jesus. Moreover, both Evangelists recognize the existence in Jesus’ ministry of “the twelve”, who act as representatives of the eschatological Messianic community. While

Mark provides a list of the twelve, John names only nine of them. It has been argued in the previous chapter that if, as is most likely, the list of the twelve served as authenticating witness for the Synoptic Gospels, then, John may have judged that he did not need to provide such a list. His own eyewitness statements were sufficient for that purpose.

Also, in both Gospels, several non-conventional disciples are identified, some named, and others anonymous. Both Evangelists employ anonymity for rhetorical and pedagogical purposes—perhaps more in John than in Mark. Indeed, some of the major discipleship roles in both Gospels are played not only by non-conventional disciples but more so, by anonymous ones. It is also striking that women play prominent discipleship roles in both Gospels. These include the named women who served as eyewitnesses of Jesus' death and resurrection—i.e. in Mark, Mary Magdalene and Mary, mother of James the younger and of Joses, and Salome; and in John, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the wife of Clopas. Furthermore, these named women play vital apostolic functions after the resurrection.

With regard to Jesus' burial, both Gospels also highlight the pivotal discipleship roles of Joseph of Arimathea, a prominent Sanhedrist who came to faith earlier during Jesus' ministry but did not publicly declare his hand until Jesus' death. Upon the death of Jesus, Joseph gathered the courage to publicly associate himself with the movement. In John's Gospel, the account is augmented by associating Joseph with his colleague, Nicodemus, thus apparently reinforcing the point that the transforming effects of Jesus' ministry extended widely and deeply into the Jewish hierarchy. With regard to non-Jewish disciples of Jesus, Mark highlights the key apostolic function of the demoniac in the Gentile region of Gerasenes, the feeding miracle in the Gentile territory on the eastern bank of Galilee, and the confession of the Roman centurion. Likewise, John highlights the successful witness of the Samaritan woman during Jesus' mission there, the Greeks who came to Jesus, and the role of the man born blind as witness and agent of divine revelation. Accordingly, both Evangelists definitely show that the followership of Jesus was much wider and diverse than the "twelve". The earliest Christian

movement, certainly before the death of Jesus, was multiform, made up of people of different races, ethnicities, genders and of all social and cultural classes.

Despite these agreements between the two Evangelists, there are several differences with regard to the discipleship characters that they focus on, as well as their characterizations. Apart from Joseph of Arimathea, Mary Magdalene and the anointer of Jesus, the two Evangelists focus on completely different non-conventional disciples. Mark describes the discipleship qualities of Simon's mother-in-law, the haemorrhaging woman, the demoniac, Bartimaeus and the owner of the Upper room. John on the other hand focuses on the Bethany family, the Samaritan woman, the βασιλικός of Capernaum, and the man born blind. This difference is no doubt a reflection of John's choice of different emphases in composing his Gospel.

Even so, there are several differences between Mark and John regarding how they characterize the conventional disciples. Firstly, and as discussed in chapter three, though the two Evangelists describe a Jesus-disciples interaction from the very beginnings of Jesus' respective ministries, they give completely different accounts. In the case of Mark, Andrew and Simon are abruptly and imperiously called to follow Jesus; whereas in the case of John's Gospel, Andrew and the Beloved Disciple respond to the witness of the Baptist and follow Jesus in a quest. It was argued in that chapter that since the two Evangelists follow different time scales of Jesus' ministry, the two accounts are not incompatible. It is, for example, explicitly stated by Mark that the calls of the disciples took place *after* the imprisonment of the Baptist (Mk 1:14), while in John's Gospel, the Baptist was clearly not yet in prison. The two accounts therefore describe different encounters, so that when placed in parallel with each other, they shed significant light on the abrupt encounters between Jesus and the first disciples in Mark. Theologically, by focusing on the quest of the disciples, John's account complement Mark's in giving a rounded picture of how discipleship begins.

Secondly, though the twelve are in the constant presence of Jesus in both Gospels, they appear more active in Mark than in John's Gospel. It has however been explained in chapter five that the apparent passivity of the disciples in John is only apparent; for,

by their presence, they play a significant eyewitness role, through their observations (i.e. seeing and hearing), memory and witness.

Thirdly, whereas Peter is prominent in Mark, other members of the twelve, in addition to Peter are also highlighted in John's Gospel. Thus Philip for example features in certain key roles such as witnessing to, "calling" and introducing Nathanael to Jesus (Jn 1:44-48), his role in the feeding miracle (Jn 6:5-7), his introduction of the questing Greeks to Jesus (Jn 12:21-22), and his involvement in the discussions in Jn 14:8-9. Similarly, Andrew (cf. Jn 1:40; 6:8; 12:22) and Thomas (cf. Jn 11:16; 14:5; 20:24-29; 21:2) play important roles in John's Gospel. It is also evident that John focuses more on the disciple-disciple interactions, demonstrating a keen interest by an eyewitness writer to nuance significant emotional exchanges of relevance in his account.

Two other areas of differences between the Evangelists require further exploration—(a) the characterizations of John, the son of Zebedee, and (b) the characterizations of Simon Peter in both Gospels.

#### *6.1.1.1 The Characterizations of John Zebedee in Mark and John*

John, the son of Zebedee plays an essential role in Mark's Gospel. He was among the first four disciples to be called by Jesus. And he apparently remained prominent among Jesus' followers so that his name appears third in the list of the twelve (Mk 3:17). At some point in their discipleship careers, James and John were nicknamed by Jesus as Boanerges, which Mark explains as "the sons of thunder" (Mk 3:17). Significant debate surrounds the reasons why Jesus nicknamed them, as well as the ethymology of the name itself (cf. Rook 1981, 94-95; Culpepper 2000, 39; France 2002, 161; Stein 2008, 172). With regard to the etymology, there appears to be a movement toward a consensus among interpreters that it was derived from a Galilean Aramaic dialect whose correct translation was, as Mark puts it, "sons of thunder".

But why such a name for a disciple of Jesus? Since Mark does not indicate the actual reasons why Jesus gave them this nickname, one ought to be restrained in proposing

an explanation. Certainly care must be exercised in extrapolating from the meaning of the name to make conclusions about John's temperament or character (contra Stein 2008, 172). It must be remembered, for example, that though Peter is nicknamed as "rock", his behaviour before Easter cannot be said to have been a "firm and solid personality", as the nickname evokes. France's advice is therefore apposite—"The NT records do not give us enough information about James and John to enable us to judge how far this term might fit their character (if indeed this was the purpose)" (2002, 162). If therefore "sons of thunder" were even an indication of the temperament of James and John, then, like Peter, it may well be a prophetic indication of their future careers than of their previously existing temperament.

All said, at least three general observations may be made regarding the nicknaming of John Zebedee as "John Boanerges". Firstly, apart from Peter (Mk 3:16), only these two among the twelve were explicitly said to have been nicknamed by Jesus. This indicates a very significant and prominent role, perhaps much more than Mark himself gives space to in his Gospel. Secondly, the nicknaming appears to indicate a special relationship of the two with Jesus, which though not at par with that of Peter, yet, is much more significant than the other members of the twelve. In the Old Testament, the renaming of characters is performed only by God, or His angels on His behalf, and indicates a significant status transformation in their relationship with Yahweh (e.g. Gen 17:5, 15; 32:28; Isa 62:2-12; cf. Blaine 2007, 35-36). The nicknaming of John Zebedee by the embodied Divine Council is unlikely to have been any less.

Thirdly, given the positive nature of the nickname given to Peter, (and for that matter of characters in the Old Testament) it is also unlikely that Boanerges was meant by Jesus to be disparaging or a negative branding of His disciples. Accordingly, even if the nickname "sons of thunder" directly referred to the temperament of John, it must have been a positive characteristic, in contrast to the often assumed impression that they were "hot-headed" individuals prone to "fiery outbursts", as Lane describes them (1974, 135; cf. Stein 2008, 172). On the contrary, "sons of thunder" may well be designating them as devotedly zealous for the cause of Jesus. One therefore agrees with Culpepper's conclusion—"By giving the name Boanerges, Jesus announced that James

and John would become 'sons of thunder', mighty witnesses, voices as from heaven" (2000, 40).

Indeed, the announcement of the witnessing career of the John Zebedee is bolstered by the significance of the four occasions that he is found in the special group of "the three" or "the four" with Jesus. John is among this "select" group in Jesus' company at the raising of the daughter of Jairus, the transfiguration, at the Mount Olivet discourse and at Gethsemane. As noted in chapter four, this group plays a central eyewitness role in Mark's Gospel, especially in relation to that Gospel's apocalyptic revelation.

It is perhaps a marker of his prominence, as well as his zeal for the cause of Jesus, that like Peter, the negative characteristics of John Zebedee are also highlighted in Mark's Gospel. It was John, who though speaking on behalf of at least some of his colleagues, attempts to ban the non-following exorcist from exercising the power of Jesus over demons (Mk 9:38). He duly receives a rebuke from Jesus. It was also John Zebedee, together with his brother, who sought advantage of honour at the expense of his colleagues, and caused friction among them (Mk 10:38-45). This later incident certainly shows them in a negative light; but, it also hints at a human perversion of their ambitious zeal for Jesus. Though Jesus rebukes them, he nevertheless affirms and predicts their commitment to His cause and their suffering for that purpose—"The cup that I drink *you will drink*; and with the baptism with which I am baptized, *you will be baptized*" (Mk 10:39). The two wanted to be great in the kingdom of God, and the essential sentiments of their request were granted; but, only on Jesus' terms—through suffering and martyrdom. Thus an overall balanced characterization of a very prominent member of the twelve is given in Mark's account.

The purported differences between the characterizations of John Zebedee in Mark's Gospel, as against that in John's Gospel, have raised no small amount of dispute among interpreters. At the root of the problem is the fact that the sons of Zebedee are named on only one occasion in the fourth Gospel—in Jn 21:2, where they are identified in a party of seven disciples. Even then, this identification does not directly name him as

“John”, but in a manner implying that the writer assumes that the reader knows the sons of Zebedee.

It is true that the later designation of the anonymous Beloved Disciple in Jn 21:7 as one of the seven, indicates that the Beloved Disciple was either one of the two sons of Zebedee in that party, or of the other two unnamed disciples. This makes a direct correspondence of the Beloved Disciple with John Zebedee quite likely, even though “most contemporary scholarly views” think it rather simplistic to make such a conclusion (Keener 2003, 1229; cf. Culpepper 2000, 57; Boismard 1998, 76-80). All the same, when this apparently non-committal equation of John Zebedee with the Beloved Disciple in Jn 21:2-7 is added to the not uncommon view among interpreters that John 21 is itself an epilogue which was not part of the “original” Gospel (cf. Minear 1983, 85-98; Reim 1976, 330; Bultmann 1971, 700), the challenge is posed to explain what could amount to a complete lack of Johannine interest in John Zebedee.

This, however, is not the exact situation in the Gospel; for, most interpreters now accept that the evidence for excluding John 21 from the rest of the Gospel is externally non-existent and internally, at best, tenuous (cf. Keener 2003, 1219-1224). Crucially, no extant manuscript of the Gospel has been discovered which does not have that chapter, indicating that the Gospel has most probably always existed with the twenty one chapters. The fact remains though that the identification of the Beloved Disciple as one of the four unnamed members of the seven in Jn 21, and so likely one of the sons of Zebedee is the nearest to explicit identification of John Zebedee by John’s Gospel.

The reader who is familiar with Mark’s Gospel is therefore left with the inevitable choice, that given the prominence of John Zebedee in Mark, the writer of John’s Gospel, who most likely knew Mark’s Gospel, has either (a) deliberately diminished the presence of John Zebedee in his narrative or (b) John Zebedee is present in the account in such a manner that does not directly identify him as such. Since the author of the Gospel is the Beloved Disciple (Jn 21:24-25), and as has been argued in chapter three, the Beloved Disciple is the anonymous disciple of Jn 1:37-39, and since the Beloved Disciple appears to be one of the twelve, the conclusion is inescapable that the reason for lack

of an explicit identification of John Zebedee is the latter option—John Zebedee is the author of the fourth Gospel who identifies himself as the Beloved Disciple.

This otherwise straightforward answer is however complicated by the other fact that there are no overlapping stories in Mark and John in which direct references are made to John Zebedee. The reasons for this phenomenon are not hard to find. Despite the similarities between the two Gospels, they nevertheless overlap in only a few specific stories, none of which explicitly names John Zebedee. And as has already been noted, the Fourth Gospel gives much more space to the discourses of Jesus and the non-conventional disciples. Be that as it may, the account in John gives enough information to enable comparisons of the characterizations of John Zebedee in both Gospels (table 6.2). For our purposes, the key question that such a comparison needs to answer, is whether, given the respective approaches of either Evangelists, the characterizations are compatible, and if so, what further information does John's Gospel add to our understanding of the formation of John Zebedee.

Table 6.2 Differences in Characterizations of John Zebedee in Mark and John

John Zebedee in Second Gospel	John Zebedee in Fourth Gospel
Called by Jesus while at business (1:19)	Follows Jesus after the Baptist's witness (1:37-39)
Nicknamed "Boanerges" (3:17)	Reclines next to Jesus at meal (13:23)
Eyewitness with "the three" at Jairus' house (5:37), transfiguration (9:7), and Gethsemane (14:33), and "the four" at Mount Olivet discourse (13:3)	?Follows arrested Jesus to high priest's residence (18:15-16)
Prohibits the non-following exorcist (9:38)	At the cross with Jesus' mother (19:26-27)
Seeks position of honour (10:38)	At the empty tomb (20:1-10)
	At the post-resurrection restoration (21:2, 24)
	Self-declaration as the author (21:24-25)

It is clear that, despite appearing to play a "minor role", the Beloved Disciple nevertheless "looms large" in John's Gospel (Collins 1995, 367). That he reclines at Jesus' side during the meal in Jn 13:23 also indicate his prominence. Furthermore, apart from the first introduction in Jn 1:37-39, and his presence at the cross (Jn 19:26-27), the Beloved Disciple is always found in the presence of Peter, again indicating his



eminence<sup>61</sup>. As it will be shortly observed, the fourth Gospel also recognizes the prominence and leadership role of Peter. Yet, the prominence of John Zebedee in the fourth Gospel emanates not only from the title of Beloved Disciple that he bears and the significance of his association with Peter, but also in his key eyewitness role.

It is true that the epithet, “the one Jesus loved” would appear rather odd, if he were not the author of the Gospel. Yet, even then, it is a description that is not directed only at the Beloved Disciple (e.g. Jn 11:3, 26); albeit, it must be admitted that this was more frequent with John Zebedee. Despite its sentimental connotations, however, it should be noted that the designation refers to Jesus’ love rather than the character of John Zebedee. Minear has attempted to link this label with that placed by Moses on the tribe of Benjamin in Deut 33:12 (1977, 110). This theory would however necessitate making a direct correspondence between the Johannine farewell discourse and Moses’ discourse in Deuteronomy, a correspondence which, as was noted in chapter five (§ 5.3.3.1.1), is not water tight. If at all therefore the label Beloved Disciple were an indication of the character of John Zebedee, then the best that may be concluded is that it reflects his discerning perception and appreciation of Jesus’ love.

This perceptive nature of the Beloved Disciple underlines his eyewitness role in John’s Gospel. This role begins when as one of the first two disciples of Jesus, he responds to the witness of the Baptist concerning Jesus (Jn 1:37-39). It is followed by his nearness to Jesus at the supper, so near that he acted as an intermediary to Peter in seeking to know who it was that would betray Jesus (Jn 13:24). It is his discerning roles at the empty tomb (Jn 20:1-10) and the post-resurrection appearance in Jn 21:24-25 that have earned him the description as a key eyewitness (cf. Bauckham 2007; Bauckham 1993, 21-44; O’Grady 1999; Byrne 1985, 83-97). Thus in typical Johannine fashion, and as a key eyewitness, the Beloved Disciple is explicitly stated to be present at important events in the Gospel, sees, hears, perceives, believes, remembers, later understands Scripture’s testimony and testifies.

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<sup>61</sup> Unsurprisingly John Zebedee continues in Peter’s presence in Acts 3:1, 3, 4, 11; 4:13, 19; 8:14.

The Beloved Disciple is not overtly underlined as showing any misunderstanding of Jesus in John's Gospel. However, given the writer's tendency to insist that the misunderstandings were global on the part of the disciples, and was only fully clarified after Easter and with the aid of Scripture, one ought to be careful not to overemphasize this feature of the Beloved Disciple. So, for example, after entering the empty tomb and believing, he explains, "for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead" (Jn 20:9). The Beloved Disciple is therefore no different from his colleagues in that respect.

Accordingly, the not infrequent assessment that he was, for example, the epitome of the "ideal disciple" (so, Kurz 1989, 100-107), or "paradigm of ideal discipleship" (so, Beck 1997, 132), or one who even "embodied the Paraclete for others and shaped their understanding of the work of the Holy Spirit in their midst" (so, Culpepper 1983, 123; cf. Koester 2003, 242) are unfortunate hyperboles. Significantly, unlike what an "ideal Johannine disciple" would have done, the Beloved Disciple does not openly confess Jesus in the Gospel, even though admittedly, he writes his testimony so that others will believe (Jn 21:24-25). Furthermore, he does not bring any other person to Jesus in the Gospel, as for example, Andrew and Philip do (Jn 1:41-43). He therefore does not completely exemplify every expected quality of a Johannine disciple.

Bauckham's view that the role of the Beloved Disciple in John's Gospel should be labelled the "ideal author" (2007, 73-91) is therefore a much more measured assessment than the "ideal disciple" accolade. Even though Bauckham himself does not mention it, the "ideal author" compliment parallels the function of some of the agents of God in the Old Testament who, on being allowed access into the Divine Council, are ordered to *record* what they see and hear (e.g. Exod 32:32-33, Ps 69:28-29; 139:16; Isa 4:2-6; 34:16-17; Jer 22:30; Dan 10:21 cf. Collins 1993, 326). As explained in chapter three (§ 3.1.1), a similar phenomenon occurs in the inter-testamental Second Temple Judaism literature (e.g. 4Q417 1 i 13-18; 4Q299 ii 2.8 cf. Bennema 2001, 61-82).

Given the Beloved Disciple's eyewitness credentials, and his statements on the purpose for writing the Gospel in Jn 20:31 and 21:24-25; there is no reason why the "ideal

author” accolade might not fittingly typify his self-understanding. In that respect, the Beloved Disciple should be regarded as an agent of the embodied Divine Council whose function was to see, hear, interpret and *record* the testimony from the Council<sup>62</sup>. This would also seem to be an appropriate interpretation of the historical and pastoral role of the Beloved Disciple given the extraordinary influence of his Gospel throughout the Christian era.

A difficult problem is posed by the statement in Jn 18:15-16 that a particular disciple was acquainted<sup>63</sup> with the high priest. Is this “other disciple” the Beloved Disciple, and if so, how does this information fit with the characterization of John Zebedee in Mark’s Gospel? The question primarily belongs to the realms of historical plausibility, as to whether it is credible that a Galilean fishing family in the first century AD could have become acquainted with the high priest’s family in Jerusalem. Finding this scenario improbable, a number of interpreters have reasonably opted for the suggestion that the “other disciple” in Jn 18:15-16 is not the same as the Beloved Disciple (e.g. Keener 2003, 1090-1092; Culpepper 2000, 62; Barrett 1978b, 525; Bruce 1983, 344-345). Others take it that this “other disciple” was the Beloved Disciple; although he was not John Zebedee, but a priestly believer who was based in Judea and therefore was naturally known to the high priest (so, Bauckham 2007, 76; cf. Hengel 1989, 129) or a prominent Jerusalem disciple of Jesus (so, Witherington 1995, 2008), or perhaps Lazarus (so, Moloney 1998, 490).

