CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGES TO THE GOSPEL: INCIPIENT GNOSTICISM AND

JOHANNINE TEACHING ON THE RESURRECTION

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO

THE SOUTH AFRICAN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF THEOLOGY

BY

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DECLARATION

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

Nicholas Woods_____
South African Theological Seminary (SATS), February, 2011

ABSTRACT

Within the past generation, a new school of scholars has arisen who view the texts discovered at Nag Hammadi as equal to or even superior to the traditional canonical materials. They view several of these texts and particularly, *The Gospel of Thomas,* as containing independent traditions that form the earliest layers in the development of Christianity. As the pool of texts used to illustrate the historical Jesus continues to broaden and increase, Incipient Gnosticism is being seen more and more as the source of Jesus' teaching. As this continues to happen, key traditional doctrines such as the future, bodily resurrection of believers are reinterpreted or done away with altogether.

This study looks carefully at the Gnostic and Incipient Gnostic view of the resurrection and compares it to the view given in *The Gospel of John.* The view of the resurrection in *The Gospel of John* is used as a test case against the Gnostic or Incipient Gnostic perspective. Furthermore, the study analyzes the various new texts that have been identified as the earliest sources of Jesus' teaching. Once each of these sources has been critically analyzed, a determination has to be made as to whether they make a contribution or are a substantial influence as to what Jesus taught on the resurrection.

Finally, the study attempts to find a plausible solution to the problem of what is the true background of John's Gospel. This study concludes that the answer lies not in the Nag Hammadi literature, but rather, in the documents of Qumran and in the broader Jewish context. The problem of a Gnostic or Incipient Gnostic background to Jesus' teaching is re-examined in light of the parallels between the Palestinian Qumran materials and *The Gospel According to John.* Consequently, different conclusions are then reached as far as the background of John's Gospel is concerned. The study concludes that given a Palestinian background to *The Gospel of John,* Jesus' teaching on the resurrection appears to be both futuristic and corporeal.

LIST OF KEY TERMS

Note: Definitions of the relevant key terms are taken, except where otherwise indicated, from C. Evans, *Fabricating Jesus 2006*, pp. 246-247 and B. Witherington, *The Gospel Code 2004*, pp.178-184.

Agrapha-Independent sayings of Jesus that are not written in the New Testament.

Ascetism-The teaching that spirituality is attained through renunciation of physical pleasure and personal desires. Ascetism often assumes that the physical body is evil and is ultimately the cause of sin.

New Testament Apocrypha-Texts from the New Testament era that are not accepted as Scripture.

Canon-Literally means "standard" or "rule." The term is most closely associated with a collection of books that the church has recognized as the written Word of God or Scripture and that functions as the rule or standard of faith and practice.

Canonical Gospels-The four Gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John in the New Testament.

Christology-The theological study of and doctrines related to who Jesus is and what he accomplished through his life, death, and resurrection.

Codex (pl. codices)-An ancient type of book produced by folding a stack of papyrus sheets or vellum binding.

Dead Sea Scrolls (DSS)-The collection of approximately eight hundred and fifty Jewish manuscripts. They are mostly fragmentary. They were discovered by shepherds in 1947 in caves near the shore of The Dead Sea. These scrolls represent all the Old Testament texts except the *Book of Esther*. The scrolls also contain non-biblical texts, including

commentaries and paraphrases of Old Testament books, as well as liturgical and eschatological works.

Docetism-An ancient view that was seen as a heresy in the early church, that Jesus only seemed or appeared (δοκεω) to have a body.

Ebionites-An ancient form of Jewish Christianity that tended to enhance the status of the law and minimize the divine nature of Jesus.

Eschatology-Popularly known as the study of the end times. Eschatology seeks to understand the ultimate direction or purpose of history as it moves towards the future.

Essenes-A sect within ancient Judaism that zealously contended for Jewish faith and life, and seems to have viewed themselves as the true Israel. They are probably connected to the Dead Sea Scrolls.

Extracanonical Gospels-Texts outside of the New Testament that relate stories about or sayings of Jesus.

Gnosticism-An early Greek religious movement that was particularly influential in the second century church. The word Gnosticism comes from the Greek term "gnosis," meaning "knowledge." Gnostics believed that their followers had gained a special kind of spiritual enlightenment, through which they had attained a secret or higher level of knowledge not available to the uninitiated. Gnostics also tended to emphasize the spiritual realm over the material.

Heresy-Any teaching rejected by the Christian community as contrary to Scripture and to orthodox doctrine.

The Gospel of Thomas (GTh)-An esoteric writing purporting to record the secret or hidden teachings of Jesus to Thomas and to his other disciples. It contains 114 saying and is written in a non-narrative framework.

Johannine Tradition-The texts of the New Testament that are related to the Apostle John. They are *the Gospel of John*, 1-3 *John*, and *The Book of Revelation*.

Logia-A collection of sayings attributed to Jesus.

Nag Hammadi-A town in Egypt where thirteen leather-bound books, including some of the Gnostic Gospels, dating from about A.D. 250-380, were found at the end of 1945.

Orthodoxy-Literally means "right praise" or "straight thinking" as opposed to heresy. Being orthodox implies being characterized by consistency in belief and worship with Christian faith.

Oxyrhynchus (Oxy.)-An archaeological site in Egypt. It was first discovered at the end of the nineteenth century, where thousands of papyri and fragments, mostly Greek, have been found.

Papyrus (Pap.)-A tall, aquatic reed that grows in the Nile Delta of Egypt and was made into a writing material of the same name. The earliest NT Greek manuscripts were written on papyrus.

Paranomasia-Verbal play involving the sounds of words. This is the tool that was used by the author of the *Gospel of Thomas* where words are used and arranged as an organizing or poetic device. The recognition of this device has helped Perrin place GTh in a Syrian context (Perrin 2002:49).

Punning-Punning involves the correlation of words in which a certain word or group of words fits in with an established context. These words also give rise to a separate frame of reference or meaning (Perrin 2002:51).

Q-A hypothetical document consisting of a collection of Jesus' sayings. "Q" is an abbreviation of the German word Quelle, "source." Q accounts for the sayings of Jesus that are common to the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, but are not found in Mark (approximately 230 verses).

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ABBREVIATIONS

ABD	Anchor Bible Dictionary
Act Thom	The Acts of Thomas
Ap Jas	The Apocryphon of James
Ap Jhn	The Apocryphon of John
Ap Paul	The Apocalypse of Paul
Ap Pet	The Apocryphon of Peter
Auth Tchng	The Authoritative Teaching
Com Pslms	The Commentary on the Psalms
Dam Doc	The Damascus Document
Dial Sav	The Dialogue of the Savior
DSS	The Dead Sea Scrolls
Epis Rheg	The Epistle of Rheginos
Gos Eb	The Gospel of the Ebionites
Gos Eg	The Gospel of the Egyptians
Gos Heb	The Gospel of the Hebrews
Gos Mary	The Gospel of Mary
Gos Naz	The Gospel of Nazareans
Gos Pet	The Gospel of Peter
Gos Phil	The Gospel of Phillip
Gos Sav	The Gospel of the Savior
Gos Trth	The Gospel of Truth
Hyp Arch	The Hypostasis of the Archons
Ltr Pet Phil	The Letter of Peter to Phillip
MOD	The Manual of Discipline
NIV	The New International Version

NT	The New Testament
Odes Sol	The Odes of Solomon
OS	The Old Syriac Text of the New Testament
OT	The Old Testament
Oxy	Oxyrhynchus
Pap	Papyrus
Pap Eg 2	Papyrus Egerton 2
Pis Soph	Pistis Sophia
POxy 840	Papyrus Oxyrhynchus 840
POxy 1224	Papyrus Oxyrhynchus 1224
ROC	The Rule of the Community
Q	The Gospel Q "Quelle"
Sec Mk	The Gospel of Secret Mark
Sec Trts Sth	The Second Treaty of the Great Seth
Tch Silv	The Teachings of Silvanus
Thnks Pslm	The Thanksgiving Psalm
Thom Con	The Book of Thomas the Contender
Trtse Res	The Treatise on the Resurrection
War Scrl	The War Scroll

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The problem of Incipient Gnosticism lying behind Jesus' teaching on the resurrection began in the 20th century and must be seen in it's growth and emergence from the Eusebian model, which lasted for the first nineteen hundred years of Christian history.

Eusebius of Caesarea lived from A.D. 263-339 and has been called the "father" of church history. He wrote the most popular and detailed church history that we have from ancient times. His church history covered the first three hundred years of Christianity (Williamson 1965:20). Eusebius called the books of the New Testament that were universally accepted "homologoumena" or ὁμολογούμενα in Greek. The books that were spoken against were called "antilegomena" or ἀντιλεγόμενα in Greek (Schaff 2002:522). Eusebius said that other books were spurious or heretical (Schaff 2002:523). These were the books that were viewed as spurious until the modern era, and as falling outside Christian doctrine and teaching.

Church councils would later uphold the perspective that Eusebius had established. For example, *The Council of Hippo* (A.D. 393) and *The Third Council of Carthage* (A.D. 397) gave a complete listing of the books of both the Old and New Testaments that should be read as Scripture in all of the churches (Bruce 1988:232). Eusebius popularized the viewpoint that orthodoxy was the first form of Christian belief and that heresy came later and was a perversion of orthodox belief (Ehrman 2003:164-5). In this model, the Bible was seen as the foundation and authority in Western culture and was regarded by most as

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"God's divinely inspired revelation" (Borg 1998:121-127). Although this position was held for such a long period of time, it would soon be called into question.

Herman Samuel Reimarus (1694-1768) was a German historian who wrote a work entitled *On The Intention of Jesus and His Disciples* (Levine, A.J. 2006:5; Reimarus 1970:61-269). Reimarus attempted to bring the canonical Gospels under critical scrutiny. Reimarus said that they were humanly created materials that narrated false stories. Reimarus argued that the canonical Gospels relied on historical distortions and fantasies and that the disciples stole Jesus' body and invented the story of His resurrection, as well as the teaching about His second coming (Levine 2006:5; Reimarus 1970:268). The claims of Reimarus would lead him to look outside the New Testament for information about the historical Jesus.

Building on the work that Reimarus had started, a school was founded in Tübingen, Germany by scholar F.C. Baur (1792-1860). Baur's school looked outside of the New Testament for clues as to the historical developments of what took place during the early Christian era (Ehrman 2003:170-1). He wrote a doctoral thesis in 1835, in the German language, which was entitled*: The Christian Gnosticism, the Christian Religion or Philosophy in its Historical Development.* Gnosticism was seen as the beginning point or the underlying structure of the Christian religion (Rudolph 1984:31-32). Baur's school was called *The History of Religions School* or *Die Religionsgeschichtliche Schule* in the German tongue. This school emphasized using works outside of the New Testament. It preferred such sources as the *Pseudo-Clementine* literature, in order to provide insights into the developments of early Christianity (Johnson 1996:93). According to Baur, all of the religions of the world are manifestations of God and they should all be looked at equally (Hodgson 1966:15).

Walter Bauer (1877-1960) built on the ideas begun by F.C. Baur and Reimarus. He showed that Christianity had foundations from a number of different texts and sources which were writings outside of the New Testament (Bauer 1971:2-22). In other words, there were numerous diverse "Christian" movements that came much earlier than the later developments we find in the church fathers and in the New Testament (Johnson 1996:117). Under Bauer's

model, one might speak of early Christianities in the plural, rather than one Christianity. Under Bauer's teaching, the words "orthodoxy" and "heresy" became irrelevant and inappropriate to use. This is because, according to Bauer, competing views existed side by side in earliest Christianity. Bauer was explicit that none of these other sources had a claim to original authority over the others (Bock 2006:55).

The greatest impact would be made by a man named Rudolf Karl Bultmann and a few of his students who would push his pattern of thought into a new generation. Bultmann lived from 1884-1976. He was a professor at the University of Marburg. Bultmann completely re-evaluated the writings of the New Testament. He showed a relationship between the New Testament writers and the Incipient Gnostic writers. Bultmann showed that the writers of the New Testament borrowed and used Gnosticism, and also confronted it as something dangerous to Christian doctrine and harmful to the church (Yamauchi 1979:129-131).

Bultmann was the first to claim a "Gnostic redeemer myth" lying in the background of John's Gospel (Bultmann 1971:376-77 cf. Hays 2000:119). Bultmann later began a program to "demythologize" the New Testament, starting with *The Gospel According to John* (Bultmann 1941:1-42; Malet 1968:184-5). Bultmann appealed to Oriental Gnostic or Mandean sources, as the basis of the "Gnostic redeemer myth." This activity would later become seriously challenged by Carsten Colpe, a scholar living in this time (Robinson 1962:287-289). Nevertheless, through the use of Gnostic or Incipient Gnostic sources, Bultmann had laid the foundation of New Testament scholarship for many years to come. Soon Bultmann's work would be revolutionized and expanded by the discovery of fifty two Egyptian codices in a place called Nag Hammadi, Egypt (Robinson 1962:287-289).

In 1945, an Arab peasant named Muhammad Ali discovered the fifty-two Gnostic or semi-Gnostic texts written in a language that was similar to Egyptian hieroglyphics with Greek letters. This language was known as Coptic (Thatcher 1999:323). Rudolf Bultmann's last student, named Helmut Koester, made popular the idea that many of the writings found at Nag Hammadi are sources

for the earliest developments of traditions about Jesus, including the resurrection (Koester 1990:173-190 cf. Thatcher 1999:326). Others see these writings as Gnostic and date them to the second and third centuries (Rudolph 1987:42-3). Koester placed many of them within the first century and attests that they are sources of the canonical material (Koester 1990:49-71;113-187). Koester calls these "other gospels." He sees them as a valid and vital part of the life and faith of the early Christians (Koester 1990:43-47). Koester and his successors have started out on a journey to learn more about the earliest and most primitive Jesus traditions by studying them in the original Coptic. These are the texts from Nag Hammadi (Thatcher 1999:339).

The question that lies before us is, "if Gnosticism or Incipient Gnosticism underlies Jesus' teaching, does it call upon us to re-examine or even redefine Jesus' teaching on His bodily resurrection from the dead or the physical resurrection of all believers in the future as taught in *The Gospel of John* (Yamauchi 1979:129-131)?"

It appears that Jesus' teaching on the resurrection as both futuristic and bodily or corporeal has been called into question by an Incipient Gnostic or Gnostic point of view (Wright 2006:532-552). Later, this study will show what a Gnostic or Incipient Gnostic perspective on the resurrection is.

For Pagels, the resurrection has been relegated to a mere symbol or metaphor rather than an actual event in history (Pagels 1979:35-37). Others have seen the resurrection as a subjective vision or even a hallucination (Craig 2000:187-200). Still others have called for a "reconsideration" of the long-taught resurrection doctrine (Riley 1995:178-180). Scholarship has reached a state of "crisis" and many traditional teachings such as the resurrection have come under attack (Thomas & Farnell 1998:13-34). One might ask the question that, if there is no resurrection or if the resurrection is something that is already passed, in what sense can one believe or have faith (2 Timothy 2.17-18)? Moreover, is there anything remaining to believe in? Thus, it is likely that the research accomplished in this study will help inform faith.

1.1.1 The Problem

What did Jesus teach about the resurrection of the dead in the *Gospel According to John* in light of recent scholarly attempts to redefine His teaching as having it's roots in Incipient Gnosticism? In order to answer this broad question, several smaller research questions must be addressed first.

1.2 THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS OF THE STUDY

1.2.1   What is Gnosticism? What is Incipient Gnosticism?

This study will show that Gnosticism is not one uniform system. It is, rather, several different systems that have common components among them. The most significant and common thread is that the material world is evil and that salvation can be attained only through the acquisition of knowledge, or γνῶσις in Greek. The definition of Gnosticism will be discussed more thoroughly in section 2.3.1. Incipient Gnosticism is the earliest form of Gnosticism that many argue had its development prior to the apostolic writings. The definition of Incipient Gnosticism will be developed in detail in section 2.3.4.

1.2.2   What is the Incipient Gnostic View of the Resurrection?

The Incipient Gnostic view of the resurrection varies among the different Gnostic schools or strands. The Gnostic or Incipient Gnostic view of the resurrection does not seem to be physical or corporeal. This will be discussed in sections 2.4-2.6. In addition, the Incipient Gnostic view of the resurrection is not futuristic in the same sense as the view in *The Gospel of John*. Some of the Incipient Gnostic writings present an ascent of the "pneuma self" after death. The soul or the "pneuma self" is to be reabsorbed into the divine, the cosmos, or the place of the soul's origin. At best, the Gnostic or Incipient Gnostic perspective may have only a limited hope of a future expectation.

1.2.3 How Have Scholars Advanced or Challenged the Theory that Incipient Gnosticism Lies Behind the Fourth Gospel?

Scholars have attempted to show that various Gnostic texts are and should be dated earlier than the canonical writings. They have suggested that these writings are independent of the canonical material. These issues will be discussed in detail in Chapters 2 and 3. Other theories have been put forward as to the source of *The Gospel of John*. Incipient Gnosticism has been the alternative choice in recent decades. The other alternatives that have been suggested will be more fully discussed in Chapter 2.

1.2.4 What Role Do the Dead Sea Scrolls *(DSS)* Play in Helping Us Find the Background of John's Gospel?

The Dead Sea Scrolls (*DSS*) was an important discovery. Because the language of John's Gospel is similar, and in many points identical, to what is found in the scrolls, it is likely that the scrolls and Judaism serves as a more plausible background to John's Gospel than do the writings from Nag Hammadi. The Nag Hammadi texts do not share the same linguistic parallels. The similarities in language between John and the Scrolls will be fully discussed in Chapter 4.

1.2.5 What did Jesus Teach about the Resurrection of the Dead in The Gospel According to John?

In contrast to the Gnostic consensus that the resurrection is at most a spiritual one and most likely in the present, *The Gospel of John* teaches the resurrection of the dead is yet futuristic and definitely has a physical or corporeal aspect to it. This will be discussed more fully under section 2.7.

1.3 THE IMPORTANCE, PURPOSE AND HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY

1.3.1 The Hypothesis

This study is expected to reveal that *The Gospel of John* presents the resurrection of the dead as having both a present or realized, as well as a

futuristic or eschatological aspect to it. We will find that both aspects are relevant to Christian believers. It should reveal that there have been serious scholarly attempts to undermine or completely do away with Jesus' teaching on the resurrection of the dead in John. The methodology employed in reaching this conclusion has been by finding the roots of Jesus' teaching in Incipient Gnosticism through other gospels and documents which Crossan feels have been "improperly ignored" (Crossan 1992:ix). This study will reveal that methods and research in the field are flawed.

1.3.2 Academic Purpose

The purpose of this study is both academic as well as personal. Academically speaking, recent scholarly work has tended to see Jesus' teaching on the resurrection only in light of Gnostic and Incipient Gnostic sources, like those found in the Nag Hammadi Library. New light needs to be shed on the work of the new school of scholars. In this study, the researcher has identified these scholars generically as the "new" *History of Religions School*. This study will shed some new light on their research methods as well as their techniques. The discovery of the Nag Hammadi codices has come to challenge and even undermine the traditional or canonical literature and has caused many to set aside the writings of the fathers of the early church and redefine the resurrection. For these reasons, the significance of this study cannot be underestimated.

1.3.3 Personal Motivation

From the researcher's standpoint, it would take sixteen years before the importance of the canonical material would be made clear. The devaluation of the traditional materials may have a significant impact on faith and the life of the church in the resurrection. The legacy and teaching exemplified by Hymenaeus and Philetus mentioned by the Apostle Paul in 2 Tim. 2.17-18 continues to live on in many churches and institutions. Many times the emphasis in the scholarly community is the ability to chart out "new trajectories" which are sure to take into account the "complexity of historical developments" like the influence of Incipient

Gnosticism and Gnosticism behind Jesus' teaching on the resurrection in the *Gospel According to John* (Koester 2006:269-270).

Should *The Gospel of John* be removed from the other canonical literature because it was influenced by Incipient Gnosticism (Morris 1995:59)? If it is influenced by Incipient Gnosticism, what is the extent or the impact of such an influence? More specifically, what is the impact of Incipient Gnosticism on Jesus' teaching on the resurrection of the dead in *The Gospel of John?*

1.3.4 The Significance of The Study

In recent years, many have felt confined in using *just* the canonical materials for their research. To everyone the issues of this study are extremely important. Meier illustrates this point and shows his concern when he says:

> To be limited in historical Jesus research to the four Gospels, a few scattered data elsewhere in the New Testament, and Josephus is a galling limitation (Meier 1991:140). However, to call upon the *Gospel of Peter* or the *Gospel of Thomas* to supplement our four Gospels is to broaden our pool of sources from the difficult to the incredible (Meier 1991:141).

Throughout this study, Jesus' teaching on the resurrection of the dead in John will be emphasized. The significance of this study cannot be underestimated. Ever since the beginning of the church, it was the claim that Jesus had been "raised from the dead" physically and bodily that brought persecution on the early church. The church fathers believed that the Gnostics and the Incipient Gnostics escaped persecution for the reason that they reinterpreted and denied the bodily resurrection altogether.

In the ancient world, this issue was so important that in the *Letter From the Churches of Vienne and Lyons*, there is a description of how the torturers of the early Christians burnt the bodies and scattered the ashes into the Rhone, so that no remains of the slain Christians might still be visible on earth (Eus. H.E. 5.1.1—2.8; Wright 2006:549). The persecutors of early Christianity wanted to completely do away with all hope of a future bodily resurrection for believers.

Eusebius of Caesarea records their thoughts and motivation for scattering their ashes:

> Because through trusting in this, [the resurrection] they have introduced strange and new worship, and have despised terrors, going to death readily and joyfully. Now let us see if they will rise again, and if their god is powerful enough to help them, and to snatch them out of our hands (Eus. *HE* 5.1.1-2.8).

> N.T. Wright makes an interesting remark on this subject when he writes:
> Which Roman emperor would persecute anyone for reading The *Gospel of Thomas*? Which local officials would feel threatened by someone expounding *The Epistle of Rheginos* or *The Exegesis of the Soul* (Wright 2006:550)?

The issues surrounding Jesus' teaching on the resurrection in John have been extremely important to Christians as well as to non-Christians. This seems to have been the important element during the development of the early church. And from a modern standpoint, coming to a plausible conclusion on whether Jesus taught that the resurrection was corporeal and futuristic in comparison to the purely spiritual Gnostic or Incipient Gnostic perspective carries a significant amount of weight for those in the scholarly community as well as those outside of it.

1.4 THE OBJECTIVES AND AIMS OF THE STUDY

The objective of this study is to solve the main problem mentioned above. The study will attempt to determine what Jesus taught about the resurrection of the dead in John's Gospel despite recent scholarly attempts to root His teaching in Incipient Gnosticism. This problem can only be solved by addressing each of the research questions that were put forward in sections 1.2.1 through 1.2.5 mentioned above.

It will be our objective in this study to answer the research questions to a reasonable person's satisfaction. If we succeed in solving the main problem, we will have overcome a major tendency to devalue the canonical writings, replacing them with extracanonical sources. In addition, we will have defended

and protected the hope and motivation of believers. This hope hinges on a future bodily resurrection like the one mentioned in 1 Peter 1.3 and Acts 23.6.

1.5 THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY (A DUAL APPROACH)

The study will take a dual methodology focusing on two research traditions or areas. The first research area or paradigm will deal strictly with Incipient Gnosticism and Gnosticism. Here we will look at what Gnosticism is and what it teaches about the resurrection of the dead in the Nag Hammadi texts. The primary six texts under consideration will include *The Gospel of Thomas*, *The Gospel of Peter* (containing the "Cross Gospel"), *The Dialogue of the Savior* (containing the "Dialogue Gospel"), *The Egerton Gospel* (otherwise known as Papyrus Egerton 2), *The Apocryphon of James*, and *The Gospel of Secret Mark* (Dunn 2003:162-172; Crossan 1988:xiv-xv).

A significant amount of time will be given to *The Gospel of Thomas* since this is the main text scholars look to as the source of Jesus' teaching (Witherington 2006:27-34 cf. Cameron 2004:89-108). This is the text that has been taken the most seriously as the source of Jesus' teaching (Grant 1960:100-107; Klauck 2003:107-109). There are other documents that have been given some attention by the scholarly community, but are not taken seriously as the source of Jesus' teaching.

The second research area will focus on what Jesus taught about the resurrection of the dead in *The Gospel According to John.* In this paradigm, John's Gospel will be used as a test case for the Incipient Gnostic perspective on the resurrection. The exegetical step will involve a detailed study of each text in John's Gospel that pertains to the resurrection of the dead. The texts in *The Gospel of John* that deal with the resurrection of the dead include the following passages: Jn 2.19-22; 3.15-16; 5.24-29; 6.39-54,68; 8.35,53,56; 10.28; 11.24,25-26,32-43; 12.23-25,32-35,50; 13.1-3; 14.1-3; 16.20-22; 17.1-5,11,13; 20.1-29. Although, not all of these texts will be scrutinized, it is this pool that the study will pull from in order to determine what Jesus taught about the resurrection of the dead in John. This research area will also explore the

possibility of a Palestinian background to *The Gospel of John* rooted in The Dead Sea Scrolls and Judaism's perspective on the resurrection.

1.6 DELIMITATION OF EXEGESIS TO THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

The exegetical aspect of the study will be limited to *The Gospel According to John.* There are several reasons for this. First, many feel that John drew on traditions that were not available to Matthew, Mark, and Luke (Witherington 1995:37). In addition, possible background influences for John's Gospel have been speculated more than for the Synoptic Gospels. Some of these include Hellenism, Incipient Gnosticism, and Palestinian Judaism to name a few (Brown 1966: xlii, liil-lxiv).

In fact, the debate of whether Incipient Gnosticism influenced John's Gospel is far from settled (Beasley-Murray, G.R. 1999:lv). This is because *The Gospel of John* bears many similarities to various writings in the Nag Hammadi Library. *The Gospel of John* has within it the basic outline of the story of how Jesus pre-existed as a heavenly redeemer who descended to spread His saving knowledge to the earth. Next, He re-ascended to heaven. Although the meaning of this story has been interpreted quite differently in the texts from Nag Hammadi, this overall story outline is present in John. In fact, several of the texts from Nag Hammadi share this same story outline. It is for this reason that many feel the texts from Nag Hammadi could possibly have had some influence on *The Gospel According to John* (Dart 1988:xvi).

Hill notes that John's Gospel contains several lines that could fit into Gnostic systems (Hill 2006:280-1) John's Gospel was used and controlled by the Gnostics throughout much of the 2nd century (Hill 2006:205). For example, Irenaeus of Lyon, who wrote in the 180's, describes how Valentinian Gnostics derived much of their system from John's prologue (Logan 1991:109-110). In addition, Gnostic scholars are the first known authors to have produced exegetical commentaries on the text of *The Gospel of John* (Pagels 1989:16-17). It has been suggested that *The Gospel of John* did not become preferred by orthodox Christians until the end of the second century (Smith 1999:25).

In addition, the sources behind *The Gospel of John* are important to the interpretation of what Jesus taught on the resurrection. As discussed earlier, one of the main critics of a Semitic background to John's Gospel was Rudolf Bultmann. Bultmann's ideas were criticized by a professor from the University of Chicago named Carsten Colpe who wrote a monograph called *Die Religiongeschichte Schule: Darstellung und Kritik ihres Bildes Vom Gnostichen Erlosermythus* where he was able to disprove Bultmann's assertion that a "Gnostic Redeemer Myth" laid behind John's Gospel.

Colpe did this by showing that the Oriental and Mandean sources that Bultmann had presumed for the Incipient Gnostic backdrop for John's Gospel were not there in their entirety (Colpe 1961:69 cf. King 2003:141-147). Colpe's methodology was effective in showing that the attempts made by Bultmann and others in the *History of Religions School* to recover earlier and pre-Christian sources were not based on the most solid evidence (Dodd 1958:98).

Special attention will be paid to the connections and parallels between the Qumran texts and John (Charlesworth 1990:76-105). The study will take under careful consideration the idea that John may have a Semitic background and may possibly be the most Jewish of all the four Gospels (Reed 2003:709-726; Charlesworth 1988:77-98). Locating Jesus' teaching as having its' roots in Palestinian Judaism will challenge the credibility and use of early Gnostic and Incipient Gnostic sources (Charlesworth 1992:9-12).

The battle has always surrounded *The Gospel of John*. Each of the selected passages in John need to be looked at for their rational arguments pertaining to what Jesus taught on the resurrection. Modern scholarship sees John's Gospel as the most heavily influenced by Gnosticism, as well as the most evolved theologically. *The Gospel of John* has been the most challenged of all the texts of the New Testament. It is essential to resolve the conflict here first. Finding a solution to the problem of Jesus' teaching on the resurrection in this Gospel will allow us to set the standard for the rest of the New Testament. That is to say that if John's teaching on the resurrection can be undermined, so can the other three Synoptic Gospels. On the other hand, if it can be resolved in *The Gospel*

of John that Jesus did not teach a Gnostic or Incipient Gnostic perspective on the resurrection, than it is more than likely that He did not do it elsewhere either.

