Johannine Sabbath Conflicts As Juridical Controversy

An Exegetical Study of John 5 and 9:1-10:21

Submitted by

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A thesis submitted in total fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

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Statement of Authorship and Sources

This thesis is to the best of my knowledge and belief original. No other person's work has been used without due acknowledgment in the main text of the thesis.

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This thesis has not been submitted for the award of any degree or diploma in any other tertiary institution.

Martin Asiedu-Peprah
March 25, 2000
ABSTRACT

AIM

The study examines the two Sabbath conflict narratives in the Fourth Gospel (Jn 5 and 9:1-10:21) from a narrative-critical perspective. It seeks to determine the precise nature of the Johannine juridical metaphor as reflected in these narratives, the specific purpose of its use as a distinctive narrative genre in the text under study, as well as the plausible social function it would have played within the Johannine Sitz im Leben.

SCOPE

The scope of the study is determined by the above-stated three-fold objective. Thus, it begins with the examination and critical evaluation of previous Johannine scholarship concerning the nature of the Fourth Gospel's juridical metaphor which, at least since Théo Preiss, is generally understood as corresponding to a trial. It then goes on to establish that, in the light of recent understanding of the Old Testament rib-pattern as a two-party juridical controversy, Jn 5 and 9:1-10:21 are best understood not as a trial, but as a two-party juridical controversy as found in the Old Testament. This formal analysis of the text is then followed by an exegetical study of the Johannine Sabbath conflict material (Jn 5 and 9:1-10:21). The exegetical analysis underscores the fact that the juridical process in the text under study is throughout bilateral in nature and therefore corresponds to the controversy as a juridical procedure and not to a trial (which is not encountered until chapters 18-19). The study closes by examining the specific role that the juridical controversy, as a
narrative strategy, plays in terms of the communication to the reader of the christology which emerges from the two narratives, and the social function which the use of this distinctive genre would have had within the Johannine *Sitz im Leben*.

**CONCLUSIONS**

In terms of major conclusions, the study establishes firstly that the Johannine Sabbath conflicts are essentially *bilateral* in nature with Jesus as the accused and "the Jews" as the accusers. This means that we are dealing here with a *juridical controversy* and not a *trial* which is *trilateral* in nature. As a bilateral procedure, the juridical controversy is marked by a strong rhetoric of persuasion which is always aimed at one's opponent in a bid to convince him/her of the truthfulness of one's position in order to bring the conflict to a peaceful end and effect reconciliation. Secondly, it demonstrates that the narrator of the Fourth Gospel uses the juridical controversy as a narrative strategy for the purposes of the christological persuasion of the reader. This means that the narrator places the rhetorical techniques inherent in the juridical controversy at the service of the christological credo which he/she is seeking to communicate to the reader. Finally, the study shows that the recourse to the juridical controversy as a narrative strategy in the Fourth Gospel would have been necessitated by the Christian-Jewish conflicts of the post 70 C.E. period. The use of the juridical controversy in Jn 5 and 9:1-10:21 would therefore have been part of the effort of the Johannine Christians to convince their opponents of the truthfulness of their christological claims and to lead them to faith in Jesus. In this perspective, the juridical controversy christology would have functioned within the Johannine *Sitz im Leben*, among other things, as a means of persuasion of and an appeal to first-century Jewish non-Christians to acknowledge the true identity and significance of Jesus.
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Melbourne, March 25, 2000
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INTRODUCTION

Justification and Purpose of the Research

There is unanimity among Johannine scholars that one distinctive characteristic of the Fourth Gospel is the fact that the evangelist presents Jesus as caught in long-drawn out juridical confrontations between himself and "the Jews." It is generally acknowledged in this regard that Théo Preiss was the first to have drawn attention to the importance of the Johannine juridical metaphor for a correct understanding of the theological thought of the Fourth Gospel. The importance of the juridical metaphor as a hermeneutical key to Johannine thought can be seen in the fact that much of what the Fourth Gospel has to say concerning the identity of Jesus as well as his soteriological significance is embedded in episodes in which legal terminology and imagery is frequently used. This is especially evident in the long episodes found in 5:1-10:42.