There are reasons to suggest that based on the text, this “other disciple” is more likely the Beloved Disciple. Firstly, all the other Johannine uses of the phrase “other disciple” (four times in Jn 20:2-8) link him to the Beloved Disciple. Secondly, this particular pericope completes the picture that the Beloved Disciple did not entirely abandon Jesus at anytime during His arrest, trial and crucifixion (Lincoln 2005, 453; cf. Koester 2003,

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<sup>62</sup> This function is even more evident in Rev 1:2

<sup>63</sup> Γνωστὸς could also be used for a familiar friend, but in the present context, this is most unlikely.

71)<sup>64</sup>. In Mark's Gospel, the twelve abandoned Jesus after the arrest and only Peter is found nearby as Jesus is tried. This leaves the eyewitness function of disciples between the trials and the crucifixion to non-conventional disciples such as Simon of Cyrene. In John's Gospel, on the other hand, the presence of this "other disciple" appears to make up for a key eyewitness role, especially of the account of Jesus' trial and faithful witness before the high priest. This is so important a role for the author of John's Gospel that the likelihood is that the "other disciple" fits in with his manner of characterizing the Beloved Disciple elsewhere in the Gospel.

Moreover, there are several pieces of external evidence to support the plausibility that John Zebedee could have been acquainted with the high priest's family. Firstly, Zebedee had hired servants (Mk 1:20), indicating that he was most likely not a poor fisherman. This undermines the tendency to imagine that John Zebedee was from the deprived margins of society and unlikely to have had connections in Jerusalem. Secondly, several wealthy fishermen entrepreneurs of the time transported salted Galilean fish to the Jerusalem elites during the time (cf. Morris 1995, 666 n.37; Alcihron, Aelian and Philostratus 1949, 9). Even though this does not constitute direct evidence that John Zebedee was acquainted with the high priestly family, it does again undermine the foundations of the general assumption that a Galilean fisherman could not have been known to a Judean high priest's family. Trading relationships were essentially social relationships in ancient Palestinian and Mediterranean settings.

Thirdly, there is a possible circumstantial evidence that John Zebedee himself could have had priestly connections. A comparison between Matt 27:56 and Mk 15:40 indicate that John Zebedee's mother was most probably Salome. Now, even though the fourth Evangelist does not name her, he refers to the presence of the sister of Mary, Jesus' mother, at the cross (Jn 19:25), leading to the possibility that this sister is the same

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<sup>64</sup> Even though he believes that the "other disciple" in Jn 18:15 was the Beloved Disciple, Lincoln insists that because he was a "literary device" who was fictionally inserted to "guarantee the Gospel's witness", there is no need to explain how plausible it could be that a Galilean fisherman could be known to the high priest's home (2005, 453).

person as Salome<sup>65</sup>. Since Jesus' mother was a cousin of Elizabeth, "a daughter of Aaron" the high priest (Lk 1:5) and wife of Zechariah, the priest, the possibility that Salome was hence from a priestly family and so John Zebedee knew priests is not farfetched. It is granted that this argument is quite circumstantial and does not tender direct evidence to categorically prove that John Zebedee was the one referred to in Jn 18:15. What it shows, however, is that it is plausible that he was acquainted with the priestly family. Accordingly, and for the purpose of the present project, it suffices to conclude that the "other disciple" of Jn 18:15 was most probably the Beloved Disciple, who was also John Zebedee and played a key eyewitness function at Jesus' arrest and trial at the high priest's residence.

The question as to whether "sons of thunder" in the Markan characterization could be compatible with a perceptive person as the Beloved Disciple is again one of careful understanding of both terminologies. As has been noted above, "sons of thunder" does not indicate any negative temperament of John Zebedee, and would at best be characterizing him as zealously devoted to the cause of Jesus. As noted earlier, the designation as Beloved Disciple characterizes him as perceptive witness rather than as a sentimental individual. And this would not contradict the characterization of John Zebedee in Mark's Gospel, where Boanerges could equally refer to his prominent witnessing role. Though the designation "Beloved Disciple" is not the same as a zealously committed disciple, neither is it incompatible with it. The picture of one who was tenaciously zealous for the sake of Jesus would definitely fit with the characterization of the Beloved Disciple at the trial at the high priest's house, at the cross where he eventually takes Jesus' mother home, and in the race to the empty tomb. John's Gospel does not narrate any failures on the part of the Beloved Disciple; but, the account of his failures in Mark's Gospel is not incompatible with the Beloved Disciple, whose closeness to Jesus, combined with his zeal, could have been a source of inordinate misadventures such as what are narrated in Mark's Gospel.

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<sup>65</sup> This situation is not as clear-cut, and perhaps cautious reserve regarding this conclusion is demanded (cf. Bauckham 1991, 245-275; Corley 1999, 85-97).

Accordingly, it appears that the characterization of John Zebedee in John's Gospel is compatible with his characterization in Mark. And the above comparison has shed additional light on his role as a discerning and perceptive eyewitness who proceeds to author a written testimony. This is clearly also a reflection of the Johannine emphasis on the disciples as eyewitnesses to Jesus' ministry and Passion. On the whole, the two accounts give convincing depiction of the making of a foundational member of the Christian community, whose zealous devotion and perception combined with his intimate interaction with Jesus the embodied Divine Council, leads him to write an eyewitness testimony that remains one of the most influential books that the world has ever read.

#### *6.1.1.2 The Characterizations of Simon Peter in Mark and John*

A similarly complex picture emerges when the characterization of Simon Peter in Mark's Gospel is compared with John's. In both he is the lead disciple, the spokesperson and the one who makes the most frequent errors. Yet, both Evangelists portray positive and negative characteristics which are compatible with each other. In Mark, Peter is the first disciple to be called by Jesus (Mk 1:16), and his prominence is indicated by being the most named disciple, his identification at the head of the discipleship list, and the change of his name by Jesus. Peter also extends hospitality to Jesus and on more than one occasion, his home was not just the centre of the Capernaum ministry, but also a venue for teaching of disciples. In addition to these, Peter no doubt participated in the key actions of the disciples recounted in the Gospel—their roles as agents of divine power and of revelation (cf. Cassidy 2007; Brady 1979, 42-57; Best 1978, 547-558; Wiarda 1999, 19-37; Matera 1989, 153-172).

Other features of his characterization in Mark may be categorized into three—(a) his loyalty to Jesus, (b) his eyewitness role and extraordinary flashes of spiritual insight, and (c) his failures. Peter's unquestioning loyalty to Jesus in Mark is indicated by his immediate response to the call, his constant presence with Jesus throughout the ministry and his intentions, pledge and actions during the arrest of Jesus. As an eyewitness of Jesus' ministry, Peter is present at the key events in the Gospel,

especially those events involving significant revelation of the identity of Jesus such as the revivification of Jairus' daughter, the transfiguration, the Mount Olivet discourse and the prayer at Gethsemane. In Mark's Gospel, the highest point of his career was when in answer to Jesus' query; he made the insightful confession that Jesus was the Messiah. The profoundness of this confession may appear to be underplayed in Mark, where Jesus "sternly" warns the disciples not to tell anyone (Mk 8:30). However, given that similarly "stern" warnings for people to keep Jesus' identity secret are elsewhere in Mark explicitly directed only to demons who confess the true identity of Jesus (e.g. Mk 1:25, 34; 3:11), Peter's confession must be regarded as a declaration of the mysteries that are only revealed in the Divine Council.

Yet, and perhaps as a tribute to his loyalty, outspokenness and prominence, it is Peter who also bears the brunt of the negative light that is thrown on the twelve. Peter's main failure was misunderstanding Jesus. It was pointed out in chapter four that this appears to have begun in the very early stages when he is depicted to have κατεδίωξεν (literally, hunted) Jesus down with the mistaken intention of expecting a repetition of the previous day's successful ministry in Capernaum (§ 4.2.2.1). The misunderstandings continue throughout the ministry, and reach its highest point when soon after his profound confession; Peter attempts to rebuke Jesus for depicting His Messiahship as one of rejection, suffering, death and resurrection. The vigour of Jesus' rebuke—"Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things" (Mk 8:33)—demonstrates the seriousness of Peter's misunderstanding. In many ways, it was also a misunderstanding that lay at the root of Peter's denial of Jesus.

It will be a mistake to diminish the importance of these misunderstandings in the life of the most prominent disciple of Jesus. Yet, it is equally an error to over-emphasize them at the expense of his immense energy, insight and loyalty to Jesus. Paradoxically, Peter's failures are a reflection of his prominence and intense loyalty to Jesus. Indeed, as noted in chapter four, misunderstandings in some of these cases, should be seen as manifestations of the formative maieutic interactions between Jesus and the disciples. Though Mark intimates it with the reference to the nature of Peter's repentance in Mk 14:72; on the whole, his account does not give a complete closure to the formation of

Peter. It is true that after the resurrection, a hint of Peter's restoration is given (Mk 16:7). However, by not narrating how exactly Peter's restoration occurred, Mark's version of the formation of Peter appears to take this information for granted as known to his readers.

Table 6.3: The Characterizations of Peter in Mark and John

Peter in Mark's Gospel	Peter in John's Gospel
Called by Jesus by Sea of Galilee (1:16)	Introduced to Jesus and follows Him (1:40-42)
Hospitality to Jesus (1:29, 3:19; 9:33)	Nicknamed by Jesus (1:42)
Misunderstands and seeks Jesus (1:36-39)	Pledges loyalty to Jesus (6:68)
Nicknamed by Jesus (3:16)	Confesses Jesus as "the Holy One" (6:69)
Eyewitness with "the three" and "the four" at Jairus' house (5:37), the transfiguration (9:2), the Mount Olivet Discourse (13:3) and Gethsemane (14:33)	Misunderstands the Footwashing (13:6-11)
Confesses Jesus as the Christ (8:29)	Seeks knowledge of the betrayer through the Beloved Disciple (13:24)
Rebuked by Jesus as minding the things of men (8:33)	Eagerly pledges loyalty to death to Jesus (13:36-37)
Misunderstands the transfiguration (9:5)	Cuts Malchus' ear (18:10-11)
Articulates his sacrificial devotion (10:28)	Follows Jesus to the trial (18:15-16)
Seeks interpretation of fig tree miracle (11:21)	Denies being a disciple of Jesus (18:17-27)
Articulates his loyalty to Jesus (14:29)	Eyewitness of resurrection (20:2-6)
Follows Jesus to the trial (14:54)	Restored by Jesus after the resurrection (21:1-19)
Denies that He was Jesus' disciple (14:66-72)	His martyrdom predicted (21:20-21)

For the most part, the account of Peter's formation in John's Gospel reinforces the characterization in Mark's Gospel (table 6.3). As in Mark, he is most often the leader and spokesperson in John. Furthermore, his loyalty is still on display even when John chooses to emphasize different aspects of Jesus' ministry. Besides, Peter exhibits the same traits of misunderstandings as in Mark's Gospel, and on several occasions, these misunderstandings are perversions of his loyalty and devotion to Jesus<sup>66</sup>. It is true that there are a number of nuanced differences between the two Evangelists. Even so, the

<sup>66</sup> Interpreters generally highlight as many as seven negative characterizations of Peter in John's Gospel—(a) his refusal to allow Jesus to wash his feet (13:6-11), (b) his inability to directly ask Jesus about His betrayer (13:23-25), (c) his slashing of Malchus' ear (18:10), (d) his failure to enter the high priest's compound (18:15-16), (e) his denials (18:17-27), (f) his second place finish in the race to the empty tomb (20:2-10), and (g) his inability to recognize the resurrected Jesus (21:7).



differences in these particular areas are not significant (cf. Thatcher 1996, 435-448; Domeris 1993, 155-167; Droge 1990, 307-311).

There are three specific areas however, in which John's characterization of Peter significantly differs from Mark's—(a) the first encounter with Jesus is different, (b) an account of his post-resurrection restoration is given by John, and (c) the constant pairing with the Beloved Disciple in John's Gospel. The account of Peter's first meeting with Jesus is significantly different from Mark's. In John's Gospel, Peter is not the first disciple, but is introduced to Jesus by his brother Andrew (Jn 1:40-42). Since this incident occurs earlier than the one in Mark, it clearly reflects John's desire to begin his account from the witness of the Baptist. All the same, it is also narrated that Peter received his nickname as soon as Jesus first met him. This differs from the synoptics where the renaming occurs later. However, Mark does not state the exact timing of Peter's renaming, merely indicating while listing the twelve that Peter received a name change at some point in his career.

There is a nuanced difference in John's presentation of Peter's name change. In John, Jesus told Peter, Σὺ εἶ Σίμων ὁ υἱὸς Ἰωάννου: σὺ κληθήσῃ Κηφᾶς (Jn 1:42; literally, You are Simon the son of John; *you will be called* Cephas). In effect, whereas the Synoptics record the actual renaming of Peter, John records Jesus' *prediction* of the renaming of Peter. Consequently, it appears that the prediction of Peter's renaming serves three important functions in the fourth Gospel. Firstly, it confirms the prominence of Peter, in spite of the fact that he is not identified as the first disciple of Jesus. Secondly it serves a Christological function, indicating Jesus' predictive powers. And thirdly it indicates Jesus' divine status as the one who names the disciple.

John's account of the post-resurrection restoration of Peter in Jn 21:1-19 provides a more satisfactory closure to the formation of this disciple. Not only does John give details of Peter's visit to the empty tomb as an eyewitness, he also describes the incident when Jesus appears to the group of seven at the shores of the Galilean sea. Peter also gets the opportunity to pledge his love and loyalty to Jesus, is reinstated as the lead shepherd, and his martyrdom predicted again.

An interesting feature of John's Gospel, which has attracted significant commentary by interpreters, is the frequent pairing of Peter and the Beloved Disciple. On four of these occasions, the two disciples interact in such a manner as to attract the question whether there is an authorial intention to contrast them—(a) at the meal where Peter's distance from Jesus necessitated his needing to use the Beloved Disciple as an intermediary to Jesus (Jn 13:24-25), (b) the Beloved Disciple's help in gaining access for Peter into the high priest's residence (Jn 18:15-16), (c) the race to the empty tomb in which Peter comes second to the Beloved Disciple (Jn 20:2-6), and (d) Peter's unsolicited concern for the future of the Beloved Disciple after the resurrection appearance (Jn 21:20-25). It is apparent that on these four occasions the Beloved Disciple appears in a degree of positive light by association with Peter. When this phenomenon is added to some of the other pericopae in which the Beloved Disciple also appears to be portrayed positively, the question is raised whether this enhanced status is achieved at the expense of Peter. In other words, does John's Gospel present a competitive rivalry or even opposition between Peter and the Beloved Disciple; and if so, what is the significance of this?

Several interpreters affirm that such a rivalry exists in John's Gospel (e.g. Cullman 1953, 27; Kasemann 1951, 292-311; Martyn 1979, 157; Haenchen 1984, 107; Culpepper 2000, 62; Perkins 1994, 99; Waetjen 2005, 15). Some argue that this supposed competition is more or less an allegory of a purported rivalry between the Johannine Church, represented by the Beloved Disciple, and the Apostolic Church, represented by Peter (cf. Brown 1979, 71-85). For Bultmann, Peter represented Jewish Christianity, whereas the Beloved Disciple represented its rival, the Hellenistic or Gentile Christianity (1971, 466-473). Against these assessments are more moderate commentators, who urge that the two disciples are portrayed as equals complementing each other (e.g. Barrett 1978b, 577; Schnackenburg 1990, 2.75; Bauckham 2007, 85; Blaine 2007, 3; Quast 1989, 12; Wirada 2000, 178).

There are a number of reasons to support this latter view of a collegiate complementary relationship between the two disciples in John's account. Firstly, it is evident that several of the proposals suggesting rival "competition" between the two disciples tend to read the Gospels as allegorical histories of the Church "communities". Though it is

apparent from Acts that racial tensions developed within the early church (e.g. Acts 6:1), and from Paul's letters that the earliest churches had different characteristics and ethnic-theological related problems, it is basically unwarranted to read the Gospels in the same fashion that the Pauline letters are to be read. Certainly, and as has been noted in the previous chapter, to attempt to read the relationship between the two foundational members of the Christian community as more or less a "two-level drama" has fundamental methodological flaws.

Secondly, suggestions of a competition between Peter and John appear not to give adequate attention to the nature of the material that the fourth Evangelist has selected for his account. Since the supposed competition between John and Peter occur during the Passion, and it is evident that Peter performs very badly during that period, one ought to have expected him to be shown in a negative light. On the other hand, if accounts were taken of other scenarios during the Johannine Passion in which Peter is portrayed positively, such as his pledge of loyalty till martyrdom in Jn 13:37, and his intention and subsequent actions to defend Jesus at His arrest in Jn 18:10, then the supposed diminution of Peter's stature in John's Gospel appears to be based on insecure exegetical foundations (cf. Blaine 2007, 81-104).

Furthermore, the "competition" view does not seriously take account of the varying roles of these two disciples. If, as has been discussed, the Beloved Disciple's role is one of a perceptive witness, then clearly those occasions where such features are emphasized in the Gospel, such as at the empty tomb, and the post-resurrection appearance, he would appear to be positively characterized. One agrees therefore with Bauckham's caution in this direction, "the Beloved Disciple is given superiority only in those respects that qualify him in his own role of perceptive witness of Jesus" (2007, 85). As for his ability to secure access for Peter into the high priest's residence, and to run faster than Peter, such details only indicate eyewitness account, rather than any attempt to disparage Peter. At best, they confirm that Peter was perhaps older, and the Beloved Disciple knew some members of the high priest's household and helped his colleague enter at the time. The positive portrayal of the Beloved Disciple therefore enhances, rather than diminish, Peter's reputation on these two occasions.

Thirdly, the Johannine account ensures that the reader begins and finishes with the knowledge that Peter remains the prominent disciple. As noted earlier, the prediction of Peter's renaming in John 1:42 mitigates against any negative conclusions that the reader could have made because Peter is not the first disciple to meet Jesus. And at the end of the Gospel, Peter is surely restored as the lead shepherd among the disciples, thus completing and complementing Mark's account. By ending the Gospel with a conversation between Jesus and Peter, albeit regarding the Beloved Disciple, the fourth Gospel leaves Peter's prominent role intact.

Accordingly, the pairing of the two disciples should not be seen as indication of a competitive rivalry between the two foundational members of the early church. If the depiction in Acts of the Apostle counts for any evidence, which it should, then the pairing of Peter with the Beloved Disciple was clearly one of enduring and influential friendship of colleagues rather than competing rivalries. The characterization of Peter in Mark's Gospel is therefore compatible with that in John's, but with an added complementary feature of his restoration after the resurrection, as well as a close relationship with his colleagues, especially the Beloved Disciple.

### 6.2.2 The Outcomes of the Formation of the Disciples in Mark and John

In both Mark and John, the disciples were formed to become agents of divine power and revelation. Though these objectives are declared in the early stages of the Jesus-disciples encounters, they are couched with different theological terminologies and emphases. In line with the apocalyptic eschatological colouring of Mark's theology, the disciples are depicted in the first encounter as eschatological harvesters—they would be made into ἀλιεῖς ἀνθρώπων (fishermen of men; Mk 1:17). As explained in chapter three of the dissertation, this clearly figurative phrase has a significant Old Testament background related to God's eschatological actions of judgment and redemption. Accordingly, the Markan disciples were to become co-agents of Jesus in the fulfilment of this eschatological function. As agents of the embodied Divine Council, they also fulfil

the role of co-warriors of the Divine Warrior who comes to execute judgment on the evil spiritual forces and the systems that perpetrate them.