In addition, *The Gospel According to John's* salvation and resurrection passages can be placed into the two categories of "realized eschatology" or salvation in the present and "final eschatology" or futuristic salvation (Brown, R.E. 1966:cxv-cxx). This creates confusion that needs to be clarified. Bultmann had completely erased John's futuristic eschatology by arguing that a later "ecclesiastical redactor" had added passages that refer to the future resurrection of believers (Correll 1958:80-81). Kysar sees a tension or ambiguity between the Johannine passages that teach a futuristic and a realized eschatology (Kysar 1975:213).

Finding a clear solution as to Jesus eschatological teaching in John's Gospel will serve as a test case in resolving this ambiguity elsewhere.

1.7 OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY AND TIMELINE FOR COMPLETION

This study will have five chapters. The first chapter will involve laying out the research problem and its parameters. The second chapter will trace the development of Gnosticism as a means of scholarly research. The third chapter will specifically focus on the merits of the texts themselves that are used in historical Jesus research to place Incipient Gnosticism as a backdrop for the NT. The fourth chapter will involve a thorough analysis of the Dead Sea Scrolls or DSS and Judaism as an alternative to an Incipient Gnostic backdrop to John's Gospel and perspective on the resurrection. The final chapter will involve a summary of the findings of the study and their significance for us today.

CHAPTER II

INCIPIENT GNOSTICISM; GNOSTICISM; AND BIBLICAL STUDIES

2.1 GNOSTICISM AS HERESY

The word "heresy" is a word that roots itself in the Greek (αιερεσις) and in the Latin *hairesis.* The Greek word is found in 2 Peter 2.1. In this context, the word is translated and means a "destructive opinion." The Church Fathers, otherwise known as the Patristic writers worked hard to refute the doctrines that did not agree with the Apostolic traditions found in the New Testament (Rudolph 1987:9).

The church fathers appear to have been negative towards Gnosticism and it's views on the resurrection. They saw Gnosticism as a deviation from true Christianity. Church fathers such as Epiphanius of Salamis had severe doubts as to whether Gnosticism could actually form any kind of moral community comparable to the Christian church (Rudolph 1987:19; *Panarion* 2.6.17).

Men like Epiphanius were dedicated in the conflict against Gnosticism, because they viewed Gnosticism as a major threat to the Christian church during it's formation years when it may have been more vulnerable to Gnostic teaching. Although, the church fathers clearly labeled Gnostics as heretics, there is some evidence that Gnostics may have considered themselves and labeled themselves as "Christians." (King 2003:27). Many believe that it is the church fathers writings and work that led to the destruction of many Gnostic communities and the disappearance of the Gnostic literary heritage altogether until their reappearance and discovery at Nag Hammadi in 1947 (Rudolph 1987:10).

2.1.1 Justin Martyr

Justin Martyr was a key Christian opponent to Gnosticism and it's view on the resurrection. Justin was a Greek philosopher before he converted to Christianity. Many have speculated that Justin does deal directly with Gnosticism and it's spiritualizing the resurrection in his *First Apology to the Roman Emperor Antonius Pius* written between 150 and 155 CE (Segal 2004:565). In this writing, Justin deals with teachers such as Simon, Menander, and Marcion who were well known Gnostics, whom he defines as "heretics" (Rudolph 1987:10). The problem arises in that this particular work has been lost over time. Several attempts have been made to reconstruct it from other texts and quotations, but without success (Rudolph 1987:11).

2.1.2 Irenaeus of Lyon

The earliest full text dealing with Gnosticism comes from Irenaeus who was the Bishop of the city of Lyon, which is located in Southern France. He lived from approximately 130 or 150 to 200 CE (Rudolph 1987:11). His most famous work is *The Exposure and Overthrow of the Falsely so Called Gnosis.* Later versions shorten the title to *Against Heresies* or *Adversus Haereses* in Latin (Rudolph 1987:11).

In *Against Heresies*, Irenaeus' attack is on the school of the Valentinians and other Gnostic groups which he presents as a "family tree." Geneologically he traces them back to Simon Magus, mentioned in Acts Chapter 8 (Rudolph 1987:12). Irenaeus' makes clear what his purpose is in writing the work. His goal regarding Gnosticism is to "not only expose the beast to view, but to inflict wounds upon it from every side" (*Adv. Haer.* 1.31.4 cf. Rudolph 1987:12).

He accomplishes his goal in the first book by setting the teaching of the "Gnostic heretics" against the "catholic" teaching developed by and traced back to the Apostles. Irenaeus follows the "true" doctrine through a succession of bishops that he traces back to Linus and then to Peter and Paul at the Church of Rome (*Adv. Haer.* 3.3,4 cf. Rudolph 1987:12). Irenaeus indicates that the off-center teachings of the Gnostics is what instigated him to write his great work.

He blames their denial of the bodily resurrection on their denial of God's power in creation (Segal 2004:565).

2.1.3 Hippolytus of Rome

The next church father to deal directly with Gnosticism was Hippolytus of Rome. Hippolytus saw Gnosticism as having its' origins in the Greek religion of Hellenism where there was no bodily resurrection. He has gained notoriety for his writings dealing with such things as the doctrine of the Trinity (Rudolph 1987:13). Eventually, Hippolytus was banished from Rome and he died in exile.

His major work is called "The Refutation of All Heresies" or *Refutatio Omnium Haeresium*. Another name for it is "The Philosophical Teachings" or *Philosophoumena* in Latin, which was written about 222 CE (Rudolph 1987:13). The work is divided in two parts. Part one contains books one through four, and deals with Greek paganism. In part two of the work, he talks about thirty three Gnostic systems (Rudolph 1987:13). The way he sets up his work is designed to show that Gnosticism has its' roots in the "wisdom of the heathen" or the Greek philosophy described in part one, where resurrection was not physical (Rudolph 1987:13).

According to Hippolytus, the Gnostics had "taken over" Greek philosophy and misused it for their own purposes (Rudolph 1987:14). Hippolytus is typical of the church fathers in that he is on the attack against Gnosticism and it's view of the resurrection, which he sees as heresy.

2.1.4 Tertullian of Carthage

Tertullian is noted as the founder of Latin Christianity and lived from about 150 to 223 CE (Rudolph 1987:16). Tertullian expressed and used legal language in his work called in Latin- *Dei Praescriptione Haereticorum.* This title means "a plea for the prosecution against the heretics" and has several examples in it of Tertullian's use of "judicial" language to confront heresies. For Tertullian the resurrection of the dead involves a resurrection of the "flesh" as he puts it (Segal 2004:571). He seems to be confronting the purely spiritual view of the resurrection held by the Gnostics (Segal 2004:571).

Tertullian explained that Christian doctrine was derived from the Apostles and that heresy is a later perversion of Apostolic doctrine which he describes as the "rule of faith" (*Tertullian De Praescr. Haer. 21*; cf. Rudolph 1987:17). Tertullian believed that truth comes before error (King 2003:35). He explains it this way:

> Those (heresies) indeed which did exist in the days of the apostles, are condemned in their very mention. Or if they were not the same, but arose afterwards in a different form, and merely assumed from them certain tenets, then, by sharing with them an agreement in their teaching, they must needs partake in their condemnation, by reason of the above-mentioned definition, of lateness of date, which meets us on the very threshold. Even if they were free from any participation in condemned doctrine, they would stand already judged on the mere ground of time, being all the more spurious because they were not even named by the apostles (*De Praescr. Haer.* 34 cf. Rudolph 1987:17).

> For Tertullian, "truth precedes error" and he means that the earlier apostolic doctrine from the New Testament is sufficient to refute later errors made by the heretics about the resurrection (Rudolph 1987:17; *De Praescr. Haer. 21*).

How do we know that Tertullian was specifically appealing Gnosticism or Incipient Gnosticism in his struggle against heresies? Admittedly, Tertullian did not spend as much time confronting Gnosticism as Irenaeus did. He did define *gnosis* as:

> A declining syncretism such as the natural spirituality that mankind loves……a spiritual and idealistic overestimate of the self which blurs the fixed limits that separate the creature from the deity. It is at the same time the "nihilistic" hostility against the God of reality who has created the world and has revealed Himself concretely in the flesh (Rudolph 1987:16; *De Praescr. Haer*. 21).

Tertullian appears to be writing about Gnosticism or one of it's streams whenever he speaks of heresy. Like Hippolytus of Rome, Tertullian sees the origin of Gnosticism as being rooted in Greek philosophy, which denies bodily

resurrection (Rudolph 1987:17). In sum, Tertullian saw Gnosticism as a movement that came after Christianity.

2.1.5 Clement of Alexandria

Clement of Alexandria lived from 140 to 215 CE. Compared to the other church fathers, he was the most educated. He was a founder and teacher in the Alexandrian School of Theology. Three of his writings are well known in dealing with Gnosticism (Rudolph 1987:16). They are the *The Exhortation to the Greeks, The Paedagogus* or "The Instructor," and *The Stromata* or "Carpet Bags" (Rudolph 1987:16).

Clement used the method known as allegorization when it came to interpreting the Scriptures. This method was also used by his student Origen. Clement closely embraced Gnostic ideals because he saw Gnosticism as "an extension of the works and words of the Lord, and it (Gnosticism) conforms to the tradition of the Lord" (*Clem Alex. Strom.* 7.104.2 cf. Rudolph 1987:16). In other words, Clement's theology approximated the Gnostic belief that he claimed to oppose.

Clement did believe in the resurrection of the body in some form. However, the nature of that form is ambiguous (Segal 2004:571). The *Stromata* is important, because in it, Clement quotes from the Gnostic teacher Theodotus and several other Valentinian teachers (Rudolph 1987:16). In this writing, Clement classifies the various Gnostic systems according to the teaching of their founders. This includes such men as Valentinus, Marcion, Basilides, and Matthias (Clem. Alex. *Stromata* 7.17.108 cf. Rudolph 1987:17) Clement classifies the differences between each sect, teacher, group, conduct, and location (Rudolph 1987:17).

2.1.6 Origen

Origen was Clement of Alexandria's student. Origen follows Clement's allegorical interpretation of the Scriptures. Origen considered Clement's allegorical interpretation of the Scriptures to be the correct way to interpret the Scriptures (Rudolph 1987:17). Like Clement, Origen comes close to the

theology of Gnosticism, which he claims to oppose. An example of this would be the high priority he places on "knowledge." He contrasts "knowledge" with what he calls the "simplicity" of faith (Rudolph 1987:17). Another idea that Clement and Origen highly esteemed was the doctrine of the pre-existent soul, it's fall into matter, and it's return to God (Rudolph 1987:17). As we will see later in this study, this pattern is close to the "Gnostic Redeemer Myth" that was constructed by *The History of Religions School*. In a similar manner, Origen's view of the resurrection was identical to Plato's idea of the "immortality of the soul" (Segal 2004:574). Origen did not believe in a physical resurrection (Segal 2004:574).

Origen is famous for his knowledge of Gnosticism based on the Gnostic documents that he had in his possession. His exposition of John's Gospel provides some forty eight quotations of Heracleon's commentary on John (Rudolph 1987:17). Origen directly opposes Gnosticism in his work, *Contra Celsum,* where he boasts about his efforts to retrieve Gnostic documents (*Contra Celsum* 6.24 cf. Rudolph:1987). In sum, like his mentor Clement, Origen directly opposed the heresy of Gnosticism as the other church fathers had. Due to his desire for knowledge and his belief in the soul's pre-existence, it's fall into matter, and its return to God, he positioned himself close to the Gnostic belief system and it's view on the resurrection.

2.1.7 Eusebius of Caesarea

Eusebius was the most popular church historian. He wrote the most well-known history of the early church, in ten books, and he died in 339 CE. In his church history, he continues the belief that was held by the other church fathers. He deals with the rise of Gnosticism and views it as a heresy (Rudolph 1987:17). He does not spend the amount of time dealing with the doctrines and tenets of Gnosticism as Irenaeus and Tertullian. In the time that he does spend dealing with Gnosticism, he quotes older patristic sources (Rudolph 1987:18). Eusebius also quotes from several works that have been lost in antiquity (Rudolph 1987:18).

2.1.8 Epiphanius of Salamis

Epiphanius of Salamis was the Bishop of Cyprus around 367 CE (Rudolph 1987:18). His most famous work is *The Panarion* or "Medicine Chest," which he wrote between 374-377 CE. Epiphanius calls it a "medicine chest" because he provides the "medicine" or "antidote" for those who have been "bitten by the fierce and venomous snakes" who are the heretics (Rudolph 1987:19). He does not spend much time on each heresy. He gives complete information on about half of the heresies (Rudolph 1987:19). Epiphanius speaks of eighty heresies. Twenty of the heresies date before Christianity (Rudolph 1987:19). Like Irenaeus, Epiphanius creates a "family tree" of heresy (Rudolph 1987:19). Although Epiphanius deals with other heresies besides Gnosticism, he does deal with Gnosticism in diverse variations and strands.

Like those who came before him, Epiphanius goes on the attack against heretics describing them as "vainglorious," "worthless," and "evil minded" people who have "apostacized" from the "pure apostolic doctrine" taught by the apostles (Rudolph 1987:19). Epiphanius supports his opinions of the Gnostics by his own experience living among them (Rudolph 1987:19). Epiphanius had observed a group known as the "Barbeliotes" when he visited Egypt in 335 CE. He observed their secret doctrines and what he calls their "obscene rights." Epiphanius later reported this to church authorities, who, in turn, expelled eighteen of them from the church (Rudolph 1987:19 cf. *Panarion* 2.6.17).

The church fathers spent much of their time and attention in dealing with Gnosticism. Each of them attempted to combat Gnosticism and its purely spiritual view of the resurrection as heresy. Clement of Alexandria and Origen came the closest to appropriating Gnostic ideas. Whether they did it intentionally or unintentionally is difficult to determine.

2.2 GNOSTICISM AS THE SOURCE FOR THE RECONSTRUCTION OF THE ORIGINS OF CHRISTIANITY

2.2.1 H.S. Reimarus—The First Attack on the Canonical Texts

Hermann Samuel Reimarus lived from 1694-1768 and his life marks the beginning of the movement that would criticize or find fault with the canonical writings (Wright 2002:6-7). His work, called *Fragments,* was published in 1778 by a philosopher named Gothold Lessing. Reimarus made a sharp distinction between the Jesus who lived in history or the "historical Jesus" as he called Him and the Jesus found in the Gospels (Porter 2000:32-33). The book was published in several fragments. The seventh fragment that he published was called: *The Intention of Jesus and His Disciples* (1788).

Reimarus made a sharp distinction between the historical Jesus and what he found written in the New Testament (Reimarus 1970:61-269 cf. Martin 2000:35-36). Reimarus claimed that the disciples stole Jesus' body and invented the stories about His resurrection for financial profit (Martin 2000:35). It was at this time that the *History of Religions School* or *Religiongeschichteschule* had it's beginnings in Germany. It is to Reimarus that we can trace the first attacks on the authority of the canonical texts within the modern period.

2.2.2 F.C. Baur and The Beginnings of Unorthodox Christianity

Ferdinand Christian Baur lived from 1792-1860 and founded the Tübingen school, which completely changed the way the New Testament writings were analyzed. They were now looked at using the historical-critical methods that were used by Reimarus (Hodgson 1966:86-89). According to Baur, the goal of theology is to investigate and interpret the historical origins of the Christian Church in new and imaginative ways (Hodgson 1966: 88-89).

In his most famous writing called *The Christ Party in the Corinthian Community*, Baur stated his opinion that earliest Christianity involved an unresolved conflict between two groups of Jewish Christians (Ehrman 2003:170-71). One group was led by Peter and the other group was led by Paul. Baur said that Peter represented the idea that salvation was by keeping the law. In

contrast, Paul believed that salvation was available to all (Ehrman 2003:171). According to Baur, it was not until much later that the two divergent views held by Peter and Paul came to be melded into the "orthodox" or "catholic" point of view (Ehrman 2003:171).

Some believe that Baur was influenced by the German philosopher Hegel. Hegel's view was that history proceeded because of a reaction between thesis and antithesis. For Baur Christian history began with the "thesis" of Jewish Christianity encountering the "antithesis" of Gentile Christianity. According to Baur, this resulted in a "synthesis" of orthodox or Catholic Christianity. The antithesis came later. Baur's perspective was that the earliest Christian writings should be placed in history according to their theological content (Ehrman 2003:171). Baur believed that the best way to examine the writings of the New Testament was based on their theological arguments, rather than on the canonical lines of demarcation, which he believed were formed later (Ehrman 2003:171). In Baur's view, Christianity was formed by diverse and competing viewpoints that were all equal in their merit. This is quite different from the previous, prevailing view, that the Apostles passed along a single uniform orthodox viewpoint on such teachings as the resurrection.

2.2.3 Walter Bauer--The Roots of the History of Religions School

In 1934, a German Scholar named Walter Bauer (1877-1960) released a work in German called: *Rechtglaubigkeit und Ketzerei im altesten Christentum* (Bock 2006:45). In English it is translated *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity*. Bauer attempted to show that groups that were later labeled as heretical by the orthodox church actually were the ones that dominated both geographically and theologically in the first few centuries of Christianity (Koester 1965:114).

Bauer's thesis rested on the fact that the Church of Rome eventually came to control the Christian areas, so that orthodoxy won out and Gnosticism and it's view of the resurrection became supressed (Bock 2006:50-51). Bauer failed to note that there were several centers of orthodoxy in such places as Antioch, Jerusalem, and Asia Minor that were free of Roman influence (Bock 2006:50).

Moreover, there is no indication that Rome forced it's views on these places. It is likely that this did not occur until much later, during the Middle Ages. In addition, most of the archaeological evidence from these areas is of an orthodox nature (Bock 2006:50) This indicates that orthodoxy came first. It is likely that orthodoxy first dominated in areas like Asia Minor because the letters of John and Paul originated from here.

Bauer's second claim was that Gnosticism was present in both Edessa and Alexandria prior to the development of orthodoxy there (Bock 2006:52-3 cf. Bauer 1971:44-60). Bock has concluded that the evidence that Gnosticism preceded orthodoxy in these areas is not substantial. To make his case in the Alexandrian region, Bauer had to argue that the document known as *Pseudo-Barnabas* is a Gnostic work (Bock 2006:52). There is substantial evidence to suggest that this is really a Syriac work (Bock 2006:52).

The remains of fourteen of the earliest pieces of papyri found just outside of Alexandria have been examined (Baur 1971:44-60 cf. Bock 2006:52). Only two of the fragments are potentially Gnostic and both come from *The Gospel of Thomas* (Bock 2006:53). In Chapter 3, we will discuss how it is possible that *The Gospel of Thomas* may have originally been composed in Syriac.

No firm conclusion can be reached as to which came first in Edessa (Bock 2006:54). Bauer offered the evidence from *The Edessene Chronicle*, which was a sixth century source (Bock 2006:54) *The Edessene Chronicle* names Marcion, Mani and Bar Daison (Bardesanes) as those who were present in this region (Bock 2006:54). According to church tradition, the Apostle Thomas was the first to bring Christianity to this area. This implies that orthodoxy and it's view of the resurrection, was in this region first, rather than Gnosticism or Incipient Gnosticism. Bauer had made some errors in his work. It is his idea that "Gnosticism preceded the development of orthodox Christianity" that would provide a great contribution to the work done by the scholars in *The History of Religions School* and potentially redefine Jesus' teaching on the resurrection in John.

2.2.4 The History of Religions School—Oriental Mandaean, Manichean, and
        Hermetic   Gnosticism as the Origin of Christianity

One of the important discoveries for the *History of Religions School* was in the sixteenth century (King 2003:82). The discovery of a group of Mandaean texts provided a pool of resources that many in the *History of Religions School* believed would challenge the canonical writings. A Jesuit missionary came into contact with a community living in Iran whose members called themselves "Nasoraie d'Yahya*"* (Nasoreans of John) or "Mandayi" (King 2003:82). From "Mandayi" scholars came to designate this group as the Mandaeans (King 2003:82).

These new Mandaean materials provided the *History of Religions School* with a new pool of texts for use to challenge the canonical writings. Also, the newly discovered materials provided the *History of Religions School* scholars with the resources they needed for the creation of what would become known as the "Gnostic redeemer myth" (King 2003:82).

2.2.4.1 Richard Reitzenstein

Richard Reitzenstein lived from 1861 to 1931 and can be credited with laying the foundations for the creation of the "Gnostic redeemer myth" (King 2003:84). Reitzenstein developed "The gnostic redeemer myth" as he worked on the Iranian Primal Man, or in German, *The Urmensch* (King 2003:84). Through his analysis of the Egyptian work known as *Poimandres*, he claimed he found the basic outline of what he called *The Myth of the Primal Man* (King 2003:84). He believed the myth could be traced to an Oriental Gnosticism which came from the Mandaean texts.

According to Reitzenstein, it was the Mandaean texts that served as the basis for various ideas and concepts found in the New Testament (King 2003:84). In 1910 he produced a work in German entitled: *Das Mandäische Buch des Herrn der Größe und die Evangelienüberlieferung*. Reitzenstein relied on Mandaean and Manichean sources from the Iranian religion (King 2003:85). Through this method, he laid the foundations of what would become known as the "Gnostic redeemer myth" (King 2003:85).

Reitzenstein associated the Iranian Primal Man figure with "a redeemer" who was in need of redemption (King 2003:85). The Mandean materials also showed Reitzenstein that man had a divine soul, but that it needed to be awakened by a divine spark (King 2003:85). The work done by Reitzenstein laid the foundations of the "Gnostic redeemer myth." Reitzenstein's hypothesis was that Jesus was originally a Mandaean Gnostic. According to Reitzenstein, Gnosticism, and it's view on the resurrection, was the foundation of all Christianity (King 2003:89). Rudolf Bultmann later wrote out the full sketch of the "Gnostic redeemer myth."

2.2.4.2 Wilhelm Bousset

Reitzenstein worked closely with a man named Wilhelm Bousset (King 2003:99). In 1903, he wrote a book called: *Die Religion des Judentums*, which turned to Gnostic, Mandaean, Manichean, and Kabalistic sources to determine the meaning of many Christological titles (King 2003:90).

Bousset connected the writings of Paul and *The Gospel of John* with Gnostic Oriental religion. Thus, Bousset and Reitzenstein were virtually identical in their theology. Their work on the Madaean texts laid the foundations for Bultmann's work on the "Gnostic redeemer myth." At this point, the work of Bousset and Reitzenstein was not thoroughly cross examined and the texts that they used were not carefully scrutinized.

2.2.4.3 Rudolf Bultmann--Gnosticism behind The Gospel of John

In 1923, Rudolf Bultmann published a study of the Johannine prologue called *Die Religonsgeschictliche Hintergrund,* where he found that the "logos figure" in John's prologue had been heavily influenced by what he called "Hellenistic Jewish speculation" rather than by a strictly Palestinian source or background (King 2003:102). The work dealt with John 1.1 and John 1.14. This meant that *The Gospel of John* had a significant amount of influence coming from a Greek background, rather than from a Palestinian one. He had suspected this because John used the Hellenistic term "logos" (λογός) instead of the more Jewish term "sophia" (σοφίὰ)(King 2003:102).

Later, Bultmann published an article on *The Gospel of John* entitled *Die Bedeutung der Neureschlossenen Mandaischen und Manichaischen Quellen für das Verstandnis der Johannes Evangeliums,* which in English is translated: *The Significance of Newly Discovered Mandaean and Manichaean Sources for the Understanding of The Gospel of John*. In this work, he argued that *The Gospel of John* presupposed a Gnostic salvation myth and could be understood and interpreted only with that background (King 2003:102). Continuing with the work started by Reitzenstein, Bultmann drew primarily on Mandaean and Manichaean texts. He was convinced that the background to *The Gospel of John* came from Gnosticism, rather than from Jewish or Palestinian sources.

2.2.4.4 The History of Religions School and Problems With it's Methodology

The Researcher will show that here the "Gnostic redeemer myth" did not exist on its own as a coherent narrative (cf. Colpe 1961:13; King 2003:19). Various pieces from the Mandaean materials were assembled to form what has been known as the "Gnostic redeemer motif" (King 2003:19). Next, these elements were combined into a single coherent narrative known as "The Gnostic redeemer myth" (King 2003:109).

In this manner, this narrative gained support by the fact that so many artifacts could be interpreted to fit into some part of it (King 2003:109). The problem was that there was *no single* existing ancient literary source that could present the entire "Gnostic redeemer myth" (King 2003:109). Instead, the scholars in *The History of Religions School* had artificially constructed it. Eventually, the "Gnostic Redeemer Myth" was universally declared to be fake or artificial because it could not be found in any historical text (King 2003:109). Only pieces of it could be found.

Bultmann (1956:163-4) had taken hold of the entire "Gnostic redeemer myth" motif and tried to push it back in time prior to the canonical texts. The entire narrative simply was not there. Despite this evidence, "The Gnostic redeemer myth" still lived on to exert considerable influence over scholars like Bultmann (Bultmann 1971:376-77 cf. King 2003:109). It would serve as a basis to interpret, not only *The Gospel According to John*, but also, John's view of the

resurrection (King 2003:109). Carsten Colpe (1961) eventually recognized that there was a problem in interpreting the canonical texts with a "Gnostic redeemer myth" background. In time, the problem presented would become significant to many (Koester 1978; Cameron 1992; Patterson 1993; Colpe 1961).

2.2.4.5 The Problem with the Dating of the Gnostic Material

The History of Religion School's teaching about Gnosticism, resting at the base of Christian origins, relied heavily on the early dating of Mandaean sources (King 2003:138). Hans Leitzmann wrote an article entitled *Ein Beitrag zur Mandaerfrage*, in which he proposed that the Mandaean texts used by the *History of Religions School* were actually dated one thousand six hundred years after the New Testament writings (Leitzmann n.d.:139-140 cf. King 2003:138). In addition, he argued that the Christian elements in the Mandaean writings were from a late seventh century Christian influence. Leitzman's proposition overcame the idea of a "Pre-Christian Gnostic redeemer myth."

In essence, Reitzenstein, Bultmann, Bousset and the other *History of Religions* scholars were using materials that were dated later in time than the developments in early Christianity. Thus, it appears there was more evidence that the Mandaeans existed after the developments of Christianity, rather than before it (Colpe 1961:13 cf. King 2003:138).

The evidence that Mandaeanism came much later than Christianity was plentiful. For example, the oldest whole Mandaean manuscript has been dated to the sixteenth century. King notes that there were several archeological discoveries such as a Mandaic bowl that has been dated to the sixth century CE (King 2003:139).

More evidence that Mandaeanism came later included the fact that the tractate that Reitzenstein had originally relied on to construct the "Gnostic redeemer myth" was dated to the third century AD (Robinson 1962:288). These discoveries and a critical analysis of the texts that were originally used by Reitzenstein and Bousset contradicted a pre-Christian date for the Mandaeans. As each piece of evidence became available, the more likely it became that the Mandaean texts were later in time than the New Testament texts and posed no

threat to orthodox belief on a futuristic resurrection. As more and more of these pieces of evidence came to light and were substantiated to be later in date, the more likely it was that Reitzenstein and Bousset had been inaccurate about the Mandaean materials.

2.2.4.6 Carsten Colpe and the Gnostic Redeemer Myth

In 1961 Carsten Colpe, a professor from the University of Chicago, wrote a work entitled: *Die Religionsgeschichtliche Schule: Darstellung und Kritik ihres Bildes vom Gnostischen Erlösermythus* (Colpe 1961:91 cf. King 2003:141). Colpe directly attacked the sources used by the *History of Religions School*, which established a pre-Christian Gnosticism from Mandaean and Hermetic sources. For example Reitzenstein had claimed to have located a fragment from a Zoroastrian writing. He used this fragment as one of the texts to be dated earlier than the canonical texts (Colpe 1969:69 cf. King 2003:141). Colpe was able to determine that this fragment should be dated much later than the writings of the New Testament. With each continuing development, it became more evident that "The Gnostic redeemer myth" was founded on texts and documents that were written later and were no threat to a literal resurrection.

Colpe successfully argued that Reitzenstein had misused terminology from the Mandaean texts for his own purposes when he created the "Gnostic redeemer myth" (Colpe 1961:92-95 cf. King 2003:140). Colpe noted that from a single fragment, Reitzenstein had misused several terms (Colpe 1961:92 cf. King 2003:142). For example the term "gyan" did not end up referring to the "redeemed redeemer" of the "Gnostic Redeemer Myth" as Reitzenstein had suggested. Rather, this was the term most commonly used for humans dwelling in the physical body (Colpe 1961:92 cf. King 2003:142).

Reitzenstein had identified the term "griw" as a characteristic *in only the redeemed* (Colpe 1961:95 cf. King 2003:142). Colpe showed that the term should be used more broadly as the inner essence *in all people* that separated from the body after death. Finally, Reitzenstein argued that the term "manuhmed" was the sleeping element of the soul that is awakened by God's call (Colpe 1961:95 cf. King 2003: 143). Colpe noted that within the Mandaean

materials there were no references to the "soul" by using a single word. That is to say, Reitzenstein had built a "doctrine of the soul" that fit into his "Gnostic redeemer myth." He had done this based on a word that, by itself, did not connote what Reitzenstein had said it did (Colpe 1961:95 cf. King 2003:144). This was one example of stretching terms in the Mandaean materials to fit the concept of the "Gnostic redeemer myth."