Over the last fifty or so years since the work of Preiss, scholars have studied the Johannine juridical metaphor and have invariably described it as

---

1 The term "Jews" is understood throughout the present study as a reference to one of the characters within the narrative world of the Fourth Gospel. It does not refer to the Jewish people and will therefore always be placed within quotation marks. See below, 89, n. 67, for a further comment on this issue.

corresponding to the narrative genre of "judicial proceedings," or "trial scene." In the words of de la Potterie, "the whole life of Jesus is presented in the Fourth Gospel within the juridical framework of what is called "the great trial."³ On his part, V. C. Pfitzner is of the opinion that "the whole Gospel develops a courtroom scene in which the Son of God, who has come to earth, is on trial for his Sonship."⁴ However, this interpretation of the Johannine juridical metaphor as a forensic process is fraught with many difficulties and inconsistencies. For instance, the fact that a forensic process presupposes a trilateral procedure consisting of an accuser, a defendant and a judge leaves this interpretation vulnerable to severe and justified criticism, since the juridical confrontations between Jesus and "the Jews" appear to be essentially bilateral in nature. This and many other difficulties associated with the current interpretation justify the need for a new scholarly investigation on the precise nature of the Johannine juridical metaphor. This is what the present study proposes to do.

The study intends to take a fresh look at the Johannine juridical metaphor by examining the two Sabbath conflict narratives in Jn 5 and 9:1-10:21.⁵ In doing so, the study will attempt to pursue a three-fold objective:

³ L. de la Potterie, "The Truth in Saint John," in The Interpretation of John, 2nd ed. ed. J. Ashton, 67-82. (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1997) 76. See also S. Pancaro, The Law in the Fourth Gospel: The Torah and the Gospel, Moses and Jesus, Judaism and Christianity according to John. NT.S 42. (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1975) 1, who describes the confrontation between Jesus and "the Jews" as "an impressive juridical trial." A more detailed discussion of this point will follow in chapter one of this study.


i. to determine the precise nature of the juridical metaphor used in the two narratives and on the strength of it, to undertake a critical reading of the texts under study with the view to shedding new light on their meaning.  

ii. to examine the role of this specific juridical metaphor in the two narratives. The question here is: for what purpose and how is this specific juridical metaphor used within the framework of the two narratives?

iii. to explore the historical setting of the two narratives and to infer from it the social function which the juridical metaphor would have played within the Johannine Sitz im Leben.

The basic thesis of the study may be summed up as follows:

i. Jn 5 and 9:1-10:21 correspond in a general way in their form and content to the controversy as a juridical procedure as found in the Old Testament.

ii. This distinctive narrative genre is used for the rhetorical purpose of the christological persuasion of the reader.

iii. The juridical controversy would have functioned, among other things, as an appeal to non-Christian Jews within the Johannine Sitz im Leben.

129-130. R. Schackenburg however disagrees with the idea that 10:1-21 can be separated from 10:22ff and maintains that "no hiatus of any kind occurs subsequent to v. 21, since the metaphor and subject of shepherd and sheep (vv. 26-29) link up so closely with vv. 1-18." See R. Schnackenburg, The Gospel according to St John, 3 vols. HTC 4/1-3. (London: Burns & Oates, 1980) 2: 275. See also G. Mlakuzhyil, The Christocentric Literary Structure of the Fourth Gospel, AnBib 117. (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1987) 205-208. He is of the opinion that, given the difference in the characteristic vocabulary and literary genre between Jn 9 and 10:21, they should be understood as two distinct literary units (see 208, and n. 344).

6 By "critical reading of the text," I intend a systematic analysis of the developing responses of the reader in relation to the words as they succeed one another in time. See S. Fish, Is There a Text in This Class? The Authority of Interpretive Communities. (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1980) 26.
The two narratives under study have each been separately the subject of a number of monographs and a considerable number of scholarly articles. However, to my knowledge, no attempt has been made at an in-depth monographical study of the two narratives together, nor has there been a study of the juridical aspect of the Sabbath conflict motif as a hermeneutical key to the understanding of the purpose and social function of the christology of the two narratives within its historical context. The present study therefore attempts to fill this gap.

Jn 5 and 9:1-10:21 form part of the section 5:1-10:42 of the Fourth Gospel. This latter section is itself part of the first major section of the Gospel namely, 1:19-12:50. The section 5:1-10:42 deals with several controversies between Jesus and his opponents within contexts of Jewish feasts on the issues of Jesus' origin and identity. Its content may be presented briefly as follows. The section begins with Jn 5 which deals with the healing of a sick man at the pool.