In line with this initial presentation of the purposes of the calls of the disciples in Mark, they are depicted exercising this divine power on several occasions in the narrative. The first of such occasions occurs in the second chapter of the Gospel during their plucking of the grain on the Sabbath. As demonstrated in chapter four of the dissertation, Mark underlines this incident as symbolically depicting the disciples as eschatological harvesters who effect the divine power of the Son of Man. Subsequent to that, the disciples imitate Jesus' eschatological functions by healing and exorcising demons, so that by the sixth chapter of the Gospel, they were independently performing their roles as His agents (Mk 6:12-13 cf. Mk 1:14-15; 1:38-39). As will be shortly noted, it is also significant that several of the failures of the disciples in Mark were related to their inability to perform some of these tasks. Mark demonstrates that frequently such failures emanate from unbelief.

The Markan disciples were also to become agents of divine revelation. The key passage in this regard is Mk 4:10-12 in which while explaining His reasons for teaching in parables, Jesus underlined that the disciples had been given "the μυστήριον of the kingdom of God". Though there are several difficulties associated with this passage, a number of conclusions were made in chapter four of the dissertation that shed light on the function of the disciples as agents of divine revelation, and these are worth repeating (§ 4.2.3.1). Firstly, this description of the Markan disciples as recipients of divine mysteries parallels them with attendants of the Divine Council who also receive the mysteries of the Council. Secondly, and based on the Old Testament and inter-testamental background of the concept, it was emphasized that the mystery had three miraculous features—(a) the *de novo* divine revelation or spiritual information, (b) the miraculous ability to interpret and understand the revelation, and (c) a pre-requisite faith response from the agent. When any of these are lacking, the mystery cannot be unveiled. Thirdly, this nebulous feature of Markan epistemology is at the root of the frequent misunderstandings of the disciples. Furthermore, it is apparent that the death and resurrection plays a key role in relation to the μυστήριον, even though this is not so

explicitly stated in Mark. As will shortly become clear, it also appears that the nebulous nature of the *μυστήριον* in Mark was one of the elements that John undertakes to complement.

Be it as it may, the Markan disciples are exposed to several revelations from the spiritual realm, especially Christological “confessions” from unclean spirits, several theophanic revelations, and teachings and explanations of Jesus. These clearly contributed to their becoming agents of divine revelation. The Markan disciples also function as rabbinic pupils who engage Jesus in discussions that enable them understand His identity, authority and mission. Nevertheless, the prominence that the Gospel gives to their inability to understand Jesus before Easter needs to be taken into consideration in any evaluation of their functions in the Gospel. It may therefore be concluded that though the Markan disciples should be conceptualized as agents of divine power and revelation, they function more clearly in the former than the latter.

In contrast to Mark’s Gospel, the objectives of the formation of the disciples are expressed in the beginning of the Johannine account in less apocalyptic terms. As noted in chapter three, the emphasis in John is on the disciples as witnesses, who come to Jesus, dwell with Him, believe, confess, testify and bring others to Jesus. They are also described as harvesters in this sense, even though the sapiental emphasis means that this harvesting is done through bearing witness. This predominantly revelatory slant to the functions of the Johannine disciples, as pointed out in chapter five, mirrors the portrait of Jesus in that Gospel. Indeed, most of the functions of the Johannine disciples are couched in revelatory terms, so that their future acts of power are for example also depicted as acts of revelation that will glorify God.

A key role of the Johannine disciples is as eyewitnesses of Jesus. In the previous chapter, it was demonstrated that the presence of the disciples at key events underlines this Johannine emphasis. By seeing the works of Jesus, and hearing His words, the disciples act as witnesses. However this function occurs with the aid of Jesus’ explanations, the Scriptures, and memory, as well as the work of the Spirit-Paraclete. These enable the disciples come to understand the spiritual significance of the words

and works of Jesus and so qualify as competent witnesses. In this respect, and unlike the situation in Mark's Gospel, no miracle of Jesus occurs before only a select group of disciples. Furthermore, whereas Mark emphasizes the intermittent theophanic revelation of Jesus to the disciples, John explains that Jesus was a constant theophany who was beheld by the disciples who put their faith in Him (Jn 1:14).

Another area in which John appears to complement Mark is in the manner in which the fourth Evangelist deals with the question of divine mystery. Even though John does not use the Markan terminology of *μυστήριον*, he repeatedly underlines the lack of understanding of the Johannine disciples. Both Evangelists clearly regard divine revelation as a miraculous event which God gives to His agents. Both also underline the role of faith in understanding divine revelation. However, what is different in John is that the Gospel explains the factors that resulted in misunderstanding of the disciples. In John's presentation, the mystery was given by Jesus in a proleptic fashion, ahead of its full unveiling through the death and resurrection of Jesus, and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Hence, by explicitly noting the disciples' lack of knowledge of the Scriptures, the role of the death and resurrection of Jesus in granting understanding to the disciples, and the future role of the Holy Spirit in clarifying and making known the teachings of Jesus, John provides an explanation for the misunderstandings of the disciples. If John knew Mark, and wrote his Gospel with readers of Mark in mind, then a complementary reading of both Gospels explains how the disciples functioned as agents of divine revelation. Whereas Mark highlights the giving of the mystery, John explains the hermeneutical dimension of divine *μυστήριον*.

On the other hand, it is a significant omission that John does not report a disciple performing any miracle or exorcism, even though reference is made to the fact that the disciples would perform "greater works" than Jesus. Clearly, the fourth Evangelist was not averse to the disciples performing miracles. The relatively lesser space that he gives to the conventional disciples may also have contributed to this omission. Besides, it is apparent that John was keen to select and focus on the significance of a few miracles performed by Jesus, rather than provide all the account of the events in Jesus' ministry (cf. Jn 21:25). Accordingly, this omission is probably a reflection of the fourth

Evangelist's awareness that his first readers already knew of the acts of power by the disciples. Even so, it is evident that this is one of the areas in which Mark augments John's account. It may be concluded therefore that whereas John emphasizes the role of the disciples as agents of divine revelation, Mark emphasizes more their role as agents of divine power. The two accounts hence complement each other.

### 6.2.3 Key Processes in the Formation of the Disciples in Mark and John

It is perhaps unsurprising that a significant difference exists between Mark and John with regard to the highlighted key processes and events involved in the formation of the disciples; after all, both Evangelists focus on diverse stories and discourses of Jesus. The key formational activity of the disciples in both Gospels is to follow Jesus. Though the term has a spatial meaning for the conventional disciples, it is also used in a metaphorical sense to denote a spiritual commitment to Jesus—to believe, imitate and obey Him. It was observed in chapter three that Mark links this to his theology of “the Way in the wilderness”, so that the disciples metaphorically follow Jesus the embodied Divine Council in a divine war sense to fulfil the Isaianic new exodus. In addition to following, the Markan disciple keeps the company of Jesus, observes Him, receives teachings and theophanic encounters and assists Jesus in His ministry. It is therefore unsurprising that both the Markan Jesus and His disciples are depicted to be constantly on the move from one place to the other.

The disciples in John's Gospel also follow Jesus in the same sense as the expression in Mark. Typical of John, however, this spatially derived metaphor of formational activity is augmented and complemented with a complex of theological idioms derived from ancient Near and Middle Eastern hospitality. The Johannine disciple does not just believe and follow Jesus; s/he also dwells or abides with and in Jesus. The discussion of this important emphasis in chapter three underlined that divine hospitality is a key component of Johannine conception of the formation of the disciples. This is evident in the way Jesus is depicted as the divine Host, both literally and metaphorically. Not only does He provide food, drink and company to those who come to Him; but, in fact He



Himself is also the food, the drink and the place in whom disciples dwell. Thus whereas in Mark the disciples predominantly serve and extend hospitality to Jesus; in John, the phenomenon is reversed, so that it is mostly Jesus who serves food and extends hospitality to disciples. Here, John is clearly not aiming to correct Mark, but emphasizing the interactive relationship between the embodied Divine Council and His agents.

In addition to believing and experiencing divine hospitality, the Johannine disciple also confesses and testifies of Jesus as a means of bringing others to the faith. In this respect, the theme of harvesting as a formational activity is also prominent in John's Gospel. But this activity is also the same in Mark in which the disciples preach and perform miraculous works.

In both Mark and John, an important marker of progress of formational development of a disciple is to make the correct Christological confessions. This is clearly related to the disciple experiencing the divine nature of Jesus, acknowledging it and believing in Him and thus confessing it. This phenomenon is poignantly illustrated in John 9 where the man born blind progresses in His knowledge and confessions of the identity of Jesus—from Jesus as a man, as a healer, as the prophet-like-Moses, as a prophet-greater-than-Moses, as One from God and as the Son of Man who is worthy of worship. Though no similar progressive confessions are made by any interlocutor in Mark, the confession by Bartimaeus that Jesus was Son of David appears to be underlined by the Evangelist as an indication of the degree of the blind man's faith.

Perhaps as a reflection of the "messianic secret" in Mark, the conventional disciples confess Jesus as the Messiah quite late in the narrative. This sharply contrasts with the picture in John's Gospel in which the disciples ascribe Jesus with several Christological titles at the beginning of the narrative. This baffling discrepancy needs further investigation that is beyond the scope of the present project. Two points must however be made. Firstly, and as was underlined in chapter three (§ 3.3.3.1), despite their apparently significant Christological confessions in John 1, it is evident that the disciples were nonetheless at initial stages of their faith journeys. Indeed they are first said to have put their faith in Jesus later on in Jn 2:11; suggesting that the profoundness of the

Christological confessions should not necessarily be taken as indicative of their level of spiritual maturity. Secondly, though Peter's confession occurs late in the Markan narrative, he certainly must have had significant faith and growth in Jesus to have followed, served and partnered Jesus in ministry. It does appear therefore that though Christological confessions are underlined as markers of progress in the formation of the disciples, specific confessions that are highlighted in the narrative should also be seen as serving other purposes of the Evangelists.

There are other areas of nuanced differences in formational activities between the two Gospels. Because John underlines the function of the disciples as eyewitnesses, there is an apparent passivity in the manner in which they are portrayed in that Gospel. Yet, the idea that they are present at key events in the Gospel, so that they see, hear, correctly interpret or misunderstand but later understand, believe and testify, prepares them to fulfil their main roles as eyewitnesses of Jesus' ministry. Mark also underlines the presence of the disciples at key events and focuses on the misunderstanding of the disciple as a way of clarifying their reception of divine revelation from Jesus. Accordingly, both Evangelists complement each other in the manner in which the accounts show the formation of the disciples as agents of divine revelation.

It is tempting to insinuate a difference between how the two Evangelists understood and employed the concept of faith in their depiction of the formational activities of the disciples. In Mark, faith is an explicit pre-requisite for miracles, and several characters are duly commended for exercising faith (cf. Marshall 1989; Twelftree 1999). In John, in which the active form of the word believe rather predominates, the emphasis is on believing in the Person of Jesus as a result of His miraculous works and words (cf. Sproston 1985, 77-97; Byrne 1985, 83-97). Yet, this difference is mostly illusory. Mark also regards faith as a matter of degrees, and repeatedly emphasizes the manner in which the works and words of Jesus engender faith. Similarly, believing in Jesus is underlined as a pre-requisite to becoming a child of God (Jn 1:12). Thus the apparent difference in the concept of faith is only apparent.

In terms of the pattern and sequences of the process of formation of the disciples, a fascinating three stage progression is observed in both Mark and John. As table 6.4 shows, in both Gospels, stage one involved the observation and participation of the disciples in the public teaching and performance of miraculous works of Jesus. Stage two is largely focused on private teaching on ethics, in which the death of Jesus is the centre of such emphases. Stage three is the Passion and resurrection and narrates the failures of the disciples followed by their redemption and restoration. It is apparent that these progressive stages of development of the disciples parallel the activities of Jesus and may not necessarily imply a major theological significance. It is nevertheless interesting that in the post Easter formation of disciples, the three stages may be expected to be followed but in the reverse order. For example one would expect that new disciples should be privately tutored before being exposed to public ministry.

Table 6.4: The Three Stage Progression in the Formation of the Disciples

Stage	Mark	John
<b>Stage 1</b>	Public teaching and working of miracles in imitation of Jesus: focused on performance	Public Teaching and “active” observation of Jesus: Focused on making eyewitnesses
<b>Stage 2</b>	Private teaching and revelation: focused on kingdom ethics	Private teaching and revelation: Focused on ethics of love and union with Jesus
<b>Stage 3</b>	Failure, redemption and restoration through Jesus’ death	Failure, redemption and restoration through death and resurrection and Spirit endowment

This issue will be briefly taken up again in the next chapter. However, it is perhaps in anticipation of this sequencing that John’s Gospel emphasizes the proleptic contribution of the death and resurrection of Jesus as the atonement for sins of the disciples in a much earlier fashion than Mark does. As discussed in chapter five, apart from the Baptist’s testimony in John, this feature also occurs with some of the symbolic allusions to purification, most explicitly in the symbolism of Siloam in John 9 and of the footwashing in John 13. Thus John may well be clarifying the foundational role of the atonement in any discipleship by treating that theology in the proleptic fashion that the story demands. Nevertheless, because the theology of atonement is largely muted in

the whole Gospel, it is difficult to argue conclusively that the fourth Evangelist completely reverses this three stage progression. If any conclusion can be made therefore, it is that the theology of atonement occurs in a proleptic fashion in the formation of the disciples prior to the death and resurrection of Jesus.

#### 6.2.4 The Key Events in the Formation of the Disciples in Mark and John

Several of the key events in which the interactions between Jesus and the disciples appear to have significant formational import are not shared by both Gospels. Mark for example identifies the plucking of the grain, the sea crossings, the independent missions, the transfiguration and the Gentile mission as key formational events. In John, on the other hand, the witness of the Baptist, the Johannine signs, the Samaritan mission, the footwashing and the farewell discourse were the key events in the formation of the disciples. These divergences of elaborated events emanate from the different authorial emphases, and supplement each other.

It has also been argued in the previous chapter that because most of the key concepts involved in the formation of the disciples in John's Gospel are also networked in the footwashing and its interpretation, that footwashing should be regarded as the Johannine summary of the formation of the disciples. Thus themes related to the soteriological purification of the disciples, the moral ethical imperative to imitate Jesus' example of loving service, the key role of the disciples as agents of divine revelation, their calling to sacrificial living to the point of martyrdom and the role of divine hospitality in the formation of the disciples are all summarized by this unique event in the Gospel according to John.

Despite their divergences, both Gospels narrate four key events that are fundamental to the formation of the disciples—the feeding miracles, walking on water, the anointing of Jesus and the Passion and resurrection of Jesus. Two<sup>67</sup> of these will be briefly

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<sup>67</sup> The walking on the water is essentially treated by both Evangelists as part of the feeding miracle and is clearly emphasized as a theophanic encounter.

discussed in the next section in which the hypotheses will be validated. In both Gospels however, the death of Jesus overhangs the Jesus-disciples interaction from the beginning. In Mark, the first intimation is given early in Jesus' ministry when He explains why His disciples did not need to fast like the disciples of the Pharisees—"The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast on that day" (Mk 2:20). The death of Jesus is subsequently closely linked with discipleship through the symbol of the cross, which is introduced immediately after Peter's confession in Mk 8. From then on, kingdom ethics is linked with Jesus' death by being defined as living the cruciform life. It is only by denying oneself, taking up the cross and following Jesus that the disciple may truly serve Jesus (cf. Meyer 2002, 230-238). Suffering for the sake of Jesus, as well as martyrdom, is therefore a key feature of Markan discipleship. The institution of the Lord's Supper, which is narrated by Mark, also reinforces the redemptive dimensions of Jesus' death.

Similarly, the death of Jesus is alluded to very early in John where the Baptist testifies that Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. It has been argued in chapter three that this description connotes a conflation of the Servant of Isaiah 53 and the sacrificial Passover Lamb. By highlighting this testimony of the Baptist, the fourth Evangelist indicates the primary role of the atonement in the formation of disciples. They follow Jesus because He is the One whose death takes away their sins. Moreover, and in a move that significantly sheds light on Mark's theology of revelation, the death and resurrection are underlined in John's Gospel as the key that unveils the mystery of Jesus. It is true that John highlights the death of Jesus as a means of returning to the Father, and of His, and the Father's, glorification. Still, and as discussed in chapter five, these emphases do not exhaust the significance of the event in the Gospel. Accordingly, it appears that in complementing Mark's Gospel, John takes the soteriological significance of Jesus' death as a given, and proceeds to build on it by highlighting its revelatory nature.

### 6.2.5 The Failures of the Disciples in Mark and John

Mark's characterization of the twelve in an apparently negative light in the second half of the Gospel has been explored in chapter four. Rather than situating the reasons in any polemical intentions by Mark, as some have sought to do, the dissertation has rather argued that given the positive aspects of the Evangelist's portrayal of the disciples elsewhere, this negative portrayal was a reflection of the *elenchus* phenomenon in Mark's philosophy of education, which he most likely also shared with his intended Greco-Roman audience. In other words, to Mark and his first readers, not only were these highlighted failures of the disciples expected in the account of their training; the failures also demonstrate the disciple-making credentials of Jesus.

Table 6.5 Comparisons of the Failures of the Disciples in Mark and John

Failures of the Disciples in Mark	Failures of the Disciples in John
Misunderstand that Jesus' mission was not limited by geography (1:36-38)	Misunderstand discourse on temple destruction (2:20-22)
Misunderstand the parables (4:10-13)	Misunderstand why Jesus spoke to Samaritan woman (4:27)
Fail to perceive that power had gone forth from Jesus (5:30-32)	Misunderstand food discourse (4:33)
Failures during sea crossings	Misunderstand and are offended by the feeding discourse (6:61)
Disciples are hardhearted (6:52)	Misunderstand statement about Lazarus' death (11:12)
Misunderstanding "concerning" the loaves (8:21)	Peter misunderstands the footwashing (13:6-11)
Peter misunderstands Jesus' Messiahship (8:31-38)	Thomas confesses lack of knowledge of where Jesus was going (14:5)
Disciples fail to exorcise possessed boy (9:14-29)	Peter misunderstands the nature of spiritual warfare at the arrest (18:10-11)
Disciples argue concerning who is the greatest (9:33-37)	
John attempts to ban non-following exorcist (9:38-41)	
Disciples prevent little children from coming to Jesus (10:13-17)	
James and John request for positions of honour (10:35-45)	
Disciples desert Jesus at His arrest (14:50)	

John also highlights the failures of the disciples; yet, his emphases are different. Firstly, the failures are generally fewer in John than in Mark. This difference should not in itself

lead to any significant conclusions, since the Johannine account contains more proportion of Jesus' discourses, and also gives a significant amount of space to the non-conventional disciples. Secondly, and as table 6.5 shows, the nature of the failures of the disciples in John is slightly different from those of Mark, both in terms of emphases and the Evangelists' explicit and implicit commentaries. In John, the failures are mostly in areas of perception, and their misunderstanding of Jesus' identity, actions and discourses. Also, no accounts of performance of miracles by disciples, and therefore failure to do so, are given by John.