Although Colpe agreed with Reitzenstein's construction of the "Gnostic Redeemer," he disagreed that the entire myth could be found in a singular place (Colpe 1961:189-191 cf. King 2003:144). Colpe believed the "Gnostic redeemer myth" could be presented in its entirety only by using Reitzenstein's model and not by using the primary Mandaean sources (Colpe 1961:140-170 cf. 144).

Reitzenstein had constructed a sequence of "Primal Man" figures beginning with the Iranian "Gayomart" and moving forward to the "Gnostic Primal Man" or "Urmensch" and ending with the New Testament "Son of Man" (Colpe 1961:149; King, 2003: 144). Colpe showed that the settings in which each of these figures appeared were quite different, one from another (Colpe 1961:150-152 cf. King p. 144). According to Colpe, since their settings were different, it was unlikely that these figures were connected or joined in any way.

Colpe was able to show that the Gnostic "Urmensch" in the Mandaean materials had Gnostic elements that could not be found in the Jewish "Son of Man" (Colpe 1961:150; King 2003:145). Colpe was successful in showing how different and unconnected the two terms really were. In addition, Colpe showed how the two figures differed in their work of salvation (Colpe 1961:150; King 2003:145). For example, in Iranian thought, the Savior brought about salvation by renewing the world to the state it was in prior to it's fall from the Garden of Eden (Colpe 1961:150 cf. King 2003:145). In contrast, in Judaism, the world is restored to it's original state, but not as a work of salvation (King 2003:145). Colpe was able to rule out the idea that the figures were related to each other as Reitzenstein had suggested (Colpe 1961:191; King 2003:147).

In sum, Colpe had been able to show that the "Gnostic redeemer myth" was actually an artificial model that brought together texts that did not fit together (King 2003:147). In addition, the "Gnostic redeemer myth" redefines and

misapplies the terms and texts that it claims to represent (King 2003:148). Robinson sums it up well when he says, "what was lacking was a clear instance of the pre-Christian myth upon which conjectural reassembling of the myth could be built" (Robinson 1962:288). The more that scholars dug for pieces to substantiate the *History of Religions School* for a full "Gnostic redeemer myth," the more they could turn up only materials that seemed to be later than the New Testament.

Colpe's critique was devastating to the positions held by the *History of Religions School*. The impact of Colpe's work had a minimal effect on the scholarly community worldwide. Despite it's credibility, his critique did not halt the next generation of scholars from continuing the work begun by the *History of Religions School.* The use of Mandaean texts had been undermined and would eventually be done away with. However, now scholars had at their disposal, the newly discovered Nag Hammadi Codices to help them.

2.2.4.7 The Methodology Used by Colpe and The History of Religions School

The "Gnostic Redeemer Myth" was "constructed by taking bits and pieces from particular themes and ideas from many historical and literary contexts and combing them into a single coherent narrative" (King 2003:109).

H.A. Green calls the methodology that was used by the *History of Religions School* for the construction of the "Gnostic Redeemer Myth "motif methodology" (Green 2006:122). Green describes this methodology as when twentieth century motifs are constructed for descriptive purposes and are taken as objective reality, even though "historically and empirically" they don't actually exist (Green 2006:122) Robinson notes that many make the mistake of believing that the origins of the "Gnostic redeemer myth" is the work of second century Gnostics, rather than the work of the *History of Religions School* (Robinson 1962:288). Colpe was able to show that the *History of Religions School* had used the "motif methodology" that Green identifies (Colpe 1961:191 cf. King 2003:109). Schnackenburg notes in his commentary on John that the "Gnostic redeemer myth" was only a "conviction" with no "complete or definite" form (Schnackenburg 1967:548).

Colpe was able to show that the "Gnostic redeemer myth" does not define it's sources of origin. Colpe showed that if you are going to establish a solid hypothesis, you must first start with the basis of the conclusion. It can be only from that basis that you would work towards the motif or theme. Colpe had demonstrated that the *History of Religions School* had done the opposite.

King notes that "Colpe destroyed the work of the *History of Religions School* by showing three things: 1) The dating of the Mandaean source material came after Christianity and not before, 2) Reitzenstein and Bousset were not as competent in the languages and dating of the Mandaean materials as they had claimed, and 3) that Reitzenstein and Bousset had pulled motifs from their literary, historical, and social contexts which led them to a fabricated myth that had never existed" (King 2003:138).

2.2.4.8 The Methodology of Colpe and the Researcher Revisited

Following Colpe's example, the researcher will look to the ancient sources to give us the evidence needed in order to know if the *New History of Religions School* is correct in its assessment of the sources (Bock 2006:35). Looking at the sources, themselves, will put us on the most solid historical footing in examining the relationship between Incipient Gnosticism and *The Gospel of John*. Colpe showed how strict scrutiny of primary texts can either make or break a theory. Colpe's work preserved the belief in a literal bodily resurrection.

Today, most theories on Incipient Gnosticism focus on whether texts are dependent on or independent of the canonical writings. They also focus on whether they were written early enough to be the source of the canonical material. Moreover, generalizations and stereotypes that we have inherited about the noncanonical writings must be avoided (Robinson 1962:287). Special attention will be paid to the dating of the source material. We know that the extracanonical writings that are deemed early and independent of the canonical material could reshape or distort Jesus' teaching on the resurrection in John. The "motif methodology" that was described above, must be avoided (Green 2006:130). The *History of Religions School* took twentieth century conceptual

formulations and imposed them on the texts of the first and second centuries (Green 2006:130).

In sum, careful scrutiny of the primary source material will help to avoid the mistakes *The History of Religions School* made in the past, relying on the work of others and forming generalizations based on wishful thinking.

2.2.5 Helmut Koester and the *New History of Religions School*

Helmut Koester was Rudolf Bultmann's last student. He continued his work as the head of the *New History of Religions School*. He continued to follow Walter Bauer's proposal that a re-evaluation of Christian history was called for (Koester 1971:114-115). Bauer's thesis had been that Christian groups that were later labeled as heretical had predominated in the first two or three centuries. According to Bauer and Koester, these groups dominated both geographically and theologically, and were the sources of orthodox Christianity (Koester 1971:114-115).

Koester concluded that it was not possible that the orthodox church was the direct offspring of the teachings, doctrines, and institutions of the apostles. Also, Koester denied the fact that the orthodox church was the only one that was able to preserve the true apostolic teaching (Koester 1971:114-115). He has been described as a scholar "dedicated to finding early independent traditions in apocryphal gospels" (Meier 1991:149).

According to Koester, "deep seated prejudices" exist against the extracanonical literature that has caused many to shun the study of these books (Koester 1980:105). Koester has given some examples of this "prejudice" which he finds in standard reference materials. An example would be in Merriam-Webster's dictionary which explains the term "apocryphal" as "not canonical; unauthentic; or spurious" (Koester 1980:105). Koester believes that this definition in turn shows prejudice against the noncanonical writings.

Koester believes that calling these writings "unauthentic" or "spurious" is a mistake based on unfair prejudice. This is because he believes that the apocryphal texts can make a valid contribution to historical Jesus research (Koester 1980:105). Koester also finds fault with the work of M.R. James, who

likewise defines "apocryphal" as "spurious" (James 1924:xiii cf. Koester, 1980:105). The reason why Koester objects to both of these definitions is because he believes that it is inappropriate to elevate the canonical witings above the noncanonical writings.

Schneemelcher makes a qualifiying statement that some of the apocryphal writings appear to be contemporary with the canonical writings and to have been written based on the same traditions (Schneemelcher 1991:50ff. cf. Koester 1980:105). Koester is not satisfied with this either because he believes that some of the extra-canonical writings *are older* than the canonical materials and are *their source,* which would cause the resurrection in John to be redefined.

2.2.5.1 The New History of Religions School and the Elevation of the Noncanonical Texts

Noncanonical texts are given priority over the canonical texts in the *New History of Religions School.* Koester and others, who hold similar views are a part of the *New History of Religions School.* Koester has affirmed the importance of the discovery of such writings as *The Gospel of Thomas, The Apocryphon of James,* and *The Dialogue of the Savior* (Koester 1957:76). In a postscript written in 1986 from an article first published in 1957 he writes:

> This history was much richer than the canon would suggest, and in theological terms, it was more controversial and more interesting, because the "Living Jesus" spoke in many different ways to different people (Koester 1957:76).

Koester continues, "the historian must never solve this problem by using labels such as 'orthodox' and 'heretical', nor should responsible Christians and theologians try to do that any longer today" (Koester 1957:76). Koester has greatly popularized this view today.

2.2.5.2 The New History of Religions School and Early Independent Traditions of Jesus

The argument of the *New History of Religions School* is that many writings have been overlooked by the church, and have not found their rightful place with

the other traditional writings (Koester 1980:130). They argue that several non-canonical writings are "at least as old and as valuable" as the canonical Gospels as sources for "the earliest developments of Christianity" (Koester 1980:130).

Koester goes on to describe them as "significant witnesses" for the formation and development of the Gospel literature (Koester 1980:130). They argue that the extracanonical material has roots that goes back to the apostles and Jesus and that those texts present an "alternative Christianity" in the form of Incipient Gnosticism (Bock 2006:xxv). There have been other alternative backgrounds to John's Gospel that have been proposed. This study will examine those more carefully in the next two sections. The call of the *New History of Religions School* is for a complete reconsideration of the origins and doctrines of Christianity, including the resurrection.

2.2.5.3 An Alternative Christianity—The Gnostic Gospels

Marcionism, Montanism, and Hellenistic thought have been presented as equally viable alternatives when speaking about early Christianity and possible backgrounds to *The Gospel of John*. These alternatives will be discussed in more detail in the next section, dealing with Incipient Gnosticism. After the discovery of the Nag Hammadi manuscripts in 1945, Gnosticism became the "alternative" of choice for the *New History of Religions School* (Bock 2006:26).

1965 was the year in which there began to be a new appreciation for the apocryphal writings (Charlesworth and Evans 1998:479). Many of these writings are Gnostic or Incipient Gnostic writings. These writings have received a lot of attention. There are thirty or so documents that have been identified as Gospels or "Gospel-like" writings. Five of them have received the most attention. All of them have defenders who advocate their antiquity and ability to redefine Jesus' teaching on the resurrection (Evans 2006:62-63). These writings are *The Gospel of Thomas*, *The Gospel of Peter, Egerton Papyrus 2*, *The Gospel of Mary*, and *The Secret Gospel of Mark* (Evans 2006:62-3).

Since the incorporation of these texts into the study of the New Testament, an entirely new age has begun. Robinson summed it up quite well when he said, "it is clear that in America, at least, the study of the canonical Gospels has

entered a new era, the era of the relevance of the non-canonical materials" (Evans 2006:51). Although scholars like Bock and Evans date these materials to the second century at the earliest, the claim of the *New History of Religions School* is that their traditions reflect a pre-history that traces Gnosticism to a point in time earlier than the canonical material (Bock 2006:25). This era was initiated by the discovery and publication of the Nag Hammadi Codices (Robinson 2006:51). If Gnosticism came before the canonical texts and specifically, *The Gospel of John*, our view of the resurrection would be completely altered. The futuristic aspect of the resurrection as well as it's corporeality would be completely changed. The resurrection would be seen as an event that was occurring in the present or had already occurred in the past.

2.3 THE DEFINITIONS OF GNOSTICISM AND INCIPIENT GNOSTICISM

2.3.1 Dictionary Definition

Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary has defined Gnosticism as "the thought and practice, especially of various cults of late pre-Christian and early Christian centuries distinguished by the conviction that matter is evil, and that emancipation comes through "gnosis" (Webster's 2005 cf. King 2003:5). Eliade's Encyclopedia of Religion defines Gnosticism as follows:

> An outlook contemporary with early Christianity, which freely manifests itself in the form of a large number of divergent trends. The common denominator that inclines some to speak of Gnosticism as a religion with it's own essence is the presence of a particular set of myths.....the demiurge or fashioner of this world, is evil, except in a few testimonies; he is said to be ignorant, proud, and "mad" in a number of Coptic texts that are part of the collections of Gnostic codices, the largest of which was dug up in Nag Hammadi, in Upper Egypt in 1945 (Eliade, Couliano, and Wiesner 1991:97).

2.3.2 Incipient Gnosticism and Other Alternatives to the Foundation of Early Christianity

In the earliest Christian sources, ideas or concepts appear which the apostles challenged directly (i.e. 1 Tim 1:20, 2 Tim 2:17-18, 1 Cor. 15, etc.; Bock 2006:5). These ideas or concepts would eventually develop into the Gnostic systems of the second century (King 2003:5). The earliest sources reflect what has been called "Incipient Gnosticism" (King 2003:5).

Incipient Gnosticism is only one solution that has been proposed as a background to John's Gospel. In fact, there is considerable debate around this issue. Two other alternatives that have been proposed include Marcionism and Montanism. Still others have proposed that Hellenistic thought is the background of John's Gospel.

Marcionism derives its name from Marcion who was a figure in church history who rejected the Old Testament and spoke of a good God and an evil God. Although Marcion rejected the Old Testament in favor of a kinder God, the rest of his theology was not consistent with Gnosticism (Bock 2006:26). Marcion drew the attention of church authorities due to his truncated view of the Scriptures. He did not hold the view that the material world was evil and that salvation was through "gnosis." It is for these reasons that many have not devoted a significant amount of time in dealing with Marcionism as being a possible background for the canonical writings.

Montanism is another theological stream that has been presented as an alternative to Gnosticism and as a possible background to John's Gospel. Montanism arose in the same period as Marcionism and had an emphasis on ongoing special revelation. Attention was drawn to the advocates of Montanism, Montanus and Priscilla, because of their ongoing revelation that they claimed to have received from God. Ongoing and changing revelation was troublesome to the first century church who already had the older teaching of the apostles to uphold (Bock 2006:26).

Montanism did not provide a plausible solution as a backdrop to the Gospel of John. Montanism, like Marcionism, presupposed the existence of the canonical materials. For Marcionism, you needed to have Scripture to truncate.

For Montanism, you needed to have previous revelation to presuppose ongoing revelation at the hands of Montanus and Priscilla (Bock 2006:26). It is for these reasons that neither one of these two religious systems could possibly be the forerunner of *The Gospel of John.*

Of these three views, Gnosticism and Incipient Gnosticism became a serious contender with early Christianity. It was only Gnosticism and Incipient Gnosticism that brought in outside elements and attempted to distort the teaching that came from the apostolic writings. Marcionism was successful solely in cutting out the Old Testament and parts of the New Testament. Meanwhile, Montanism added special revelation, but did not attempt to alter or distort the teaching as they were originally laid down by the apostles (Bock 2006:26).

Gnosticism alone attempted to distort the apostolic writings and change their meaning. For this reason, Gnosticism posed the greatest threat to the church and has emerged as the alternative choice to those who are looking for a reinterpretation of Jesus' teaching on the resurrection in John. Gnosticism appears to be the most credible of the three alternatives (Bock 2006:26).

Other suggestions have been put forward as possible backgrounds to John's Gospel. Raymond Brown notes that some have suggested that Hellenistic thought is the source of John. Others have proposed the view that it is Greek philosophy that lies behind *The Gospel of John.* Brown notes that John does have some elements of Greek philosophy; however, it is "nothing more than one would normally find in the Palestinian Judaism of the time and definitely less than what could be found in Hellenistic Judaism" (Brown, 1966:lvii).

Others have proposed John was dependent on Philo of Alexandria. However, Philo's allegorization of the Old Testament and his philosophical coloring are not present in John (Brown, 1966:lviii). The most that can be said for this theory is that Philo and John share the common background of Judaism (Brown 1966:lviii).

Others have suggested that John is dependent on *The Hermetica.* The language between these two works is entirely different. *The Hermetica* has a strong Greek or Hellenistic tone and John contains a strong Semitic influence

(Brown 1966:lix). In addition, *The Hermetica* is widely recognized as a work of the second and third centuries (Brown 1966:lix). Also, the *Hermetica* emphasizes such things as Oriental speculation, Wisdom, and Greek abstract thought which is indicative of how different the two works must have been in their development (Brown 1966:lix). For these reasons, Gnosticism and Incipient Gnosticism has been the choice of the new *History of Religions School*, in recent years, as to what is the source of *The Gospel of John*.

2.3.3 Pre-Gnosticism, Proto-Gnosticism, and Messina

In 1966, an international congress convened in Messina, with the express purpose of addressing the issue of the origins of Gnosticism (King 2003:169). The papers published there show that there is a wide variety of opinion on the subject (King 2003:169). A firm definition of Gnosticism could not be reached at the conference in Messina.

The Messina definition of Incipient Gnosticism involved the mixing of different themes and motifs that had not yet developed into the Gnostic systems of the second century (King 2003:170). Some of these themes included Jewish apocalypticism, ideas from the writings of Qumran, and a focus on the feelings of panic surrounding Judaism after the destruction of the temple (King 2003:170). In the conference, they also focused on such geographical areas as Egypt and Mesopotamia (King 2003:170).

It is likely that Gnosticism was not a singular movement, but more of a way of seeing the world, that has produced many viewpoints based on the essential features of it (Bock 2006:23).

2.3.4 The Five Key Components of Gnosticism

There is no exact definition for Gnosticism. Kurt Rudolph, a professor at the University of Marburg, explained Gnosticism as having five key parts (Rudolph 1987:57 cf. Bock 2006:18-19). The first characteristic of Gnosticism is dualism of good and evil (Rudolph 1987:57 cf. Bock 2006:18;). This dualism exists in both God and in humans (Bock 2006:18). In Gnosticism, the god that created the universe is known as the "demiurge." In Gnosticism the demiurge is an evil

god and is associated with the matter that he created. In Gnosticism, matter is considered evil. It is a dualism between the creator god and the other transcendent, unknowable god (Rudolph 1987:58 cf. Bock 2006:18).

The second characteristic in Gnosticism is the distinction between what is seen as "good" and what is seen as "evil." The ideas of light, soul, spirit, and knowledge represent what is "good." Darkness, matter, flesh, and ignorance reflect that which is evil in Gnosticism (Rudolph 1987:58 cf. Bock 2006:19). The material world is seen as evil and of lesser importance than the spiritual world. The positive part of man is often characterized as a "divine spark" (Rudolph 1987:58 cf. Bock 2006:19).

The third characteristic of Gnosticism involves salvation of the non-material part of man (Bock 2006:19). This is only accomplished through the acquisition of knowledge or by attaining gnosis (Rudolph 2007:58-9 cf. Bock 2006:19). In Gnosticism, there is no future resurrection of the body or at least the hopes of such a resurrection seem to be faint at best (Rudolph 2007:58 cf. Bock 2006:19). Salvation by gnosis presents itself as a contradiction to salvation by faith.

The fourth characteristic of Gnosticism involves an eschatology where the soul is connected with the creation and will be sent into the "fullness" or the "pleroma," where good dwells (Rudolph 2007:59 cf. Bock 2006:20). In Gnosticism, the resurrection of the dead is associated with the end of creation. The end of the human soul is bound up in the end of the creation and is reabsorbed into the "pleroma" or the "fullness."

The last element involves the social community of the Gnostics as well as their practices in that community (Rudolph 2007:59 cf. Bock 2006:20). The church fathers provide much information on the practices of the Gnostics as they interacted in a group situation. Epiphanius of Salamis and other church fathers had claimed to live amongst them. From their writings, we have information on how these groups interacted with each other as well as how they interacted with other Gnostic and Christian groups.

2.4 GNOSTICISM AND THE RESURRECTION

Does the Gnostic or Incipient Gnostic resurrection include a physical element, which involves the restoration of the material creation, or is the resurrection merely a spiritual one? Adolf Von Harnack once said that Gnostics may not all have believed that the resurrection occurred in the past (Harnack cf. Peel 1970:144). Harnack went on to state that future expectations and a hope for the Gnostics appears to "have been quite faint and above all meaningless" (Peel 1970:144). This accurately describes the Gnostic and Incipient Gnostic perspective. In a majority of Gnostic systems, the destiny of the individual is related to what happens to the cosmos (Peel 1977:156). The main view is that the soul or the "pneuma" reabsorbs itself and ascends into "the Divine" (Peel 1977:156). In the Gnostic and Incipient Gnostic systems, the physical aspect as well as the futuristic aspect of it appears to be absent.

2.4.1 Images and Terms of Life after Death and The Resurrection in Gnostic Texts

Gnosticism presents several images of what happens to a person after death. Several Gnostic texts reveal a variety of images that describe the Gnostic or Incipient Gnostic view of the resurrection. For example, in *The Gospel of the Egyptians*, life after death is referred to as the "reception" into the "imperishable life" of "all souls upon which the Spirit of Life had descended" (NHC III *2* 61.22-23; Peel 1977:157). The language used in this text is unclear and a bit confusing. However, the text does not seem to point to a futuristic resurrection that is corporeal in nature.

Gnostic and Incipient Gnostic literature use several other terms to describe life after death. Some of the images or terms that are used include the "rest of the aeons" mentioned in the *Apocryphon of John* (NHC II *1*.26.20-31; Peel 1977:158), the "completion of the pleroma" mentioned in *Pistis Sophia* (48.33-49), and the "restoration" mentioned in the *Treatise on the Resurrection* (NHC I *3* 4.30-33). Although these texts, do shed some light on what happens to the soul in the "end," they are not specific enough to provide any information on a

future resurrection. At most, in these texts, one can find only shaded references reabsorption of the soul back into the cosmos or the divine.

Several texts from the Nag Hammadi Codices have language and images that shed more light on the Gnostic or Incipient Gnostic view of life after death. Some of the images or ideas that emerge from this literature are the "consummation of the aeon" or "the end of days" (Peel 1977:158). Some works that include information about the "end" are *On the Origin of the World, The Gospel of the Egyptians,* and the *Paraphrase of Shem* (Peel 1977:158).

Other terms used to describe the time of the end in Gnosticism include the terms "time of dissolution," "the hour," "the end of the all," "the day of death," "rest in the consummation," "the great assembly of the faithful and believing entities," and the "dissolution of the corruptible" (Peel 1977:158). A futuristic resurrection seems to be quite remote and distant from these images.

A futuristic bodily resurrection seems to be inconsistent with these terms. The "time of dissolution" is found in *The Dialogue of the Savior* (NHC III *5* 122.2-3)."The hour" is found in *The Dialogue of the Savior* 127.16-19. The term "the end of the all" is found in *The Dialogue of the Savior* 142.9-10 (Peel 1977:159).

In addition, the term, "the day of death," is found in *The Apocalypse of Adam* (NHC V *5* 76.16-20). The image of the "rest in the consummation" is found in *The Paraphrase of Shem* from (NHC VII *1* 43.2-20). The image of "the great assembly of the faithful and believing entities" is found in *The Second Treatise of the Great Seth* (NHC VII *2* 51.13-20). The "dissolution of the corruptible" is found in *The Apocalypse of Peter* (NHC VIII *3* 76.14-20; 77.14-21; Peel 1977:159). Without exception, there is no strong reference to a futuristic resurrection. Also, the Gnostic images do not have a bodily aspect to them. Church fathers like Irenaeus and Hippolytus uphold this view (Ref. VII.10.26; Adv. Haer. 1.6.1; Peel 1977:159).

2.5 THE RELEVANT LITERATURE FROM THE NAG HAMMADI LIBRARY

2.5.1 The Gospel of Thomas

The Gospel of Thomas emphasizes the reception of eternal expectations in the present through the acquisition of knowledge (*gnosis*; γνῶσις). In other words, in Gnosticism and in Incipient Gnosticism the hope of a future resurrection must be realized in the present. In the Gnostic and Incipient Gnostic systems, that only comes about through the receiving of knowledge. *Gnosis* (γνῶσις) is the Greek word for knowledge and is used most often in Gnosticism to be the means by which the initiate obtains salvation (Peel 1977:152). In contrast, pistis (πίστις) or faith is emphasized by orthodox writers following the teaching of the Apostle Paul and others as the means of salvation. In the first Saying in *The Gospel of Thomas*, salvation is an important issue:

Those that keep my word will not taste of death (1).

Furthermore, Logion 28 seems to indicate that entrance into the kingdom takes place when one is free from the "intoxication" or "lack of understanding" associated with being in human bodies (Bock 2006:132). In addition, in Sayings 21 and 37, the body is compared to clothing that we are encouraged to throw away (Wright 2003:535). Saying 21 illustrates this point:

Therefore I say to you, if the owner of a house knows that the thief is

coming, he will begin his vigil before he comes and will not let him dig

through into his house or his domain and carry away his goods (21).

In this saying, the "home owner" must watch for the "thief" and guard the treasure of knowledge (Wright 2006:535). The thief represents the world of the flesh and he must be resisted by the initiate. Here, the flesh is something is to be resisted. The flesh must be resisted, if it tries to creep into the house. This is a clear message that there is no bodily resurrection.

Saying 22 indicates that the afterlife only comes with "oneness." More specifically, the language employed is when "the two are made one, the inside is made like the outside, the above is made like the below, the day of eschatological fulfilment will arrive in the present" (Peel 1977:153). This saying brings out a couple of important ideas. First, whatever eschatological

expectation there is, it will arrive in the present and not the future. Secondly, the concept of "oneness" is probably too confusing to say anything about. In addition, if we interpret this text consistently with other texts that come from the same writing style, we have to conclude that the "oneness" spoken of refers to the elimination of the flesh. With this idea in mind, a future bodily resurrection does not seem to be plausible.

In Saying 51 of *The Gospel of Thomas* we read:

His disciples said to Him, "on what day will rest for the dead occur, and on what day does the new world come?" He said to them, "That [rest] for which you are waiting has come, but you do not recognize it?" (Peel 1977:153)

Some have suggested that the "rest" ($\alpha\nu\alpha\pi\alpha\upsilon\sigma\iota_{\varsigma}$ in Greek) or "repose" refers to a resurrection (Wright 2006:535). In this text, it is insignificant whether a repose, rest, or a resurrection is spoken of (Wright 2006:535). As far as this text is concerned, the fate of the departed, whether it be rest or a resurrection, is the same, and refers to the present or the past instead of to the future. According to this text, the repose spoken of has "already come" and does not refer to the future. In addition, it would be difficult to establish a clear relationship between a "rest" or a "repose" and a futuristic bodily resurrection.

Saying 113 follows this same train of thought when it says that "the kingdom" has already arrived secretly (Wright 2006:535). According to this Saying, "the kingdom" does not involve a final divine act in history that produces a new heaven and earth or a future physical resurrection (Wright 2006:535). Another place where this text explains it's conception of the resurrection is in Logia 71:

Jesus said, "I will destroy this house and no one will be able to rebuild it." This Saying closely parallels Jn 2.19 in which "temple" has been commonly interpreted as an image for the human body. Some have interpreted this to mean that Jesus will remove the body of the initiate and not replace it (Wright 2006:536). Riley suggests that Saying 71 is a reference to an early form of Christianity called "Thomas Christianity" that denied a bodily resurrection of both Jesus and his followers (Riley 1995:133-156).

Riley says that Johannine Christians adjusted the saying in John 2.19 in response to what the "Thomas Christians" had used in Saying 71 (1995:156). Although this is a theoretical possibility, there is no solid evidence to insist that it is true. If true the perspective would embrace the idea that *The Gospel of Thomas* is the source of *The Gospel of John* (Riley 1995:156).

Another example in support of Riley's claim, is the significant difference in meaning of the word for "temple" (ναός; ⲣⲡⲉ) used in Jn 2.19 and the use of "house" (οἰκία, ⲏⲉⲓ) from GTh 71. Riley suggests that this is the type of "adjusting" that was done by the Johannine community (Riley 1995: 149-150). However, the supposition that Thomas comes before John would not be possible if the evidence points to the fact that the *The Gospel of Thomas* was written after *The Gospel According to John* (Meier 1991:137). The priority of John to Thomas is important to the outcome of this study. If Thomas is the source of *The Gospel of John,* then Jesus' futuristic and bodily teaching on the resurrection would need to be reinterpreted in favor of what is taught about the resurrection in *The Gospel of Thomas*. As discussed previously in this chapter, that view involves a reabsorption into the divine or a return to the place of one's origin. A futuristic, bodily resurrection is not present in Thomas as it is in John.

In conclusion, when one looks at GTh alone, it is clear that a future resurrection is not a possibility. Robinson accurately summarizes the position held by Koester and others dealing with life after death and a future resurrection in GTh:

> In order to return to one's origin, the disciples must become separate from the world by stripping off the fleshly garment and passing by the present corruptible existence (Robinson 1990:126). Here, it is only after stripping off everything that binds him to the world, can the initiate experience the new world, the kingdom of light, peace, and life (Robinson 1990:126).

This description causes one to conclude that *The Gospel of Thomas* teaches the importance of returning to one's origin. It teaches the importance of getting rid of the fleshly garment and passing by the present time because of the corruption of our physical flesh. It teaches the possibility of a new world and a

kingdom of light. A futuristic bodily resurrection does not seem to be a possibility in this text. This advocates for a reabsorption into the place of one's origin which takes place in the present time and not in the future.