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8 There have been two recent monographs on conflict and christology in the Fourth Gospel: R. R. Creech, Christology and Conflict. A Comparative Study of Two Central Themes in the Johannine Literature and the Apocalypse. diss. Baylor Univ., 1984; J. L. Stevens, Conflict in the Fourth Gospel. Its Relation to an Understanding of Messiah. diss. New Orleans, 1991. While Creech undertakes a comparative study of the theme of conflict and christology in the whole of the Johannine literature, Stevens is concerned with the theme of conflict in the whole of the Fourth Gospel. The present study focuses on two specific narratives which deal with the Sabbath conflict motif. It seeks to elucidate the precise nature of the juridical metaphor of the Sabbath conflict narratives and the use of the juridical motif for a christological purpose in the Johannine Sitz im Leben.

of Bethesda (5:1-9b). The fact that the healing takes place on a Sabbath triggers off a controversy between Jesus and "the Jews" on Jesus' identity and his relationship with God (vv. 9c-47). The following chapter (Jn 6) distinguishes itself from Jn 5 by the change in place and time, as well as in *dramatis personae*, and deals with the feeding of the five thousand (6:1-15), the walking on the sea (6:16-21), and Jesus' self-revelation as the bread of life (6:22-71) amidst signs of opposition and unbelief (see 6:41-42, 52).

A new subsection begins with 7:1 and goes to the end of chapter 8.\(^\text{10}\) Not only do Jn 7 and 8 share the same temporal and geographical settings (the feast of Tabernacles and the Temple), but also from the thematic point of view, they both deal with Jesus' self-revelation in the context of conflict and increasing hostility. Jn 9:1-10:21 forms the next subsection of Jn 5-10.\(^\text{11}\) Once again, Jesus' healing activity on the Sabbath leads to a christological controversy between Jesus and his opponents on his identity and origin, and ends with the shepherd discourse (10:1-18) and the reaction of "the Jews" to Jesus' revelation through word and deed (10:19-21). The section 5-10 ends with 10:22-42 during the feast of the Dedication. The confrontation between Jesus and "the Jews" on this occasion leads to two crucial affirmations by Jesus (10:30, 38) which substantiate all the christological arguments presented during the other feasts (5:1-10:21). Thus, 10:22-42 may be considered as a kind of conclusion to the whole section of 5:1-10:42. Hence, it may be argued that in 5:1-10:42, there are the feasts between the two Sabbath conflicts in which Jesus' origin and his unique relationship with the Father are extensively developed (5:1-10:21), and the feast in which Jesus' affirmations constitute the closure of his claim of oneness with the Father (10:22-42).

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\(^\text{10}\) On Jn 7-8 as a literary unit, see for instance, Mlakuzhyil, *Christocentric Literary Structure*, 201-205.

\(^\text{11}\) On 9:1-10:21 as a single literary unit, see above, 2, n. 5.
On the basis of this brief analysis of the content of 5:1-10:42, the structure of the section may be presented as follows:

5:1-47  Sabbath healing leading to a christological controversy (Unnamed feast).

6:1-71  Feeding of five thousand leading to Jesus' self-revelation as the bread of life amidst signs of opposition and unbelief (close to Passover).

7:1-8:59 Jesus as source of living water and light of the world in a context of controversy and increasing hostility (Tabernacles).

9:1-10:21 Sabbath healing leading to a christological controversy (Tabernacles).

10:22-42 Confrontation between Jesus and "the Jews:" two crucial affirmations substantiating the christological arguments of the other feasts (Dedication).

The above structure demonstrates that the section of controversies within the contexts of Jewish feasts (5:1-10:42) is almost enclosed within the two Sabbath conflicts (5 and 9:1-10:21). This not only shows the importance of the Sabbath theme for the literary structure of the section, but also that the two narratives (5 and 9:1-10:21) are closely related to each other and should be studied together as the present study proposes to do. Additionally, there are several other reasons which justify the basic assumption of the study that 5 and 9:1-10:21 have deliberately been designed as matching narratives, and thus suitable for sequential analysis. The following may be noted:
a). Structure.