Furthermore, in several of the instances of failure in both Gospels, though more in John than in Mark, the misunderstandings serve as platforms for additional revelation and teaching. This phenomenon of misunderstanding, together with its twin literary features of irony and ambiguities, has been significantly researched, and as noted earlier in chapter three, some are at least directly related to the nature of revelation and revelatory discourses (e.g. Carson 1982, 59-91; Leroy 1966; de Jonge 1970-1971, 337-359; Culpepper 1983, 152-165; Duke 1985; O'Day 1986). Its heightened presence in John reflects the predominance of the Gospel's emphases on divine revelation.

Thirdly, in the Johannine accounts of the failures of the twelve, there appears to be an effort on the part of the Evangelist to limit the degree of negative light it could imply to the reader. In some cases an explanation of the theological significance behind such failures is given. So, for example, on a number of occasions when the disciples misunderstand, John gives a reason for their misunderstanding usually related to their lack of knowledge of Scriptures at the time (e.g. Jn 12:16) or that the understanding became more complete after the resurrection (e.g. Jn 2:20-22).

Another approach is the apparent Johannine clarification of what happened to the disciples when Jesus was arrested. So for example, Mark summarizes that at the arrest of Jesus, "all of them deserted Him and fled" (Mk 14:50), even though he proceeds to state that Peter "followed Him at a distance" (Mk 15:54). John on the other hand writes that at His arrest, it was Jesus who insisted to the soldiers that they should let the disciples go. John then proceeds to narrate the theological significance of this, that "this

was to fulfil the word that he had spoken, ‘I did not lose a single one of those whom you gave me’” (Jn 18:9). He also adds that “Simon Peter and another disciple followed Jesus” to the high priest’s residence (Jn 18:15).

Clearly, accounting for this difference will depend on the theory that one presupposes regarding whether John knew Mark, and if so what were his intentions in this relationship. The complementary theory appears a much more fruitful approach to this problem, since it enables an understanding of the “positive” aspects of Mark’s “negative” characterization of the disciples. As far as the Evangelists were concerned, the failures of the disciples were predictable and part of their formation. Mark treats this formative aspect of failure in an enthymematic fashion, by assuming that his audience shared his understanding of the *elenchus* phenomenon. John, on the other hand, clarifies it in such a manner that the reader who was unaware of this phenomenon would not draw the wrong conclusions.

The complementary approach to both Gospels also helps put some of the general statements in John regarding failure in discipleship in sharp perspective. Jesus’ statement in Jn 15:5—“I am the vine, you are the branches; those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because *apart from me you can do nothing*” epitomizes this Johannine clarification. The Johannine explanation for failure and its opposite corollary, that dwelling in Jesus is the pre-requisite for fruit-bearing, are repeated on several occasions and in different forms in the Gospel (table 6.6). This is further underlined by the repeated references to how Jesus relies on the Father for His success. Similarly, there are other emphases to explain the requirement for success as agent of God—e.g. being called and mandated by God, being endowed with the Spirit, knowledge and understanding of the Scriptures, and the resurrection.

It may be reading too much into a phenomenon in John’s Gospel to postulate that the reason for these emphases was to provide a prism for interpreting the failures of the disciples in Mark’s Gospel. Nevertheless, if John wrote with readers who were familiar with Mark’s account of the failure of the disciples in mind, then one of the ways that these readers would have interpreted the failures of the disciples would have been



John's indication that the failure of a disciple stems from failure to remain in union with Jesus and with the Father. At least this approach illustrates the immense utility of the complementary theory.

Table 6.6: Apparent Johannine "Explanations" for Discipleship Failure

<b>Cause of Failure</b>	<b>Examples</b>
<b>The calling and the ability comes from God</b>	<b>Jn 3:27:</b> John answered, 'No one can receive anything except what has been given from heaven (cf. Jn 9:23)
<b>Lack of knowledge of Scriptures leads to misunderstanding</b>	<b>Jn 12:16:</b> His disciples did not understand these things at first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things had been written of him and had been done to him
<b>The resurrection unlocks the mystery</b>	<b>Jn 2:22:</b> After he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this; and they believed the scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken
<b>Lack of the Spirit's endowment</b>	<b>Jn 6:63:</b> It is the spirit that gives life; the flesh is useless. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life (cf. Jn 3:5-6, 34; 4:23; 7:38-39; 20:22)
<b>Lack of dwelling in Jesus</b>	<b>Jn 15:5:</b> I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing
<b>Not following Jesus' example of dwelling in the Father as His agent</b>	<b>Jn 5:19:</b> Jesus said to them, 'Very truly, I tell you, the Son can do nothing on his own, but only what he sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, the Son does likewise (cf. Jn 8:28)

Regardless of which theory that is chosen for explaining the differences between Mark and John, on the failures of the disciples however, John's more extensive account of the post-resurrection restoration of the disciples appears to provide a more satisfying closure to the story of the formation of the disciples. At the end of John's Gospel, the disciples are restored, they are endowed with the Spirit-Paraclete who empowers them and gives them understanding into the mystery of Christ, and the sense that the disciples function only with and in union with Jesus is established. It is tempting therefore to conclude that if John knew Mark, he has given an account that enables the reader to make more sense of Mark's account of the formation of the disciples.

### 6.2.6 Summary of Accepted Hypotheses

Based on the above comparative analysis, the following hypotheses are accepted:

- In both Mark and John, the discipleship net is much wider than those explicitly labelled as “disciples” and indicates the broad and multiform nature of the foundational Christian community.
- In both Mark and John, the disciples function as apprentice agents of Jesus through whom God’s power and revelation were channeled.
- Mark highlights the dimension of their formation to be agents of divine power; and John complements this by accentuating their formation to be agents of divine revelation.
- John’s focus on the “union” of the disciples with Jesus complements the Markan phenomenon of the constant presence of the disciples with Jesus, as well as enabling explanation of some of the failures of the disciples.
- In John’s Gospel, discipleship is often expressed in terms of experiencing divine hospitality, whereas in Mark’s Gospel, discipleship is often expressed as extending hospitality to Jesus.
- The highlighted failures of the disciples in both Gospels are a reflection of the divine-human nature of their interaction with Jesus, and the differences in degree of emphases are due to the differences of emphases of the dimension of agency in the respective Gospels.

Table 6.7 Comparison of the Formation of the Disciples in Mark &amp; John

Category	Sub-Category	Mark	John	Comments
<b>Key Terminologies</b>	<b>Disciples</b>	Used only for the twelve	Used for wider group of followers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conceptually both Gospels extend discipleship beyond the twelve.</li> <li>• The twelve serve as representative of the Messianic community</li> </ul>
	<b>Apostles</b>	Used only once and functionally applied	Never used for disciples, but functionally applied	
	<b>The Twelve</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Used on 10 occasions</li> <li>• Provides a list</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Used on 4 occasions</li> <li>• No list but nine are named</li> </ul>	
	<b>Others</b>	“Those around Him”	Some of “the Jews”	
<b>Key Characters</b>	<b>Non-Conventional Disciples</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bartimaeus</li> <li>• Joseph of Arimathea</li> <li>• The Named women</li> <li>• Simon’s mother-in-law</li> <li>• Haemorrhaging</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lazarus</li> <li>• Martha and Mary</li> <li>• Joseph of Arimathea</li> <li>• ?Nicodemus</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Both Evangelists highlight key roles played by non-conventional disciples and</li> </ul>

		Woman <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demoniac</li> <li>• Anonymous exorcist</li> <li>• The Anointer of Jesus</li> <li>• Upper Room Owner</li> <li>• Centurion at cross</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Named Women</li> <li>• Man born blind</li> <li>• βασιλικός of Capernaum</li> <li>• Samaritan Woman</li> </ul>	women <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Both Evangelists feature ambiguous characters but John appears to have more</li> </ul>
	<b>Conventional Disciples</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The twelve</li> <li>• First introduction was a Call</li> <li>• Peter is prominent</li> <li>• The “three” and “four”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Twelve</li> <li>• First introduction was a Quest</li> <li>• Peter along with Beloved Disciple are prominent</li> <li>• Andrew, Thomas and Philip play key roles</li> </ul>	The relationship between Peter and the Beloved Disciple
<b>Key Outcomes of Formation</b>	<b>Agents of Revelation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Given the mysteries of revelation</li> <li>• Theophanic encounters</li> <li>• Incomprehension highlighted</li> <li>• Given explanations by Jesus</li> <li>• Preaching and teaching</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eyewitnesses of Jesus</li> <li>• John explains the key role of the Passion in unlocking signs and mysteries – i.e. the mystery was given proleptically</li> <li>• Interaction with Jesus as a constant theophany</li> <li>• Incomprehension noted</li> <li>• Given explanations by Jesus</li> </ul>	Nuanced difference in theology of revelation, with John focused more on hermeneutical dimensions. Illustrated by the use of Isa 6:9-10 by both Evangelists
	<b>Agents of Power</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plucking of the grain</li> <li>• Perform miracles and exorcisms</li> <li>• Failure to exorcise boy, and storms</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will perform miraculous works</li> <li>• Disciples “harvest”</li> </ul>	
	<b>Helping Jesus</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keeping Jesus’ company</li> <li>• Extending Jesus Hospitality</li> <li>• Rabbinic Pupils</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Serving Jesus food</li> <li>• Rabbinic pupils</li> <li>• Harvesting after feeding miracle</li> </ul>	
	<b>Other Functions</b>	Functions are Imitative of Jesus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Functions are Imitative of Jesus</li> <li>• Disciples Baptize</li> </ul>	Discipleship as Reflected Christology

<b>Key Processes in Formation</b>	<b>Formational Activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Follow Jesus</li> <li>• Keep Jesus' company</li> <li>• Observe Jesus</li> <li>• Theophanic revelations</li> <li>• Receive teaching through questioning Jesus</li> <li>• Participate in Jesus' authority and functions</li> <li>• Assist Jesus</li> <li>• Independent Partners</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Follow Jesus</li> <li>• "See" and "hear" Jesus</li> <li>• The role of the "Signs"</li> <li>• Believe into Jesus</li> <li>• Receive Jesus' hospitality</li> <li>• Union with Jesus</li> <li>• Receive teaching through questioning Jesus</li> <li>• Remember Jesus' teaching</li> <li>• Confess and Witness</li> <li>• Harvest</li> </ul>	
	<b>Key Stages of Formation (Also related to literary structure)</b>	<p>Three stage process of formation:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Public teaching and focused on performance</li> <li>2. Private teaching and focused on ethics</li> <li>3. Redemption and Restoration during Passion of Christ</li> </ol>	<p>Three stage process of formation:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Public teaching and focused on performance as eyewitnesses</li> <li>2. Private teaching and focused on union with Jesus and ethics</li> <li>3. Redemption and Restoration during Passion of Christ</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Differences in ethical emphases</li> <li>• John complements Mark with emphases on union with Christ</li> <li>• John completes the account of the restoration of the disciples</li> </ul>
	<b>Markers of progress</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Christological Confessions</li> <li>• Further Participation in Jesus' ministry</li> <li>• Understanding mystery</li> <li>• Disciples rebuked by Jesus on several occasions for incomprehension and unbelief (4:40; 7:18; 8:17, 21, 32, 9:19)</li> <li>• Mark's charge of the hardheartedness of disciples (6:52)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Christological Confessions</li> <li>• Further progression in faith underlined</li> <li>• Understanding mystery after resurrection</li> <li>• Emphases on Jesus-disciples and inter disciple-disciple relationship and emotional exchanges</li> </ul>	Both Evangelists note the "falling away" of the twelve at the arrest and crucifixion, even though this is mitigated in John, and account of restoration given in full

<b>Key Events in Formation</b>	<b>Common Formational Events</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feeding Miracles</li> <li>• Walking on water</li> <li>• Anointing</li> <li>• Passion &amp; Resurrection</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feeding Miracles</li> <li>• Walking on water</li> <li>• Anointing</li> <li>• Passion &amp; Resurrection</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Atonement theology features in both but more prominent in John</li> </ul>
	<b>Peculiar Formational Events</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Calls of first four disciples</li> <li>• Plucking of the Grain</li> <li>• Transfiguration</li> <li>• Sea Crossings</li> <li>• Lord's Supper</li> <li>• Apocalyptic Discourse</li> <li>• Gentile "Mission"</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quests, reception of witness and introductions of first few disciples to Jesus</li> <li>• The Witness of the Baptist</li> <li>• The Johannine Signs</li> <li>• Footwashing</li> <li>• Farewell Discourse</li> <li>• Samaritan "Mission"</li> <li>• Greeks come to Jesus</li> </ul>	
	<b>Peculiar Emphases</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kingdom of God</li> <li>• "Messianic Secret"</li> <li>• Cross bearing</li> <li>• The "Way" Theme</li> <li>• Holy War motif</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Divine Hospitality</li> <li>• Role of Spirit Paraclete</li> <li>• Friendship with Jesus</li> <li>• Love and Unity in Community of Disciples</li> </ul>	Both Evangelists emphasize faith in Jesus, but John has a peculiar formulation of it.
<b>Unanswered Questions with regard to Formation</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Were the disciples restored after Easter?</li> <li>• Why are their failures highlighted?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why no record of miracle or exorcism by disciples</li> </ul>	Complementary theory best able to provide answers

### 6.3 Validation of the Findings

The above findings will now be briefly validated by examining how both Evangelists portray the Jesus-disciples interaction in two of the events which they both narrate. The aim of this validation is not to perform a detailed comparative exegesis; but, to isolate the significance of certain similarities and differences between the Evangelists as a means of showing the nuances they brought to bear in their conceptualization and depiction of the formation of the disciples. A major guidance in this respect are the

implicit and explicit commentaries by the Evangelists, as well as how some of the allusions they underline evoke intertextual ideas from elsewhere in Scripture.

It must be admitted up front, however, that this is not to claim that the sole reasons for the differences of emphases by either Evangelist was to make theological points (cf. Brown 1966, 237). While many differences in emphases between the Gospels may have been as a result of such theologizing, theology is not the only reason for the differences. Yet, and especially in the case of the John and Mark relationship, several of the differences underline how the Evangelists separately interpreted the Jesus-disciples interactions. Moreover, if as has been argued above, John knew Mark and wrote with readers of Mark in mind, then a possible inter-author dialogue may well explain some of the nuanced differences, thus illuminating Christian origins. Accordingly, a study of the stories in which the two overlap should provide a window for validating some of the above conclusions.

For one reason or the other, there is something respectively unique about the feeding of the five thousand, the walking on the water and the anointing of Jesus. The feeding is the only miracle that is reported by all four Evangelists, the anointing is the only non-miraculous story reported by all four, and the walk on the water is one of only two miracles that are performed solely for the conventional disciples. Furthermore, each of these demonstrates a number of important features of the formation of the disciples—the feeding highlights the participation of the conventional disciples in the ministry of Jesus as His agents. And the anointing emphasizes the major contribution of non-conventional disciples to the dynamics of the earliest Jesus movement. The walk on the water is fused with the feeding miracle by both Evangelists, and for reasons of brevity will be excluded from the following exegesis.

### 6.3.1 The Feeding of the Five Thousand and the Formation of the Disciples

Studies on the similarities and differences between Mark 6 and John 6 are protean and lie at the heart of the discussions on the relationship between Mark and John (e.g. Bacon 1910; Anderson 1996; Henderson 2001, 3-26; Stein 1992, 482-502; Manus

1991-1992, 47-71; Marcus 2000, 53-54; Barrett 1978b, 271-278; Brown 1966, 231-250; Dodd 1976, 196-206; Mackay 2004). Both accounts are given in five stages<sup>68</sup>—(a) the pre-miracle identification of need and proposal of solution, (b) the performance of the miracle itself, (c) harvesting of the left-overs, (d) the response of the crowd and disciples to the miracle, and (e) the walking on water miracle (Mk 6:30-52 and Jn 6:1-21). For the purpose of the present project the first four stages will be the focus of the following exegesis, which will also show that in each of these phases, there are nuanced differences between the two Evangelists which validate the findings of the dissertation.

### *6.3.1.1 The Pre-Miracle Discourses and the Formation of the Disciples*

A clue in the manner in which Mark views the role of this miracle in the formation of the disciples is how he fuses it with the return of the disciples from their evangelistic mission in Mk 6:30-44 (cf. Guelich 1989, 336; Wink 1988, 277-290). Accordingly, in Mark, the account of the feeding begins by reminding the reader of the previous independent ministries of the disciples. The return and reporting of the ἀπόστολοι (apostles) to Jesus underlines the fact that they were agents of the embodied Divine Council. It is these agents on their inter-missionary “retreat” who engage in a formational conversation as a prelude to the miracle. Elsewhere in Mark, when Jesus separates out His disciples to a quiet place, the object is for key lessons of revelatory proportions (cf. Mk 4:34; 9:2; 28; 13:3). This is no different.

The conversation depicts an aspect of Mark’s emphasis in the formation of the disciples—as His agents and partners, the disciples share in Jesus’ mission, responsibilities and authority. Thus even though it is the disciples who show their concern in asking Jesus to send the unwanted crowd away so that they could get something to eat (Mk 6:35), it was Jesus who on the other hand “saw a great crowd; and He had compassion for them because they were like sheep without a shepherd”, thus alluding to Jehovah, the Shepherd of Psalm 23:2. Other allusions to this Psalm in

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<sup>68</sup> In actual fact a wider correspondence between Mark and John should include the whole of Mk 6-8, with the food controversy in Mk 7:1-23 playing a similar role as the food discourse in John 6:26-33 (cf. Mackay 2004, 298). The correspondence is however not water-tight.

the passage include the “green grass” (Mk 6:39) and the banquet imagery of Ps 23:5 (cf. Mk 6:41-42). This allusion also relates the miracle to the feeding of Israel in the wilderness by their Shepherd (cf. Num 27:16-17; 1 Kgs 22:17; Ezek 34:23; Zech 13:7; 2 Bar 77:13-15).

Furthermore, in Mark, the crisis of need for the miracle is generated by Jesus in His refusal to dismiss the crowd, creating the anticipation that an object lesson is in store for the disciples. The contrast between the nature of Jesus’ response to the crowd and those of the disciples should therefore be seen as a contrast between divine compassion and human compassion (contra Donahue and Harrington 2002, 206). Jesus saw a spiritually leaderless and hungry people, while His disciples saw a physically hungry crowd. If any polemic exists in Mark’s account, however, it is directed at Herod the Tetrarch who feasts himself but provides the Galileans with no leadership (cf. Lane 1974, 227).

The pre-miracle conversation therefore serves the function of drawing the disciples into sharing the divine pastoral mission, and responsibilities, and the authority to meet them as partners in ministry with Jesus (cf. Stein 2008, 314; France 2002, 265). This sharing of Jesus’ responsibility for the crowd and the power to provide for them is reinforced by Jesus’ emphatic command to the disciples in Mk 6:37—αὐτοῖς, Δότε αὐτοῖς ὑμεῖς φαγεῖν (literally, “*you*, give them something to eat”). In other words, the food must be provided through the disciples. This leads them to find the five loaves and two fish for the miracle. The feeding of the five thousand in Mark’s Gospel is therefore a joint project between Jesus and His disciples at which the disciples play active roles as His partner agents and under-shepherds. Indeed, given the emphatic nature of Jesus’ command, the impression from the pre-miracle discourse in Mark is that Jesus intends to work with His disciples to diagnose the problem, and provide the loaves and fishes to solve the problem (cf. Henderson 2001, 3-26). That they could do so is in no doubt, having just returned from their independent missions.