2.5.2 The Book of Thomas the Contender

This text is a dialogue between the risen Jesus and His alleged twin brother, Judas Thomas (Wright 2006:537). The name Judas Didymus (twin) Thomas refers to Jesus' "twin brother." This reference only appears in the Syriac literature and does not appear in the canonical literature. The idea of Jesus having a twin brother is not present in the New Testament.

This text embraces the idea of the denigration of the body (Wright 2006:537). This text says that the human body is a "prison" that will "perish" in several places (142.10-143.10; 143.11-144.19).

> For when you come forth from the suffering and passion of the
> body, you will receive rest from the Good One, and you will reign
> with the King, you joined with Him and He with you, from now on,
> forever and ever. Amen (145.10-16; Wright 2006:538).

In this book, the best one can hope for is to spend eternity as a spirit without a body (Riley 1995:157-167). As Riley notes, "*The Book of Thomas the Contender* makes reference throughout it to the fact that that the physical bodies will dissolve at death and the soul alone will endure and come forth out of the visible realm" (Riley 1995:165,167). Riley notes that in this book the soul will reach the "exalted height and the pleroma" (Riley 1995:165,167). The language of this text is clear. There will not be a future resurrection of the body. In fact, coming out of the body is a prerequisite to becoming a part of the immaterial world. It is also a prerequisite of returning to the pleroma. This can only be done without a physical body.

2.5.3 Pistis Sophia

Pistis Sophia was never found with the other texts from Nag Hammadi (Bock 2006:134). This text is part of what is known as the Askew Codex (Bock 2006:134). Part of this codex is a hymn which reads:

> God will save their souls out of all matter, and a city will be
> prepared in the light; and they will inherit it. And the soul of those
> who will receive mysteries in His name will be within it (32.35-36).

Chapter 37 of this text calls these individuals who have been enlightened "pneumatics" (Bock 2006:136). In *Pistis Sophia*, those who are "of the light" reflect spiritual awareness (Bock 2006:136). In contrast, those who are not of the light, do not have an "enlightened spirit," but rather have an "evil soul" (Bock 2006:136). The "pneumatics" or "spiritual ones" are headed for redemption and everyone else is not. In this text, there is no physical resurrection, but rather a reascension into the kingdom of light (46:7-8; Bock 2006:136).

2.5.4 The Teachings of Silvanus

The Teachings of Silvanus is a text from Nag Hammadi found in Codex VII. As in the other texts we have looked at so far, certain themes or ideas are emphasized:

> It is necessary to guard the divine, which is within, to cultivate it, and
> thereby come to know what is one's birth and substance, and from what
> race he comes (Peel 1971:152; Codex VII *4* 9.1, 33-92, 29).

In this text, the future state of man is equal to the place of one's origin. According to this text, the body came into being from the earth, and from that which was previously created (Bock 2006:138). This text puts an emphasis on living "according to the mind" (93.3-5). Clearly, the immaterial nature of man is the central focus. Since the author presupposes the idea that man was originally immaterial, it would be fitting to assume the author would rule out a future bodily resurrection for believers.

2.5.5 The Apocryphon of John

In *The Apocryphon of John*, the soul is described as being encased in the body. This text words this concept as "the grave of the new creation of the body" or as the body being in a "tomb" (NHC II *1* 24.34). Those who will inherit salvation are described as those on whom the "Spirit of life will descend" (Peel 1977:153; Bock 2006:139). The text illustrates this by saying:

Such then are worthy of the imperishable, eternal life, and the calling (*II* 25:33-26:3 cf. Bock 2006:139).

In this text, it is those who have the Spirit who will inherit salvation (*II* 26:7-19). This text describes those who have "no interest in the spirit" as being purged over a period of time. According to this text, the soul will eventually "awaken from forgetfulness and acquire knowledge" (*II* 26:32-27:8).

Interestingly, the "salvation" described in this text, has nothing to do with a physical or a bodily resurrection. The emphasis is on "the spirit" only. The reference to an "imperishable, eternal life, and the calling" has nothing to do with a physical or bodily resurrection. Since the body is seen as a grave or as a tomb, it is unlikely that a bodily resurrection will ever take place.

2.5.6 The Apocalypse of Peter

This text describes the spiritual experiences of Peter in a vision of light that he sees. In this text, Peter's apostolic authority is used as a basis to give credibility to the Gnostic experiences which are described here (NHC VII *3* 72.9-26; Wright 2006:544) Peter's Gnostic experiences are described here, generally, as "consubstantiality with the divine" (NHC VII *3* 70.15; 71.14; Peel 1971:152). The text describes it this way:

> But what they released was my incorporeal body. But I [Jesus] am the intellectual Spirit filled with radiant light. He whom you saw coming to me is our intellectual pleroma, which unites the perfect light with my Holy Spirit (83.6-15).

This is a description of Jesus laughing at his accusers and torturers who do not understand that Jesus' body alone is suffering (Wright 2006:544). The real Jesus is an "intellectual spirit" looking down on those inflicting pain on his mortal body from above (Wright 2006:544). In this text, Jesus' spiritual substance is released to rejoin the heavenly "pleroma" which enables him to look down on his mortal body as it suffers (Wright 2006:544). The text makes it clear that everyone needs to achieve this spiritual state that Jesus achieved. The text declares that whoever does not "abide with the immortal soul, will dissolve into that which does not exist" (76:18-20; Bock 2006:140).

In this text, the language of dissolution of the body is used. Also, the idea of being released from the body in order to rejoin a heavenly pleroma is used. There is no futuristic resurrection here.

2.5.7 The Apocalypse of Paul

The Apocalypse of Paul is found in NHC V. This text teaches the transmigration of the soul. This is the belief that the soul passes from body to body. Irenaeus of Lyon describes this as the soul passing from "body to body" to complete the required actions in the body before it's final ascent to the pleroma or cosmos (*Adv. Haer.* I 25.4).

This view is expressed in *The Apocalypse of Paul* in 20.22-23 and 21.17-20 (Robinson 1992:256). The idea of a final ascent contradicts the Jewish view of a bodily resurrection since a final ascent has no corporeal aspect to it. The concept of a transmigration of souls from one body to another seems to contradict the idea of a physical resurrection, since the soul never stops moving from body to body.

2.5.8 The Apocryphon of James

The *Apocryphon of James* offers secret revelations given by the risen Jesus to James and Peter after a waiting period of five hundred and fifty days (NHC I *1*; Wright 2006:544). The text is supposed to be a "secret writing" from Jesus to Peter and James (Bock 2006:139). Like many other texts from Nag Hammadi, the emphasis is on the denigration of the body in contrast to the imperishability of the soul (Bock 2006:139). In this text we read the following quote:

> For it is the spirit that raises the soul, but the body that kills it; that is, it (the soul) kills itself……….for no one who has worn the flesh will be saved (11:38b-12:16; Bock 2006:140).

According to this text, no one who has worn the flesh will receive any kind of salvation. This text seems to indicate that those who continue to wear the flesh will not enjoy the hope of a future resurrection. Under this belief, a futuristic resurrection is cancelled out. Another important text that deals with the future resurrection says:

But you, by faith (and) knowledge have received for yourselves life. Verily, I say unto you, whosoever shall receive life for himself and will believe in the kingdom, will never depart from it (14.8-17; 3.24-34)……..But I have said my last word to you, and I shall depart from you, for a chariot of spirit has borne me aloft, and from this moment on I shall strip myself that I may clothe myself (Bock 2006:140).

This text emphasizes the importance of receiving and living in a present actualized kingdom received through *gnosis*. A spiritual ascent is emphasized, rather than a future bodily resurrection.

2.5.9 The Authoritative Teaching

In *the Authoritative Teaching,* Jesus tells His disciples that the eternal state after death can be realized by them in the present:

Our soul indeed is ill because she dwells in a house of poverty, while matter strikes blows at her eyes, wishing to make her blind.

In the present, unrealized state, the soul is in the midst of suffering and torment because it exists in "a house of poverty," which is the human body (NHC VI, *3* 27. 25-28; Peel 1977:153). The emphasis in this text is on the soul, and a future physical resurrection seems distant based on the thoughts of the author (Peel 1977:153). If the "house of poverty" refers to the human body, the text would indicate that people are suffering because they are in the human body. In addition, the text suggests that if the human body is destroyed, the soul will be free.

2.5.9.1 The Letter of Peter to Phillip

The Letter of Peter to Phillip teaches the importance of stripping off the human body. According to this text, this is how initiates enlighten others (Peel 1977:153). This idea or concept is most clearly spelled out when we read:

When you strip off from yourselves what is corrupted, then you will become illuminators in the midst of dead men (Peel 1977:153).

The picture here is of a spiritual resurrection, which is different from what is found in the traditional materials. Robinson indicates that that these "luminous

revelations or appearances" could appear in both Gnostic as well as orthodox writings (Robinson 1982:11). However, others have suggested that in the orthodox writings, there is a corporeal or physical aspect to most revelations or appearances.

For example, in Rev. 1.1-13, the resurrected Christ appears to John as a theophany. There does seem to be a bodily aspect to the resurrected Christ in this appearance. John describes His physicality. Another appearance or illumination occurs in Acts 7:55-56, where Jesus appears at the right hand of the Father to Stephen the Martyr as he is dying. Again, Jesus' presence appears bodily, and not just as a spiritual illumination.

2.5.9.2 The Gospel of the Savior

In this text, resurrection language is used:

Now it is fitting that the soul regenerate herself and become again as she formerly was. The soul then moves of her own accord. And she received the divine nature from the Father for her rejuvenation, so that she might be restored to the place where originally she had been. This is the resurrection from the dead. This is the ransom from captivity. This is the upward journey of the ascent to heaven. This is the way of ascent to the Father……Then when she becomes young again [i.e. when her youth is renewed like "that of an eagle"] she will ascend, praising the Father and her brother by whom she was rescued (134.6-29).

This text indicates that only by going through a second birth, will the soul be saved (Wright 2006:546). In this passage, resurrection language is being used for a spiritual new birth, which leads one to escape from the world of captivity, where the soul is in bondage to the physical body (Wright 2006:546). The text indicates the soul's desire to ascend and be "where she was before." This is a reabsorption into the divine, rather than a future corporeal resurrection. The text says that "this is the resurrection" when referring to the ascent of the soul (Wright 2006:546).

Further, it is not just an ascent that is in view. It is a return of the soul to where it was before. The text indicates that souls pre-exist and then they depart

from this world and go back to where they were before. The idea of pre-existent souls does not seem to be a concept or idea that is found in any of the canonical writings. The idea of a soul pre-existing, descending into matter, and then re-ascending back where it was before is typical of what one usually finds in Gnostic texts. The problem is that a futuristic bodily resurrection does not fit into this pattern.

2.5.9.3 The Gospel of Truth

In this text, the disciples ask the Lord about the resurrection body:

Change your glory into [another] glory in order that [we] may be able to bear it, lest we see [you and despair] (107.2.3)…….[in] three days, [and I will] take you to [heaven] with me, and teach you (122.60-63).

Although this text is fragmentary and difficult to understand, it speaks about the initiate's life after death. The text continues:

And we too became like the spiritual body. Our eyes opened up to every side, and the entire place was revealed before us. We [approached] the heavens, and they [rose] up against each other. Those who watch the gates were disturbed. The angels were afraid and they fled to the […] [They] thought [that] they would all be destroyed. We saw our Savior after he pierced [through] all the heavens….(100.7.1-6 cf. Wright 2006:547).

This spiritual body of the believer seems to be like Jesus exalted, radiant body. The corporeal or physical component of the body is still lacking. This passage does use or employ resurrection language. However, the language surrounding these terms seems to focus on being transported into the heavens in order to escape the present reality of the flesh, which appears ugly and difficult to look at. A Gnostic ascension is the theory this text is supporting.

2.5.9.4 Dialogue of the Savior

Similar to other texts that we have seen so far, this text emphasizes rest:

Hence…….he is called, he hears, he replies, and he turns toward Him who called him and he ascends to Him and knows what He is called. Since he has knowledge, he does the will of Him who called him, he desires to please Him and finds rest (Peel 1971:151).

The appeal is to "rest" and salvation only if one can achieve *gnosis* in the present. Moreover we read:

This is the word of the Gospel of the finding of the pleroma for those who wait for the salvation which comes from above, when their hope, for which they are waiting—they whose likeness is the light in which there is no shadow, then at that time the Pleroma is about to come (34.34-35.7).

Hence, salvation is not just associated with "rest" or "repose," but with reaching the pleroma or "fullness." The text goes on to describe the end for the disciple or initiate:

For the Father knows the beginning of them all as well as their end. For when their end arrives, He will question them to their faces. The end, you see, is the recognition of him who is hidden, that is, the Father, from whom the beginning came forth [and] to whom will return all who have come from Him (Peel 1977:156).

The "end" seems to exists in the present through a "recognition" or reception of *gnosis*. The gift from the Father is the Spirit that refreshes the soul and prevents it from suffering loss (Bock 2006:143). The emphasis of this text is on the soul. It is also on returning to the Father from where it came. There is no designation of time in this text. In addition, there is no focus on corporeality. There does not seem to be an emphasis on a future physical resurrection.

In addition we read:

Already the time has come, O brothers, that we should leave behind us our sufferings and stand in the rest; for he who stands in the rest will rest himself forever. But I say to you, be in heaven at every time (Peel 1977:153).

The text is speaking about the importance of leaving behind the physical body. In addition, there is a priority given to being in heaven at every time in this

text. This takes away from a futuristic aspect to the resurrection. The resulting form of the soul in this text is described as of being "in nakedness":

> But I say to you that you will be blessed when you shall be naked, for it
> is not a great thing (NHC III 5.143, 10-23).

The text emphasizes the present, where the soul is praised and the body is denigrated. The "nakedness" in this context, probably refers to the stripping aside of earthly flesh and the physical body. Removing the body is seen as the solution to the problem. Based on these verses, a futuristic physical resurrection is ruled out.

2.5.9.5 The Second Treatise of the Great Seth

This text is another one that has a spiritual emphasis and is addressed to the "kindred Spirits" of Jesus Christ:

> But these things I have given to you—I am Jesus the Christ, the Son
> of Man, exalted above the heavens—O perfect and undefiled ones, on
> account of the mystery, undefiled and perfect and unutterable. But
> they think that…….You do not know this because the fleshly cloud
> overshadows you. But I alone am friend of Sophia. I have been in the
> bosom of the Father from the beginning, in the place of the sons of
> Truth, and the Greatness. Rest with me, my fellow spirits and my
> brethren, forever (69:20-70:1).

This text teaches that the flesh creates confusion. Union with the spirit and with knowledge is the most important thing, rather than with that which has been created (Bock 2006:144). The ultimate union, in the future, will involve other "kindred spirits." A physical resurrection seems out of place in the "spiritual" process that is described. There is a strong emphasis here on the immaterial aspect of humankind. Such things as the union with knowledge, incorruption, and spiritual union are clearly in view. The physicality or fleshly aspect of man is not emphasized in this text. Here, there is no emphasis on a futuristic physical resurrection.

2.5.9.6 Hypostasis of the Archons

In this text, Adam and Eve eat of the fruit, but it is shown that their souls are defective as they were originally created because:

Their imperfection became apparent in their lack of acquaintance; and they recognized that they were naked of the spiritual element, and took fig leaves and bound them upon their loins (Robinson 1990:165; Hypostasis 90:13-19).

This text shows that the soul that the creator God had given them was defective from the beginning (Bock 2006:145). The defectiveness seems to have manifested itself because Adam and Eve had taken on a physical or fleshly nature. Their flesh and clothing is viewed as evil in this passage. It is the spiritual nature of man that is seen as something to be obtained. The possibility of a future fleshly resurrection does not fit with this passages' repudiation of the flesh. In addition we read:

You, together with your offspring, are from the primeval father, from above, out of the imperishable light, their souls are come. Thus the authorities cannot approach them because of the spirit of truth present within them; and all who become acquainted with this way exist deathless in the midst of dying mankind. Still that sown element will not become known now (96:19-28; Robinson 1990:169).

The people who received this letter need the "seed of new life" or "the spirit from above" to be made complete or perfect (Bock 2006:145). There is a solid emphasis on the spiritual nature of man here. The material nature of man is seen as evil. A future physical resurrection is not possible from this passage.

2.5.9.7 The Epistle to Rheginos (Treatise on the Resurrection)

The Treatise on the Resurrection, from Codex I of the Nag Hammadi Library, is also known as *The Epistle to Rheginos.* A realized eschatology flows throughout this text:

Then, indeed, as the Apostle said, "We suffered with Him, and we arose with Him, and we went to heaven with Him" (NHC *I* 45.24-28; Peel 1971:151; Wright 2006:539).

This text conveys the same message as *The Gospel of Thomas*. The message is that of a realized eschatology or the obtaining of "rest" in the present, through the attainment of "knowledge" or *gnosis* (Rheg. 43.30-44.4 cf. Wright 2006:539). The idea of going to heaven with Christ here does not refer to a future resurrection. Rather, it has to do with a realized eschatology brought about through *gnosis*. This text brings out another interesting twist:

> Indeed the visible members which are dead shall be saved, only the living members which exist within them would arise. Then, what is the resurrection? It is always the disclosure of those who have risen (47.30-48.6; Wright 2006: 540).

Surprisingly, this does not seem to be a physical resurrection with an identifiable physical body. Rather, in this text, we are given the view of an ascension after death of our inward, invisible "members," covered by a new, spiritual "flesh" (NHC I *3* 47. 4-8; 47. 38-48; 3. 45; 45.36-56.2 cf. Peel 1977:160).

In 48.3-11, the author uses the appearances of Moses and Elijah, as they occurred in Mark 9.14, in order to prove the truth of the resurrection. The author believes that the Gnostic, spiritual person will retain the identifiable characteristics of his earthly body. The author also believes that the spiritual body will have many changed characteristics as well (48.34-38 cf. Peel 1977:160).

In this text, there does not seem to be a resurrection of the physical flesh or a continuity between the earthly body and the resurrection body (Peel 1977:160). This text does emphasize the inner, spiritual man. Peel has carefully described what is presented in this text as "spiritual flesh which retains personally identifiable characteristics" (Peel 1977:160).

Although this text does come close to what we find in *The Gospel of John*, it still differs from the orthodox view in that the present world is seen as an evil illusion (Wright 2006:541). In this writing, the reality of the resurrection can only occur by escaping the flesh (Wright 2006:541). Although the resurrection bodies described in this text are recognizable, with discernable features, there is no evidence from the text that the resurrection bodies described are physical or

corporeal. Since the flesh is denigrated in other parts of this text, we can only assume that a more spiritual resurrection is the one that is presented here.

T.J. Anderson has described the resurrection in this text as "Platonic philosophy dressed up in Pauline language" (Anderson 2011:43). Anderson feels this text is an attempt to synthesize the orthodox and Gnostic perspectives on the resurrection (Anderson 2011:44).

This text also makes it clear that the resurrection is not something that will take place in the future. Such language as "we arose with Him," and "we went to heaven with Him" expresses this. This text does seem to fall short of a futuristic and corporeal resurrection.

2.5.9.8 The Gospel of Phillip

From the outset, the text seems to attack fleshly existence:

The [Lord rose] from the dead. [He became as he used] to be, but now [his body] was perfect. [He did indeed possess] flesh, but this [flesh] is true flesh [our flesh] is not true, but [we possess] only an image of the true (Gos. Phil. 68.31-7; Wright 2006:542).

Although the text is fragmentary and the meaning of "true flesh" is confusing and obscure, it still seems that the flesh is imperfect and can only be made perfect only if one is made "like Him." The text goes on to connect the resurrection of the disciple or initiate to baptism. We read:

Those who say they will die first and then rise are in error. If they do not first receive the resurrection while they live, when they die, they will receive nothing. So also when speaking about baptism they say, "baptism is a great thing," because if people receive it, they will live (Gos. Phil. 73.1-8; Wright 2006:542).

Here, the resurrection is moved to the present time, taken in a realized sense, and is connected with the sacrament of baptism. In addition we read:

Those who say that the Lord died first and then rose up are in error, for He rose up first and then died. If one does not first attain the resurrection will he not die?.......Compare the soul. It is a precious thing and it came to be in a contemptible body. Some are afraid lest

they rise naked. Because of this, they wish to rise in the flesh, and they do not know that those who wear the flesh are naked. It is those who [. . .] to unclothe themselves who are not naked. "Flesh and blood shall not be able to inherit the kingdom of God." What is this which will not inherit? That which is on us. But what is this very thing which we will not inherit? It is that which belongs to Jesus and his blood. Because of this, He said, "he who shall not eat my flesh and drink my blood has not life in him." What is it? His flesh is the word, and his blood is the Holy Spirit. He who has received these has food and he has drink and clothing. (Gos. Phil. 56.15-57.8; Wright 2006:542).

The passage is puzzling, and it is difficult to determine the full meaning of "nakedness" in this text. If we keep in mind the text previously discussed on baptism (73.1-8), it could refer to not receiving baptism in the appropriate way. Unbaptized flesh would be seen as unredeemable, and excluded from heaven (Wright 2006:543). Another relevant passage in this text reads:

I find fault with the others who say that it [the flesh] will not rise. Then both of them are at fault. You say that the flesh will not rise. But tell me what will rise, that we may honour you. You say the spirit is in the flesh, and it is also the light in the flesh. But this too is a matter which is in the flesh, for whatever you shall say, you say nothing outside the flesh. It is necessary to rise in this flesh, once everything exists in it. In this world those who put on garments are better than the garments. In the kingdom of heaven the garments are better than those who have put them on (Gos Phil. 57.9-22; Wright 2006:543).

This text does seem to be as close as any text from the Nag Hammadi Library has gotten to the orthodox position. Robinson says, "this is as far as Gnosticism could reach out towards orthodoxy, without forsaking it's basic position of contrast with Paul" (Robinson 1982:17). Nevertheless, the text still indicates that resurrection is something that must happen before death (Anderson 2011:41). It also indicates that the resurrection is purely spiritual (56:25-35; Anderson 2011:41).

It has been the observation of many that the overall worldview of this text has "everything to do with the goodness of the soul over against the contemptible body, and the need of the former to escape it" (Wright 2006:544). *Phillip* reflects the same ideas as several other Gnostic texts, where it is the spirit that gives life to the soul. As Bock notes, "the sons of Adam are contemptible, as opposed to the sons of the perfect man" (Bock 2006:142).

In some sense, this text does teach the resurrection of the flesh. As Wright noted earlier, it is important to take into account the overall character of the work (Wright 2006:541). Throughout this text, the "flesh" is seen as something that is contemptible. When this text speaks of the "resurrection of the flesh," it is not in the same sense as one would find in *The Gospel of John.* Whatever resurrection is mentioned here, it is not one that will result in salvation for man or an eternal home for him in heaven. Due to the fact that the text is permeated with references denigrating the flesh, it must be concluded that this text still falls short of the orthodox position (Robinson 1982:17)

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2.5.9.9.9 Conclusion: Gnosticism, Nag Hammadi, and The Resurrection

The main position among the Nag Hammadi texts is that of a realized eschatology and a salvation that is received in the present through the reception of *gnosis.* This seems to have been the position represented by *The Gospel of Thomas, The Teaching of Silvanus, The Apocryphon of John, The Apocryphon of James, The Authoritative Teaching, The Letter of Peter to Phillip, The Gospel of Truth,* and *The Dialogue of the Savior.*

Another position that is strongly represented in the Nag Hammadi literature involves the re-ascent of the soul into the divine after death (Peel 1977:153). This view is presented in *The Exegesis of the Soul, The Second Treatise of the Great Seth, The Pistis Sophia, The Apocalypse of Peter,* and *The Apocalypse of Paul.*

In essence the soul reascends into the light or into the cosmos (Peel 1977:155). Irenaeus' statement adequately summarizes this view when he says:

"upon death, this spark of light returns to what is of the same nature as itself, and the other elements of man's composition are dissolved into what they were made from" (*Adv Haer* I .24.1; 1977:155).

Yet, another position that is represented in *The Gospel of Phillip* and in *The Treatise on the Resurrection,* is that the soul or spirit retains identifiable personal qualities and characteristics in the final state (Peel 1977:165). Nevertheless, a corporeal or physical aspect to such post-mortem existence is still lacking.

Based on the research presented, it must be concluded that as Gnosticism grew and developed from it's incipient form, it also developed different shades of meaning in it's concept of the resurrection (Peel 1977:166). Now, we turn our attention to *The Gospel of John,* which will serve as a test case to analyze what we found in the Nag Hammadi literature. A comparison between the Nag Hammadi literature and *The Gospel of John* shows the differences between the Gnostic and the orthodox perspective on Jesus' teaching of the resurrection of the dead. This comparison also shows a clear demarcation on *when* the resurrection of the dead occurs.

2.6 TEST CASE FOR THE GNOSTIC OR INCIPIENT GNOSTIC VIEWPOINT--THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

2.6.1 The Gospel of John: A Realized and Futuristic Resurrection

Of all the literature in the New Testament, *The Gospel of John* is the book that has been the strongest to emphasize the present time in what many have called a "realized" or "actualized" eschatology. Peel notes that "this view is almost indistinguishable from the Gnostic perspective presented above in the texts from Nag Hammadi" (Peel 1970:147). There is an emphasis on this present, realized, or inaugurated eschatology in such places as John 5.24-25, 3.18., 11.25, 12.31; 3.15, 36; 4.14, 26; 5.39; 6.27, 40, 47, 54, 68; 10.28; 12.25,50; and 17.2 (Wright 2006:441). This has led many to believe that the concept of the resurrection in *The Gospel of John* is just a modified form of the Gnostic view. From these verses, it seems consistent with the Gnostic view.

Many believe that the Gnostics originally seized John's text and claimed it as their own (Peel 1970:148). Two of the strongest proponents for a completely realized eschatology in *The Gospel of John* are Rudolf Bultmann and C.H. Dodd. For Bultmann, the editor or "compositor" reinterpreted the eschatology in *The Gospel of John,* as what is occurring now, allegorically, in the believer's life (Kysar 1970:92).

C.H. Dodd interprets the resurrection in the present or "realized" sense as "the churches answer for Christ's failure to return in the first century" (Gibbs 2008:3). He interprets the futuristic resurrection passages in John as a "code for something that may take place before bodily death and has for its result the possession of eternal life here and now" (Gibbs 2008:3). For Dodd, the future resurrection passages are allegorical of the believer's salvation experience, and for Bultmann they are the work of a later editor.

It seems likely to me, as the researcher, that that positions of Dodd (1958) and Bultmann (1971) do not adequately explain away the futuristic aspect of the resurrection mentioned in the text. Nevertheless, we do agree with them that *The Gospel of John* appears to have been heavily influenced by Incipient Gnosticism (Cook 1988:82). As Brown states, "in John, eternal life is a present possibility" (Brown 1966:cxvii). We now turn to some passages that show the inaugurated or realized aspects of eternal life in *The Gospel According to John.*

2.6.1.1 John 6.39-54 (NIV)

This present, realized, or inaugurated eschatology is exemplified in the following text from John 6.39-54 (NIV):

39And this is the will of Him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all that he has given me, but raise them up at the last day [αναστησω αυτο εν τη εσχατη ημυερα]. 40For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day……….[αναστησω αυτον εγω τη εσχατη ημυερα] 44"No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws[eklush] him, and I will raise him up at the last day……[καγω αναστησω αυτον εν τη εσκατη] 50 But here is the

bread that comes down from heaven, which a man may eat and not die51 I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever *(εισ τον αιονα; [ζησεται εις τον αιωνα]; into the age to come). This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." …………. 54Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.

In verse 40, the promise of eternal life is for the present. In verse 44, the "drawing" [εκλυση] by the Father is done by God in the present time. Likewise, the promise for life in verse 50 is for the present time as well. In verse 54, the promise "having eternal life" is also in the present. D.A. Carson notes:

> And if realized eschatology predominates in the Fourth Gospel, it is partly because John emphasizes what Jesus actually accomplished during his ministry and by his death/exaltation, partly because of his strong emphasis on individual renewal, and partly because he focuses on the transformation of people and not of the universe (Carson 1991:259)

Beasley-Murray notes "the gift of eternal life in the present does rule out the future promise of the resurrection" (Beasely-Murray 1999:92). He goes on to note: "It is a dualism of the present and the future that go together" (1999:92). For example, the promise of a future resurrection for the believer is to take place on "the last day" in 6.39, 40, 44, and 54.

Bultmann had attempted to explain these verses away as having been written much later by the hand of an orthodox "ecclesiastical redactor" (Peel 1970:148). In his commentary on *The Gospel of John,* Bultmann says the following about vv. 5.28-29:

> In any case verses 28 and following have been added by the editor, in an attempt to reconcile the dangerous statements in verses 24 and following with traditional eschatology. Both the sources and the Evangelist see this eschatological event in the present proclamation of the word of Jesus. Yet the popular eschatology, which is so radically swept aside by such a view, is reinstated again in verses 28 and following. *The editor corrects the Evangelist by this simple addition*, so

that it is difficult to say how he thought the statements in verses 24 and following could be reconciled with it (Bultmann 1971:261).