The Johannine Sabbath conflict narratives have an identical structure which places them in the closest possible relationship. They both exhibit a basic structure comprising a healing account, a dialogical section and a discourse: 12

- healing account 5:1-9a; 9:1-7
- dialogical section 5:9b-18; 9:8-38
- discourse 5:19-47; 9:39-10:18

In both narratives, the transition from one major division to the other is marked in similar ways. Thus, the passage from healing account to dialogue is made by means of an exchange between the beneficiaries of Jesus' healing activity and a group of people ("the Jews" in 5:9b-10 and "the neighbours" in 9:8-12). Again, the transition from dialogue to discourse is marked by the same emphatic formula Ἄμην ἰησοῦς καὶ ἔλεγεν αὐτοῖς, no such transitional phrase is found in 10:1. However, this difference should not be overemphasized. The same situation is encountered one more time in 12:24 where a discourse which follows upon an introductory dialogue, is introduced by the formula ἐκ τοῦ ἀμήν. Among these motifs, the following may be noted:

12 The only difference is that while in 5:19 the formula is provided with a transitional phrase, Ἄμην ἰησοῦς καὶ ἔλεγεν αὐτοῖς, no such transitional phrase is found in 10:1. However, this difference should not be overemphasized. The same situation is encountered one more time in 12:24 where a discourse which follows upon an introductory dialogue, is introduced by the formula ἐκ τοῦ ἀμήν. Among these motifs, the following may be noted:

i. The two narratives both contain a healing account in which two anonymous characters are described as having long-term disabilities (the lame man in Jn 5:5 has been sick for 38 years while the man in Jn 9:1 has been blind from birth) and in which Jesus himself takes the initiative in the healing.

ii. They both have the same geographical setting, i.e. in and around Jerusalem in proximity to the temple.

iii. The healings take place on a Sabbath. It is interesting to note that in both narratives, the Sabbath motif is introduced in a similar manner (Jn 5:9b and 9:14).

iv. Most importantly, the healing on the Sabbath, on both occasions, leads to a conflict with "the Jews" which has a strong christological content.\textsuperscript{15} There can be no doubt that this Sabbath conflict motif occupies an important place in both 5 and 9:1-10:21. In both instances, it is closely related to the christological question which is at the heart of the two narratives and indeed of John's story about Jesus as a whole.\textsuperscript{16} It is Jesus' activity on the Sabbath which leads to the confrontation with "the Jews" on the issues of his relationship with the Law and of his identity. Since the evangelist uses the Sabbath conflict motif as a hermeneutical key to the correct understanding of the person of Jesus and his work, it can be said that the two issues crucial to both Jn 5 and 9:1-10:21 are the Sabbath and the identity of Jesus.\textsuperscript{17}


\textsuperscript{16} See H. Weiss, "The Sabbath in the Fourth Gospel," \textit{JBL} 110 (1991) 311-321. See especially 311. The utmost importance of the Sabbath conflict motif for John's christology in 5 and 9:1-10:21 is clearly established by a simple comparison with the treatment of the Sabbath conflict motif in the Synoptic Gospels. While John has intertwined the Sabbath conflict motif with the christological question, the synoptists "are concerned with the question[of] how far the law of the Sabbath is valid for men and how far it is limited (by the law of love)" (Bultmann, \textit{The Gospel of John}, 247).

\textsuperscript{17} Thus, I cannot but disagree with those scholars who maintain that the Sabbath motif is secondary and was only appended as an afterthought to make the healing narrative a suitable introduction to the discourse. See for instance: C. H. Dodd, \textit{Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel}. (Cambridge:
c). **Common juridical context.**

Another important element is that both narratives are placed within the same specific juridical context of a conflict centred around the Sabbath law. This identical juridical context, coupled with the fact that the two major parties in the conflicts are the same in both narratives, strengthen the assumption of the present study that the two narratives can and should be studied together as a guide to a better understanding of their content and function within the section 5:1-10:42.

**Methodology and Plan of the Research**

The present study is undertaken from a narrative-critical perspective (synchronic). The issue of the pre-history of the text is therefore not taken into consideration; an attempt is made to make sense of the final transmitted text.\(^{18}\) The narrative-critical analysis is carried out within the framework of the *reader-response criticism*. The Sabbath conflict narratives with their central characters are particularly "open to the concerns of Reader Response Criticism - that is, ones that are sensitive to the successive unfolding judgments that take place

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during the reading experience. It is assumed that, as a first time reader, the implied reader responds to the text in terms of its temporal flow, and always performs the response the text calls for. The reader has no prior knowledge of the Johannine version of the Jesus event and therefore knows only what has been read so far at any given moment. However, he/she is credited with some knowledge of the story of Jesus and indeed everything that the narrator takes for granted and therefore does not explain to the reader. These include the koinè Greek, Jewish theology, the Old Testament etc.