The situation is slightly nuanced in the Johannine account of the pre-miracle discourse. Firstly, there is a significant complementation of the setting in Jn 6:1-4—by stating the



timing of the miracle just before Passover, and the venue to be on a mountain. With regard to the Passover, it appears that apart from indicating a springtime miracle; it also alludes to the paschal lamb imagery already stated in the first chapter of John. Hence John invites the reader to understand this miracle in the light of the upcoming crucifixion (cf. Keener 2003, 665). However, since it is Jesus Himself who is the Passover Lamb, this allusion of the feeding miracle should not be understood in sacramental terms (contra Dodd 1953, 333). The mountain imagery naturally alludes to the OT exodus motif and the Sinai theophany (cf. Howard Brook 2003, 143). It therefore lays a foundation for the later interpretation of the miracle as revealing the Heavenly Bread as the *Νομος*, the incarnated Torah who gives and sustains life (cf. Borgen 1965, 152-153). Accordingly, if the emphases in the Johannine spatial and chronological setting for the miracle is taken into consideration the miracle in John is invested with significant Christological and revelatory elements.

Secondly, and reinforcing the emphasis on Christology, rather than the disciples approaching Jesus as in Mark, it is Jesus who first expresses His concerns, and directed to Philip—"Where are we to buy bread for these people to eat?" (Jn 6:5). Since Philip hails from Bethsaida (Jn 1:44), the area where the miracle occurred, it makes sense for the question to have been directed to him. The initiative then is from Jesus, a not uncommon characteristic of John's Gospel. While the difference between Mark and John on who took the first step of speaking is obvious, the essential point John appears to make is that Jesus was not unconcerned about the need of the people. And even though Philip's reply is not in the exact words that the Markan disciples give, it essentially denotes the same misunderstanding of the disciples in Mark. Yet, the difference between the two Evangelists hints at some of the upcoming elaborations in the Johannine account. Since in Johannine sense, this miracle was a sign, the participation of the disciples is limited mostly to providing the bread and harvesting the leftovers. Indeed, as a sign, the miracle in John appears directed at the disciples as much as the crowds—both groups will be challenged by Jesus' interpretations of it, misunderstand, and some become offended and defect.

The third difference is John's explicit clarification that the question directed to Philip was meant to be a *πειράσμων* (a test). Though this explains the omniscience of Jesus, a not uncommon clarification in John, it nevertheless generates an important question—what was the test? Was the “test” the question to Philip, or the miracle that was about to occur? Though often used in a negative sense, as in “tempting” somebody, *πειράζω* is clearly used in this passage in the positive sense, as in “proving” or “testing the faith” of somebody. Accordingly, in a limited sense, it could mean that by initiating the conversation, Jesus was proving the faith of Philip and hence the other disciples’ (cf. Barrett 1978b, 274). This was a common educational technique of the time, and there is no reason why Jesus would not have employed it as a means of drawing His disciples into re-examining the extent of their reliance and faith in Him (e.g. *p. Sanh* 3:5 §2; *Ber* 9:2, §3). There are also several Old Testament precedents of God testing His agents (e.g. Gen 22:1; Ex 15:25; Deut 13:3; Jer 17:10). In this respect John parallels what prevails in Mark's Gospel and indeed would suggest that his explanation that this was a test is aimed at complementing Mark at this point. The miracle of the feeding follows from the creation of a “crisis” by Jesus for a formational purpose of testing His agents.

Be that as it may, there are several reasons to believe that John extends this idea of testing beyond an attempt to *stimulate* the disciples' faith to the provision of a context for understanding how the sign would *challenge* the disciples' faith. Firstly, by clarifying that Jesus knew what He was going to *do* (Jn 6:6), John appears to be inviting the reader to see the test not just in relation to Jesus' question, but more so in relation to what Jesus was about to do. Secondly, in the Johannine context, and because of their revelatory nature, the signs also constitute as “tests” of the faith of their witnesses (cf. Anderson 1996, 192-193). John may therefore be pre-empting that Jesus raised the question as part of the wider test that was about to occur on the mountain. Thirdly, the mountain top imagery links with the intertextual allusions to the testing of God's people. In the Sinai theophany, Moses reminds the people that God had come to test them (Ex 20:20). And given the exodus connotations of the Johannine setting of the feeding miracle, the idea of testing the people in the wilderness elaborated in Deut 8:2-3 offers a

suitable parallel to this miracle. Fourthly, the sign ends with a significant testing of the disciples that necessitated their open pledge of allegiance to Jesus (Jn 6:67-71).

It may therefore be concluded that, in the pre-miracle discourse in John, an added element of the “testing” function of the forthcoming sign is emphasized to shape the manner in which the formation of the disciples through this miracle is to be understood (cf. Howard-Brook 2003, 143; Schnackenburg 1970, 2:15; Keener 2003, 665). What the “test” actually constituted of remains to be clarified in the exegesis of the subsequent post-miracle discourse by Jesus. However, it is evident in the initial discourse directed at Philip that it was to be a test of faith in Jesus as the embodied Divine Council.

Accordingly, the comparison of the pre-miracle discourses indicates a nuanced difference between Mark and John which also validate a conclusion of the dissertation. In Mark, the disciples are reinforced as agents of divine power whose concern for the people are re-channelled by Jesus into partaking in His spiritual concern as the Shepherd. They are then tasked with acting to provide the food for the people. On the other hand, in John, the discourse with Philip begins the test of the faith of the disciples as witnesses to the upcoming sign. Though the idea of a “test” is implied in Mark, it is much more revealed and complemented in John. Thus in Mark, the disciples are predominantly depicted as agents of divine power, whereas they are depicted as agents of revelation in John.

#### *6.3.1.2 The Miracle and the Formation of the Disciples*

In both Mark and John, the disciples provided the loaves and fish. However, John explains, perhaps as reflection of his eyewitness credentials, that the food originally belonged to a boy. In both also Jesus blesses the loaves and they are duly distributed. Both evangelists do not give any room for speculation regarding how the multiplication of the loaves occurred, whether in the hands of Jesus, the hands of the disciples, or the hands of the crowd. Attempts to establish the answer to this question on linguistic verbal grounds is at best strained. The miracle is confirmed not only by the indication of the satisfaction of crowd but also by the harvest that follows.

There are some minor differences which reinforce the initial impressions gathered from the pre-miracle discourses. Firstly, in the Markan account, the active roles of the disciples continue to be highlighted in the performance of the miracle. If as is most likely, the αὐτοῖς (them) in Mk 6:39 refers to the disciples, then it is the disciples who arrange the crowds into ἀνέπεσαν πρασιαὶ πρασιαὶ κατὰ ἑκατὸν καὶ κατὰ πεντήκοντα (literally, “they reclined blocks by blocks by hundred and by fifty”). In John, though the command is clearly directed to the disciples, there is no such elaboration on how the disciples went about fulfilling it (Jn 6:10). Accordingly, there is the temptation to seek for a possible significance in the Markan elaboration.

Mark’s description of reclining on “green grass” no doubt evokes the Shepherd and banquet imageries. However, the regimental arrangement of the crowd also carries new exodus (Ex 18:21, 25; Deut 1:15) and probably holy-war military overtones. This military connotation may not be pressed too far; for there is a practical reason for organizing the people in such a fashion as to aid the distribution. Furthermore, there is evidence that the Qumran community sat down at their community banquets in similar regimental fashion (e.g. IQS 2:21-22; 1QM 4:1-5:16; CD 13:1-2). However, there is also a distinct possibility that both banquet and military overtones are to be regarded as significant since the Qumran community regarded itself as playing a part and preparing itself for an eschatological holy war (cf. Marcus 2000, 407-408; Gundry 1993, 325; Neirynck 1988, 121; Yadin 1962, 59). Given the role of the Markan disciples as co-warriors of the embodied Divine Council, the idea that Mark intends to denote this arrangement in the desert as symbolizing part of this role may not be far-fetched.

A second difference is that whereas Mark states the active participation of the disciples in distributing the loaves (Mk 6:41), in John it is said that Jesus distributed the loaves. Clearly, given the large number of people, it is more practical for the distribution to have been done through the disciples. And John here perhaps assumes that his readers would take it that this was the case. After all, the actions of an agent, especially one regarded as in union with the Sender, are equivalent to the action of his Sender (cf. Borgen 2000, 84).

The suggestion has been made that the Markan elaboration denotes the sacramental interpretation of the feeding (e.g. Stein 2008, 316; Marcus 2000, 409), while its absence in John supports a Johannine non-sacramental interpretation of the miracle (Keener 2003, 668). While this may be so, such an interpretation of this difference is inadequate on its own. If at all John is making a theological point, this point is that the disciples were as much recipients of the miracle as were the crowd—a point which indeed is also true of Mark's description. Indeed both Evangelists revert to the Johannine presentation when it comes to the distribution of the fish—both state that it was Jesus who distributed the fish. Yet, Mark's elaboration shows how he elsewhere highlights the active role of the disciples as agents of Jesus' power. John's interest is more on the eyewitness and revelatory aspects of their roles.

Thirdly, Mark underlines that the people ate the food and were satisfied (Mk 6:42), reinforcing the new exodus Messianic banquet interpretation of the miracle (cf. Isa 25:6-9; Marcus 2000, 420). John also confirms that the people were satisfied (Jn 6:12a). However, this fact is stated as part of narrating the command to harvest, quickly moving the focus of the narrative to the command and actions of Jesus, rather than the recipients of the miracle. In other words, the concern of the Johannine statement of the effect of the miracle is to reinforce Jesus' role as the Divine Host, rather than the people's enjoyment of His largesse. In the first century Mediterranean milieu, a good host would provide abundance of food (cf. Plutarch *T. T.* 7:4; *Mor.* 702D-704B).

John is clearly not negating the eschatological banquet connotations of the satisfaction of the disciples; for, abundance was the exact feature of the banquet as described in the Old Testament (e.g. Joel 2:19-26; 3:18; Amos 9:13). What he however appears to have done was to complement Mark by focusing on Jesus as the Divine Host of that banquet. This turn of the interpretation of the miracle towards divine hospitality will become even more important when the Johannine Jesus later underlines that He is the Bread from Heaven. Accordingly, this comparison again validates the hypothesis that the Evangelists nuanced the accounts in the respective directions postulated in the dissertation—in Mark hospitality is a discipleship ethic, while in John, it is Christological.

### 6.3.3 *The Harvest of the Leftovers and the Formation of the Disciples*

Both Evangelists report that the disciples harvested the leftovers and it amounted to “twelve baskets full of broken pieces and of the fish” (Mk 6:43) or simply “they filled twelve baskets” (Jn 6:13). In both, it is apparent that the emphasis is on the superabundant result of the miracle. There is a temptation to see some theological significance in the number twelve, and for that matter, the five, the two and the five thousand. If they did, neither Evangelist gives sufficient information for firmly ascertaining what they were. In the context of Mark, the leftovers signify the arrival of the kingdom with its blessings (cf. Stein 2008, 317; Thiering 1970, 1-12). In the context of John’s Gospel, in addition to this superabundance, there is a probable allusion to the harvest of manna in Ex 16:19-20.

Two differences may well have significance for the formation of the disciples. In Mark’s account, the leftovers include the fish, while only the “barley loaves” are cited as leftovers in John. Indeed, Mark makes reference to the fish on four occasions (Mk 6:38, 41a, 41b, 43)—it is referred to at presentation of the food to Jesus, at His blessing of the food, at the distribution of the food and at the harvesting of the leftovers. In contrast, fish is referred to on two occasions in John (Jn 6:9, 11)—when they were identified with the boy, and when Jesus distributed them.

Though in the case of John the omission is unlikely to be because of any specific theological reasons, in the case of Mark, the consistent references to fish could well be significant. To Mark, the multiplication of fish in the miracle was as important as the multiplication of loaves. Clearly the fact that some of the disciples were fishermen may also have influenced the eyewitness emphases in the reporting. If a theological point were in view therefore, then the idea that the disciples were called to be “fishers of men” would have been reinforced by the harvesting of leftover fish. As noted in chapter three, dining on fish was seen as an eschatological sign in sections of the inter-testamental literature (e.g. 2 *Bar* 29:3-8; 2 *Esd* 6:51-52). The two symbols of dining and harvesting both reinforce the idea that the Markan disciples were agents of divine power and eschatological harvesters.

It does appear that John complements this “eschatological harvesters” idea in the narrative in two ways. Firstly, rather than the disciples proceeding to harvest the leftovers without being prompted to do so, as is the case in Mark, in John, it is Jesus who commands the disciples to “Gather up the fragments left over, *so that nothing may be lost*” (Jn 6:12). This language typifies the Johannine penchant for *double entendre*. On the one level it refers to the harvesting of the leftovers to avoid waste (so Keener 2003, 668; Morris 1995, 305). However, on a secondary level it indicates the Johannine Jesus’ mission to ensure that “not one of them was lost except the one destined to be lost” (Jn 17:12) or “that I did not lose a single one of those whom you gave me” (Jn 18:9). Indeed within the discourse that follows the feeding miracle, Jesus insists—“this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day” (Jn 6:39). Thus the temptation to see a secondary allusion to the gathering of people to Jesus by the disciples in this Johannine depiction of the harvesting is strong.

It is true that essentially the bread in the primary Johannine interpretation symbolized Jesus, the Bread from heaven, the embodied Divine Council (Jn 6:35, 51). And Dodd therefore thinks that if at all a symbolical meaning is meant by the harvesting, it probably refers to “bread that abides and is not lost” (1976, 207; cf. Morris 1995, 305). Yet, nothing stops the Evangelist from highlighting a secondary discipleship meaning to the symbol of harvesting the leftovers. As was noted in chapter five, John’s Gospel often underlines discipleship as a reflected Christology. Thus it is likely that the Christological element of the harvesting is augmented by reflected discipleship element.

In that case, the harvesting of leftovers by the disciples represents the bringing together of the people of God to Jesus, particularly given the strong connotations that the number twelve has with regard to Israel (so Howard-Brook 2003, 146; Brown 1966, 248). This interpretation is reinforced by the use of the term *Συναγάγετε* (gather), a word often used for the gathering of the scattered children of God, as in Jn 11:52 (cf. Meeks 1967, 94-98; contra Keener 2003, 669). Moreover, it would otherwise be paradoxical that it is in the harvesting of the leftovers that John shows the disciples as active, in comparison to the account in Mark. This however is consistent with the emphases by

the fourth Evangelist of the discipleship function of harvesting for the kingdom (e.g. Jn 4:38; 15:8, 16). John appears therefore to complement Mark in the manner in which the harvesting of the leftovers is interpreted.

#### *6.3.1.4 The Effect of the Feeding Miracles on the Disciples in Mark and John*

The evidence is that the feeding of the multitudes constituted a major turning point in Jesus' ministry (cf. Culpepper 1997; Anderson 1996; Harrill 2008, 133-158; Kim 2007, 307-322). Dodd has pointed out that the main reason for the differences between Mark's and John's accounts of the feeding is that whereas the story is told consistently from the point of view of the disciples in John's Gospel, it is inconsistently told from the point of view of Jesus in Mark (1976, 200). In this respect, though both accounts present the miracle as a sign, the apocalyptic nature of Markan epistemology results in emphasizing both the idea of the miracle as a mystery and hence the lack of understanding of the disciples. In John, the miracle is also treated as a mystery, but typically the interpretation is given through a sapiental flavoured discussion between Jesus and the disciples, including the twelve.

In Mark, the motif of loaves dominates Mk 6:8-8:30 (used seventeen times), till Peter's confession, creating a section of the Gospel which has the incomprehension of the disciples in relation to the miracle as one of its main motifs. This results in a staggered and scattered commentary on the effect of the miracle of feeding on the disciples. Accordingly assessment of how Mark conceptualizes the role of the miracle of feeding on the formation of the disciples requires a much broader consideration of the whole section. After the feeding, the disciples begin a sea crossing in which Jesus comes to them in a theophany while walking on water. That story closes with the comment by Mark that "they did not understand about the loaves, but their hearts were hardened" (Mk 6:52). They then embark on a Gentile mission, at the close of which another feeding miracle is performed. While returning from the mission, a discussion erupts among the disciples which draws a stern rebuke from Jesus, again linked to the loaves—"Why are you talking about having no bread? Do you still not perceive or



understand? Are your hearts hardened? Do you have eyes, and fail to see? Do you have ears, and fail to hear? And do you not remember” (Mk 8:17-18).

The difficulties associated with the interpretation of this rebuke by Jesus are well rehearsed (e.g. Gnllka 1978, 310; Beck 1981; Matera 1989, 153-172; Countryman 1985, 643-655; Kiel 2006, 93-113). The key issue is, though there clearly was a major misunderstanding on the part of the disciples regarding the feeding miracles, the narrative does not make the exact nature of this problem clear. What is clear is that Mark emphasizes the mysterious nature of the miracle; and as it is with the theology of apocalyptic revelation in that Gospel, he also underlines the lack of understanding of the disciples (cf. Mackay 1997, 119-130; Kiel 2006, 93-113; Drury 1991, 98-119).

Jesus’ diagnoses of the problem of the disciples at this point are therefore revealing—(a) they were unable to spiritually see and hear, (b) they were unable to interpret and understand, and (c) they were unable to remember. As pointed out in chapter three, these three emphases of seeing, interpreting and remembering constitute important features of eyewitness revelatory encounters. The sign of the loaves therefore exposed the failings of the disciples as eyewitnesses. In this respect, Peter’s extraordinary confession on the divine identity of Jesus, coming at the end of the section focused on the incomprehension of the disciples, balances out the degree to which the Markan disciples should be seen in a negative light. Though they were culpable for their lack of faith, the mystery would only be fully unveiled after Easter, a fact that, admittedly, Mark does not underline.

John also treats the feeding miracle as a sign—but typical of his sapiental emphases on revelation, it was a mystery whose interpretation was dependent on Spirit inspired hermeneutics (cf. Jn 6:63). And as it is elsewhere in the Gospel, the revelatory nature of the discourse challenges the faith of the disciples and demands the commitment of the disciples despite their misunderstanding and offence. Thus John appears to complement Mark’s presentation of the effect of the feeding miracle on the disciples in several ways. Firstly, John presents a more unified, though prolonged discourse on the meaning of the miracle, in contrast to the scattered nature of the references in Mark (cf.

Anderson 2007, 138). This results in a seamless link between Peter's confession, Jesus' lesson on discipleship as "the way of the cross", and the feeding miracle in John.

Secondly, by focusing on the idea of Jesus' question to Philip as a "test", John provides an important prism for assessing the effect of the miracle on the twelve. This reignites the question of the "test". What was it? O'Day has helpfully explained that because John, unlike Mark, does not focus on the hunger of the crowd, Jesus' performance of the miracle was because of His obligation as Host, rather than as a compassionate Shepherd. The disciples were being tested if they were equally willing to share this obligation of hosting the crowd (2003, 196-198). Accordingly, the story may be read in the light of the Johannine theme of divine hospitality. Though O'Day stops short of making the distinction, in the divine hospitality emphasis of John, Jesus is both the Host as well as the Food from Heaven, the embodied Divine Council who gives and sustains life. The test for the disciples were therefore in these two areas. And whereas the disciples were willing and able to help Jesus to fulfil His responsibilities as Host, they found the second proposition difficult.

Thirdly, John underlines the incomprehension and the offence that Jesus' Christological explanation of the miracle caused the disciples, including the twelve. This incomprehension is certainly also highlighted in Mark where the disciples draw a rebuke from the author, as well as Jesus. Yet, by presenting a unified discourse, the main cause of this incomprehension is much more apparent in John than in Mark. Fourthly, John, like Mark emphasizes Peter's confession at the close of the controversy, but elaborates further the commitment of the disciples to dwell with Jesus (Jn 6:69). The details of the confession differ from that in Mark and raise some problems of their own (cf. Domeris 1993, 155-167; Matera 1989, 153-172; Anderson 1982, 157-169). Though space will not allow an exploration of this problem, it suffices to point out how the Johannine confession ("Holy One of God") functionally explains Jesus' role as the embodied Divine Council (cf. Domeris 1993, 167; Anderson 2007, 139). John's summary of the effect of the miracle on the disciples therefore complements Mark's by giving a logical explanation of the nature of the incomprehension as well as the relief that Peter's confession provided to that period of crisis in their formation.