Bultmann's explanation is well thought out. Several verses do seem to point to a future bodily resurrection of believers in *The Gospel of John*. Similarly, E. Haenchen believes these verses were inserted by "those unhappy" with the message of John (Haenchen 1980:253).

2.6.1.2 John 5:24-29 (NIV)

Several verses such as 3.36, 5.21, and 5.28-29 point to a future physical resurrection. For example in John 5.24-29 (NIV) we read:

24I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes Him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life. 25I tell you the truth, a time is coming and has now come when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live. 26For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son to have life in Himself. 27And he has given him authority to judge because he is the Son of Man. 28Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear His voice 29and come out—those who have done good will rise [αναστασιν] to live, and those who have done evil will rise [αναστασιν] to be condemned (NIV).

2.6.1.2.1 Linguistic Argument

The verb ανιστημι means "to cause to arise" and is used here and eight other times in *The Gospel of John* (Gibbs 2008.:5). Wherever it is used in John, it used in the "futuristic" rather than in the "realized" sense. Contextually speaking, it should most likely be used that way here as well (Gibbs 2008:5). Similar observations can be made of John's use of such verbs as ζωοποιεω (*to make alive*) and εγειρω (*to raise*). For example εγειρω occurs 14 times in John's Gospel, as well as one occurrence in *The Book of Revelation* and always seems to refer to "physical events" with the exception of its usage in 7.52 and 5.21 (Gibbs 2008:5).

In addition, the word ζωοποιεω occurs 3 times in Jn. 6.63 and twice in Jn. 5.21. Each time that it is used, it refers to a physical resurrection. Lastly, the word αναστασις has two occurrences which are found in Rev. 20.5-6. Of the remaining four uses of it, two are found in 5.29 and two in 11.24-25. Each usage seems to refer to a physical resurrection. When John makes use of these terms, he is always referring to a physical resurrection. Gibbs describes the use of these three "resurrection terms," as John's "resurrection word group" (Gibbs 2008:5). According to Gibbs, when these terms are used together, they denote a future corporeal resurrection, in contrast to what we have found so far in the literature Gnosticism and Incipient Gnosticism, where resurrectionis spiritual (Gibbs 2008:5).

2.6.1.2.2 Contextual Argument

Christ's authority over the final judgment seems to be the broader context of this passage (Gibbs 2008.:6). In addition, the repetition of such terms as οτι, ερζεται, ωρα, ακουσουσιν, ζωης, ανδ κρισεως indicates that verses 28-29 are the "peak" of the discourse. According to Gibbs, a text "peaks" when it contains the highest numbers of what he calls "peak markers." These "peak markers" include such things as repetition, word or verb density, longer or shorter sentences, and changes in point of view (Gibbs 2008:6).

There seems to be a sudden change in tense from the present to the future tense in verses 28-29. In addition, the dualism presented in v. 29 of the two resurrections seems to be an added linguistic device that shows the discourse does "peak" in verses 28-29. These two verses flow with the rest of the text and refer to a future resurrection and judgment. One must conclude that the "yet future event of the resurrection is "casting it's light" into the present time (Wright 2006:443). D.M. Smith notes that "just because John reinterprets traditional Jewish and Christian eschatology does not mean that he denies it" (1999:138). Carson notes that these two verses are not "out of step" with the realized eschatology of John's Gospel and to do away with these verses is an "assignment that is severely mistaken" (Carson 1991:256).

In conclusion, this material is different from the purely realized or spiritualized resurrection forms taught in the Nag Hammadi literature. This is particularly true because in verses 28 and 29, a dual future resurrection seems to be in view. Therefore, "the resurrection to life" for Christian believers occurs before the millennium or the thousand year reign of Christ (Cook 1988.91). Also, "the resurrection to judgment" or "Great White Throne Judgment" occurs after the millennium in accord with Rev. 20.1-6 (Cook 1988:91).

2.6.1.3 John 11

In this text, Lazarus comes back from death into the same kind of life he had before he died. He does the same activities he did before he died such as sharing in a dinner party (12.2). Jesus had informed His disciples that Lazarus was dead when they thought he was asleep (11.11-16). Morris notes that "in the New Testament, the death of the believer is characteristically categorized as sleep" (Morris 1995:48). Lazarus had been in the tomb in Bethany for four days. Also, his body had begun to decay (11.17, 39).

Jesus raises him without his former corruption (v. 41). This is indicated from the text, in that there was no smell coming from His body (v. 41). Jesus calls him out of the tomb, unties him, and releases him back into normal life (Wright 2006: 443). There is confusion some confusion in verse 24 as to when the resurrection will occur and which resurrection is Jesus referring to (Matson 2002:74). Matson notes that "the differences between these two types of resurrections implies that Lazarus' resurrection is at least a foreshadowing of the coming general resurrection" (Matson 2002:74).

2.6.1.4 John 11:21-27 (NIV)

[Jn. 11] 21"Lord," Martha said to Jesus, "if you had been here, my brother would not have died. 22But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask." 23Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." 24Martha answered, "I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day." 25Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies;

26and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?" [εις τον αιονα; into the age to come]. 27"Yes, Lord," she told him, "I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who was to come into the world."

In this passage, the resurrection is something that takes place in the present time, and it is related to a confession of faith in Jesus Christ (vv. 25-26). Those who believe in Jesus already possess the life of the future age and the resurrection of the dead which will take place at a future point in time, specifically "at the last day" (v.24). Dodd says it best when he concludes:

All of these passages affirm, first, that eternal life may be enjoyed here and now by those who respond to the word of Christ, and, secondly, that the same power which assures eternal life to believers during their earthly existence will, after the death of the body, raise the dead to renewed existence in a world beyond (Dodd 1958:364).

2.6.1.5 John 12:23-25 (NIV)

23Jesus replied, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. 24I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds. 25The man who loves his life will lose it, while the man who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life [τουτω εις ζωην αιωνιον].

C.K. Barrett says that the grain represents Christ in His own death and resurrection (1967:352). Barrett believes it is plausible that John was relying not only on the Christian tradition about the death and resurrection of Jesus, but also ancient fertility rites related to the death and resurrection of a fertility god (Barrett 1967:352). Witherington believes that the "production of many seeds" (v. 24) may refer to Jesus' expanding ministry and possibly a futuristic resurrection of believers (Witherington 1997:223-224).

2.6.1.6 John 12:48 (NIV)

> 48There is a judge for the one who rejects me and does not accept my words; that very word which I spoke will condemn him at the last day.

From this passage, we can come to the conclusion that He may be speaking of a future resurrection, when His word will judge all men. Smith notes that here "judgment begins now, but it will also have it's fulfillment on the last day" which refers to the future (Smith 2005:246).

2.6.1.7 John 14:2-3 (NIV)

> [Jn 14:2-3] In my Father's house are many rooms [μοναι πολλαι]; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. 3And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come [ἔρχομαι] back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.

Here, Jesus uses the image of the many apartments of the Jerusalem temple as an image of the many rooms that will be provided in heaven for believers (Wright 2006:446). The word for "room" here is μονή. Brown notes the normal meaning of "μονη" is the "a dwelling place" in the Father's house (Brown 1970:626). This word may be interpreted either a permanent or a temporary sense to it (Morris 1995:568). Some have suggested that this would indicate the believer will have a temporary dwelling in heaven, until the future physical resurrection of the dead (Wright 2006:446). Sloyan notes that the "destiny of Jesus is the same one that is in store for His friends" (Sloyan 1988:179). This must mean a futuristic corporeal resurrection for all believers similar to Christ's own resurrection.

Cook notes that the word (μόναι) or "dwelling places" puts an emphasis upon the permanence of the dwellings, while the plural number shows that individual provision will be made for all of the Father's children (Cook 1988:94). Cook argues that each child will have a suite of rooms (Cook 1988: 94). He describes the dwelling places as the safe places where those who have died may lodge and rest while awaiting the future resurrection. Cook points out that the present tense usage of ἔρχομαι creates a "vivid and realistic picture" of the believer's

future in heaven and physical resurrection. This is in contrast to the Gnostic and Incipient Gnostic perspective, which would find a fulfillment of salvation, mainly in the present time (Cook 1988:98).

2.6.1.8 Conclusion on The Higher Critical Methodology Used in Interpreting *The Gospel of John*

In conclusion, the only way to make *The Gospel of John* fit into the view of the resurrection as portrayed in the texts from Nag Hammadi is to use the higher-critical methodology which was used by Bultmann (1971). Another way, we can make it fit is by applying the allegorical hermeneutic utilized by C.H. Dodd (1958).

As discussed above, these methods can be destructive to the unity of the text and the genuine thought of the author (Cook 1988:92). In the researcher's opinion, these methods cannot be trusted, because they force scholars to impose external systems onto the text (Dodd 1958:148). Dodd's explanation and discussion of "eternal life" illustrates this (Dodd 1958:148). As we have seen, the text, itself, speaks of the future physical resurrection (Gibbs 2008:8). To impose a purely Gnostic or Incipient Gnostic view on these texts, would make it necessary to place an interpretation on them that does not fit.

2.6.1.9 Conclusion and Findings on the Resurrection in *The Gospel of John*

In conclusion, the resurrection in *The Gospel of John* is both present and futuristic. In John, eternal life is both spiritual and physical as opposed to the purely spiritual Incipient Gnostic or Gnostic perspective (Cook 1988:89). It is important to resist any temptation to make this dichotomy soft, by "compromising the futuristic aspect of the resurrection or overemphasizing the realized aspect of it" (Wright 2006:441).

The Apostle John maintained the Pharisaic or Old Testament view of the resurrection, but added to it an inaugurated or realized aspect (Wright 2006:447). When Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life," he was speaking of both the present and the future. As Witherington notes:

Jesus being the life means that He gives eternal life, which begins in the present life and continues beyond death, while Jesus being the resurrection means that in a larger sense of the term, a person who believes in Him will never die, for he or she will be raised (Witherington 1995:203).

Jesus also provided the assurance that "salvation will last through bodily death and into God's future kingdom" (Wright 2006:447). John portrays the end of the work of God in relation to the believer, as the future glorification of the believer.

This glorification or resurrection will involve body, soul, and spirit, as opposed to the merely spiritual, Gnostic or Incipient Gnostic viewpoint (Cook 1988:92). Without the redemption of the body, salvation in heaven cannot begin for the believer (Cook 1988:92). Nevertheless, it is difficult to understand why the Apostle John phrased it in this manner. Perhaps he was making it clear that, although the resurrection was yet future, there is an aspect to it that begins now (Witherington 1995:203). Eternal life begins with a life in Christ. That life begins now and extends into eternity. The exact specifics of what that life entails, both now and in the future, are things that God will continue to reveal to us as we experience His salvation on a daily basis.

CHAPTER III

THE TEXTS

3.1 THE GOSPEL OF THOMAS (PRESERVED IN NAG HAMMADI CODEX II AND OXRYHYNCHUS 1, 654 AND 655).

3.1.1 The Gospel of Thomas in Recent Scholarly History

For many years, it has been suggested that there may be a tradition that is parallel to and independent of the Synoptic Gospels. Wilson has denied that *Thomas* is a source of the Synoptic Gospels (Wilson 1960:46, 116). On the other hand, Grant and Freedman have suggested that *The Gospel of Thomas* was derived from the Synoptic Gospels, along with other Gnostic writings (Grant and Freedman 1960:7 cf. Holding 2007:1).

Today, Patterson has indicated that it is appropriate to speak of *The Gospel of Thomas* as part of a tradition that is independent of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John (Patterson 1993:12). In addition, many see *Thomas,* as a tradition, that fits in with other writings that are similar to it in nature. One scholar, Stephen Patterson, has labeled it, "Thomas Christianity." He defines "Thomas Christianity" as a "distinctive theological and social-historical current within early Christianity" (Patterson 1993:12 cf. Holding 2007:2). Meyer has indicated that *The Gospel of Thomas* has roots that go back to the original teachings of Jesus (Meyer 2007:757).

Those who believe that *The Gospel of Thomas* should be dated to the first century are not agreed as to how much of it should go back there. For example, Montefiore suggests there are only two GTh sayings (94.15, 98.23, 26) that go

back to the first century (Montefiore and Turner 1962:50). Others, like Bruce Chilton says that three sayings (54, 82, and 99) extend back to before the *The Gospel of John* (Chilton 1984:170). If Thomas does contain the original teaching of Jesus about the resurrection of the dead, the view presented in *The Gospel of John* would need to be reinterpreted or done away with altogether.

Scholars are divided as to the dating of *The Gospel of Thomas*. Some have dated *The Gospel of Thomas* as early as the middle of the first century CE. Patterson and Robinson accept *The Gospel of Thomas* as the "fifth Gospel" (Patterson, Robinson, and Bethge: 1998). For example, Stevan Davies, Helmut Koester, and Stephen J. Patterson have dated *The Gospel of Thomas*, in the middle of the first century CE (Davies 2005:3; Koester 1990:85; Patterson 1993:113-118). The views expressed by Patterson, Davies, and Koester seem to be the modern trend.

F. T. Fallon and R.Cameron have stated what has been the more stable position that has existed over the last forty years:

> The date of 140 CE became so widely accepted as the operative consensus of scholarship, that it is still repeatedly asserted in the literature today, without any evidence or argumentation (Perrin 2002:5).

However, today, the views expressed by Davies, Koester, and Patterson are quickly becoming more accepted (Davies 2005:3; Koester 1990:85; Patterson 1993:113-118.

3.1.2 The Dating of The Gospel of Thomas and It's Importance for This Study

The dating of *The Gospel of Thomas* as well as the other Gnostic or semi-Gnostic writings is very important for this study. If it can be shown that Thomas or other Gnostic or Incipient Gnostic writings should be dated before *The Gospel of John*, then it is likely that those texts may be the source of what is in the Johannine material as far as the resurrection is concerned. If this is the case, then the futuristic, bodily resurrection, as taught by Jesus in *The Gospel of John* would have to reinterpreted in favor of the view presented in *The Gospel of Thomas* and in the other Gnostic and Incipient Gnostic writings. As we

discussed in Chapter 2, this perspective is, for the most part, a purely "realized" eschatology with little or no futuristic hope. In addition, it has for the most part, been described as a purely "spiritual" occurrence with a strong emphasis on the denigration of the physical body.

3.1.3 Is the Genre of Thomas Gnostic, Incipient Gnostic, or a Wisdom Tradition?

Robinson has suggested that the non-narrative framework of *The Gospel of Thomas* indicates that it was not originally Gnostic, but only faced Gnostic redaction at a later point in time (Robinson 1964:73-74). Robinson (1986) would place this text in what he calls a pre-canonical "wisdom" or "sayings" genre (Robinson 1986:165).

There are other texts where the Gnostics redacted or removed the passion, resurrection, and baptism of Jesus (Robinson 1986:165 cf. Holding 2009:267). Many of the verses or sayings in *The Gospel of Thomas* are in a "question and answer" literary format, which seems to be the normal way that a Gnostic or an Incipient Gnostic would write (Holding 2007:4 cf. Gartner 1961:25). This would indicate that the text was originally Gnostic, to be distinguished from the wisdom tradition or sayings genre that Robinson speaks of (Robinson 1986:165).

This evidence is probably inconclusive, since Jesus uses the "question and answer" format in different places in the canonical writings as well. Some of these places include Matt 18.21-22 and Jn 13.36-14.24 (Gartner 1961.25). Moreover, it is likely that the "question and answer format" was probably a way in which Gnostic points of doctrine were addressed (Gartner 1961:25 cf. Holding 2007:4-5). If the text of Thomas is Gnostic and not just a text that faced Gnostic redaction, it is likely that it should be dated later then *The Gospel According to John*. This would mean that Jesus' teaching in John would not to be redefined or reinterpreted in favor of a purely spiritual Gnostic or Incipient Gnostic perspective on the resurrection.

3.1.4 Wisdom Tradition and Sayings Genre in *The Gospel of Thomas*

As discussed in the previous section, the argument that is used to give *The Gospel of Thomas* an early dating is that it is part of a group of "Jewish wisdom

sayings." Robinson suggests this is the earliest source of what Jesus actually taught, and it would later develop into Gnosticism (Robinson 1964:74, 113).

In an essay entitled: *Logoi Sophon Zur Gattung der Spruchquelle Q,* Robinson identifies this literary genre as the "logoi sophon" or the "sayings of the sages" (Patterson 1993:103 cf. Robinson 1964:73-74). Robinson carried forward Bultmann's view of Jesus as a *weisheitslehrer* or a "wisdom teacher." This brought together the Jewish "wise sayings" or *meshalim* that one might find in the *Book of Proverbs* or the *Wisdom of Solomon* and the sayings of Jesus in the canonical writings (Patterson 1993:103).

In his essay, Robinson traced the development of the "wisdom genre" which he found in *Didache* 1.3-5 and Mark 4.1-34 through *The Gospel of Thomas* and eventually into Gnosticism (Patterson 1993:103 cf. Robinson 1964:71-113). In this manner, Robinson showed the development of a pre-canonical Incipient Gnosticism into a fully developed Gnostic system (Robinson 1964:71-79).

A major argument that has been forward by Koester, is that since *The Gospel of Thomas* does not have a narrative or biographical form, it must be dated earlier than *The Gospel of John* and should be placed within the wisdom sayings genre (Holding 2009:269 cf. Patterson 1993:104-105). Holding notes that "The lack of a narrative structure," refers to the fact that the death, resurrection, and miracles of Jesus are excluded in *The Gospel of Thomas* (Holding 2009:267). Also, within this type of literature, high Christological titles like "Son of Man" and "Son of God" are not present. According to Koester and Robinson, this type of literary genre has within it sayings that are very similar to those found in *Thomas* (Koester 1990:85; Robinson 1964:74).

Jenkins notes that other documents that have the same structural format as *The Gospel of Thomas,* like *The Gospel of Phillip,* are commonly accepted to fit into the second or third centuries (Jenkins 2001:69-70 cf. Holding 2007:7). Jenkins notes that *The Gospel of Phillip* is commonly dated to the third century (Jenkins 2001:69-70). *The Gospel of Phillip* is a text of unconnected sayings and statements, that like *The Gospel of Thomas*, is without any narrative or biographical structure (Jenkins 2001:70). There are other documents, like *The Pistis Sophia,* that contains this same type of structure (Holding 2007:6).

Holding notes that most would date it to the third century (Holding 2007:6). Therefore, evidence based on *The Gospel of Thomas'* non-narrative structure is inconclusive.

Koester situates *The Gospel of Thomas* in close proximity to a document known as "Q" (Koester 1965:136). "Q" is the material shared by Matthew and Luke that is not found in Mark. It consists of about two hundred and thirty verses (Jenkins 2001:56-7). The Q document is named after the German word *Quelle* which means "source" (Jenkins 2001:57). There is some disagreement as to what Q actually consists of (Witherington 2004:182). Nevertheless, Thomas is a "sayings source" that can be paired with Q and used to redefine what Jesus taught on the bodily resurrection in *The Gospel of John* (Segal 2004:468).

Koester divides Q and *Thomas* into an Eastern and Western branch, with *Thomas* representing the Eastern branch, and Q representing the Western branch (Koester 1965:136). Most see Q as being more orthodox in nature than *Thomas*, because it falls within the Western branch. This is also because Q was based on verses that are found in Matthew and Luke, rather than the material that is in *Thomas*.

Without the existence of the "wisdom genre," it would be difficult to situate *Thomas* within the first century. In addition, if Thomas is not situated in the first century, it presents no threat to the material and physical perspective on the resurrection as taught by Jesus in *The Gospel of John*. Is this wisdom genre mentioned in the New Testament? For example, Patterson has made reference to Paul's attack on wisdom in 1 Cor. 1-4 as an attack on the development of this genre as it is presented in Q and *Thomas* (Patterson 1993:104 cf. Holding 2009:267).

This interpretation does have some problems. Paul does seem to be refuting worldly wisdom in 1 Cor. 1-4. Is Paul's argument directed against Incipient Gnostic sources such as *The Gospel of Thomas* or Q? If the wisdom saying genre was what Paul was referring to, why wasn't he more specific about it? In the canonical texts, this sayings genre that Patterson and others refer to seems to be absent. However, it should be noted that the New Testament does seem

to make references to Incipient Gnosticism in various places, such as in 1 John 4.1-3.

The main argument Koester uses to situate *The Gospel of Thomas* early is that it is not dependent on the Synoptic Gospels (Koester 1965:118-119). Patterson argues, using *The Gospel of Thomas* 26, 34, and 54 as examples, that the only way *Thomas* could be dependent on the Synoptic Gospels is if it's author "deliberately broke up it's collections, scattering its parts, using some parts of Jesus' sayings while omitting others" (Patterson 1993:51 cf. Holding 2009:280).

Patterson may be correct. It is possible that second century Gnostic schools participated in this kind of practice. This would explain why this material is arranged the way that it is.

3.1.5 Does a Saying That is Simpler in Form Mean It Was Written Earlier?

One of the arguments that is used to date *Thomas* early is that the sayings in it are smaller, or appear to be truncated, unlike those in the Synoptic Gospels. Cameron stated, "texts whose literary forms are relatively spare can generally be dated to a period earlier than those which exhibit a more elaborate, developed stage in the tradition" (Cameron 1982:26; Robinson 1986:149; Holding 2007:7). Meyer quoting Cameron's article on *The Gospel of Thomas* in the *Anchor Bible Dictionary* (ABD) says that:

> An intertextual model may prove helpful, for it enables texts to be understood as highly conscious authorial compositions, adapted and adopted from various encounters with groups and repeated engagements with texts that constituted the cultural tapestry of the times (Meyer 1992:13).

Meyer seems to be saying that the use of elaborations and interpretations is a strong indicator that the text was written later than other texts that do not have elaborations and interpretations (Meyer 1992:14 cf. Holding 2009:267). The "simpler forms" can easily be explained based on the fact that a common Gnostic practice was to "make hidden" or "hide the meaning" of a text (Holding 2009:267). Leaving in the interpretation would indicate that the text was

probably not written by those who are in the Gnostic or Incipient Gnostic school. Since no interpretation is present, we have a hint that this text was written later and does not impose a threat to the the fleshly wounds and literal, physical resurrection that is described in John.

Secrecy is sometimes brought up by Jesus in the Synoptic Gospels, as in Mark 4.11 and 4.34 (Grant and Freedman 1960:64-65). Secrecy was not a major part of Jesus' teaching. In these two instances, Jesus later makes known to His disciples the fullness of His teaching. He also explains that He speaks in parables so that unbelievers will not understand His teaching.

In other words, anyone interested in following Him or having faith in Him will understand what He is saying and teaching. Jesus taught nothing in secret. In Gnosticism and Incipient Gnosticism we have an entirely different perspective. In fact, it is the Gnostic's goal to "make hidden" the meaning of their texts, so that they can confuse outsiders and arouse interest in their new initiates, so they can progress in the Gnostic system step by step (Grant and Freedman 1960:64-5 cf. Holding 2007:7). Therefore, truncated or shortened sayings are not indicators of an early dating. Shortened sayings fit better with the purely spiritual resurrection presented in Thomas, where humans come from the light and are destined to return to it if they just realize their heavenly origins (Segal 2004:470).

3.1.6 Ecclesiastical Editing or Gnostic Redaction?

Patterson argues that *The Gospel of Thomas* preserves the most original form of the parable that is found in Matthew 13.3-9, Mark 4.2-9, and Luke 8.4-8 (1998:42). Patterson's reasoning is that in the synoptics, the parable is followed by an allegorical interpretation, and *The Gospel of Thomas* version does not have that allegorical interpretation attached to it (Holding 2009:272; Meyer 1992:14-15). This would suggest that *The Gospel of Thomas* was written earlier. The Synoptic texts that have the "allegorical interpretation" are Matthew 13.18-23, Mark 4.13-20, and Luke 8.11-15. Patterson claims that the church added the interpretation later on in the synoptics texts (1998:42). Therefore, *Thomas*

preserves the most original form of the saying and is the source of John (Meyer 1992:14-15).

However, Gnosticism's goal was to "make secret" the interpretation of a parable to all but the initiates. Montefiore notes the following:

> Probably the reason that no allegorical explanations are appended to Thomas' parables is to be found in the desire to keep the true spiritual interpretation of the sayings hidden (Holding 2007:6 cf. Montefiore 1962:64).

It is probably for this reason that *Thomas* intentionally leaves some of his parables in a primitive state, while he seems to be prepared to alter many of Jesus' sayings drastically to suit his own Gnostic purposes (Montefiore 1962:64 cf. Holding 2007:6) Blomberg has suggested that the changes of the *Thomas* text from the Synoptic version is because of Gnostic redaction (Blomberg 1984:184-5 cf. Holding 2007:7). This would explain why there are no allegorical interpretations or explanations in *Thomas,* like there are in the Synoptic materials.

If one can show that the Gnostics changed parts of the text of *Thomas,* it would indicate that it is probably a Gnostic text and should be dated later than *The Gospel of John*. Blomberg has pinpointed Gnostic redaction in *The Gospel of Thomas* in a few places. One example of this is when the planter fills his hands with seeds. Blomberg notes that the heavenward ascent of the seeds seems to represent the Gnostic teaching of the heavenward ascent of the soul (Blomberg 1984:185). These redactions in the text indicate that the Gnostics had these texts in their possession, at a later time and are probably responsible for their origin and creation. It also shows that they are responsible for the creation of the view of the resurrection that says that the knowledge of the Lord can be sought and found, helping one to realize their own spiritual origin and future (Segal 2004:468).

3.1.7 Prominent Apostolic Figures in the Early Church

Another major argument put forward in support of the idea that *The Gospel of Thomas* is earlier than what is found in the canonical materials is that *Thomas*

appeals to authority figures like the Apostle James (Patterson 1998:41-2; Holding 2007:7).

Patterson has taken note of the fact the appeal to apostolic authority is especially true of the Apostle Thomas (Patterson 1998:42). As Patterson indicates: "in GTh 13, Thomas is exalted, but Peter and Matthew must play the fool, unable to understand the real significance and identity of Jesus" (Patterson 1998:42). For Patterson, this would indicate that *Thomas* was written in a time prior to *The Gospel of John*. He puts it this way:

> This suggests a time in early Christianity when local communities
> had begun to appeal to the authority of particular well-known
> leaders from the past to guarantee the reliability of their claims,
> even while rejecting the rival claims of others, and their apostolic
> heroes (1998:42).

GTh 13 is a possible attack on the Apostles Peter and Matthew and the Gospels associated with them (Patterson 1998:42). Riley asserts that the attack on Thomas in John 20.24-29 is an attack on *The Gospel of Thomas*. This attack is directed at GTh 71. This attack would also be on what Patterson had described as "Thomas Christianity" (Riley 1995:151). Segal notes "what better way for John to defeat the perspective on the resurrection found in *The Gospel of John* but by having it's author, Thomas, admit his spiritual position was wrong (Segal 2004:469). Meyer notes that it was only at this later time that Thomas was designated "doubting Thomas" (Meyer 2007:780).

It is also just as plausible that John is answering to an Incipient Gnosticism in his own time that has nothing to do with *The Gospel of Thomas* or the "Thomas Christians." Following this train of thought, it is also just as likely that GTh. 71 was written later than *The Gospel of John*, and is an attack on John 20.24-29.

Mere apostolic appeal is not a strong indicator of whether something was written earlier or later. Several other Gnostic texts use apostolic names and authority to make their arguments. Some of these include texts such as *The Gospel of Phillip,* and *The Apocryphon of John* (Holding 2009:276). Gnostics made extensive use of apostolic names in the titles of their works and in the

works themselves. They did this so that their works would be read and looked at with prominence and notoriety and not immediately dismissed.

3.1.8 The Use of Christological Titles

Patterson notes that *The Gospel of Thomas* seems to lack high Christological titles (Patterson 1998:43). Patterson puts it this way:

> Throughout the collection, one is hard pressed to find an instance in which Jesus is referred to in any of the Christological titles that became ever more prominent as the early fellowship of Jesus grew into a full-fledged religious movement (Patterson 1998:43).

Patterson further states that within *The Gospel of Thomas*, "He [Jesus] is not the 'Son of Man,''Son of God,' 'Christ,' or even 'Lord'" (Patterson 1998:42 cf. Holding 2009:276). Patterson indicates that "the absence of these titles is indicative of an earlier, rather than a later time" (Patterson 1998:43; Holding 2009:276). Patterson concludes that *The Gospel of Thomas* must have been written at a time before such titles were used regularly by Christians. If Patterson is correct, then it is likely that the purely spiritual view of the resurrection of Thomas should be accepted over the futuristic and bodily perspective presented in *The Gospel of John*.

However, the absence of high Christological titles may indicate that these titles were deleted by the Gnostics in accord with their own views of Christ (Holding 2007:7). For the Gnostic, Jesus always remains divine (Segal 2004:468). He is the "revealer-savior, who speaks in puzzles and imparts knowledge so that humans may also become divine" (Segal 2004:468). His existence as the unique Son of God is not emphasized.