In addition to the narrative-critical analysis of the Sabbath conflicts, attention will also be paid to the historical and social context that is implied in the two narratives. In this regard, an attempt will be made to establish the historical setting of the narratives, to identify their intended historical reader, as well as to suggest a plausible social function within the Johannine Sitz im Leben for the use of the juridical metaphor in 5 and 9:1-10:21. The taking into consideration of both "narrative" and "historical" concerns enables the text to be studied in a way which is both respectful of the narrative world in the text, as well as the historical and cultural context which helped to shape the text.

The structure of the study is determined by its three-fold objective namely, the nature of the Johannine juridical metaphor, the how and why of its use in 5 and 9:1-10:21, and its historical setting as well as its social function within the Johannine Sitz im Leben. The first chapter will therefore be devoted to the narrative genre of the two narratives under study. It will examine the

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20 On the implied reader, see J. L. Staley, The Print's First Kiss: A Rhetorical Investigation of the Implied Reader in the Fourth Gospel. SBL.DS 82. (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988) 30-37. See especially 34-35; F. J. Moloney, "Who is «The Reader» in / of the Fourth Gospel?" in The Interpretation of John, ed. J. Ashton, 219-233, 2nd ed. (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1997) 219-220. While not being a person, since the implied reader is credited with certain qualities, capacities and tastes, it sometimes becomes necessary to use a personal pronoun (he/she). Henceforth, the implied reader will simply be referred to as "the reader."
assertion of previous Johannine scholarship that these narratives correspond to
the narrative genre of "judicial proceedings," or "trial scenes," and highlight the
difficulties and inconsistencies inherent in this position. It will then go on to
show that, in the light of recent understanding of the Old Testament rib-pattern
as a two-party juridical controversy, the genre of the two narratives in 5 and
9:1-10:21 is best understood not as a trial, but as a two-party juridical
controversy as found in the Old Testament.

The second chapter will examine both the immediate and overall contexts
of the two narratives. The aim will be to elucidate how they relate to their
narrative context, as well as their function within the entire Gospel narrative. In
this latter perspective, an attempt will be made to establish the importance of the
Sabbath motif both in 5 and 9:1-10:21 and in the overall literary construction of
the Fourth Gospel.

Chapters three and four constitute the heart of the research. They will be
devoted to the exegetical reading of 5 and 9:1-10:21 respectively. The
exegetical reading will be preceded each time by the examination of both the
narrative setting and structure of each narrative. An attempt will be made to
propose a structure for each passage using criteria based on their nature as a
juridical controversy, and needlessly to say, this structure will each time serve as
the basis for the exegetical reading of the text. The exegesis of the text will seek
firstly to show that in terms of their form (structural elements) and content, both
narratives correspond to the OT juridical controversy, and secondly to offer
some new insights into their meaning.

Chapter five will examine why and how the juridical controversy is used
as a narrative strategy in the two narratives under study. In this regard, an
attempt will be made to demonstrate the fact that the juridical controversy is
used for the christological persuasion of the reader. The narrator places the
rhetorical techniques of the juridical controversy at the service of his/her
attempt to persuade the reader about the identity and significance of Jesus.
The sixth and final chapter will attempt to relate the use of the juridical controversy for a christological purpose to the history of the Christian community behind the Fourth Gospel. The aim will be to find out the historical circumstances which made the Johannine Christians resort to this distinctive narrative genre to express their christology, as well as the function that the juridical controversy christology would have played within the Johannine Sitz im Leben.

In the general conclusion, a summary of the findings of the study will be presented. In the light of these results, an attempt will be made to examine very briefly the entire section of 5:1-10:42 to see if the presence of the juridical controversy pattern can be discerned in other texts. Finally, the use of the juridical controversy pattern in the Fourth Gospel will be related to one crucial issue in Johannine research, namely, the purpose of the Gospel in its present form.
Chapter One

Narrative Genre of the Johannine Sabbath conflict narratives

The precise determination of the narrative genre of a text is of great importance for its correct understanding, given that narrative form and meaning are inseparable. In relation to the Johannine Sabbath conflicts (5 and 9:1-10:21) which are the object of the present study, the question of narrative genre is closely linked to the issue of the nature of the juridical metaphor which is used in these narratives. As stated earlier, the current scholarly position on the Johannine juridical metaphor is that it corresponds to the narrative genre of "judicial proceedings," or "trial scene." The present chapter examines this position and attempts to show that, given the difficulties and inadequacies associated with it, it must be considered as untenable. An attempt will be made to demonstrate that the Johannine juridical metaphor, as reflected in the Sabbath conflict narratives, corresponds in a general way in its form (structural elements) and content to the controversy as a juridical procedure in the Old Testament, and that the Old Testament juridical controversy should be considered as its literary and historical antecedent.