### 6.3.1.5 Conclusion on how Mark 6 and John 6 Validate the Hypotheses

In conclusion, both Evangelists highlight this miracle as making significant contribution to the formation of the disciples. In Mark the feeding shows the disciples participating as agents of divine power. The revelatory element of the miracle is also highlighted, but this depicts the disciples as misunderstanding the miracle, and this because of their unbelief. Peter's confession that Jesus was the Messiah however brings relief to the depiction of the failings of the disciples. In John on the other hand, the miracle is stressed as a major revelatory test on the disciples, while their role as agents of Jesus' power, though also present, is less highlighted. The narrative in John complements the Markan narrative through the extended discourse which sets forth the nature of their misunderstandings. As in Mark, Peter is shown as agent of divine revelation in John when he openly confesses Jesus as "the Holy One of God" and additionally pledges the commitment of the disciples to continue to dwell with Jesus in the face of the offence. Whereas hospitality is emphasized by the miracle as a discipleship ethic in Mark, the idea of divine hospitality is accentuated in the Johannine account.

### 6.3.2 The Significance of the Anointing of Jesus in Mark 14 and John 12

Another account in which the two Evangelists overlap is the anointing of Jesus. As pointed out earlier, the anointing of Jesus by a woman during a dinner is unique for being the only non-miraculous narrative that is repeated by all four Evangelists. It is of interest in validating some of the findings of the dissertation because it involves a non-conventional disciple.

Though there are a number of differences between the two narratives in Mk 14:1-11, and Jn 12:1-8, there are enough similarities to lead to the conclusion that they both describe the same event. The following are the salient similarities—(a) in both, the anointing occurs in Bethany and during the holy week (Mk 14:1; Jn 12:1), (b) the perfume is indicated to be expensive by both (Mk 14:3; Jn 12:3); (c) the woman's actions are criticized (Mk 14:4-5; Jn 12:4-5), (d) both give the cost of the perfume (Mk 14:5; Jn 12:5), (e) both criticisms indicate an apparent interest in the poor (Mk 14:5; Jn

12:5), (f) in both Jesus defends the woman (Mk 14:6; Jn 12:7), and (g) in both Jesus links the woman's act to His death (Mk 14:7; Jn 12:8).

There are important differences<sup>69</sup> between the two accounts; and these have generated significant variations in theoretical explanations (cf. Gardner 2008, 65-73; Coakley 1988, 241-256; Malbon 1983, 29-48; Holst 1976, 435-446). For the purposes of the present project, however, the focus is on how the Evangelists interpreted the symbolism of the woman's actions and for that matter how such an understanding reflects on their respective conceptualizations of the formation of a non-conventional disciple.

In this regard, it goes without saying that both Evangelists rigorously record and held the view that the highest degree of discipleship to Jesus was open to all of Jesus' followers, including those in the social margins of society. This view clearly emanated from Jesus Himself, who courted and encouraged people, including women into His closest circle. In focusing on the anointing, both Evangelists also indicate the pivotal roles of women in the foundational Christian movement. It is true that she is anonymous in Mark, but this does not make her any less significant than the other anonymous non-conventional disciples in Mark. And in naming her, John appears not only to be endorsing the historicity of the Markan narrative, but also indicating the major role Mary played in the foundations of the earliest Christian movement.

Secondly, it is apparent that both Evangelists interpret the anointing as at least a parabolic symbol. This no doubt emanates also from Jesus' endorsement in her defence, which clearly indicated that the critics did not understand or appreciate the symbolism. Thirdly, both Evangelists related the actions of the woman to Jesus' death, not only through the time linkage to the Passover, but also to the reference to Jesus' burial. In Mark, this is also done explicitly through "sandwiching" the anointing with the

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<sup>69</sup> The differences include (a) different time setting in relation to the Passover (two days in Mk 14:1, but six days in Jn 12:1), (b) different names for the host (Simon the Leper in Mk 14:3, but Lazarus in Jn 12:20), (c) the woman is anonymous in Mark but named as Mary in Jn 12:3, (d) different parts of Jesus' body is anointed (head in Mk 14:3, but feet in Jn 12:3), and (e) different protestors (anonymous "some" in Mk 14:4, but Judas in Jn 12:4).

plot to kill Jesus. In both cases, the woman's actions highlight the predominant roles of the women disciples in relation to the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus.

An important question arises as to how much the difference between the two accounts point to differences in the manner in which either Evangelist conceptualized the roles and formation of non-conventional disciples. In Mark, it appears that the action is interpreted in three complementary fashions—(a) it was a prophetic act of anointing, (b) it was a discipleship act of devotion and self-sacrificial love to Jesus, and (c) it was a “rabbinical” act of preparing Jesus for His burial.

If as it is most likely Mark had a theological understanding of the woman's action, then in indicating that the anointing was on Jesus' head, he most probably understood the symbolism to be indicating the kingship of Jesus. It is true that in antiquity, heads were sometimes anointed at banquets without royal connotations, as Josephus testifies regarding Claudius (*Antiquities* 19:238). Yet, the other indications of the narrative, as well as Mark's deliberate sandwich with the plot to kill Jesus, would most likely have invited the competent reader in the first century to see an added theological meaning to this, given especially Jesus' praise and immortalization of the woman's action. The interpreter must therefore look to the theological repertoire and background of Mark and his first readers for more indication of the significance of the act.

In the Old Testament, head anointing is predominantly done in relation to the anointing of kings (e.g. 1 Sam 9:15-10:13; 16:12-13; 1 Kgs 1:38-40) and priests (e.g. Ex 28:41; 1 Kgs 19:16). Though the anointers in these cases were male prophets, the implication in Mark is that the woman's act was also prophetic, giving witness to Jesus as the Messiah-king. The woman's action focuses on the identity and mission of Jesus, whose kingship would be revealed in a few days on the cross (cf. Matera 1982, 74; Miller 2006, 221-236; Tasker 1961, 242). In this sense, the woman acted as an agent of divine revelation; and the schism that resulted from her action, confirm the fact that her symbolic act was a prophetic sign (cf. Malbon 1995, xlviii).

The discipleship element in Mark's account is indicated by the nature of Jesus' comment in Mk 14:8a—ὃ ἔσχεν ἐποίησεν (literally, “what she had, she did”). A number

of interpreters have taken it that Jesus' description of her act as a "good service" labels it also as a charitable act (so, Lane 1974, 494; cf. Danker 1966, 467-472). This interpretation would however require that Jesus is regarded as "the poor" person receiving the charity of the woman. Though in itself this interpretation is not impossible, it appears to insinuate a Pauline theology of the poverty of Jesus into the narrative. A much more promising interpretation of the discipleship element of the woman's act is in the breaking of the expensive bottle as a total sacrifice of her possessions as well as her very self for the "good service" of Jesus (cf. Stein 2008, 634; Miller 2006, 227). This is clearly in line with Mark's emphases on extension of hospitality to Jesus as a key trait of discipleship.

The element of preparation for Jesus' burial is also highlighted by Jesus' comment in Mark. However, in Mark, it appears that the point regarding the burial in itself was not its prophetic element, but rather is to distinguish the act as a "good service" from alms giving to the poor. Two reasons for this view may be briefly stated. Firstly, by highlighting that the anointing was on Jesus' head, the actual burial element is not accentuated, albeit Mark also shows that it was in Jesus' death that His kingship is truly defined. Secondly, Jesus' reply sets the woman's "good service" in contradistinction to giving of alms to the poor—"Let her alone; why do you trouble her? She has performed a good service for me. For you always have the poor with you, and you can show kindness to them whenever you wish; but you will not always have me" (Mk 14:6-7). As Daube has shown, the rabbis consistently set "good deeds" such as the burial of the dead above alms-giving (1956, 315). As expounded in chapter four of the dissertation, kingdom ethics in Mark is inextricably linked to the death of Jesus. Consequently, typical of Mark's Gospel, the emphasis on the act of the woman is on its sacrificial discipleship act directed to the service of Jesus' death. Another indication of this heightened sense of the woman's service is the fact that her anointing was the only one Jesus is said to have received in Mark's Gospel. When the other women disciples later came to the grave with the intention of performing the anointing, it was too late; Jesus by then had been raised from the dead (Mk 16:1).

John's account essentially repeats the three aspects of the significance of Mary's act of anointing; but, his emphases is much more on its witness to Jesus' death. Firstly, the discrepancy regarding the timing of the anointing; whether it occurred two (Mark) or six (John) days before Passover raises an interpretive possibility with regard to John's theological interpretation. There are several options; but, if at all one Evangelist has changed the time as part of a theological allusion, then John's is the most likely. In Ex 24:16, six days indicates the waiting period before the revelation of the theophany to Israel. And this appears to be reflected by Mark's (Mk 9:2) and Matthew's (Matt 17:1) use of the "six days" idiom for the time before the transfiguration. Since John regarded Jesus as the Passover Lamb, and His death as His glorification (Jn 12:23-24), it is not unlikely that he would regard "six days" before Passover as the beginning of the period before the theophanic crucifixion. If John therefore used the "six days" in this fashion, as a number of interpreters believe that he did, it illustrates how he highlights the action of Mary as an important revelatory event inaugurating the "six days" before the glorification on the cross (cf. Glasson 1963, 72; Keener 2003, 862)<sup>70</sup>. This is clearly a profound endorsement of Mary's role as Jesus' disciple.

A second indication of Johannine theological emphasis is the fact that the anointing was on Jesus' feet. Clearly, given the large amount of ointment used, both head and feet would have been anointed. But each Evangelist appears to emphasize an aspect for their respective theological reasons (cf. Morris 1995, 509). As noted earlier, head anointing was more common for guests, but the anointing of feet also occurred in antiquity, and indicates a position of respect from the anointer (e.g. the anointing of Rabbi Jonathan in *P. Pe'ah* 1:1 §13). Since the woman's hair was regarded as her glory (cf. 1 Cor 11:7), the wiping of Jesus' feet with Mary's hair, and in violation of the customs, indicates the intensity of her devotion and servitude to Jesus. Therefore the discipleship element is heightened in John.

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<sup>70</sup> Esler and Piper's suggestion that John moved the date to a Sunday to serve the purposes of the Johannine community appears rather incredible (2006, 63).

Yet, the fact that it was on the feet does not also negate the significance that this constituted a royal anointing in the Johannine sense (cf. Stauffer 1960, 107; Beasley-Murray 1987, 209; Schnackenburg 1970, 2.370). However, for John, this royal anointing is related to the preparation for Jesus' death and burial element (Jn 19:19), and not a prophetic anointing as is more prominent in Mark's Gospel. The practice of anointing bodies before burial is widely reported in extant literature (e.g. 2 Chron 16:14; Antiquities 17:199; *m. Šabbat* 23:5; Homer *Iliad* 18:351) and hence Mary's act should be interpreted in that light. In that sense, the anointing of feet much fits the emphasis in the Johannine account that Mary was preparing Jesus for His burial than the anointing of head would have (cf. Brown 1966, 454; Esler and Piper 2006, 67).

Finally, the censure of Judas in John interprets the act as a revelatory sign which brings judgment and condemnation on those who don't believe. In John, the criticism is pointedly made by Judas Iscariot, and even though it is related to the poor, the Evangelist uses the opportunity to clarify Judas' uncharitable motives and behaviour (Jn 12:6). Accordingly, in John, Mary's act becomes a revelatory sign which served to unveil the one among the disciples whose ways were not right. Indeed, this revelatory feature of Mary's act is thrown in sharp relief by how it prefigured the washing of the feet of the disciples. As Culpepper has shown a parallel structural relationship exists between Jn 12 and Jn 13 making the symbolisms of both acts comparable (Culpepper 1998, 202-203; cf. Esler and Piper 2006, 66; Painter 1998, 375). Both are signs related to the death of Jesus and served to distinguish Judas as the agent of Satan (Jn 12:4-6; 13:10-11). Therefore, the anointing of Jesus' is complemented by John to show Mary as a non-conventional disciple who acts as a witness to Jesus and an agent of revelation, thus validating some of the hypotheses of the dissertation.

## 6.4 Conclusion

The present chapter has shown that a comparative study of the Gospels and Mark and John can yield significant dividends in shedding light on both the historical and theological background of the formation of the disciples. It is apparent that the position



the investigator takes with regard to the relationship between the two Gospels will affect the direction of conclusions. A complete isolation of one Gospel from the other, as was noted in the previous chapter, results in the relegation of the witness of one of the Gospels, often John's Gospel, from contributing to understanding Christian origins. On the other hand, a full blown un-nuanced harmonization stifles the testimony of the individual witnesses. Thus the argument has been made in favour of a complementary relationship between Mark and John which enables comparative exegesis of the Gospels which is also sensitive to the various historical and theological nuances that the Evangelists have made.

With this background in mind, the present chapter has summarized and compared the findings from the investigations of the formations of the disciples in Mark and John. Both Gospels make unique emphases and contributions to the subject which together shed significant light on the formation of the disciples. Though both Gospels emphasize that the disciples were formed as agents of divine power and revelation, Mark much more emphasizes the dimension of power, whereas John emphasizes the dimension of revelation. In several ways also, John complements the account in Mark in such a manner as to explain, augment and sometimes clarify the Markan account. As the validation of the hypotheses has shown, such an approach significantly sheds light on how it came to be that Jesus' ministry gave birth to Christianity. How this thesis impacts on contemporary pastoral reflections on the making of disciples will now be discussed in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS OF STUDY

The aim of this dissertation has been to describe, analyze and compare the formation of the disciples of Jesus as presented in the Gospels of Mark and John in such a manner that will help explain Christian origins. It took two basic assumptions for its starting point—that the genre of the Gospels are primarily the *bioi* of Jesus and that there was a direct continuity between Jesus and the Christian religion that followed Him. Based on these assumptions, the dissertation investigated the accounts of the interactions between Jesus and His followers during His ministry, death and resurrection in order to delineate how the two Evangelists conceptualized the formation of the disciples. The following are the summaries of the findings.

#### 7.1 Summary of Chapter One

Chapter one, which also serves as the introduction to the dissertation, gave a background to the task, as well as providing the definitions of the major terminologies, rationale and methodology of the study. Recent trends in Gospel Studies have undermined several of the assumptions of the historical-critical approaches and the methodologies that resulted from them. In its place, the fact that the Gospels are biographies of Jesus, together with new insights into the utility of the literary methods of historical analysis has resulted in refined approaches to the Gospels. This provides the basis for the examination of the formation of the disciples as depicted in the Gospels to help explain Christian origins. In such an enterprise due consideration is also given to the socio-historical, cultural and religious backgrounds of the Evangelists as well as the first intended readers, together with any ideological commitments they may have brought to bear on their responsibilities as biographers of Jesus. The Gospels of Mark and John were the focus, and the overall task was to give a historical-theological

description of how the Jesus-disciples interactions caused Christianity to happen. A comparative study of narrative-theological exegesis of Mark and John, which retains the individual voices of the Evangelists, was judged the most appropriate to the task.

A key to the study is the definition of “formation” as the dialectical process through which the disciples, based on the nature of their relationship with Jesus, were psychosocially, theologically and spiritually moulded into the pattern suited for their projected functions. In this sense, the word “formation” much better describes the Jesus-disciples interactions than “training” or “education” and has three dimensions—the nature of the relationship between Jesus and the disciples, the expected outcomes of the interactions and the processes and events involved in the interactions.

## **7.2 Summary of Chapter Two**

Chapter two of the dissertation was a review of selected studies that focused on the formation of the disciples. It was observed that writers have conceptualised the relationship between Jesus and His disciples in six different categories—rabbinic pupils, converts of Jesus, students of a philosophical school, unique entity, eschatological prophetic school and as agents of Jesus. The chapter examined various contributions by writers on these categories and evaluated the utility of the models as investigative tools for studying the formation of the disciples.

Despite its historical advantage, the rabbinic pupil model suffers from being significantly different from the Jesus-disciples relationship. The “converts” model highlights spiritual transformation in the disciples, but only through the superimposition of external theological paradigms not very suited to the genre of the Gospels. Inasmuch as it derives most of its insights from outside first century Judaism, the philosophical school idea is also inadequate. Though the “unique entity” model appears attractive for its ability to allow flexibility, it nevertheless suffers from lack of clear controls and standardization in the conclusions. The eschatological prophet model is certainly one of the most convincing conceptualizations of discipleship to Jesus, given that Paul grounded his own self-understanding in the prophetic tradition. Yet, it is patently

inadequate given also that the disciples functioned in far wider roles than the prophets of the Old Testament.

On the other hand, the agency model shows significant promise for investigating the disciples. Most important among its attractions, is the fact that both Jesus and the disciples could be appropriately examined under this rubric. In addition, the OT and STJ's portrayal of God's agents, especially those with affinities to the theological idioms of each of the Evangelists, may be used to formulate the coordinates of an appropriate model. The chapter therefore provided a methodological base for developing the investigative tool for Gospels research.

### **7.3 Summary of Chapter Three**

The third chapter was devoted to developing this investigative tool further to fit the biographical-theological genre of the Gospels. It begun with a survey of the nature of the interactions between God and His agents as portrayed in the OT and the literature of STJ. Within the OT, the Godhead is depicted in several texts as in council with Himself and His agents, especially in formulating plans and issuing decrees that influence events within His creation. Human agents interact with the Divine Council in the OT in two main ways—through revelation as in dreams or visions, and by personal interaction with a divine Person in a theophany. In the later, the element of hospitality which provided a pivotal cultural context in all social interactions in the Ancient Near East as well as the Mediterranean regions was a consistent feature. In the sapiential literature of the OT, qualities of God are personified and interact with human agents to instruct them in their missions. It was indicated that worthy of note is the contribution of the second part of Isaiah (40-66) in fashioning the theology of Yahweh proceeding from His Council to lead His people in a new exodus. Alongside this is the divine warrior motif in which God again proceeds from the Council to recruit the righteous as co-agents in a holy war.

Though the Jewish literature of the second temple period is varied in outlook and emphases, the divine-human interaction is broadly depicted in the two ways in the Old

Testament, albeit in several different combinations. In the apocalyptic literature, for example, the emphases on revelation of mysteries of the Divine Council are linked with heavenly journeys into the divine realm, at which human beings interact with the heavenly realm. This particular model is clearly unsuited to the situation of the disciples, though some aspects of apocalyptic theology are evident in the Gospels. Similarly, the personification of the Logos, Wisdom and Torah in the various traditions was highlighted as important in informing how the Gospels are to be studied.

This model was piloted and fine-tuned on the first chapters of Mark and John to identify how the two Gospels portrayed the first interactions between Jesus and the disciples. It was identified that the predominant theological frame of Mark's prologue is the Isaianic new exodus motif, and thus Jesus is depicted as the embodied Divine Council, who has come to proclaim the eschatological kingdom of God. It was therefore concluded that the disciples in Mark must be considered as at least on par with the agents in the Old Testament who encountered and interacted with the Divine Council. In Mark, the mission of Jesus, and hence of the disciples, is depicted as the eschatological harvesting of people into God's Kingdom, though the element of judgment especially of the evil forces is also not far from the understanding of the unique phrase ἀλιεῖς ἀνθρώπων (fishers of men). The means by which the disciples share in this mission is to follow Jesus, so as to be *made* (ποιήσω) into "harvesters". And the mechanism by which their formation will occur is through the power of Jesus, the Stronger One who baptizes with the Spirit. On the other hand, the disciples respond to this divine initiative by follow (ἠκολούθησαν) Jesus.