3.1.9 The Gospel of Thomas' Dependence on the Synoptics and John

When one reads *The Gospel of Thomas* through, it cannot escape one's notice that the text is saturated with sayings and materials that come from all three Synoptic Gospels and John as well. Meier shows what he has observed in *The Gospel of Thomas* by asking the question:

Is it likely that the source that *The Gospel of Thomas* drew upon contained within itself such diverse first century material as Q, special M, special L, Matthean, and Lucan redaction, the triple tradition, and the Johannine tradition? (Meier 1991:137 cf. Holding 2009:280)

Meier argues that *The Gospel of Thomas* has material from Matthew and Luke, with some sayings coming from Mark and John as well (Meier 1991:137). There does seem to be a "blending of the Synoptic material" in *The Gospel of Thomas* (Gartner 1961:66-67). Gartner indicates that the writer of *Thomas* seems to have used all four Gospel writers, but uses Luke the most (Gartner 1961:66-67). If Thomas is dependent on them, it poses no threat to the teaching of Jesus on the resurrection in *The Gospel of John,* which involves a linear futuristic perspective and a complete restoration of bodily life for the believer.

3.2 Does The Gospel of Thomas Fit in with other Syriac Literature?

Gartner speculated that *The Gospel of Thomas* should be associated with *The Book of Thomas the Contender* and *The Acts of Thomas,* which originated in Syria. Gartner speculated that *The Gospel of Thomas* also came from Syria (Gartner 1961:272 cf. Holding 2007:29). Gartner shows this connection, when he says, "thus at the time that *The Gospel of Thomas* is supposed to have originated, there existed connections between Alexandria, Rome, and Syria, which were all influenced by Gnostic ideas" (Gartner 1961:272 cf. Holding 2009:269-270). Is it possible that *The Gospel of Thomas* should be placed in a Syriac setting, rather than in an early Palestinian one? Gartner illustrates this point when he says:

It is right to be skeptical of using *Thomas* as a major source of reconstructing the historical Jesus, not least because of the document's theological tendencies which include a Gnosticizing agenda which is a tell-tale sign that *The Gospel of Thomas* arose in the second century when Gnosticism was more fully developed (Gartner 1961:272; Witherington 1997:50).

Gartner believes that *Thomas* receives unfair prejudice in favor of an early date. Gartner says that *The Gospel of Thomas* should be treated the same as other texts with the same literary character. He says, "if *The Gospel of Truth* is reckoned as coming from Valentinian Gnostic circles, the same ought to apply to *The Gospel of Thomas,* since the resemblance between these two is so great" (Gartner 1961:272). *Thomas* does seem to fit well with texts from the second century, like one piece of a much greater puzzle. This would remove the problem of having to reinterpret or completely deny Jesus' teaching on the resurrection in *The Gospel of John*.

If *The Gospel of Thomas* is situated in second century Syria, would it have any effect on Jesus' teaching about the resurrection in *The Gospel of John*? If *The Gospel of Thomas* is not a first century document, than the argument that Incipient Gnosticism is the source of *The Gospel According to John* is considerably weakened.

It is possible that *The Gospel of Thomas* is not dependent on Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, but rather on Tatian's *Diatessaron,* which is a combination or conflation of them. This would explain the conflation of the synoptic material within *The Gospel of Thomas*. It would also provide a proper contextual situation for *Thomas*, taking into account *Thomas*' desire to use different Gnostic themes, catchwords, and phrases.

3.2.1 Was The Gospel of Thomas Originally a Syriac Document?

It has long been held that there is no clear framework or organizing principle lying behind the composition of *The Gospel of Thomas* (Evans 2006:74). New light indicates that where *The Gospel of Thomas* disagrees with the Synoptic Gospels, it does agree with the Syriac tradition and with *Tatian's Diatessaron* (Perrin 2002:184). Many reasons have been put forward as to why *The Gospel of Thomas* was originally a Syriac document, rather than an Incipient Gnostic text of the first century. Several reasons supporting *Thomas* as having been originally written in Syriac have been suggested.

First, there is an association of *The Gospel of Thomas* with "Judas Thomas." Thomas was an apostle who was important in Syria (Perrin 2002:4). The title

"Didymus Judas Thomas" is found only in the Syriac literature and not in the canonical literature (Perrin 2002:4). There is no place in the New Testament where this title is used.

Paranomasia is the "verbal play involving the sounds of words and how they relate to each other in a given context" (Perrin 2002:50). Perrin notes that "this kind of word play was used widely in antiquity to provide not only the meaning of words, but also how the words sound in relation to each another" (Perrin 2002:165).

The German word for "catchword" is *stichwörter*. A catchword is "a word that can be semantically, etymologically, or phonologically associated with another word found in an adjacent saying in the text" (Perrin 2002:50). Paranomasia is about "word play," or the way words are organized to relate to each other. Within the second century Syriac context, this organization of words is very recognizable. Based on the evidence of these words, Perrin has concluded that *The Gospel of Thomas* should be situated in a second century Syriac context.

Perrin has argued that *The Gospel of Thomas* is a finely crafted Syriac text, completely knit together by catchwords (Perrin 2002:157). Patterson says that he has traced the catchwords in *Thomas,* as they may have originally occurred in Greek and Coptic. Patterson, who holds this view, does not consider the possibility that the arrangement of catchwords in *The Gospel of Thomas* may have been arranged in a Syriac setting (Patterson 1998:43; Perrin 2002:50).

Perrin constructed a chart in which he compares the English text of *The Gospel of Thomas* on the left and Bentley Layton's Coptic version in the middle column. He also includes the conjectural equivalents to the Coptic Version in Greek and Syriac (Perrin 2002:55). In his chart, the catchword in English is underlined (Perrin 2002:56). In addition, he uses arrows to show the word's link to it's corresponding catchword in the previous and the following sayings (Perrin 2002:56). We have reconstructed a part of Perrin's chart to illustrate how his chart works and the significance of it for placing Thomas in a setting that poses no threat to Jesus' teaching on the resurrection in *The Gospel of John*.

Table 3.2 Comparison of the Syriac, Greek, and Coptic Texts of The Gospel of
Thomas

(5) For there is	ⲙⲛ̄ ⲁⲁⲁⲩ 19	οὐ γάρ 21	ܠܝܬ 23
nothing	ⲅⲁⲣ	ἐστιν	ܓܝܪ
hidden which	ⲉϥϩⲏⲧ	κρυπτὸν ὅ	ܕܡܛܫܝ ܕܐܠܐ
will not become	ⲉϥⲛⲁⲟⲩⲱⲛ2	οὖ φανερὸν	ܕܢ
manifest (5.2)."	ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ⲁⲛ	γενήσται	ܢܬܓܠܐ

The chart is an analysis of the catchwords that exist in *The Gospel of
Thomas.* By looking at the English, Greek, and Coptic versions side by side, one
can see how the three texts relate to each other linguistically. Within the section
reproduced here, one can see that the entire sentence is a repeat of *The Gospel
of Thomas* 5.2, and could possibly be a scribal error. Perrin underlines it in
English because he considers the entire phrase to be one catchword (Perrin
2002:62).

The number 5.2, which comes after the word "manifest" is the chapter and
verse where the corresponding catchword can be found in *The Gospel of
Thomas*. The three numbers (19, 21, and 23) indicate the running tally that
Perrin keeps of the catchwords throughout the *Thomas* text. Perrin's chart is
extremely valuable because it shows, that if *Thomas* was originally written in
Syriac, what catchwords it would be organized around. It provides a plausible
reconstruction of what *The Gospel of Thomas* may have looked like in it's
original Syriac setting.

Perrin's theory and chart have not gone without some criticism. For instance, PJ Williams, a scholar skilled in Aramaic and Syriac, accuses Perrin of creating Syriac catchwords in line with his own "tendentious inclinations" about the late date of *The Gospel of Thomas* (Williams 2009:71-80). In other words, Williams accuses Perrin of using and choosing Syriac catchwords that are in line with his own "subliminal inclinations in favor of a late Thomas," rather than choosing the most appropriate Syriac word for each situation.

Perrin has responded that his selection of catchwords in his retroversion to the Syriac text is based on solid criteria. He says he follows the wording of the Old Syriac text, when *The Gospel of Thomas* parallels the Synoptic material (Perrin 2007:72). He also says that if the witnesses of the Diatessaron differ from the OS, then the Diatessaron is to be preferred (Perrin 2007:72). Lastly, he says that when there is not a parallel in these other two categories, he refers to the Syriac language using the criteria of "sense" and "frequency of usage" to choose the right catchword (Perrin 2007:72).

Perrin has further defended himself by saying that his choice of words in his retroversion to the original Syriac of *Thomas* is not based on single catchwords, but rather on "catchword patterns," which include the "repetition of word pairings" both forward and backwards in the text of *Thomas* (Perrin 2007:74).

Perrin records that in the Coptic version only 49% of the sayings are connected both forward and backwards to other sayings (Perrin 2007:74). He records 50% in the extant Greek text of *Thomas* that are connected in this manner. In his reconstructed Syriac original, Perrin records 89% of the sayings that are connected both forward and backwards (Perrin 2007:73).

In addition, he adds that in the Syriac *Thomas*, there are no isolated sayings that are not connected to the rest of the text. This is not true in the Greek and Coptic texts (Perrin 2007:73). Perrin does admit that his thesis is not flawless. He also admits that in some instances he has had to make an educational guess as to which Syriac word to use in the reconstructed text (Perrin 2007:3).

3.2.2 The Number of Catchwords in The Gospel of Thomas

Perrin records that there are 269 catchwords of *The Gospel of Thomas* in the original Coptic. There are 263 catchwords in the Greek version. In the Syriac version, 502 can be found throughout the Syriac version (Perrin 2002:169). Perrin argues that with the excessive number of catchwords in Syriac, as opposed to Greek, and Coptic, it is likely that the entire collection was composed in Syriac (Perrin 2002:169).

Perrin argues that a major reason for the writing of *Thomas* to begin with was to use the text as a means of making plays on words. Perrin also argues that *Thomas* was written to make phrases and motifs interact with each other. The admission of Patterson, who believes that *Thomas* is a first century text, that *Thomas* is organized around catchwords makes Perrin's case even stronger (Patterson 1998:43). Placing Thomas at a later date removes the threat it poses to the bodily resurrection.

3.2.3 The use of Catchword Patterns and Puns in The Gospel of Thomas

We now look at a few examples of catchwords in the Thomas text. The word "fire" occurs throughout the *The Gospel of Thomas*, using the words ϣⲁⲛⲧⲉ, ⲕⲱϩⲧ̄, and ⲥⲁⲧⲉ found in GTh 10, 13.8, 16.2, 82.1, and 83.1. These words are adjacent to the word for light or ⲟⲩⲟⲉⲓⲛ in Coptic found in GTh 11.3 and 83.1 (Perrin 2002:156). Continuing with this idea, GTh 16, is next to a logion using the word "eye" in GTh 17.

This word is a metaphor for "light." The attraction of fire and light is due to the fact that the words were probably originally joined by the Syriac puns (Perrin 2002:156). "Light" or ⲟⲩⲟⲉⲓⲛ, in Coptic, occurs eight times in the text. It is likely that the puns *nurā* and *nurhā* are not coincidental. This is because this is not the only place in the Syriac text where this play on words occurs. Perrin believes his case is enhanced because he has not merely uncovered isolated catchwords, but has shown the emergence of a "catchword pattern" (Perrin 2007:74). This is due to the repetition of the word play, that not only occurs in GTh 10, but also in GTh 82.1, 83.1, 16.2 and 17. Since his Syriac reconstruction

of the texts shows such patterns and is not based on isolated words or logia, he feels his case for a Syriac original is all the stronger (Perrin 2007:74).

3.2.4 The Gospel of Thomas and Tatian's Diatessaron

Tatian's Gospel harmony, known as the *Diatessaron,* was the first Gospel record completed in Syriac. Tatian's *Diatessaron* was the only Syriac Gospel in existence in the second century that scholars are aware of (Perrin 2002:184). *The Diatessaron* presents a problem for scholarship because they do not have the original text of it, and they must indirectly reconstruct it. It would appear that if the writer of *Thomas* used anything as a source, it would have to have been Tatian's *Diatessaron*, since this was the only form of the Gospel that would be available in second century Syria (Perrin 2002:184).

One such example is where *Thomas* 44 and 45 follows Matt 12:31-32 and Luke 6:43-45 respectively and yet harmonizes the texts in the same manner as is done by the major witnesses we have of the Tatian's *Diatessaron* (Perrin 2002:188). Perrin notes eight points at which he thinks Thomas follows the order of both the canonical gospels and Tatian's harmony and one place which follows the order of *The Diatessaron* alone (Perrin 2002:188).

Perrin's thesis continues to be criticized. For instance, D.C. Parker has published a critical review of Perrin's thesis. He praises Perrin for situating *Thomas* in second century Syria. Parker says that Perrin is weak on bibliographic and textual evidence that links *Thomas* to the *Diatessaron* (Parker, 2003:3).

According to Parker, Perrin acts on his own subliminal inclinations against an early dating of *The Gospel of Thomas*. Parker says that Perrin does not honestly attempt to eliminate alternative textual arguments in favor of an early *Thomas* text. He says that Perrin does not honestly seek out differences between witnesses to the *Thomas* text and the *Diatessaron* (Parker, 2003:3). Parker says that Perrin does not spend enough time with the textual issues.

Parker attempts to show that Perrin makes assumptions that there is a reflection on Tatian's harmony in *Thomas*, where it could be a mere dependence on variants of only one of the Synoptic Gospels (Parker 2003:2). In

his own defense, Perrin lists fifty Sayings from *The Gospel of Thomas* that he thinks shows Diatessaronic influence (Perrin 2007:76).

3.2.5 Conclusion Regarding The Gospel of Thomas

In conclusion, due to the criticism it has received by Williams, Goodacre, Parker, and others, the evidence surrounding Perrin's thesis is inconclusive. Bock's conclusion adequately describes the current situation:

> Perrin's thesis is bold, and if true could overturn a good amount of scholarly opinion. Although one or two scholars have latched on to Perrin's thesis, the evidence in it's support seems inconclusive. But this work illustrates one end of the variety of opinions about the date of *Thomas* (Bock 2007:112).

Even though Perrin's thesis is not without it's difficulties, it does seem to be plausible. *The Gospel of Thomas* was probably first composed in Syria. As a Syriac text, *The Gospel of Thomas,* displays a literary unity and reflects the work of one author known only as "Judas Didymus Thomas." Given the unity and organizing principles behind *The Gospel of Thomas*, it is likely that *Thomas* relied for his use of the synoptic sayings on Syriac sources. As mentioned earlier, Tatian's *Diatessaron* is the only Syriac text of the synoptic tradition that could have been available to the author of *Thomas* at that time (Perrin 2002:193). It is plausible that *Thomas* was composed between 175 and 200 CE (Perrin 2002:157). If it was, the literal, bodily resurrection as taught in John would be left unbothered.

Situating *Thomas* as a second century Syriac text alleviates the potential problem of Jesus' teaching on the resurrection being reinterpreted by Incipient Gnosticism. It would also show that the Incipient Gnostic or Gnostic view of the resurrection was probably not Jesus' original teaching. Segal notes "for those who held the Thomasine perspective on the resurrection, it was only those who actually saw the vision of the Savior that would be transformed through knowledge or gnosis" (Segal 2004:477).

Their spiritual and actualized view of the resurrection was consistent with their views on how to achieve salvation. They were a far cry from the

resurrection of the physical body that is taught by John. It was the physical body that they regarded as evil and created by an evil god known as the demiurge (Segal 2004:477).

3.3 THE DIALOGUE OF THE SAVIOR (PRESERVED IN NAG HAMMADI CODEX III)

This text is a revelation of a dialogue of the Savior with his disciples (Theissen 1996:42). Most date the text, in it's entirety, to the second century. Some have argued that several sources are incorporated into it (Theissen 1996:42). Some of these sources may date back to the first century. As with *The Gospel of Thomas*, they become relevant in understanding Jesus' teaching on the resurrection in *The Gospel of John* and whether it was influenced by Incipient Gnosticism.

3.3.1 The Dialogue Gospel

E. Pagels and H. Koester see a *Dialogue Gospel* embedded within this text. The source is located in *Dialogue of the Savior* 124.23-127.18, 131.19-21, 132.15, and 137.3-147.22 (Crossan 1991:430). This text is seen by Koester to be a source of the larger *Dialogue of the Savior,* which Crossan admits shows signs of Gnosticism (Crossan 1991:430). The sections that Dunn thinks show signs of Gnosticism are sections 26, 28, 55, and 84 (Dunn 2003:168).

Koester's position is that *The Dialogue Gospel,* spoken of previously, preserves the most original form of Jesus' sayings, which *The Gospel of John* reinterprets and redacts (Koester 1990:180-181). In this text, Mary is declared to be superior in authority to the other apostles, which also includes her resurrection in a female body (Sec. 24; Segal 2004:558). Segal believes that "to the orthodox living in this time, this would be seen as not a full bodily resurrection" (Segal 2004:558). If the *Dialogue Gospel* does exist, then what is written in John on the resurrection would have to be reinterpreted in light of the Gnostic and Incipient Gnostic sources. This would lead to a reinterpretation of Jesus' teaching in *The Gospel According to John,* which teaches a full and literal bodily resurrection.

3.3.2 Conclusion on The Dialogue of the Savior

Dunn sees *The Dialogue of the Savior* as a well-developed reflection on an earlier tradition, whose earlier form is only "occasionally visible" (Dunn 2003:168). This would be the text called the *Dialogue Gospel,* which has been highly esteemed by Koester, Crossan, and others. Due to the *Dialogue Gospel's* Gnostic distinctives, it is not likely that it preserves the earlier, or more original versions, or serves as the source to *The Gospel of John* (Dunn 2003:168).

Dunn doubts the claims that this text is earlier than what one can find in the in *The Gospel of John*. Dunn finds no comparison between it and *the Gospel of John* in "providing evidence of being rooted in the earliest forms of the Jesus tradition" (Dunn 2003:168). It is likely that the entire *Dialogue of the Savior* text should be separated from the earlier *Dialogue Gospel*. If there is no *Dialogue Gospel*, then it is likely that Jesus' teaching on the resurrection in the orthodox writings and in John will be preserved as being both futuristic as well as having the ability to restore the believer to full bodily life.

3.4 THE GOSPEL OF PETER (PRESERVED IN A LARGE FRAGMENT FROM AKHMIM AND SMALL FRAGMENT OF PAPYRUS OXYRHYNCHUS 2949 AND PAPYRUS OXYRHYNCHUS 4009).

3.4.1 Origin of The Gospel of Peter

Eusebius of Caesarea mentions *The Gospel of Peter* three times (*Ecclesiastical History* 3.3.1-4; 3.25.6). The first time he mentions it as a work constructed by heretics. The third time he mentions it, he quotes a letter of Bishop Serapion (A.D. 199-211). It is here that Serapion labels the document as "docetic" (Evans 2006:79). In the winter of 1886-1887 in Akhmim, Egypt, a codex was found in tomb of a Christian monk (Evans 2006:79). The manuscript had a fragment of a gospel, a fragment of the Greek *Enoch, The Apocalypse of Peter,* and on the inside of the back cover, an account of the martyrdom of St. Julian (Evans 2006:79). Since the text was narrated by Peter, it was accompanied by *The Apocalypse of Peter*, and seems to be docetic, referring to the heresy denying Jesus humanity.

Docetism is the teaching which comes from the Greek word δοκέω which means "to seem" or "to appear." It is the idea that Jesus only appeared to be human. Segal notes that if Jesus only appeared to be human and die, his resurrection would only be a mere appearance or vision (Segal 2004:537). This is the same idea that was present in Gnosticism. It would also discount His teaching in *The Gospel of John* of a futuristic and bodily resurrection.

We now turn to find the place of *The Gospel of Peter* in the history of scholarly research and what tools Crossan uses to carry parts of it back to the first century (Crossan 1998:44). This is important for our understanding, if it could possibly have an impact on reinterpreting Jesus' teaching on the resurrection of the dead in *The Gospel of John*.

3.4.2 History of Research in relation to The Gospel of Peter

H.B. Swete, A. Harnack, and T. Zahn held that *The Gospel of Peter* was dependent on the Synoptic Gospels (Charlesworth and Evans 1998:504). Percival Gardner-Smith argued that *The Gospel of Peter* was independent of the Synoptic Gospels (Charlesworth and Evans 1998:504). Recently, Ron Cameron has suggested that:

> It is quite possible that the document as we have it antedates the four
> Gospels of the New Testament and may have served as a source for
> their respective authors and was probably composed in Western
> Syria in the second half of the first century (Cameron 1982:78).

J.D. Crossan identifies a section of the Akhmim fragment (7:25-11:49) as being the source of the passion narratives in Matthew, Mark, and Luke. He says:

> This book has argued for the existence of a document which I call
> *The Cross Gospel* as the single known source for the Passion and
> Resurrection narrative. It flowed into Mark, flowed along with him
> into Matthew and Luke, flowed along with the three synoptics into
> John, and finally flowed along with the intracanonical tradition into
> the pseudepigraphical *Gospel of Peter* (Crossan 1988:404).

3.4.3 Evidence of The Gospel of Peter's Dependence of the Synoptics

It should be noted that Crossan's "Cross Gospel" appears to be written later and is dependent on the Synoptic Gospels. Crossan's *Cross Gospel,* in places, shows signs of lateness. For example in 7.25 we read:

> Then the Jews and the elders and the priests, knowing what sort of harm they had done to themselves, began to lament and say: "Woe [to us] for our sins; the judgment and the end of Jerusalem have drawn near" (Gos. Pet. 7.25)

This statement as well as the saying in 11.48 of *The Cross Gospel* seems to resemble Jesus weeping over Jerusalem as mentioned in Lk 21.20-24 and Lk.23:48, as well as Caiphas' counsel mentioned in Jn 11.49-50 (Evans 2006:83). Such statements seem to reflect a post AD 70 setting where it was clear that the Jews failed to recognize Jesus as the "Messiah" (Evans 2006:83). Likewise in 8.28 of the *Cross Gospel* we read:

> But the scribes and the Pharisees and the elders.....grumbling and murmuring *and beating their breasts* saying, "If at his death these great signs have happened, behold how righteous he must have been (*Gos. Pet.* 7.25)

This quote seems to represent Luke 23.47-48 where the centurion also exclaims that "this man was righteous" *[dikaios],* and the multitude returns home "beating their breasts" (Evans 2006:83). The mention of "The Lord's Day" in 9.35 seems to be a repetition of Rev. 1.10. Matthew's influence is seen in Pilate's claim of innocence in the death of Jesus (11.46; cf. Matt. 27.24; Charlesworth and Evans 1998:511).

This text is in not independent or prior in time to *The Gospel of John*. The text is dependent on the canonical texts. It is likely that the *Cross Gospel* has no place as a source in the forming of Jesus' teaching on the resurrection in *The Gospel of John*. It rather seems to be a later alteration that is dependent on rather than independent of the synoptic material and *The Gospel of John*. Therefore, Jesus' futuristic and corporeal teaching on the resurrection does not need to be reinterpreted in the form of a Jesus who only "seemed" or "appeared" to rise from the dead (Segal 2004:537)..

3.4.4 Conclusion on The Gospel of Peter

This account of Jesus being "so tall that his head extends above the heavens," a talking cross that exits the tomb with Jesus, and angels with heads that "reach towards heaven" seems to fit much better in a second century situation, than as the source of *The Gospel of John* and a potential Incipient Gnostic or Docetic source that would cause us to reinterpret Jesus' teaching on the resurrection in *The Gospel of John*.

To accept a text with these exaggerations as a source of the *The Gospel of John* would be to proceed from a fictional position. To believe that all of the apostolic writers proceeded on the grounds of Docetism, myth making, and fanciful tales to a more historical and accurate perspective seems to be out of the question. It is unlikely that this text will help redefine what Jesus taught on the resurrection in *The Gospel According to John*.

3.5 THE APOCRYPHON OF JAMES (PRESERVED IN NAG HAMMADI CODEX I)

The Apocryphon of James (*Ap Jas*) claims to be a secret teaching in dialogue form given to Peter and James five hundred and fifty days after Jesus' resurrection (Theissen 1996:42). Jesus suffering is emphasized in this text, as well as several of His parables (Theissen 1996:42). Many have associated *The Apocryphon of James* with Gnosticism (Cameron 2004:130). There does seem to be a strong influence of either Gnosticism or Incipient Gnosticism on this text.

3.5.1 The Apocryphon (Letter) of James in Modern Research

The Apocryphon of James (*Ap Jas*) is said to be based on a source independent of the Synoptic Gospels and "is also contemporary with them" (Cameron 2004:130). The position of Koester is that "*The Apocryphon of James* represents an earlier stage in the sayings tradition and one can be relatively sure of this because the sayings in it parallel the discourses in John's Gospel" (Koester 1990:200)*.*

Cameron goes to great lengths, in the original language of Coptic, to show parallels between *The Apocryphon of James* and the Synoptic Gospels

(Cameron 2004;128-130). From this, Cameron concludes that *The Apocryphon of James* exhibits characteristics parallel to the synoptics that show that The *Apocryphon of James* was written at the same time as the Synoptic Gospels or before them (Cameron 2004:128-130). If this text, or parts of it, can be dated prior to *The Gospel of John,* it is likely that the futuristic bodily resurrection will need to be redefined in favor of the purely spiritual perspective present in Gnosticism.

Cameron does this by his analysis of the text and by analyzing it's author's use of similes throughout the text. Some of the themes that emerge from this text are "prophecy of judgment, wisdom and prophetic sayings, the use of sayings to compose dialogues, and the tradition of remembering the words of Jesus" (Cameron 2004:iix).

Simply because parallels exist between the two texts does not necessarily mean that *The Apocryphon of James* was written first. Nor, does it mean that it is the source of the synoptic material. In fact, it is just as plausible that *The Apocryphon of James* is dependent on the synoptic material.

Dunn indicates that this document is "clearly Gnostic" in character based on such sections as 10.1-6 and 12.4-9 (Dunn 2003:169). In addition, dependence of the text on the synoptic material would produce the same result as the parallels described by Cameron. Dunn says that "the parallels could be explained as echoes of tradition known from the canonical Gospels and John" (Dunn 2003:169).

Moreover as discussed previously with *The Gospel of Thomas*, Gnostic practice would not exclude the use of any one of the writing genres mentioned above. In fact, these are the kinds of parallels that one would normally expect to find. Gnosticism and Incipient Gnosticism was not opposed to using the ideas and the themes of the canonical materials and John. However, they used them for their own purposes. If the entire text can be dated to the second century, it is likely that the orthodox perspective on the resurrection of the dead as put forward in *The Gospel of John* will not need to be reinterpreted in light of a purely spiritual resurrection that has already taken place in the lives of believers.

3.6 THE SECRET GOSPEL OF MARK (PRESERVED IN A SUPPOSED LETTER FROM CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA)

3.6.1 The Discovery of The Secret Gospel of Mark

In the summer of 1958, during a stay in the Greek Orthodox monastery of Mar Saba, Southeast of Jerusalem, Columbia University Professor Morton Smith found a handwritten entry on the last, unprinted, pages of an edition of the works of Ignatius of Antioch, dating from 1646 (Merkel 1991:106).

It is an extract from a letter of Clement of Alexandria to his disciple Theodore, whom he seeks to warn against a *Gospel of Mark* that has been falsified by the Gnostic sect of the Carpocratians (Merkel 1991:106). Clement says that it gives a "more spiritual" version of Mark and quotes from it (Merkel 1991:106). Smith photographed the letter, which breaks off in the middle of the sentence on the third page (Merkel 1991:106).

The original of this document is missing. Smith's findings were finally published in 1973. Because Morton Smith never published the originals, but only a photo copy of it, many people began to believe that what Smith had offered was a fake or a forgery. If *Secret Mark* is a fake, then it cannot be used as a source for Jesus' teaching on the resurrection of the dead. This text does pose a threat to the teaching of Jesus on the resurrection in *The Gospel of John*. The text teaches the basic tenents of Gnosticism. Therefore, it is likely that the Gnostic view of the resurrection would be present here. John's truth of a futuristic resurrection would need to be reinterpreted or denied altogether.

3.6.2 The Contents of Secret Mark

The alleged letter of Clement of Alexandria quotes from *Secret Mark* twice. In the first quotation, which is longer, Jesus raises a young man from the dead. Later on that evening, he returns to Jesus clothed with only a linen cloth on his naked body and spends the night with Him as Jesus teaches him the "mysteries of the Kingdom of God" (Frag. 1*III* 8-10). This text has homoerotic connotations and has stirred up some controversy.

3.6.3 Secret Mark in Recent Research

The paper and ink used for this document have never been subjected to the kinds of tests normally undertaken for such documents, since Smith was the only one who saw the original document before his death (Evans 2006:95). Smith himself indicated that *Secret Mark* was the source of much of the material in canonical Mark and John (Smith 1973:57). Cameron communicates his thoughts on this text:

> The *Secret Gospel of Mark* was probably composed around the beginning of the second century, most likely in Syria. Sometime thereafter our present edition of Mark was written, with only vestiges of the secret tradition still visible (Mk 4:11; 9:25-27; 10:21, 32, 38-39; 12:32-34; 14:51-52; Cameron 1982:67).