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1 See above, 1-2.

2 I consider this thesis as one of the fundamental elements which gives my study its originality and at the same time justifies the need to submit the Johannine Sabbath conflict narratives to a fresh scholarly investigation.
The understanding of the Fourth Gospel within the framework of judicial proceedings is usually traced back to the ground-breaking article of Théo Preiss. In this article, Preiss reacts against what he sees as the one-sided emphasis on the spiritual character of the Fourth Gospel which in his view has resulted in the complete disregard of another important aspect of Johannine thought namely, its juridical aspect. He maintains that even though the juridical aspect of the Fourth Gospel affords a more coherent system of ideas, it has long been disregarded because John has been made to live on his over-systematized reputation of a mystic. Preiss' point of departure for his analysis of the Fourth Gospel's juridical character is the frequent use of the terms "witness" and "to witness." He observes that, with the exception of Jn 4:44 and 13:21, the terms "witness" and "to witness" always connote an act that is both religious and juridical, conceived in the framework of a contest in law. This observation leads him to draw the conclusion that "the earthly career of Jesus consists of a gigantic juridical contest."

The position of Preiss has more recently been re-stated and forcefully defended by A. E. Harvey. He claims that the disputes between Jesus and "the Jews" in the Fourth Gospel "have much of the formal character of a case at law." He specifically refers to the several episodes in the Gospel which "are deliberately reported in the form of legal proceedings and to characteristic Johannine terms such as «evidence» and «witness» [which should] have their full technical force." Thus, he maintains that there is a succession of trial scenes

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3 See above, 1, n. 2.

4 See Preiss, Justification, 9-11.


8 Harvey, Jesus on Trial, 14.
in the Fourth Gospel in which Jesus is brought to trial by "the Jews" again and again for the same offences, namely, his alleged breach of the Sabbath observance law and his claim of a special and unique relationship with God.\(^9\) On each of these occasions, Jesus is found guilty and condemned by his accusers who are at the same time his judges. However, they are prevented from carrying out the sentence by a combination of special circumstances such as the sympathies of the crowd and the very elusiveness of Jesus.\(^10\)

It is within this context of the general description of the dramatic framework of the Fourth Gospel as a series of trial scenes that the Sabbath conflict narratives are also considered as trial scenes dealing with issues which were contentious between Jesus and "the Jews."\(^{11}\) In the words of Harvey, "the author of this Gospel has presented these incidents as actual 'trials' rather than merely as points of controversy."\(^{12}\) Jesus is said to have been put on trial and condemned by "the Jews" for breaking the Sabbath law. However, in the law court of John's story, the tables are turned in the course of the trial and Jesus becomes "both the judge and one of the parties in the dispute."\(^{13}\)

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\(^10\) See Harvey, *Jesus on Trial*, 55.


\(^12\) Harvey, *Jesus on Trial*, 81.

One other point worth noting is Harvey's suggestion that the Fourth Gospel's use of the literary form of a trial to present an important part of his Gospel material may well have been influenced by the literary form of "law-suit or ribh" since the latter had already entered the realm of religious thought as exemplified by its use in the Old Testament.\textsuperscript{14} In other words, for Harvey, the Old Testament rib-passages considered as trial scenes should be seen as the literary antecedent of the Johannine Sabbath conflict narratives. This latter point is corroborated by Stibbe who thinks that the literary form of John 5:16-47 as a trial narrative should be traced to the trial scenes in Deutero-Isaiah which suggest a kind of "cosmic law court ...[in which] Yahweh is the presiding Judge as well as being one of the parties in dispute."\textsuperscript{15} It is therefore important for our study of the narrative genre of the Johannine Sabbath conflicts to take a closer look at the Old Testament legal procedures as reflected in the rib-patterns.

**Old Testament rib-patterns**

It is generally accepted that the study of the Old Testament rib-patterns goes back to Hermann Gunkel's attempts to delineate the various literary forms present in Israel's literature and his designation of a number of texts as


\textsuperscript{15} Stibbe, *John*, 77.
Gerichtsreden ("lawsuits"). He describes the basic structure of the lawsuit as follows:

a. Description of the trial scene  
b. The prosecutor's address  
c. The judge's address.