In John's prologue, Jesus is depicted as the Revealer of God—He is the Divine Logos, Wisdom and Torah. Perhaps much more explicit than Mark, John depicts Jesus as the embodied Divine Council, who has come in the flesh (1:14, 18). The disciples should be understood therefore as encountering and interacting with God Himself. Witnessing and confession motif dominates the first Jesus-disciples encounter in John's Gospel. The prevalence of words and metaphors of seeing, hearing, knowing, abiding, dwelling, witnessing and confessing in the chapter all point in this direction. Discipleship for John is therefore, the building of an abiding relationship with Jesus.

## 7.4 Summary of Chapter Four

Chapters four and five employed the tools developed in chapter three but nuanced to either Gospel, to examine Mark and John. The fourth chapter conducted a narrative-theological exegesis of key passages in Mark's Gospel in order to describe and analyze the formation of the disciples from the point of view of Mark's Gospel. The chapter showed that Jesus had a large followership, many of whom were transformed through their interactions with Him to fulfil discipleship functions. Of this followership, He called twelve, labelled by Mark as "the disciples", who were to keep His company. Because of their constant presence and active interactions with Jesus, description and analysis of the formation of the disciples as agents of Jesus provide significant insight into Christian origins. Chiefly, the chapter demonstrated that the disciples are portrayed as agents of divine power and revelation, even though Mark emphasized the element of power more than revelation.

In terms of the processes and outcomes of the formation of the disciples in Mark's Gospel, the account may be summarized as follows. The first phase of Jesus' mission in Galilee (Mk 1:16-3:12) emphasized the authority and power of God's reign which Jesus had inaugurated. In this phase, the disciples follow, accompany, observe, learn and assist Jesus in this mission, and soon participate in His *ἐξουσίαν* by plucking the grain on the Sabbath. The disciples also received revelation of Jesus' identity, authority and mission, even though it is not clear how much of this revelation they comprehended.

In the second phase of the Galilean ministry (Mk 3:13-6:13) the disciples progress further from being assistants and participants in Jesus' ministry to become independent partners, who are sent out to preach and exercise the dominion of God over evil forces. During this phase also, Jesus underlines the nature of His revelation as double edged—the same revelation reveals and yet at the same time conceals, depending on the faith of the recipient. In this regard, the disciples are gifted with the "*μυστήριον* of the kingdom of God" (Mk 4:11) the function of which was to enable them comprehend the revelation from Jesus. The third phase of Jesus' ministry (Mk 6:14-8:26) was dominated by missions to Gentile territories, even though it also involved missions to purely Jewish territories. Crucial to the formation of the disciples in this phase were their partnership

with Jesus in the feeding miracles, and their failure of comprehension and execution of the power put at their disposal.

The particular emphasis on Jesus' mission from Mk 8:27 changes, and so also that of the emphases in the formation of the disciples. The approaching death of Jesus becomes the focus, as well as the ethical demands of discipleship. Mark uses the Isaianic new exodus motif to interpret the journey of Jesus and His followers to Jerusalem in this phase (Mk 8:27-10:52) as fulfilling the triumphal entry into Zion of Yahweh, the Divine Warrior, and His co-agents. However in Mark, there is an ironic twist to the procession, so that the suffering, rejection and death of Jesus become the means by which the triumph of Yahweh is portrayed.

The Jesus-disciples interactions in the final chapters of Mark are characterized by several failures of the disciples. The dissertation rejected the idea that Mark may have focused on these failures as part of his agenda of discrediting the disciples whom he opposed. Instead, and borrowing from the Greco-Roman concept of the *elenchus*, it was shown that the emphasis on the failures of the disciples should be seen as a reflection of Mark's, as well as his first readers', philosophy of education. And the examination of how the death and resurrection of Jesus impacted the formation of the disciples confirms this understanding of the failures of the disciples during the final weeks of His ministry.

## **7.5 Summary of Chapter Five**

Chapter five described and analyzed the formation of the disciples of Jesus in John's Gospel. The chapter showed that John focused on the formation of the disciples to become witnesses, and specifically, eyewitnesses of Jesus, as well as friends of God. After exegesis of the key passages, it arrived at four main conclusions. Firstly, because of the complexity of characterization in the fourth Gospel, a careful attention to the detailed characterization is required in order to ascertain who is depicted as a disciple in the Gospel. That said, a disciple in Johannine terms believes, and dwells or abides in Jesus. It also showed that the signs of Jesus play a positive role in faith, just as His

words. These two complement each other and should not be seen as in anyway antithetical. When a disciple believes, s/he must confess or witness and so bring others to Jesus. Johannine disciples should therefore be conceptualized as agents of the embodied Divine Council, functioning as vehicles of divine revelation.

Secondly, John focuses on a number of key non-conventional disciples and through that demonstrates the formation of such characters. By anonymizing some of the non-conventional disciples, the Evangelist employs them for rhetorical and pedagogical effect for his first readers. One such character is the man born blind; whose story of movement from blindness to full physical and spiritual sight and worship of Jesus as Lord also charts the formation of disciples in vivid but effective manner. John makes another significant contribution to the understanding of the formation of disciples in this account; for, the idea of purification or cleansing from sin is sustained, but in a proleptic manner in anticipation of Jesus' salvific death.

Thirdly, the analysis of the formation of the conventional disciples demonstrated that the theme of divine hospitality which is raised in the first introduction of the disciples to Jesus played a central role in their formation. This theme is transformed in a symbolic metaphorical fashion, so that the goal and means of transformation of the disciple is an ever increasing and closer relationship and mystical union of the disciple with Jesus. This theme is most explicit in John among the Gospels, and yet provides quite an effective means of explaining how it was that the association of disciples with Jesus transformed them to become the foundational pillars of the Church.

Finally, the chapter established that the footwashing appears to be an effective symbolic summary of the Johannine conception of the formation of agents of Jesus to be vehicles of His revelation. Its purificatory and "participation in Jesus" interpretation shows that the historical disciple of Jesus was formed and transformed but in proleptic manner and in anticipation of the death of Jesus. The moral-ethical interpretation emphasizes the imitative aspect of the formation of the disciples, while the emphases on revelation, preparation for martyrdom and divine hospitality all highlight the roles these play in the



formation of disciples. With this picture therefore an effective conceptualization of how Jesus made disciples in the Johannine presentation was attained.

## **7.6 Summary of Chapter Six**

Chapter six of the dissertation conducted a comparative analysis of the findings from the exegesis of Mark and John. It then examined two stories in which Mark and John overlap as a means of validating the accepted hypotheses. Firstly, the argument was made in favour of a complementary relationship between Mark and John that will enable a comparative exegesis of the Gospels, which is at the same time sensitive to the various historical and theological nuances that the Evangelists have made. Secondly, with this background, the chapter summarized and compared the findings from the investigations of the formations of the disciples in Mark and John. Both Gospels make unique emphases and contributions to the subject, which together, shed significant light on the formation of the disciples, and on Christian origins. Though both Gospels emphasize that the disciples were formed as agents of divine power and revelation, Mark emphasizes the dimension of power more, whereas John emphasizes the dimension of revelation. In several ways also, John complements the account in Mark in such a manner as to explain, add and sometimes clarify the Markan account.

These hypotheses were then validated by examining the manner in which both Evangelists present the Jesus-disciples interactions in two stories in which Mark and John overlap. Accordingly, whereas in the account of the feeding of the five thousand, Mark emphasizes the role of the disciples as agents of power, but who misunderstanding the revelatory elements of the miracle, John underlines the role of the disciples as witnesses and agents of revelation who are tested by the revelatory elements emanating from the sign. Thus John complements Mark in demonstrating an aspect of the sign, and clarifies how the revelatory element led to the misunderstanding of the disciples. Similarly, in the respective accounts of the anointing of Jesus, though both Evangelists underline a threefold interpretation of the woman's act, Mark accentuates the prophetic and discipleship elements, while John, the witness element. Furthermore, John complements the Markan account by emphasizing the preparation

for burial. These findings shed significant light on how it came to be that Jesus' ministry, death, resurrection and ascension led to a large group of followers and the origins of Christianity.

## **7.7 The Pastoral Implications of the Study to Spiritual Formation**

The subjects of discipleship, Christian Spirituality and Spiritual Formation have of late assumed a rightful central role in academic discussions in Biblical Studies, Systematic Theology and Practical Theology. At the root of this revival of interest is the re-appreciation of the fact that the primary role of the Bible is to serve the Christian community in its relationship with Jesus as Lord. For that reason, the need for a text-based foundation to these subjects has become urgent. Since the formation of the disciples in the Gospels constitutes the most sustained and ample record of formational interaction in the New Testament, the above findings could indeed serve as one of the means of informing the reflections on the nature of Spiritual formation of believers.

In this regard four main implications of the study may be outlined—related to definitions, Gospels research methodology, and processes and outcomes of spiritual formation. Firstly, in terms of definitions, the dissertation appears to have made a modest contribution to defining “formation” in such a manner as to enable its analysis in the Bible, as well as application in the contemporary pastoral situation. In this regard, spiritual formation could be defined as “the dialectical process through which, based on the nature of their relationship with God (the Father, Son and Holy Spirit), believers are psycho-socially, theologically and spiritually moulded into the pattern suited for their projected functions”. This definition, as the study has shown, provides a functional means of assessing spiritual formation based, not only on dialectical relationships with Jesus, but also on the exhibition of key outcomes as well as involving key transformational processes. This definition is therefore commended for the examination of the formation of the disciples in the other Gospels, and in the post Easter setting. Furthermore, it may be of utility in the formation of disciples in the contemporary setting. Clearly by emphasizing that Jesus is the embodied Divine Council, the definition in this

latter case will have to be restated to take account of the roles of God the Father and God the Holy Spirit in the formation of the contemporary believer.

Secondly, with regard to the methodology of Gospels research, this study has made two main contributions, one positive, and the other negative. Positively, it has underlined the immense utility of the agency model as a means of controlling the examination of the Jesus-disciples relationship in the Gospels. This allows for considering the vast intertextual relationships between the Gospels and Old Testament and literature of Second Temple Judaism, while at the same time retaining fidelity to the Gospel genre as *bioi of Jesus*. Moreover, it also enables a steadied analysis of the human-human aspect, as well as divine-human dimensions of the Jesus-disciples interactions. Furthermore, each Gospel is allowed to control its portrait of Jesus' formation of the disciples, while also enabling a conceptually synthetic understanding of the historical formation of the disciples.

On the negative side, however, this study has shown that the processes involved in the formation of the disciples in the Gospels cannot be immediately transposed from the pre-Easter setting to the post-Easter, and postmodern setting without significant modifications in definitions, and investigative procedures. Thus for example the concept of conversion needs to be significantly nuanced with regard to the Gospels. It is certain that the disciples underwent spiritual transformation in their interactions with Jesus. However, the process is clearly not in the manner that may be envisaged in the post-Easter setting. In addition, the pattern of the formation of the disciples in Mark appears to move in a reverse direction to what would be envisaged in the post-Easter setting. The disciples begin quite early as participants in Jesus' ministry, but gradually show significant signs of immaturity and desert Jesus at the Passion. Though they are restored after Easter, it would not be accurate to regard this pattern as normative for the post-Easter believer. In this regard, the Gospel of John's emphasis on the soteriological element in the interactions between Jesus and the disciples in a proleptic fashion appears to help clarify this issue for the historical disciples.

Furthermore, the question of how the theological paradigms of the Evangelists should influence contemporary reflections on spiritual formation will need addressing as an *a priori* step in the hermeneutical process. Put another way, the degrees to which Mark's apocalyptic eschatological paradigm or John's sapiential emphases as reflected in their respective accounts should shape the hermeneutical process of applying the findings to spiritual formation today have not been broached in the dissertation but need addressing.

Thirdly, the dissertation has underlined the multiform nature of the processes involved in the formation of the disciples. When the depiction in Mark and John are seen in a complementary manner, the idea of an ever deepening relationship with Jesus seems to epitomize this process. The role of the Holy Spirit is apparently assumed by Mark to be involved in the transformation of the disciples, after his initial indication that Jesus baptizes with the Spirit. In John, His prominent role is underlined with the Spirit's function as the Paraclete, and the enabler for the interpretation of Scripture. On the whole, both Gospels stress the role of faith, and the degrees of it, as a key response in the growth of the disciples. The Markan emphases on hospitality as a discipleship ethic, and the converse Johannine emphases of divine hospitality are rich with interpretive and applicatory possibilities in the contemporary settings of building disciples.

A major contribution of the study to Gospels research is the understanding of the projected outcomes of the formation of the disciples in terms of the categories of power and revelation. This enabled the analysis to show the similarities and differences between Mark and John in their respective emphases. Such a model may also be applied to the other Gospels. One imagines for example that Matthew and Luke would lie somewhere between Mark and John in this spectrum, each portraying various combinations of degrees of the disciples as agents of divine power and revelation.

More importantly, this understanding of the outcomes of formation of disciples may be applied in contemporary reflections on spiritual formation. Today's disciple is clearly of a different order from the foundational disciples in the Gospel. For a start, s/he does not physically interact with Jesus. Yet, like his/her Gospel counterpart, s/he is also called to

be the agent of the resurrected and Sovereign Lord in this world. The power of Jesus is to be exhibited in the transformation of her life, as well as her practical act of ministry to others. At the same time her words and actions should witness to the Person of Jesus and so call others to repentance. In this respect today's disciple of Jesus is no different and requires similar transformative interactions with the Living One.

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## APPENDIX A

### Characters Who Interacted With Jesus In Mark

Section	Pericope	Significant Characters
<b>Phase 1 Galilean Ministry (Mk 1:1-3:12)</b>	Prologue 1:1-15	The Baptist, Jesus & Angels
	Call of first disciples 1:16-20	Four disciples
	Demon in synagogue 1:21-28	Possessed Man
	Ministry in Simon's House 1:29-39	Simon's Mother-in-law
		Four disciples
	Healing of the Leper 1:40-45	The Leper
	Healing the Paralytic 2:1-12	Four carriers of paralytic
		The scribes
		The paralytic
	Call of Levi 2:13-17	The crowd
		Tax Collectors and sinners
		Disciples
		Scribes
	Question of fasting 2:18-22	The disciples
	Disciples Pluck Grain 2:23-28	The disciples
		Pharisees
	"Withered hand" man healed 3:1-6	Pharisees
	With multitude at lakeside 3:7-12	Great multitude
		The disciples
		The crowd
<b>Phase 2 Galilean Ministry (Mk 3:13-6:13)</b>	Jesus appoints the twelve 3:20-30	The twelve
		The many called
	Compared with Beelzebub 3:31-35	The crowd
		Jesus' family
		The Jerusalem scribes
	Parables of the Kingdom 4:1-34	The crowd
		"Those around Him" (4:10)
		The twelve
		The disciples (4:34)
	Stilling the Storm 4:35-41	The disciples
	Healing Gerasene Demoniac 5:1-20	Demoniac
		The swineherds
	Resuscitation of Jairus' daughter and healing of the haemorrhaging woman 5:21-43	Haemorrhaging woman
		The disciples
		Jairus
		Peter, James and John
	Rejection at Nazareth 6:1-6	The disciples
	Mission of the Twelve 6:7-13	The Twelve
<b>Mixed Area Ministry (Mk 6:14-8:21)</b>	The Baptist Martyred 6:14-29	The Baptist
	Five thousand fed 6:30-44	The apostles
		The disciples
		The crowd

	Jesus walks on the water 6:45-52	The disciples
	Healing the sick in Gennesaret 6:53-56	The people
	Disciples eat with defiled hands 7:1-23	The disciples
		The Pharisees and Scribes
		The crowd
	Syrophoenician woman 7:24-30	The woman
	Deaf man cured in Decapolis 7:31-37	Deaf man
	Feeding the four thousand 8:1-13	The disciples
		The crowd
<b>The Way to Jerusalem (Mk 8:22-10:52)</b>	The Yeast teaching 8:14-21	The disciples
	Blind man of Bethsaida healed 8:22-26	The blind man
		Peter
		The disciples
	Peter's confession and first passion prediction 8:27-38	The crowd
		Peter, James and John
		The disciples
	The Transfiguration 9:1-13	The crowd
		The scribes
		Child's father
		The disciples
	Healing of "epileptic" child 9:14-29	The twelve
		John
	Argument about the greatest 9:30-37	Another exorcist
		The crowd
	Another Exorcist 9:38-50	The Pharisees
		The disciples
		The disciples
	Teaching on divorce 10:1-12	The Pharisees
		The disciples
	Blessing little children 10:13-16	The Pharisees
		The disciples
	Rich Young Ruler 10:17-31	The children
		Rich ruler
		The disciples
	Request by James and John 10:32-45	Peter
		"They"
		The twelve
		James and John
	Healing and Call of Bartimeus 10:46-52	The ten
		Bartimaeus
		The disciples
		The crowd
<b>Ministry in Jerusalem (Mk 11:1-14:11)</b>	Entry into Jerusalem 11:1-11	The disciples
		Bystanders
		Crowd – ahead & following
		The twelve
	Cursing fig tree & cleansing temple 11:12-33	The disciples
		The crowd
		Priests and scribes
		Peter
	Wicked tenants parable and confrontation with leaders 12:1-40	The crowd
		Opponents
	Widow's offering 12:41-44	Disciples

	Apocalyptic Discourse 13:1-37	The disciples
		Four disciples
	Anointing at Bethany 14:1-11	The woman Judas
<b>The Passion (Mk 14:12-16:8)</b>	Lord's Supper 14:12-31	The disciples
		The twelve
	Prayer in Gethsemane & Trial 14:32-65	Peter, James and John
		Judas
		Naked young man
	Peter denies Jesus 14:66-72	Peter
		Girl
	Crucifixion 15:1-41	Pilate
		Simon of Cyrene
		Centurion
	Burial of Jesus 15:42-47	Joseph of Arimathea
		Mary Magdalene
		Mary, Jesus' mother
	Resurrection 16:1-8	Mary Magdalene
		Mary, James's mother
		Salome
		Angel/young man at tomb