Crossan says that his own working hypothesis is that canonical Mark is a deliberate revision of *Secret Mark* (1992:73). In other words, Crossan believes that *Secret Mark* is the source of canonical Mark. If *Secret Mark* is truly a Gnostic or an Incipient Gnostic text and is the source of canonical Mark, then it is probable that it had a significant influence on Jesus' teaching about the resurrection of the dead in John's Gospel. The futuristic bodily resurrection would be reinterpreted in favor of a purely spiritual perspective (Crossan 1992:73).

3.6.4 Secret Mark in Light of Modern Criticism and Forensics Evidence

When one magnifies the written text, it becomes apparent that Smith's writing may have signs of his own hand altering the writing in the text. Carlson puts it this way:

> As a result, this difference is visible in the execution of the strokes and shaky lines, blunt ends and pen lifts in the middle of strokes…..However they do signify that the writing was executed more slowly and deliberately than at a natural pace and makes handwriting purporting to be cursive or quickly written inherently deceptive (Carlson 2005:26).

Upon a closer look, this text has a shaky line quality and shows signs of what some forensics experts call "forgers tremor" (Carlson 2005:27). Carlson also

goes at great lengths to show that Smith had a unique way of writing the *theta, tau,* and *lambda* of the Greek alphabet, and how this unique form of writing appears in the Smith's text (Carlson 2005:29-33).

There are other interesting characteristics in the work that illustrate or show that the work might be Smith's own creation. For example, there are several topics in the letter that allude to Smith's previous works (Carlson 2005:71-2). For example, the climax of the night time initiation of the young man and Jesus involves a sexual practice forbidden by Jewish law (Lev 18.22; Wilson 2005:172). Also, this practice is associated with the "secret of the kingdom of heaven."

In his previously written dissertation, *Tannaitic Parallels to the Gospel,* published in 1951, Smith made the association of Mk 4.11 with the secrecy of forbidden sexual relationships and with the secret forbidden Jewish practices in Leviticus 18.22. Since a strong parallel exists, it may be plausible, that Smith continued this same thought pattern with the construction of *Secret Mark.*

Also, blotches can be viewed on the photographs of the document which seem to show that someone did the writing on printed copies of Ignatius letters, rather than on the original (Evans 2006:96). The blotches also show mildew which would not have accumulated in the library at Mar Saba, indicating that Smith took the document elsewhere to do his work before he returned (Evans 2006:96).

Smith incorporates several jokes in the text which indicates it is his own writing. He dedicates the text to "the one who knows" (Smith 2005: preface). Carlson thinks Smith is making a joke that he is the only one who knows where *Secret Mark* comes from (Carlson 2005:79).

Further he makes statements like this:

No doubt, if the past, like a motion picture, could be replayed, I should also be shocked to find how much of the story, I have already invented (Smith 2005:ix).

Carlson points out that fakers often find it necessary to put jokes in their text to show how clever they really are (Carlson 2005:79). It does seem plausible

that Smith could have done this. He was an intelligent scholar with two doctorates and was on the rise as a New Testament scholar.

3.6.5 Morton's Motives

Although it is possible that Smith had the motives to forge the letter, it is difficult to pin this issue down. Carlson proposes that Smith may have done it to "jump start" his career in 1955 when he had been denied tenure at his first academic post (Carlson 2005:80-81).

Carlson has also suggested that Smith, "a disgruntled former Episcopalian priest" was "quite angry with the establishment position of the 1950's against homosexuality" (Carlson 2005:85). It was in his later lectures that Smith made his position on homosexuality plain.

Scott G. Brown has put together a case arguing that *Secret Mark* does not have a homoerotic orientation, and since Smith had two doctorates, he really wouldn't need to worry about "jump starting" his career (Brown 2006:367, 383). Nevertheless, the notoriety that Smith has gained through the discovery of a "secret gospel" could tempt anyone.

3.6.6 Conclusion on Secret Mark

In regards to canonical Mark, we have genuine MSS that go back as early as the fifth century. In the case of *Secret Mark*, the situation seems to be quite different. We are inclined to conclude with Charlesworth and Evans that:

All we have in the case of *Secret Mark* are twentieth-century photographs of a portion of an epistle purportedly penned by Clement of Alexandria, which apparently was inscribed by an eighteenth century writer into the back of a seventeenth century book, which no one since or besides Morton Smith has seen (Charlesworth & Evans 2006:532).

Based on this evidence, it would not be wise to make judgments about *Secret Mark* on such things as the origins, sources, relationships, or priority to *The Gospel of John* and Jesus' teaching about the resurrection there.

In fact, if we did rely on a text such as this as the source of Jesus' teaching on the resurrection in *The Gospel of John*, one could only conclude that Jesus'

teaching on the resurrection could and would be dramatically altered into the purely spiritual view of Gnosticism that had a tendency to denigrate the physical existence of man and denied the bodily resurrection of believers.

3.7 PAPYRUS EGERTON 2

Papyrus Egerton 2 (*Pap Eg 2*) was found in Egypt in 1934. It consists of four fragments (Evans 2006:85). The third and fourth fragments only have a few words. The first and second fragments offer four or five stories that parallel stories found in the Synoptic Gospels and in *The Gospel According to John* (Evans 2006:85).

3.7.1 Papyrus Egerton 2's Parallels to Mark and John

Papyrus Egerton 2 has striking parallels to John 5.39-46; 9.29; 10.31, 39. It also has parallels to Mark 1.40-44; 12.13-15; and 7.6-7. Some examples are that lines 7-10 could be taken from John 5.39, 45. The lawyer's reply in lines 15-17 appear to be taken from John 9.29, while Jesus response in lines 20-23a seems to be taken from John 5.46. The declaration in lines 25-30 parallels John 7.30 and 8.20. The leper's request in line 36 uses the same vocabulary of the leper's request in Mk 1:40b. (Evans 2006:87-88; Dunn 2003:171).

The more parallels that exist between Papyrus Egerton 2 and the Synoptic material, the more likely it would seem for this text to be dependent on the Synoptic texts and *The Gospel of John*. Crossan and other members of the *new History of Religions School* have provided a solution that could cause Jesus' teaching on the resurrection in *The Gospel of John* to be redefined.

3.7.2 Independence from the Synoptic Gospels

Crossan summarizes his position on Pap Eg 2 as follows:

First, it is completely independent of all the intracanonical gospels. Second, considering the random and fragmentary nature of the text and the fact that each leaf gives a curious mix of both Johannine and Synoptic materials, the gospel gives important evidence to a stage in the transmission prior to the separation of those twin traditions. Third,

if there is any direct dependence at all, it may well be that both those traditions are dependent on this text, rather than the reverse (Crossan 1992:49).

Crossan believes that the fragments of *Pap Eg 2* represent a tradition that predates the canonical Gospels. He believes Mark is directly dependent on it as are Matthew and Luke, in a time prior to their separation from the Johannine tradition (Evans 2006:88). Koester follows closely the view of Crossan and says that he believes that the Papyrus reflects "pre-Johannine and pre-synoptic characteristics of language" which still exist side by side (Evans 2006:89).

Their view is important for this study because if this text is prior and independent of the Synoptic Gospels and John, it would show that the complete text may have a significant part in altering Jesus' teaching on the resurrection in the *The Gospel of John* away from a literal bodily resurrection. If the text of Pap Eg 2 is dependent on the Synoptic Gospels and John and this can be demonstrated, then the force of the argument that Jesus' teaching on the resurrection in *The Gospel of John* should be altered is considerably weakened.

3.7.3 Problems With Independence and Priority to the Canonical Material

There are some problems when one insists that *Pap Eg* 2 exists prior in time to the Synoptic Gospels and John and that it is independent of them. One of the seeming problems or difficulties is that *Pap Eg* 2 uses the plural for "kings" which seems to be secondary to the singular "Caesar" found in the synoptics and in *The Gospel of Thomas* 100 (Evans 2006:89). The statement "what you do bears witness beyond the prophets" reflects John 1.34, 35 and is a secondary embellishment to those verses. In addition, there is a lot of flattery for the person of Jesus that would indicate this text should be better situated in a second century context (Evans 2006:89).

Crossan insists that the blending of Synoptic and Johannine elements is a clear sign of a primitive pre-Johannine and synoptic tradition (Crossan 1992:49). Evans raises the interesting question as to why there is no mention of this "mixed tradition" in any of the later writings, such as the church fathers, apocryphal gospels, etc. (Evans 2006:90)? Several later patristic writers like

Justin Martyr did mix synoptic and Johannine material in their writings (Evans 2006:90). Perhaps it would make the best sense to situate *Pap Eg* 2 in this time frame concurrent with Justin Martyr and others, rather than trying to force this text back into the period prior to the *The Gospel of John*.

3.7.4 Parallels between Egerton 2 and other Second Century Material

Interestingly, there are several other texts from the second century that seem to reflect the same ideas that one finds in *Pap Eg* 2. In the Greek version of the *Infancy Gospel of Thomas* 12.1-2, as well as in *The Gospel of Pseudo Matthew* 34, the story of the boy Jesus sowing seed and reaping a remarkable harvest for the "poor, widows, and fatherless" is told. Interestingly, more detail is added in Pseudo Matthew 34, where we read that Jesus reaped the harvest for his "numerous acquaintances" (Evans 2006:91). In *Pap Eg 2,* lines 65-70 we seem to have the same story:

> Jesus as he walked stood [on the] bank of the [riv]er Jordan, stretched out [hi]s right hand, [fill]ed it with....and sowed...on the.....And then....water...And...before [their eyes], brought fruit...much..to the jo[y] (Jeremias and Schneemelcher 1991:98-99).

This would indicate that *Pap Eg* 2 is a secondary combining of canonical and legendary material. In this case there are striking parallels between *Papyrus Egerton* 2 and the several other examples mentioned above. It is most logical to situate this text in the second century with other texts that reflect a similar ideology.

It is plausible that the parallels in *Pap Eg* 2 are the result of hearing these Gospels read or of the oral circulation or narration of the canonical material (Dunn 2003:171). As we discussed above, it may also be due to other second century apocryphal materials that were floating around at the time. Since this text was written later, it is likely it had no impact on Jesus' teaching on the resurrection as it is laid forth in *The Gospel of John*.

3.8 THE GOSPEL OF MARY (PRESERVED IN THE BERLIN CODEX,

   PAPYRUS   RYLANDS 463, PAPYRUS OXYRHYNCHUS 3525)

3.8.1 Background of The Gospel of Mary

   The Gospel of Mary is translated from the Coptic version in a Berlin Gnostic codex called Papyrus Berolinensis 8502 and two Greek fragments known as Papyrus Oxyrhynchus 3525 and Papyrus Rylands 463 (Meyer 2004:16). The Coptic version is the most complete text, but the Coptic *Gospel of Mary* is missing six manuscript pages at the beginning and four manuscript pages in the middle of it (Meyer 2004:16). The Berlin Codex also contains *The Apocryphon of John*, *The Sophia of Jesus Christ*, and *The Acts of Peter* (Evans 2006:259). We only have about half of the original text of *The Gospel of Mary.*

3.8.2 Contents of The Gospel of Mary

   The Gospel of Mary narrates a story in which Mary Magdalene relates to the disciples the revelations that Jesus gave her (Evans 2006:92-3). In this text, Jesus has a dialogue with Mary Magdalene and Levi who understand his teaching and Andrew and Peter who do not understand (Meyer 2004:17).

   Andrew and Peter do not receive Mary's teaching that she received from the Savior. Levi rebukes Peter urging him to "let us preach the Gospel neither setting boundaries or laying down laws, as the Savior said" (Evans 2006:93). We can infer Levi or Mary's advice is a reaction to the growing institutionalization of the church, and specifically the role of women as expressed by the Apostle Paul in the pastoral epistles (Evans 2006:93). The language and the different themes of the writing leave no doubt of it's Gnostic character and origin (Schneemelcher 1991:395). Segal notes the following on Jesus' teaching on the resurrection in *The Gospel of Mary*:

>   The Gnostic Gospel of Mary suggests that all the resurrection
>   appearances were by means of visions, dreams, and ecstatic trance.
>   That is not to say that the Gnostics dismiss the dreams and ecstatic
>   trance; rather the opposite, they value them the more highly….for them
>   the body is not destined for eternal life (Segal 2004:549).

As with the other Gnostic and Incipient Gnostic texts that we have looked at, if this text or parts of it can be dated back into the first century, it could have a significant impact on Jesus' teaching on the futuristic, bodily resurrection as taught in *The Gospel of John*. It would have to be done away with in favor of a mystical, dream like experience (Segal 2004:549).

3.8.3 The Dating of Mary

Karen L. King would say that *The Gospel of Mary*, (*Gos Mary*) or at least parts of it, should be dated back to the first century. King says the following about this text:

> Assuming that *The Gospel of Mary* borrowed from or was influenced by the New Testament….But this picture is not accurate for it misrepresents the dynamics of early Christian life and practice. As I noted earlier, *The Gospel of Mary* was written before the canon had been established. At a time when there was keen debate over the meaning of Jesus' teachings and His importance for salvation….all our portraits of Him reflect the perspectives of early Christians (King 2003:93).

For King there is little doubt that Mary, and at least the traditions in it, stretch back to the first century and reflect an early Christianity that was "far more diverse and varied" then we had ever realized (King 2003:94). Debates about the role of women in the church took place in the first century, but "the perspectives" that are strong in *The Gospel of Mary* seem to reflect a later time (Evans 2006:260). Those distinctives are the Gnostic and Incipient Gnostic themes that run throughout it. They would include things like "lifting up Mary" as superior to Andrew and Peter. Also, the concept of "knowing" and "understanding" is emphasized throughout (2006:260). With this many Gnostic themes, it is likely that the text finds it's most comfortable setting in at least the second century.

3.8.4 Conclusion on The Gospel of Mary

To use *The Gospel of Mary* or any other text to reconstruct information on the sources of the Synoptic Gospels or *The Gospel According to John* would be to introduce alterations in such key doctrines as the literal and futuristic resurrection, that are based on evidence that is not completely solid. Mary is better situated in a context where the ideas expressed within it were more readily known. Therefore, it is not like that this text will redefine or alter what Jesus taught about the resurrection of the dead in *The Gospel of John*.

3.9 JEWISH CHRISTIANITY

Jewish Christianity is often associated with James the Just. Jewish Christians have often been called Nazarenes or Ebionites. Gilles Quispel is correct in describing the definition of Jewish Christianity as "difficult" (Quispel 1990:137). They are those who are Christians, but maintain the importance of keeping the Jewish law. The group evolved into many different communities. Only fragments of their texts have been preserved in quotations from the church fathers (Theissen 1996:52).

3.9.1 Gospel of the Hebrews (Preserved in Quotations by Various Fathers)

The Gospel of the Hebrews (*Gos Heb*) is known from quotations of Clement of Alexandria, Origen, and other church fathers (Theissen 1996:53). The church fathers say that Matthew wrote *The Gospel of the Hebrews* and that it was originally written in Hebrew. Some other church fathers, like Papias, believe that it was originally written in Greek. And yet others believe that it was written in Syriac. James the Just, a prominent character in Jewish Christianity, is emphasized as the brother of Jesus in this text (Cameron1982:83 cf.Theissen 1996:54). This text is similar to Matthew and is only three hundred lines shorter than Matthew.

3.9.2 The Gospel of the Hebrews and Gnosticism

There is some evidence that Gnosticism or Incipient Gnosticism is present within this text. In this text, Jesus makes the following statement:

He that seeks will not rest until he finds; and he that has found shall marvel; and he that has marvelled shall reign; and he that has reigned shall rest (*Gos Heb* frag. 4b).

This is similar to Poxy654 and *Gospel of Thomas* 2. Also, the baptism of Jesus is described as a descending of the "whole fount of the Holy Spirit" (Theissen 1996:54). In addition, the first fragment reproduces cosmic speculations about the birth of Jesus (Theissen 1996:54). In the text of *The Gospel of the Hebrews* there seems to be a trace of adoptionism, where Jesus "becomes" the Son of God at His baptism. *The Gospel According to the Hebrews* bears several themes and places of similarity with the Synoptic Gospels, *The Gospel According to John,* and *The Gospel of Thomas* (Wikepedia 2011).

3.9.3 Dating of the Gospel of the Hebrews

Cameron and Crossan both think this text could have been written as early as 50 CE and is independent of the canonical material (Cameron 1982:84-85 cf. Crossan 1992:428-429). This date is difficult to challenge and there are no signs that this text has any dependency on other Jewish Christian texts (Schneemelcher 1991:176). Likewise, Gilles Quispel believes John drew on this tradition in writing his Gospel (Quispel 1990:139). If John did draw on this tradition, it would be necessary to reinterpret Jesus' teaching on the resurrection in *The Gospel of John* in favor of a Gnostic perspective.

However, due to the Gnostic characteristics and parallels described above, it is likely that it was composed during the second century. By placing this text in the first century, Cameron and Crossan have made this text the source of John without substantial evidence. To try to reinterpret Jesus' teaching on the resurrection in *The Gospel of John* with this evidence and testimony may be problematic.

3.9.4 Gospel of the Nazoreans or Nazarenes (Preserved in Quotations by Various Fathers)

The *Gospel of the Nazoreans* (*Gos Naz*) was probably originally composed in Aramaic or Syriac and is closely related to Matthew (Thiessen 1996:52). Since the Middle Ages, it has been named after the group called the Nazarenes or Nazoreans, Jewish Christians from Berea (Aleppo) in Coele Syria (Thiessen 1996:52).

3.9.5 Contents of The Gospel of the Nazoreans or Nazarenes

The book tends to expand and embellish the contents of Matthew (Theissen 1996:52). There is no indication that it is Matthew in an original form or Ur-Matthew like some church fathers thought (Theissen 1996:52). If this text were a precanonical form of *The Gospel of Matthew*, it would clearly cause one to reinterpret Jesus' teaching on the resurrection of the dead as it is described in *The Gospel According to John*.

3.9.6 Dating of The Gospel of the Nazoreans

Hegesippus knew of *The Gospel of the Nazoreans* in 180 CE, and so it must have been written before then (Theissen 2006:52). Thirty-six fragments have survived, which represent divergent readings of the original Greek of Matthew's Gospel. Cameron says it is a translation into Aramaic or Syriac of Matthew's Greek. Some believe that it was originally written in Hebrew. Cameron makes it clear that it is *not* prior in time nor does it represent an independent tradition (Cameron 1992:97). Crossan and Koester also place this text in the middle of the second century (Crossan 1992:433).

Since modern scholarship is unanimous that this is a second century text, there is no need to debate the point any further. Moreover, since this text was written later, it should definitely be discounted as a source of Jesus' teaching as it pertains to the resurrection of the dead in *The Gospel of John*.

3.9.7 The Gospel of the Ebionites (Preserved in Quotations by Epiphanius of Salamis)

The Gospel of the Ebionites (Gos Eb) is mentioned by Irenaeus (180 CE). Seven fragments have been preserved in the Panarion of Epiphanius of Salamis (Theissen 1996:52). It was composed in Greek by the Ebionites, who lived across the Jordan from Israel proper (Theissen 1996:53).

3.9.8 Theology of the Gospel of the Ebionites

This text is a revision of Matthew, but also uses material from Luke and Mark (Theissen 1996:53). The text is altered in such a way, so as to make the group's theology evident (Theissen 1996:53). Since the text begins with the appearance of John the Baptist and the baptism of Jesus, it can be assumed that the virgin birth is rejected by this group (Theissen 1996:53). Quispel believes that the emphasis on baptism is a sure sign that John borrowed from this tradition when he wrote his Gospel (Quispel 1990:141). The text also teaches that Jesus became the "Son of God" at His baptism. The early church called this teaching "adoptionism." This would lead one to reinterpret Jesus' teaching on the resurrection in John in favor of an "adoptionist" perspective.

Also, vegetarianism seems to be a trait of this group. For example, John the Baptist does not eat locusts, ἀκρίς but he only eats wild honey ἐγκρίς. Jesus' statement in fragment seven is revealing about the vegetarian nature of this text when He says: "Do I desire with desire at this Passover to eat flesh with you" (Theissen 1996:53)? According to Epiphanius, this group only used The Gospel of Matthew and not the rest of the New Testament.

3.9.9 Dating of The Gospel of the Ebionites

Koester, Crossan, and Cameron agree that this text was written sometime in the second century and is dependent on some harmonized form of the canonical material (Crossan 1992:433). Obviously this text was written by some kind of Jewish Christian group because of its focus on the law with all it's dietary regulations, etc. Crossan and Koester agree that this text belongs in the second century, somewhere, and it relies on the canonical material. Therefore, modern

scholarship does not see this text as a threat to what Jesus taught on the resurrection in *The Gospel of John*.

3.9.9.1 The Gospel of the Egyptians (Preserved in Quotations from Clement of Alexandria)

This text seems to have Gnostic elements as well. It also seems to be a Dialogue Gospel (Theissen 1996:43). In this text, Jesus teaches Salome sexual ascetism. In order to be a bit more specific—"women cease to give birth and male and female again become one, does death no longer have power and is knowledge possible" (Theissen 1996:43). Jesus argues celibacy in this text. Cameron, Koester, and Crossan believe this text represents an independent tradition possibly written in the first century (Cameron 1982:50-51; Crossan 1992:434).

Theissen says it was written in the second century in Egypt (Theissen 1996:43; Hennecke & Schneemelcher 1991:214). Quispel does not mention it as being part of Jewish Christianity which he believes is a source of The Gospel of John (Quispel 1990:139). Almost all of the theology in this text fits into themes and motifs of Gnosticism. Even the ascetism where Jesus forbids marriage could fall under the theology of a Gnostic group known as the Encratites (Theissen 1996:43). If it is the source of John, the resurrection would need to be redefined or reinterpreted. However, due to it's saturation with Gnostic themes, it is likely that the text can be placed in the second century. Therefore, it probably poses no threat to Jesus' teaching on the resurrection in *The Gospel of John*, which was both futuristic and bodily.

CHAPTER IV

JOHN, THE RESURRECTION, AND THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS

4.1 DELIMITATION TO THE GOSPEL OF JOHN REVISITED

The greatest point of contact of the Dead Sea Scrolls (*DSS*) and the New Testament (NT) is in *The Gospel of St. John* (Morris 2007:4). As discussed previously in Chapters 1 and 2, *the Gospel of John* is used as the best test case for the background of the New Testament. This is because it has been seen as the most ambiguous in it's use of both a realized and futuristic eschatology. Due to John's late date of composition and it's potentiality for a number of different influences, it has been put in the forefront of backgrounds research.

Such scholars as Bultmann and Dodd had interpreted the fourth Gospel against a Gnostic background (Frey 2007:2). The *new History of Religions School* has done the same with such texts as *The Gospel of Thomas*, etc. With the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls (*DSS*) in 1947, the consensus of scholarly opinion is changing to see John as a late first century Palestinian composition and the most Jewish of all the Gospels. If the issue on the resurrection can be settled in John, it is likely the rest of the New Testament, which was written much earlier will follow in suit. Moreover, if Palestinian Judaism and The Dead Sea Scrolls do find their place in the background of *The Gospel According to John*, it is likely that the Gnostic and Incipient Gnostic perspective on the resurrection will be displaced by the Jewish perspective which is predominantly bodily and futuristic. This will have a tremendous impact on what Jesus taught on the resurrection of the dead in John. Literally, it would be the difference between what we found in the Gnostic and Incipient Gnostic literature on the resurrection and what we found in *The Gospel of John* and the Judaism that preceeded it.

4.2 THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD IN JUDAISM

4.2.1 Post Mortem Hope in the Old Testament

The Old Testament before the time of the prophets in Second Temple Judaism does not make a lot of references to the resurrection (Anderson 2010:25). The noted scholar James H. Charlesworth indicates that "in the history of the theologies of Israel, resurrection belief is only found in the very late literature (Charlesworth 2006:223). *Sheol* is described as the "common grave" of mankind and "little hope of a resurrection is mentioned beyond this" (Wright 2006:91). *Sheol* is mentioned in such passages as Psalms 6.5, 30.9, 88.3-12, 115.17, Gen.3.19, Is. 38.10, etc. (Anderson 2010:25). The exceptions to this were people like Enoch, Elijah, and Moses who did not have to die (Anderson 2010:25). It was from these "hints of hope" that the doctrine of the resurrection would emerge. Martin-Achard puts it this way:

> The writers of these hymns did not envisage the resurrection of the dead,
> they are simply asserting tht the living God is able to intervene,
> effectively, everywhere, and at all times, even in the darkest hour; His
> liberating interventions are particular evidence of His tremendous power
> (Martin-Achard 1960:57).

Ezekiel 37.1-14 paints a picture of a corporate or national hope for Israel (Anderson 2010:26). However, others have seen the resurrection of the dry bones in this passage as a personal resurrection hope as well (Anderson 2010:26). Isaiah 26.19 may also refer to a national or personal eschatology (Puech 1994:248). It appears that the personal hope comes out of the national hope (Martin-Achard 1960:93).

4.2.2 The Resurrection in Second Temple Judaism

Some of the Jews during this period, like the Sadducees denied life after death (Anderson 2010:27). This is illustrated in such passages as Sirach 11.26, 14.16, 17.27, 38.28, and in parts of the Mishnah and the Talmud (Wright 2006:135).

George W.E. Nickelsburg has put together a masterful study illustrating the various kinds of life after death that are present within this period. He examines such works as *The Wisdom of Solomon, The Psalms of Solomon, Maccabees, The Sybilline Oracles, The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, The Enochic Literature, The Testament of Moses etc.* and finds a variety of perspectives on life after death in this period (Nickelsburg 2006:15).

Nickelsburg does find many places where a futuristic bodily resurrection is undeniable such as in 2 Maccabees 7 (Nickelsburg 2006:119) However, such concepts as assumption, the immortality of the soul, exaltation, angelic glorification, the heavenly journey of the soul, show that there was by no means uniformity in intertestamental Judaism (2006:15). Nevertheless, Nickelsburg shows how each passage relates to such themes as persecution, oppression, and injustice (2006:viii). Therefore, each author had a greater purpose then to simply define the standard view on the resurrection in Second Temple Judaism. Similar to the Old Testament, just because the doctrine is not defined in full detail in many of these passages, does not mean that the belief in the literal and bodily resurrection is not present. Wright notes that the belief can occur without the word, but never the other way around (Wright 2006:181).

Wright notes that it was during this time that most Jews either "believed in some form of the resurrection or at least knew that it was standard teaching" (2006:129). Anderson notes that "such passages as Ezekiel 30, Joel 1-2, Amos 5, and Malachi 4 provided the righteous remnant of the nation with the hope that God would intervene at the end of the age, vindicate his righteous remnant, and punish evildoers" (Anderson 2010:28). The most clear passage that combines personal hope and resurrection faith is Daniel 12.2-3 which says:

> 2Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt. 3Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever (Daniel 12.2-3 NIV).

Wright notes that the belief that came to dominate Judaism in the first century and the intertestamental period was not merely a belief in life after death

in some disembodied state, but also included a futuristic reconstitution of the physical body (Wright 2006:29). Charlesworth notes that this belief was "common coin" amongst many Jewish groups and sects during this time (Charlesworth 2006:225). Anderson notes that this occurs in two stages "intermediate existence after death followed by eventual bodily resurrection at the judgment of the Lord on the last day" (Anderson 2010:30).

4.2.3 The Resurrection in The Dead Sea Scrolls

   Originally, there was no evidence to support the idea that the Dead Sea Scrolls supported the ideas of resurrection or immortality (Segal 2004:298). Many assumed that the Essenes were really Sadducees due to their priestly description and Josephus' description of their views of the afterlife which focused on the immortality of the soul rather than bodily resurrection (Segal 2004:298). The earliest published scrolls such as 1QH6.34-35, 1QS 4.7-8, and 1QS4.12-13 were ambiguous and vague on a futuristic bodily resurrection (Segal 2004:298).

   However, when the full Dead Sea Scrolls team had published many of the works that had remained unpublished these words from a Jewish prayer became apparent:

   And the Lord will perform marvelous acts such as have not existed,
   just as He said, for He will heal the fallen and will make the dead live
   for he will proclaim good news to the meek (4Q521, lines 11-12).

   Newly published passages like this one show that the Essenes did believe in a futuristic resurrection (Segal 2004:300). This is a scroll called *On Resurrection* that was found at Qumran Cave 4 (4Q521; Charlesworth 2006:14) Josephus had been placating to a Hellenized Roman audience who did not accept a physical bodily resurrection (Segal 2004:300). Physical bodily resurrection in the scrolls became even more explicit with the publication of *Pseudo-Ezekiel,* where the author seems to express a belief in the reconstitution of the same body that had been lost in death (Elledge 2006:34).

   However, the Essene sect did not believe only in a futuristic bodily resurrection. They also believed that men could be exalted into angelic-like

status (1QSb 4.24-28; Segal 2004:304). They also believed in a cosmic dualism and apocalyptic war between those who were in their community with those outside of their community that would culminate at the end of the world (Segal 2004:303). Emile Puech concludes his thoughts on the Essenes view of the resurrection when he says:

> The religious experience of life with God in this world must go on after death in an eternal life with the one who rewards the pious and changes their being into a resurrected transformed one, in the light of the divine glory at the day of judgment. Thus an existentialist interpretation of human existence stood alongside a linear, eschatological interpretation.