Gunkel observes that the prophetic lawsuit bears a close resemblance to the forms of address used in the secular courts at the city gate, and explains the similarity as being the result of direct borrowing.

The pioneering work of Gunkel led to an avalanche of research on the rib-patterns' literary genre as well as its Sitz im Leben. While divergent views have been expressed in relation to the Sitz im Leben of the rib-patterns, there has been a broad agreement among scholars with Gunkel's basic assertion that they reflect the proceedings of a lawsuit in which Israel appears as a defendant, and Yahweh as the accuser. The only divergent point between Gunkel's position and the research after him concerns the role of natural phenomenon

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16 See for instance H. Gunkel's introduction to H. Schmidt, Die großen Propheten übersetzt und erklärt, Die Schriften des AT in Auswahl, II. 2. (Göttingen: Vandenhoek & Ruprecht, 1915). See the section entitled: "Die Propheten als Schriftsteller und Dichter," XXXVI-LXXII. See especially LXV-LXVI. The texts mentioned by Gunkel include: Isa 1:18-20; Mic 6:1ff; Jer 2:4-9; Hos 2:4ff (see LXV, n. 16). See also H. Schmidt, Die großen Propheten übersetzt und erklärt, Die Schriften des AT in Auswahl, II. 2. zweite Auflage. (Göttingen: Vandenhoek & Ruprecht, 1923) XXXIV-LXX.


18 For an overview of the history of research on the so-called lawsuits, see C. Westermann, Grundformen prophetischer Rede. fünfte Auflage. (München: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1978) 7-63; J. Harvey, "Le 'Rib-Pattern': réquisitoire prophétique sur la rupture de l'alliance." Bib 43 (1962) 172-177; Nielsen, Yahweh as Prosecutor and Judge, 5-26.

such as "earth, heaven, mountains, hill" etc. While Gunkel maintains that the latter play the role of judges in passages like Isa 1:2-3; Jer 2:12 and Mic 6:1-2, most scholars note that they are simply called upon to hear the rib and should therefore be considered as witnesses, not judges. The role of the judge is played by Yahweh himself who thus becomes both the accuser and the judge.

There are several difficulties with this view of the Old Testament rib-pattern. Firstly, none of the rib-passages correspond exactly to the form of the lawsuit; many do not contain a judgment speech, and none contain a defence speech. Secondly, the portrayal of Yahweh as both prosecutor and judge creates an unusual situation which is never encountered in a lawsuit. The explanation offered by K. Nielsen that "the dual role of prosecution and judge... can be explained by the fact that it is he [Yahweh] who has been wronged [and] this wrong is understood by the prophets as a breach of the covenant," is far from convincing. The difficulty with this and other explanations that seek to justify the portrayal of Yahweh as both prosecutor and judge is that they do

20 Gunkel - Begrich, Einleitung in die Psalmen, 364: "In der Rede des Anklägers werden Himmel und Erde zu Richtern bestellt."

21 See Huffmon, "The Covenant Lawsuit," 292: "The natural elements... are addressed because they are witnesses to the (prior) covenant;" B. Gemser, "The Rib-Pattern," 130: "([in Mic 6:1-2] the mountains and the foundations of the earth are cited as witnesses;" Nielsen, Yahweh as Prosecutor and Judge, 74.

22 See Boecker, Redenformen des Rechtslebens, 86-87; Nielsen, Yahweh as Prosecutor and Judge, 74-76; Huffmon, "The Covenant Lawsuit," 293; Gemser, "The Rib-Pattern," 129. It may be added here that the rib-pattern has also been studied in several OT narratives which have invariably been interpreted as reflecting a judicial process. See for instance C. Mabee, "Jacob and Laban: The Structure of Judicial Proceedings (Gen XXXI: 25-42)," VT 30 (1980) 192-207, where terms such as "judicial proceedings," "judicial encounter," "judicial authority" etc. are frequently used. Mabee also considers Laban as both the "accuser and [the] Judicial authority" (see 192).


24 See for instance, Deut 32:1-25; Isa 1:2-3,10-20; Jer 2:2-37; Hos 2:4-25; 4:1-3; Mic 6:1-8. While this list is not exhaustive, it represents the texts which are generally recognized by OT scholars as belonging to the rib-pattern. See Gunkel's introduction to Schmidt, Die großen Propheten, LXV, n. 16; Harvey, "Le Rib-Pattern," 177; de Roche, "Yahweh's Rib against Israel," 570.