## APPENDIX B

### Interactions Between Christology And Discipleship In Mark

Pericope	Christology	Discipleship	Process of Formation
<b>First Disciples (Mk 1:16-20)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Holy Warrior of the Divine Council</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Followed Jesus</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Call</li> <li>Promised spiritual formation</li> </ul>
<b>Capernaum Synagogue Teaching (Mk 1:21-28)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Authoritative Teacher</li> <li>The holy One of God (1:24)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Company of Jesus</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Observed Jesus' "authoritative" teaching and "powerful" exorcism</li> <li>Keeping Jesus' company</li> </ul>
<b>Ministry in Simon's House (Mk 1:29-34)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Healer &amp; Teacher</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Company of Jesus</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Observed healings, exorcisms and teaching</li> </ul>
<b>Ministry in Greater Galilee (Mk 1:35-39)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Jesus prays and strategizes</li> <li>Jesus as divine agent (1:38)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dealing with separation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learning through questioning</li> <li>Prayer &amp; visionary approach to mission</li> </ul>
<b>Banquet at Levi's house (Mk 2:13-17)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Jesus came to call sinners</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Levi left his business to follow Jesus</li> <li>Disciples questioned</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Keeping Jesus' company</li> <li>Interacting with "sinners"</li> <li>Ready with answers when questioned</li> </ul>
<b>Dispute on Fasting (Mk 2:18-22)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Jesus as Messianic Bridegroom</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Disciples break fasting custom</li> <li>Disciples as Messiah's Guests</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Disciples break fasting custom</li> <li>Observe Jesus deal with opponents</li> </ul>
<b>Plucking Grain on Sabbath (Mk 2:23-28)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Jesus is the Son of Man</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Disciples as Agents of Power</li> <li>Disciples share Son of Man's identity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Authority and Power of Jesus transmitted through disciples</li> </ul>
<b>Lakeside Ministry (Mk 3:7-12)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Authoritative teacher and powerful healer &amp; exorcist</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Disciples prepare boat for Jesus</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assist Jesus in His ministry</li> </ul>
<b>Call of the Twelve (Mk 3:13-19)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Jesus as Divine Caller</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Twelve are called and designated as agents of divine power and revelation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To be with Jesus and to be sent out</li> </ul>
<b>Parables of the Kingdom (Mk 4:1-34)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Jesus as Teacher</li> <li>Jesus as Embodied Divine Council</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Receiving teaching and explanations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gift of μυστήριον</li> <li>Misunderstanding as means of revelation</li> </ul>
<b>Stilling the Storm (Mk 4:35-41)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Jesus is "Lord over Nature"</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Preparation for "Gentile" mission</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rebuke of the disciples</li> <li>Revelation of Jesus'</li> </ul>

41)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jesus is God</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facing the storm “with” Jesus</li> <li>• Fear in the face of danger/superstition</li> <li>• Awe at Jesus’ power</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• divinity</li> <li>• Instillation of faith in the face of demonic opposition</li> <li>• Turning of physical danger into an epiphany</li> </ul>
Healing the haemorrhaging woman (Mk 5:21-43)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jesus the compassionate Healer</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discerning the operation of divine power</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discerning operation of divine power</li> <li>• Question as means of revelation</li> </ul>
Rejection in His home town (Mk 6:1-6)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jesus the rejected Messiah</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lessons on rejection of agents</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observation of Jesus’ plight as rejected Messiah</li> </ul>
Parallel Missions of Jesus and the twelve (Mk 6:7-13)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jesus the Divine Commissioner</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Independent mission of the twelve</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Calling, sending, obeying and ministering</li> </ul>
Report from Mission & the Baptist Martyred (Mk 6:14-29)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jesus the divine Commissioner of the apostles</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hint regarding possible future rejection and martyrdom</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reporting to Jesus “all that they had done and taught” (Mk 6:30)</li> </ul>
Feeding the five thousand (Mk 6:30-44)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jesus as compassionate Shepherd</li> <li>• Jesus “the Greater Joshua”</li> <li>• Jesus the Wisdom Teacher</li> <li>• Jesus “the Greater Elisha”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disciples also concerned for the people (under-shepherds)</li> <li>• Disciples assist at the “Messianic banquet”</li> <li>• Disciples participate in miracle</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Misunderstanding of Jesus’ identity and mission</li> <li>• “You give them something to eat” (Mk 6:37)</li> <li>• Harvesting leftovers</li> </ul>
Walking on the Water (Mk 6:45-52)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jesus is God who walks on water</li> <li>• Jesus is the “I am”</li> <li>• Jesus the “divine warrior”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incomprehension of the identity and mission of Jesus</li> <li>• Incomprehension of the disciples’ share in Jesus’ authority</li> <li>• Hardness of heart</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sent ahead of Jesus towards Gentile territory</li> <li>• Epiphany and salvation on the lake</li> <li>• ? Failed exorcism of the “sea demons”?</li> </ul>
Eating with Defiled Hands (Mk 7:1-23)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jesus the teacher</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Breaking the “tradition of the elders”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seeking clarification of parable</li> <li>• Incomprehension as prelude to revelation</li> </ul>
Feeding the four thousand (Mk 8:1-13)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jesus the compassionate Provider of material needs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indirect confession of Jesus’ divinity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participation in the miracle</li> <li>• ?Participation in Gentile mission??</li> </ul>

<b>Rebuke for “hardness of heart” (Mk 8:14-21)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jesus the Teacher</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Warning concerning hard heartedness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rebuke for incomprehension</li> </ul>
<b>Peter’s Confession and first Passion prediction (Mk 8:27-38)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jesus the Christ</li> <li>• Jesus the Teacher of “the Word”</li> <li>• Jesus the suffering Son of Man</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Following Jesus “in the Way”</li> <li>• Confessing Jesus as the Christ</li> <li>• Explanation of the nature of discipleship – self-denial, cross bearing and followership</li> <li>• Warning of rejection and martyrdom of disciples</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revelation of μυστήριον</li> <li>• Clarification of the nature of Jesus’ Messiahship - Passion prediction</li> <li>• Revelation of nature of discipleship through miscomprehension and clarification</li> <li>• Rebuke of Peter for setting his mind “on human things”</li> </ul>
<b>Transfiguration (Mk 9:1-13)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jesus the Messiah</li> <li>• Theophany of Ex 24</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Witnessing Jesus’ divine glory</li> <li>• Agents of revelation on the mountain</li> <li>• In the presence of the divine council</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seeing the Kingdom come with power</li> <li>• Theophany or Christological revelation</li> <li>• “Listening” to the Son of God</li> </ul>
<b>Healing of convulsing child (Mk 9:14-29)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jesus the exorcist and teacher</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Failure to exorcise</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teaching on importance of prayer</li> </ul>
<b>Arguing about the greatest (Mk 9:30-37)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jesus the Teacher</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Moral failure in seeking advantage over colleagues</li> <li>• Indications of the leadership roles of the twelve</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Private teaching of disciples on the passion</li> <li>• Correction of disciples on leadership style in the kingdom</li> </ul>
<b>Another exorcist (Mk 9:38-50)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jesus is magnanimous</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jealousy and exclusivity corrected</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accepting other believers who do not follow the group</li> </ul>
<b>Teaching on Divorce (Mk 10:1-12)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jesus the Teacher</li> <li>• Jesus is greater than Moses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disciples asked for clarification</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning Jesus’ apologetics methods</li> </ul>
<b>Blessing the children (Mk 10:13-16)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jesus’ affection for children</li> <li>• Jesus became indignant</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Failure to discern Jesus’ interest in children</li> <li>• Good intentions but wrong perception</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rebuked by Jesus</li> </ul>
<b>Misguided request by John and James (Mk 10:32-45)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jesus prophecies about His passion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leadership role of the twelve from among the crowd</li> <li>• John and James understood Jesus’ identity but</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prediction of passion</li> <li>• Selfish ambition destroys commitment</li> <li>• Martyrdom of disciples predicted</li> </ul>

		misunderstood the nature of His Messianic mission	
<b>Healing and call of Bartimaeus (Mk 10:46-52)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jesus the Messiah</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They called Bartimaeus</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Following Jesus in the Way</li> </ul>
<b>Entry into Jerusalem (Mk 11:1-11)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jesus the Messiah</li> <li>• Jesus King of Israel</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disciples go ahead of, and behind Jesus</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disciples assist Jesus</li> </ul>
<b>Cursing fig tree and cleansing temple (Mk 11:12-33)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jesus the prophet and judge</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disciples serve as witnesses</li> <li>• Disciples will perform similar miracles as Jesus</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lesson on faith</li> </ul>
<b>Widow's offering (Mk 12:41-44)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jesus the Teacher</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disciples as pupils</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lesson on sacrificial giving</li> </ul>
<b>Apocalyptic discourse (Mk 13:1-37)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jesus the Prophet</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disciples as witnesses to Jesus' prophecies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disciples receive revelation from Jesus</li> </ul>
<b>Anointing at Bethany (Mk 14:1-11)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jesus the Messiah</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acceptance of Jesus' imminent death</li> <li>• Total "outpouring" of offering – both of the disciple and of Jesus</li> <li>• ?The disciples did not endorse the woman's act</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Act of costly love and devotion to Jesus</li> <li>• Prophetic act of anointing ahead of Jesus' death</li> <li>• Lesson on balance between "charitable" acts and devotion to Jesus</li> </ul>
<b>Lord's Supper (Mk 14:12-31)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jesus the divine host</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disciples prepare for the Passover</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revelation of the purpose and manner of Jesus' death</li> </ul>
<b>Prayer in Gethsemane (Mk 14:32-65)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jesus submits to God's will</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disciples fail to "watch" with Jesus</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vigilance in the hour of need</li> </ul>
<b>Peter denies Jesus (Mk 14:66-72)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jesus the faithful witness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Peter the faithless witness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maieusis: Challenge-failure-crisis phenomenon</li> </ul>

## APPENDIX C

### Characters Who Interacted With Jesus In John

Section	Passages	Significant Characters
<b>Book of Signs Jn 1 - 12</b>	1:1-18 Prologue	The Baptist
	1:19-34 John's Witnessing	The Baptist
		Jerusalem Priests and Levites
	1:35-51 Jesus' First Disciples	The Baptist
		First Five Disciples
	2:1-11 Wedding at Cana	Jesus' mother
		The Disciples
		Jesus' brothers
		Steward
		Servants
	2:12-25 The New Temple	Temple traders
		The Jews
		Disciples
		Many who believed signs
	3:1-21 Nicodemus	Nicodemus (and his entourage)
	3:22-36 Jesus and the Baptist	Jesus
		Jesus' Disciples
		The Baptist
		The Baptist's disciples
	4:1-42 Samaritan Mission	Jesus
		The Samaritan woman
		The disciples
		The Samaritans
		Pharisees
	4:43-52 The Nobleman's son	Jesus
		The Royal Official
		The Official's household
		Galileans
	5:1-47 Father and Son's Work	Lame man
		The Jews
		Jesus
		The crowd
	6:1-71 Bread of Life	Jesus
		Disciples
		The crowd
		The Jews
		The Twelve
		Peter
	7:1-52 Discourse in Temple	Jesus
		Jesus' brothers
		The Jews

		The crowds
		The temple Police
		The Pharisees
		Nicodemus
	7:53-8:11 Adulterous woman	Jesus
		Adulterous woman
		Scribes and Pharisees
		The crowd
	8:12-59 Children of God and of the Devil	Jesus
		The Jews
		The Jews who believed
		The Pharisees
	9:1-41 Healing of the Blind Man	Jesus
		The blind man
		Disciples
		Pharisees
		Blind man's neighbours
		Blind man's parents
	10:1-21 Shepherd and Sheep	Jesus
		The Jews
	10:22-42 Hanukkah	Jesus
		The Jews
		The "many" across the Jordan
	11:1-57 The Raising of Lazarus	Jesus
		Bethany Family
		Disciples
		The Jews
		Chief Priest and Pharisees
		The crowds
	12:1-11 The Anointing of Jesus	Jesus
		Lazarus
		Martha
		Mary
		Disciples
		"Great crowd" of the Jews
		Chief Priests
	12:12-19 Triumphal Entry	Jesus
		"Great crowd"
		Disciples
		The Pharisees
	12:20-50 Gentiles and the Cross	The Greeks
		Philip and Andrew
		Heavenly voice
		Crowd
		"Many of the authorities"
Farewell Discourse	13:1-38 The Footwashing	Jesus
		Disciples

Jn 13-17	14:1-30 Jesus Return and Presence	Jesus
		Disciples
	15:1-17 The Vine and Branches	Jesus
		Disciples
	15:18-27 Witnessing to the World	Jesus
		Disciples
	16:1-33 Dealing with Hatred of the World	Jesus
		Disciples
17:1-26 Prayer for Disciples	Jesus	
	Disciples	
Passion and Resurrection Jn 18-21	18:1-27 Arrest and Peter's Denial	Jesus
		Disciples
		Soldiers & Police
		Malchus
		Annas
		Beloved Disciple
		Chief Priest
		Caiaphas
	Slave of the High Priest	
	18:28-19:16 Before Pilate	Jesus
		The Jews
		Pilate
		Soldiers
		Chief Priest and Police
	19:17-37 Jesus' Crucifixion and Burial	Jesus
		Pilate
		Soldiers
		Chief Priests and Police
		The Jews
		2 crucified criminals
		Jesus' mother
		Mary Cleopas' wife
		Mary Magdalene
		Beloved Disciple
		Joseph of Arimathea
		Nicodemus
	20:1-31 The Resurrection	Mary Magdalene
		Jesus
		The disciples
		Angels
	21:1-25 Epilogue	Jesus
		Disciples

## APPENDIX D

### Interactions Between Christology And Discipleship In John

Pericope	Christological Emphases	Discipleship Emphases	Formation of Disciples
<b>1:1-18 Prologue</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jesus as the Logos, Sophia and Nomos</li> <li>• Jesus as God's Only Son</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Baptist as Witness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Believers in Jesus become Children of God</li> </ul>
<b>1:19-34 John's Witnessing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jesus as Son of God</li> </ul>		
<b>1:35-51 Jesus' First Disciples</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jesus the Lamb of God</li> <li>• Jesus the Rabbi</li> <li>• Jesus the Messiah</li> <li>• Jesus Son of God</li> <li>• Jesus King of Israel</li> <li>• ?Jesus is Good</li> <li>• Jesus is the Son of Man</li> <li>• Jesus is the Bridge between heaven and earth</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First disciples respond to witnesses</li> <li>• Disciples follow Jesus</li> <li>• Disciples confess</li> <li>• Disciples seek others to bring to Jesus</li> <li>• Disciples witness</li> <li>• Disciples promised vision of Jesus as the Bridge between heaven and earth</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responding to Jesus' prophetic and revelatory word</li> <li>• Responding to witness</li> <li>• Experiencing divine hospitality</li> <li>• Experiencing divine revelation</li> <li>• Testing a would-be disciple</li> </ul>
<b>2:1-11 Wedding at Cana</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jesus the Torah</li> <li>• Jesus the Benevolent Giver of new life</li> <li>• Jesus the Guest turned Host</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disciples receive "better" hospitality from Jesus</li> <li>• Disciples saw Jesus' glory and believed</li> <li>• ?Disciples as Guest at the Messianic Banquet</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased faith through seeing signs</li> <li>• Suspension of ritual law for the sake of revelation of Jesus' glory</li> <li>• Jesus' Gift of the Spirit brings new life in abundance</li> <li>• Intimation of His death and resurrection</li> </ul>
<b>2:12-25 The New Temple</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jesus the New Temple</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disciples remembered the Scriptures</li> <li>• Disciples remembered Jesus' word and Scripture</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sign, Scripture and Memory</li> </ul>
<b>3:22-36 Jesus and the Baptist</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jesus the Bridegroom</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disciples baptize</li> <li>• The Baptist as prototype disciple testifies as friend of the Bridegroom</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disciples testify</li> </ul>



<b>4:1-42 Samaritan Mission</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jesus as Prophet</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disciples baptize</li> <li>• Disciples provide food for Jesus</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disciples harvest from ripe fields</li> </ul>
<b>6:1-71 Bread of Life</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jesus the Prophet</li> <li>• Jesus as the “I am”</li> <li>• Jesus the Son of Man</li> <li>• Jesus the greater than Moses</li> <li>• Jesus the Bread of Life</li> <li>• Jesus the Holy One of God</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Andrew identifies source of food</li> <li>• Disciples arrange the people to sit</li> <li>• Disciples harvest the food leftovers</li> <li>• Disciples pledge allegiance to Jesus</li> <li>• Disciples believe and know Jesus as Embodied Divine Council</li> <li>• Jesus predicts Judas’ betrayal</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jesus tests Philip</li> <li>• Theophany on the lake</li> <li>• Jesus challenge disciples to commitment</li> <li>•</li> </ul>
<b>9:1-41 Healing of the Blind Man</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jesus as Rabbi</li> <li>• Jesus the Light of the world</li> <li>• Jesus the Prophet-greater-than-Moses</li> <li>• Jesus the Son of Man</li> <li>• Jesus is Lord</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disciples must work the works of Him</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disciples work</li> </ul>
<b>11:1-57 The Raising of Lazarus</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jesus as Rabbi</li> <li>• Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God</li> <li>• Jesus the resurrection and the life</li> <li>•</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disciples concerned about Jesus’ safety</li> <li>• Thomas encourages colleagues and pledges allegiance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disciples misunderstand</li> <li>• Jesus performs miracle for the sake of disciples to believe</li> </ul>
<b>12:1-11 The Anointing of Jesus</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jesus the Anointed One</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Judas criticizes extravagant love</li> </ul>	
<b>12:12-19 Triumphal Entry</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jesus, King of Israel</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disciples observe Jesus’ sign</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sign, Scripture, Memory</li> </ul>
<b>12:20-50 Gentiles and the Cross</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jesus the Son of Man</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Philip and Andrew introduce the Gentiles to Jesus</li> </ul>	
<b>13:1-38 The Footwashing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jesus the Teacher and Lord</li> <li>• Jesus the Sender</li> <li>• Jesus the Son of Man</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jesus washes feet of disciples</li> <li>• Jesus set example</li> <li>• Disciples as Pupils</li> <li>• Disciples as Servants</li> <li>• Disciples as</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Purification</li> <li>• Revelation</li> <li>• Preparation for Martyrdom</li> <li>• Divine Hospitality</li> <li>• Commandment of Love</li> </ul>

		<p>Messengers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disciples as Little children</li> <li>• Peter pledges allegiance</li> </ul>	
<b>14:1-30 Jesus Return and Presence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jesus the Way, the truth and the Life</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disciples will do greater works</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Spirit of truth promised</li> <li>• Divine hospitality</li> </ul>
<b>15:1-17 The Vine and Branches</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jesus the True Vine</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disciples as braches of vine</li> <li>• Disciples as Jesus' Friends</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dwelling and Abiding</li> <li>• The Father prunes disciples</li> <li>• Jesus' words purifies</li> </ul>
<b>15:18-27 Witnessing to the World</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disciples to testify to the world</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Spirit of truth will help disciples testify</li> </ul>
<b>16:1-33 Dealing with Hatred of the World</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jesus the predictive prophet</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disciples to remember Jesus' words when the hour comes</li> <li>• Jesus prepares the disciples for hard times</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sign and Memory</li> <li>• The Advocate will come</li> </ul>
<b>17:1-26 Prayer for Disciples</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jesus the High Priest</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disciples in presence of the Divine Council</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disciples are made to know the Father's Name</li> <li>• Disciples receive Jesus' words</li> <li>• God's Word sanctifies</li> </ul>
<b>18:1-27 Arrest and Peter's Denial</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jesus the Faithful Witness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Judas betrays Jesus</li> <li>• Peter cuts of the eye of the slave</li> <li>• Peter and Beloved disciple follow Jesus to high priest's house</li> <li>• Peter denies Jesus</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>
<b>19:17-37 Jesus' Crucifixion and Burial</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Beloved Disciple takes Mary home</li> <li>• Beloved Disciple testifies</li> </ul>	
<b>20:1-31 The Resurrection</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jesus the Resurrected Lord</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Peter and the Beloved Disciple see the empty tomb</li> <li>• Disciples as Jesus' brothers</li> <li>• Disciples lock themselves for fear of the Jews</li> <li>• Empowered disciples may forgive sins</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seeing the empty tomb and hearing the resurrected Lord</li> <li>• Thomas sees the resurrected Lord and believes</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thomas' doubt</li> </ul>	
<b>21:1-25</b> <b>Epilogue</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disciples as Children</li> <li>• Beloved Disciple perceives the Lord</li> <li>• Jesus restores the Disciples</li> <li>• Martyrdom of the disciples</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seeing the resurrected Lord</li> <li>• Receiving Divine Hospitality</li> <li>• Eschatological Banquet with Jesus</li> </ul>