4.2.4 Conclusion on the Resurrection of the Dead in Judaism

There are a large number of primary texts that come from Judaism that deal with life after death. It is important to avoid dogmatic clichés and concerns for uniformity when it comes to this important subject (Nickelsburg 2006:15). This is because in this literature one can find references not just to a futuristic bodily resurrection but references to immortality, exaltation, assumption, and heavenly journeys (Nickelsburg 2006:25).

Nevertheless, as Charlesworth notes, "the belief in a post-mortem resurrection was affirmed by numerous Jewish groups or sects" (Charlesworth 2006:223) When one examines Judaism, in it's totality, as it was understood in the first century, there is no doubt that the people of Israel had a hope in the afterlife that involved both life after death, as well as the reconstitution of the physical body in the form of resurrection.

4.3 THE PARALLELS BETWEEN JOHN AND THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS

4.3.1 The Two Spirits as a Parallel between John and The Dead Sea Scrolls

A feature of the scrolls is a dualism which is seen in the good spirit and the evil spirit, the sons of light and the sons of darkness, and truth and perversity (Morris 2007:5). In the *Manual of Discipline* we read:

He created man to have dominion over the world and made for him two spirits, that he might walk by them until the appointed time of his visitation; they are the spirits of truth and of error….And all the spirits of his lot try to make the sons of light stumble; but the God of Israel and his angel of truth have helped all the sons of light (Wise, Abegg, and Cook 1996:128-9).

J.H. Charlesworth demonstrated the importance of Johannine dualism in 1QS 3.13-4.26 as well (Charlesworth 1990:96). In these texts, it is clear, that there are two spirits. One of them is good and the other is evil (Morris 2007:5). Good and evil are evenly matched until the end when good triumphs over evil (Morris 2007:5). In the Qumran texts we see two spirits and their followers involved in a continuous struggle (Morris 2007:5; Charlesworth 1990:96). This is different from the view of Judaism, as well as the Old Testament, where good and evil exist, but they are not evenly matched against each other (Frey 2007:6). In the Old Testament, God is seen as the supreme good, but He has power over evil.

These texts can be compared the dualism present in the Gospel According to John, of those who are "of the earth" or "from below" (Jn 3.31) and "of the devil" (Jn 8.44). Also, those who are "from God" "hear God's voice" (Jn 8:47). This same dualism can be found in the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, specifically in the *Testament of Judah* 12:1-2 (Frey 2007:7). The background to this teaching may have been broader than existing in the Qumran texts alone. It probably did emerge out of the Palestinian Judaism of the time. The phrase does not seem to be exclusively Sectarian. Nevertheless, this would anchor John's Gospel within first century Judaism where, as we saw above, the resurrection was predmoninantly understood to be both futuristic and corporeal.

Morris does note that there is a difference in that in the Qumran view "spirit" sometimes refers to two spirits, sometimes to the spirit of a man, sometimes to angelic or demonic beings, and sometimes to the influences exerted by these beings (Frey 2007:7). In John, the Holy Spirit is deity and proceeds from the Father and the Son. Jesus is "the light of the world" (Jn 8.12) which contrasts with the Qumran view of a created "prince of lights," which is identical with their "spirit of truth" (Morris 2007:7). Charlesworth notes the differences between the two types of dualism when he says:

> The Qumran dualism is based on belief in two warring cosmic spirits;
> the Johannine dualism evolves out of an assumed belief of a spirutal
> world above and an evil world below (Charlesworth 1990:99)

In the Qumran materials, the theology of the spirits has more to do with a dualism, where good and evil exist side by side. They are coequal. John's dualism is described by Charlesworth as "soteriological," and has to do with the salvation of the believer (Charlesworth 1990:99).

4.3.2 The Sons of Light and the Sons of Darkness in the Dead Sea Scrolls and in John

In the Dead Sea Scrolls, mankind is divided into two groups (Morris 2007:6). The two groups are the sons of light and the sons of darkness. For example, in the *Damascus Document,* they are referred to as "those in the covenant", "the many," and "the sons of the camp" (Wise et al. 1996:54-55 cf. 2007:6). The *Habakkuk Commentary* describes them as "the simple ones of Judah, the doers of the law," "the teacher of the righteous and the men of his party," "God's people and His congregation," and "the poor" (Wise et al. 1996:119 cf. Morris 2007:6*).*

The Manual of Discipline refers to "sons of righteousness," "the sons of the truth," "the wise man," "the men of the community," "the men of perfect holiness," "a holy man," "all who have offered themselves," those "who have offered themselves together to his truth," "those who choose the way," and "all the men of God's lot" (Wise et al. 1996: 130-131 cf. Frey 2007:6). Likewise in the *The War Scroll,* we read of the "sons of light," "all the men of (God's) lot,""the

congregation of the sons of heaven," and "the Sons of thy truth" (Wise et al. 1996:150-154 cf. Frey 2007:6).

Also, *The Rule of the Congregation* refers to "the whole congregation of Israel,""the sons of Zadok, the priest and the men of their covenant, who turned back from walking in the way of the people," and "the men of His counsel" (Wise et al. 1996:144-147 cf. Morris 2007:6).

Similarly, the *Commentary on Psalms 37* mentions "the congregation of his elect which will be chiefs and princes," "sheep in the midst of their pastures," "the congregation of the poor," and "his holy people" (Wise et al. 1996: 220-225 cf. Morris 2007:6). The language in these texts is strong and refers to those who are *inside* the Qumran community. The Essenes were a group that honored and respected those who held their same views, held their rituals, and obeyed their law. They also dishonored and held in disrepute those who were outside of their community.

Those on the outside of the Qumran community are described as "all who despise God," "a congregation of treacherous men," etc. (Morris 2007:6 cf. Wise et al. 1996:121-125). Therefore, the Essenes had strong views of those who were outside of their community.

Although the terms "sons of light" and "sons of darkness" occurs in the Qumran materials, they also occur in a much broader context. The terms can also be found in the writings of Paul in 1 Thess. 5.5, and in various places in the Synoptic tradition such as in Luke 16.8 (Morris 2007:7). The terms also exist in literature that comes before the Qumran literature. One such text that have contains these terms is in the *Vision of Amram* (Frey 2007:8). It is likely that these terms were present intertestamental Judaism. These terms were probably transmitted, not only by the Essene Sectarians, but also by a group or groups outside the Sectarian community (Morris 2007:7). Nevertheless, Jesus' teaching on the resurrection in John is rooted in Palestinian, which had a variety of views of the resurrection. However, as discussed above, it was the futuristic and corporeal resurrection hope that was the most widespread.

John uses similar terms to refer to and to distinguish those who are in the right way and those who are in the wrong way. Those in the right way are

referred to as "disciples," "true worshippers," "my sheep," "the sons of God," "as many as received Him," "them that believe on Him," "he that beholds the Son and believes in Him", "he that hears My word and believes Him that sent me," "he that eats my flesh and drinks my blood," "he that abides in me and I in him," "my friends," "every one that is born of the Spirit," (Morris 2007:7). John refers to those in the wrong way as "the world," "the Jews," "those that love darkness," "went back and walked no more with Him," "those not of my sheep," etc. (Morris 2007:8).

The difference that exists between John and the Scrolls is that the Qumran Sectarians believe that their salvation must be by their works and efforts. For example in the *Manual of Discpline* we read "the order of the community is to seek God…to do what is good and upright before him…to do truth and righteousness and justice in the land" (Wise et al. 1996:126-127 cf. Morris 2007:9). Later we read about "all the men of God's lot, who walk perfectly in all His ways" (Wise et al. 1996:127 cf. Morris 2007:9). Those outside of the community are regarded as sinners (Wise et al. 1996:128 cf. Morris 2007:9). Once someone is inside the Qumran community, the emphasis is on works, which those, in the community, are capable of performing.

In *The Gospel According to John*, the word "to believe" (πιστις) is used over ninety times. The term is used as the purpose that John uses for writing his Gospel. He says the purpose he writes is "that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name" (Jn. 20.31). Although the *Habakkuk Commentary* does speak of "faith in the teacher of righteousness," this seems to be faith in his doctrine in the Qumran material which is salvation by works and excludes the idea of a propitiatory sacrifice of Christ (Morris 2007:8). Price describes the Essenes as a "community of the covenant (Price 1990:17). "The teacher of righteousness" referred to in the scrolls is a spokesman for God and he leads by example (Price 1990:30). However, he is not the Son of God or the Messiah who rose from the dead (Price 1990:17,30)

In conclusion, the terms "sons of light" and "sons of darkness" are used in both texts. For John, one becomes a "son of God" by faith in Jesus Christ. For

the members of the Qumran community it has to do with being a member of that community. Nevertheless the semantic link is enough to root John's Gospel in Palestinian soil where the purely realized and spiritual form of the resurrection presented in the Nag Hammadi writings was not accepted as the norm in first century Judaism.

4.3.3 Predestination Parallels Between John and Qumran

James L. Price notes that predestination is expressed in the scrolls "with a fervour and certainty unparalleled in the Jewish literature of late antiquity" (Price 1990:13). In the *Manual of Discipline* we read:

> Before things came to be, He has ordered all their designs, so that when they come to exist—at their appointed times as ordained by His glorious plan—they fulfil their destiny, a destiny impossible to change. He controls the laws governing all things, and He provides for all their pursuits (Wise et al. 1996:129).

Here we see that all takes place according to the will of God (Morris 2007:10). This also indicates that God determines the destiny of men, whether it is good or bad.

In the *Thanksgiving Psalm* we read:

> You have determined according to Your will. [You appointed them] for the spirit of man whom You have formed upon the earth, for all the days of eternity and the everlasting generations in accordance with [their] w[orks…] in their ordained seasons. You apportioned their service in all their generations and judgm[en]t…….(Wise et al. 1996:91)

In the *Damascus Document* we can see an emphasis on doing good deeds and keeping the law.

> They overstepped the covenant, violated law; and they conspired together, for all those who lived pure lives, they loathed from the bottom of their heart. So they persecuted them violently and were happy to see the people quarrel (Wise et al. 1996:52).

The men of Qumran seem to have both concepts of God's predestination and man's responsibility existing side by side. In addition, predestination can be found in non-Sectarian texts as well. It was a debate between the Pharisees and the Sadducees and was typical of first century Judaism (Jewish Encyclopedia.com 2011). It can be found in the Old Testament in God's choosing, election, and predestination of Israel to be His chosen people (Isa 56.6). Therefore, the concept was widespread in late antiquity.

The fourth Gospel also has a strong predestinarian pattern in that "no man can come unto me, except the Father draw him" (John 6.44, 65). There is also an emphasis on works where "men loved the darkness rather than the light, for their works were evil" (Jn. 3.19). What differs between John and the scrolls, is not the idea of God's predestination of the destinies of men, but rather, the agency God uses in the lives of men to fulfill those destinies. In the scrolls it is good deeds. In the Fourth Gospel, it is Jesus Christ (Morris 2007:11).

Therefore, the concept of predestination presented in *The Gospel of John* finds it's roots in the Judaism of late antiquity where the majority of the groups believed resurrection to be a future and bodily hope.

4.3.4 The Eschatological Struggle Parallels Between John and Qumran

The *War Scroll* tells the story of the people of God or the sons of light struggling with the sons of darkness until the time of the end, when there will be a final destructive battle. We read:

> For the In[structor, the Rule of] the War. The first attack of the Sons of
> Light shall be undertaken against the forces of the Sons of Darkness,
> the army of Belial; the troops of Edom, Moab, the sons of Ammon, the
> [Amalekites], Philistia, and the troops of Kittim of Assur…….There shall
> be no survivors of [all the Sons of] Darkness (Wise et al. 1996:152).

With a wealth of detail, the *War Scroll* portrays the final battle, explaining the organization and the battle tactics that will be used in that battle (Morris 2007:12). In the end, the total destruction of the wicked and eternal joy for the sons of light is illustrated (Morris 2007:12). Charlesworth notes that "conjoined

with the ethical dualism, is the idea of absolute determinism" (Charlesworth 1990:79).

Frey suggests that in *The Gospel of John,* the names of eschatologically opposed figures draw on traditions and concepts of Jewish and early Christian apocalypticism. Frey suggests that John does not show a close relationship with the names used in the Dead Sea Scrolls. He says that this neither true in the Essene texts nor in 1QS III–IV, which contains this struggle (Frey 2007:9).

Frey continues to point out that in the scrolls, the term "spirit of truth" is used for the angelic leader of the "lot of light." Some have suggested that the Johannine equivalent of this fits with the "title" of the Holy Spirit. Frey shows that the references to the Holy Spirit are not within the same kind of "dualistic" framework (Frey 2007:9). The concepts are found in late Judaism and in Jewish apocalypticism. It is likely that John should be anchored here. And it was here where there was a variety of perspectives on what happened after one died. However, it was generally understood that Judaism in it's totality held to a literal resurrection.

In *The Gospel According to John,* the concept of an eschatological struggle deals with a futuristic resurrection, as in verses 3.36, 5.21, 5.28-29 at the "last day." This resurrection, as discussed previously in this study, occurs in such places as John 6.39, 40, 44 and 54. Evil will be vanquished here as the resurrection takes place. As we discussed in Chapter 2, John sees eternal life as existing in the present, actualized sense, as in verses 6.40, 47, and 54. Jesus cast out the ruler of this world in His earthly ministry in John 12.31.

Thus, there is a differentiation between *The Gospel of John* and the *War Scroll.* The *War Scroll* has to do with a final cataclysmic battle between opposing armies, wheras, in *The Gospel of John,* we are dealing with a futuristic bodily resurrection, and the present binding of Satan. The background of Judaism provides the best background for the eschatological struggle where the resurrection was literal, futuristic, and bodily.

4.3.5 Brotherly Love

Another major theme that exists in *The Gospel According to John* and in The Dead Sea Scrolls is the theme of brotherly love. For example in the Manual of Discipline (MOD) we read:

> So shall all together compose a *yahad* (unity) whose essence is truth, genuine humility, love of charity, and righteous intent, caring for one another after this fashion, within the holy society, comrades in an eternal fellowship (Wise et al. 1996:128).

This bears a striking resemblance to John 17.20-22, where Jesus prays for His disciples and all believers to be a unity and desires that they love one another as in John 13.34ff. As we found in some of the other themes from Qumran, this concept is not exclusively Sectarian. The idea of "loving one's neighbor" goes back to the Old Testament, and is found in Exodus 20, and Leviticus 19. Gilles Quispel points out that this concept is present in what he calls "Jewish Christianity" (Quispel 1990:243). The Johannine emphasis on love is stronger than in all of the New Testament writings (Morris 2007:13). In the scrolls we find a slightly different turn on the issue:

> These are the precepts of the Way for the Instructor in these times
> as to his loving and hating; eternal hatred and a concealing spirit for
> the men of the pit! He shall leave them their wealth and profit like a
> slave does his master (Wise et al. 1996:140-141).

In contrast to John, the men of Qumran must hate those outside the community (Morris 2007:13). This is a step outside the Johannine concept of love, even for one's enemies. We are confronted by a contrast in meanings. The Johannine concept allows for no hatred at all, while the Sectarian concept does. There is enough linguistic similarity to root *The Gospel of John* in the Dead Sea Scrolls. Even though the meanings of the terms are different, the preponderance of evidence will lead us to anchor John in Judaism, where the resurrection was futuristic and literal, rather than in the Nag Hammadi literature.

4.3.6 Festivals

There is an emphasis on Jewish festivals in the Qumran material. In the *Damascus Document* we read:

……for it is not permitted] to celebrate the holidays too early or too late.....(Wise et al. 2007:51).

…. And when it cycles back, withdrawing before the light; when the luminaries show forth from their holy habitation, and when they are regathered into their glorious abode; when the times appointed for new moons arrive, and when as their periods require, each gives way to the next. Such renewal is a special day for the Holy of Holies; indeed it is a sign that He is unlocking eternal loving kindness each time these cycles begin as ordained.

This world of Jewish holidays does not exist in the fourth Gospel. There are more references to the Jewish festivals in this Gospel than in the others (Morris 2007:15). It is no mistake that John makes reference to the Jewish festivals in relation to Jesus' works and adds higher meaning to His works by mentioning them (Morris 2007:15). A. Jaubert has noted the comparisons that exist between the Zadokite calendar of Qumran and the Johannine resurrection narrative (Jaubert 1990:64-65).

John does not make reference to the ceremonial festivals and ordinances, so that they can be celebrated and honored without any alteration, since Christ's coming. The similarities in terminology shows John's Palestinian roots. If John can be rooted there, then the futuristic bodily resurrection described in his Gospel will be preserved and not redefined as a Gnostic or Incipient Gnostic backdrop would cause.

4.3.7 Messianism

Different views of the messiah are found in the scrolls. For instance in *The Damascus Document* we read:

They shall not be reckoned among the council of the people, and their names shall not be written in their book from the day the

> Beloved Teacher dies until the Messiah from Aaron and from Israel
> appears (Wise et al. 1996:59).

It is unclear whether there is more than one messiah mentioned, or if there is only one (Morris 2007:16). Similarly, in *The Rule of the Congregation* we read:

> They shall govern themselves using the original precepts by which
> the men of the Yahad began to be instructed, doing so until there
> came the Prophet and the Messiahs of Aaron and Israel (Wise et al.
> 1996:139).

Again, the two messiahs are expected or anticipated. In addition, in the *Habakkuk Commentary* we read:

> This refers to the Wicked Priest, who pursued the Teacher of
> Righteousness to destroy him in the heat of his anger at his place of
> exile (Wise et al. 1996:121).

In the scrolls, the messiah figure is often called the "Teacher of Righteousness." It is impossible to find a reference to a violent death by crucifixion or a clear passage referring to the resurrection in the scrolls of this figure (Morris 2007:17). The references to the "Teacher" may be to more than one teacher.

The concept of a messiah is not exclude to Qumran. For example, it occurs in Isa. 53, Daniel 12, and several other places throughout the Old Testament. The Qumran sect's messianism seems to have close parallels to John. There are several references to the messiah in *The Gospel of John.* John does tell his readers that he wrote the Gospel so that you might believe Jesus is the Christ or the Messiah (12.31 cf. Morris 2007:18). The ideas about the Messiah are not clearly defined in the scrolls, beyond the fact that the Essene community is waiting for a future messiah. James L. Price says the following about the the Teacher of Righteousness in the Qumran documents:

> In summary we may say that the writer (the Teacher of Righteousness)
> regarded all his troubles as sent by God to chastise, test, and purify
> him for his special vocation……his teaching provokes bitter opposition:
> murmuring and betrayal from within the community; harassment, and

treacherous attempts upon his life from enemies without (Price 1990:30)

For John, Jesus is the Messiah and He has come. John 1.1 portrays Jesus as divine from the beginning. The Qumran documents make no such reference.

In conclusion, we are faced with the problem that the scrolls and John have different meaning as to what a "messiah" is. For the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Messiah is yet to come. For John, Jesus is the Messiah and He is the fulfilment of the law. We see term usage in John and the scrolls as far as the suffering of the messiah is concerned, etc. that is very close.

The evidence here is in favor of a background in Judaism, where it was commonly held that the resurrection was both bodily and futuristic. Therefore, it is likely that the resurrection in *The Gospel of John,* will not need to be redefined in favour of a Gnostic or spiritual resurrection.

4.3.8 Ceremonial Ordinances

A few ceremonial ordinances are mentioned in the scrolls. One of the ordinances mentioned seems to be baptism:

> Concerning the purification with water; let not a man wash in the
> water, that is filthy or not enough for covering a man. Let him not
> purify in it any vessel. Any pool in a rock in which there is not
> enough covering, which an unclean person has touched, it's water
> is unclean like the water of a vessel (Burrows 1986:359).

The baths, cisterns, and pools found do not seem to have the same meaning as baptism found in John. When John speaks of being born of water and the Spirit, (Jn. 3.3) there seems to be a connection in terminology to the ideas presented at Qumran, which also has to do with the use of water to mediate salvation and forgiveness of sins (1 QS iii, 3ff; Morris 2007:19). Also, Gilles Quispel notes the following section of the scrolls as referring to baptism:

> And to purify him through holy spirit from all works of evil he will sprinkle
> upon him the spirit of truth as water of purification (1QS 4.21-23; Quispel
> 1990:143).

John places little emphasis on the ritual itself, except as it relates to faith in Jesus Christ (Morris 2007:19). In addition, the scrolls place significant emphasis on Sabbath observances, food laws, and the priesthood itself (Burrows 1986:360). Nevertheless, the scrolls are not alone in their references to ceremonial ordinances. For example, in the Old Testament, we find such ceremonies as The Passover, First-fruits, Pentecost, The Day of Atonement, and The Feast of Tabernacles.

John does not seem overly concerned about such ceremonial ordinances, since to him, Jesus is the issue at hand, rather than the ordinances that were so common in Judaism. John finds his home in Palestinian Judaism where resurrection terminology was consistently used to point to a future hope of those who believed in Yahweh. This hope was understood to involve life after death, as well as a physical bodily resurrection.

4.3.9 Eternal Life

Eternal life is spoken of in the scrolls. For example, in *The Manual of Discipline* we read:

> These are the counsels of the Spirit for the sons of the truth of the world and the visitation of all who walk by it, for healing and abundance of peace in length of days, and bringing forth seed, with all eternal blessings and everlasting joy in *life of eternity*, an a crown of glory with raiment of majesty in everlasting light (Burrows 1986:375).

Moreover, in the same document we read:

> But God in His wondrous mysteries forgave their iniquity and pardoned their transgression, and he built for them a sure house in Israel, the like of which has not existed from of old until now. Those who hold fast to it are for *eternal life*, and all the glory of man is theirs; as God established it for them (Burrows 1986:251-252).

There are a few references to eternal life in the scrolls (Morris 2007:20). The covenanters or members of the sect would obtain eternal life through abiding by the works of the law (Morris 2007:20). Charlesworth notes that "the reward of the sons of light was eternal and perpetual life" (Charlesworth

1990:101). However, John places no such emphasis on "keeping the law" in obtaining eternal life (Jn. 1.45; 5.46). Moreover, in the *Habakkuk Commentary* we read:

> For Lebanon is the council of the community, and the beasts are the simple ones of Judah, the *doers of the law*. God will *execute judgment upon him* and destroy him, as he plotted to destroy the poor (Burrows 1986:370).

We see this same idea in the *Manual of Discipline* where we read:

> On his might I will meditate, and on his steadfast love I will lean all of the day; for I know that in His hand is the *judgment* of every living man (Burrows 1986:386).

This same term "eternal life" also has a background in *Daniel* 12.3, the *Books of Enoch, the Psalms of Solomon, Joseph and Asenath*, *The Second and Fourth Books of Maccabees*, in early Christianity, as well as in several Rabbinic texts (Frey 2007:3). Therefore, the parallels in the scrolls cannot be looked to exclusively as the background of the Johannine literature (Frey 2007:3).

We are forced to look to Judaism, and in some cases even to Christianity that predates *The Gospel According to John,* as the sources for the idea of eternal life in John (Frey 2007:3). We see a close semantic connection between John, the Dead Sea Scrolls, and other documents in early Judaism. Therefore, reliance on what is present in Judaism is essential as far as understanding John's concept of the resurrection. As we discussed previously, that involves many different perspectives, as far as life after death is concerned. However, the one that was the most common in Palestinian groups was a futuristic and bodily resurrection as opposed to the purely spiritual one that we found in the Nag Hammadi writings.

4.4.1.0 Conclusion on the Parallels Between John and Qumran

At first glance, the number of Johannine terms paralleled from Qumran is impressive. As shown above, many of the occurrences of the parallels are not confined to the Dead Sea Scrolls alone, and some may be found in other Judaistic contexts of late antiquity (Frey 2007:2). Also, as we have seen above,

Johannine usage and meanings of the terms described is markedly different from the Sectarian community's meanings of the terms. We must conclude with Jörg Frey (2007:7-8) that:

> The Qumran parallels adduced are in fact important parallels for the understanding of the Johannine language. But they are parallels as part of a broader Jewish heritage which is adopted in early Christianity and also in John. More recent Qumran research has demonstrated that the library of Qumran is far more than only the heritage of a hidden sect The documents rather represent a broad variety of Palestinian Jewish literary production, and even the peculiar "Sectarian" texts are also a witness to the variety of traditions and ideas from which they were developed themselves. Seen in such a wider context, the parallels regarding Scriptural interpretation, Messianism, the Spirit-Paraclete, and other items are in fact important not as proofs of a direct literary or personal relation, but as references to the variegated Palestinian Jewish context in which the early Christian tradition is rooted.

To summarize, the Qumran documents are an appropriate background for the Johannine material. In fact the language used by John and by the men of Qumran seems to be identical in many instances. The problems arise when one talks about the meaning of that language or those terms. John has completely redefined the meanings of the terms discussed above to fit a Christian model rather than a Jewish one, which seems to be the central push of the Qumran material. Whatever the role of the Essenes or Qumran community was, it was clearly a Jewish one rather than a Christian one. However, this proves our case that the concept of the resurrection that was taught by Jesus in John is also a Jewish one. The dominant perspective in first century Judaism was for a futuristic and bodily resurrection.

When one considers the Nag Hammadi materials as a background for *The Gospel According to John,* one has embraced a popular position. It is a position that has as it's precedent decades of hard work by *the History of Religions School* and by the *new History of Religions School.* It is also a viewpoint that will probably remain popular in scholarly circles for many years to come.

However, when one considers the weight and preponderance of the evidence of the texts from Nag Hammadi, it becomes clear that many of them should be dated later than has been suggested. Our research suggests, based on the evidence presented in this study, that the world of Judaism finds a better background and setting for John, than does the literature from Nag Hammadi. Therefore, a Palestinian perspective on the resurrection of the dead would be more appropriate in *The Gospel of John*, rather than a redefinition of that concept in favor of a purely spiritual or realized perspective.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, IMPLICATIONS, CONCLUSION

5.1 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

5.1.1 Conclusions of the Study

In conclusion, this study has accomplished the purposes that it set out to accomplish. Our problem began in the turn of the 20th Century, when many scholars began to question the status of the canonical books. That tradition has continued to the present day, with many scholars attempting to redefine what Jesus taught about the resurrection of the dead in *The Gospel According to John*. This concept is based on the idea that Jesus' teaching has its roots in Incipient Gnosticism. We spent a significant amount of time answering the questions of what Incipient Gnosticism is and what is its basic view on the resurrection of the dead.

Our next step was to show what Jesus actually taught in *The Gospel According to John*. Through careful examination and exegesis of the text of John, we were able to show that *The Gospel of John* illustrates a view of the resurrection of the dead that is both realized and present, as well as futuristic and corporeal. This presented a clear contrast to the basic Gnostic and Incipient Gnostic perspective that the resurrection of the dead is something that has already occurred, and for the most part, is purely spiritual.

The objectives of the study have been satisfied. We carefully examined the methodology used by modern scholars to situate Gnostic and Incipient Gnostic texts as the background of *The Gospel of John*. We accomplished this by taking a careful look at several of the most important extra-canonical texts that

scholars have placed back into the first century as having a potential influence on Jesus' teaching concerning the resurrection of the dead in *The Gospel of John*. Through, careful and critical examination, we showed that many of them may be dated later than what some have suggested. We also showed that many of these texts may be dependent on the canonical material, rather than independent of it. Our main concern with these texts was that they could potentially undermine what Jesus taught about the resurrection of the dead in *The Gospel of John*.

We demonstrated, through evidence from the time period, what the prevailing view of the resurrection of the dead was in the Judaism of Jesus' time. We looked at the evidence presented in the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Old Testament, and in Second Temple Judaism to determine what the dominant view of life after death was during this period.

The last thing we did was to show the relationship between *The Gospel of John* and The Dead Sea Scrolls. Through an analysis of the themes in the Dead Sea Scrolls and *The Gospel of John,* we were able to show that these two bodies of literature have a lot in common in their use of language, even though the meanings behind the terms are different. We showed that the meaning of what John was attempting to communicate focused on the life and works of Jesus. Whereas, the Dead Sea Scrolls focused more on Judaism and the Essene community or sect.

We also found that many of the terms and themes in *The Gospel of John* could also be found in the broader context of Judaism. We concluded that a broader Palestinian context, which includes The Dead Sea Scrolls, probably poses as the best background for *The Gospel According to John.* N.T. Wright's suggestion is appropriate:

> Christianity never seems to have developed, even from it's beginnings as a spectrum of belief, either of the pagan variety, or of the Jewish variety, but always stuck to one point on the Jewish scale (Wright 2006:552).

Therefore, this places the teaching of Jesus in *The Gospel of John,* as Charlesworth states, *within*, and not *from* early Jewish theology (Charlesworth

2006:156). And as we discussed previously, this theology was understood by almost everyone in the first century to consist of a literal and bodily post-mortem resurrection. Since this provides the most likely background of Jesus' teaching on the resurrection in *The Gospel of John,* a reinterpretation of the teaching becomes unnecessary and inconsistent with the Judaism where John is rooted.

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