25 For instance Isa 1:16-20; Mic 6:8; Ps 50:14-15.

26 Nielsen, Yahweh as Prosecutor and Judge, 74.
not maintain a clear distinction between the *riḥ* which is essentially bilateral and the lawsuit which is by nature trilateral involving a plaintiff, a defendant and a judge. 27 Thirdly, the use of the term "lawsuit" to describe the OT *riḥ*-pattern creates grave misunderstandings. A lawsuit occurs when two disputants are unable to solve their dispute, and either of them refers their problem to the courts. It then becomes the duty of the judge to hear both sides of the case and to hand down a binding decision. It is only when the case is placed before the courts that it actually becomes a lawsuit. This means that whatever happens prior to this cannot be described as a lawsuit. Again a lawsuit ends with the handing down of the judge's verdict. 28 This is not what happens in the OT *riḥ*-passages where the two disputants deal with the problem themselves, with each party trying to convince the other of the justice of their position.

The above-mentioned difficulties undermine the contention that the OT *riḥ*-pattern reflects the judicial proceedings of a lawsuit or trial. There is therefore the need to examine other types of juridical procedures within Israel so as to classify more accurately the OT *riḥ*-pattern.

The Old Testament *riḥ* as a two-party juridical controversy

The above mentioned difficulties associated with the interpretation of the OT *riḥ*-pattern as a trial has revealed the need for an alternative

27 H. J. Boecker (*Redeformen des Rechtslebens*, 87-89) followed by G. W. Ramsey ("Speech-Forms in Hebrew Law and Prophetic Oracles," *JBL* 96 [1977] 51) maintains that Yahweh’s so-called dual function as prosecutor and judge in the prophetic *riḥ*-passages have their secular parallels in passages such as 1 Sam 22:11-16. Saul is said to function as both prosecutor and judge in a lawsuit against Ahimelech. This is doubtful because the encounter remains bilateral and there is no indication that the King refers his accusations to a third party. It is a clear example of a situation in which the accuser refuses to accept the protestation of innocence on the part of the accused (1 Sam 22:14-15) and resorts to violence as a means of obtaining justice. See de Roche, "Yahweh's Rib against Israel," 572-573.

28 See de Roche, "Yahweh's Rib against Israel," 564.
understanding of the OT rib-pattern. It may be noted in this regard that contemporary Old Testament scholarship has argued convincingly that far from depicting a trial scene or being a judicial process, the OT rib-pattern belongs to the literary genre which may be designated as "juridical controversy." As a juridical procedure, the controversy is a two-party dispute on questions of law. It possesses its own juridical character and structure and can proceed to the resolution of conflict without outside mediation. The primary objective is for each of the two disputants to try and convince the other party of the truthfulness of their position or claims, and to seek a solution which is mutually acceptable in order to effect reconciliation and restore peace. It can exist between two individuals, or two groups, or even between an individual and a group but the essential element is that in all these cases, the nature of the juridical controversy and its resolution is entirely bilateral. P. Bovati describes the structural elements of the controversy as a juridical procedure in three stages:

a) accusation
b) response
c) conclusion of controversy

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30 For what follows, see especially Bovati, *Re-establishing Justice*, 30-166.

31 See Bovati, *Re-establishing Justice*, 30-33.
a). The Accusation

The accusation signals the beginning of the controversy and at the same time indicates to the other party the reason for the dispute. It remains at the centre of the controversy as long as the dispute lasts. The accusation, whether it is declarative or interrogative,\textsuperscript{32} consists of three elements:

i. A person or group of persons becomes aware of an illegal act or a misdeed committed by another person or group of persons.

ii. Whoever perceives the crime denounces the other person by speaking out and thereby indicating the beginning of the controversy.

iii. The accuser serves notice explicitly or implicitly in his denunciation that the particular misdeed or crime carries with it some sort of punitive sanction. Thus, the accusation as "the conditional anticipation of the sentence" constitutes a serious threat against the accused.\textsuperscript{33} The implementation of the threatened sanction depends on the response of the accused.

b). The Response of the accused

The outcome of the juridical controversy depends essentially on the response of the accused to the charge levelled against him/her. This response can either take the form of a confession of guilt and admission of wrongdoing

\textsuperscript{32} On the declarative and interrogative forms of the accusation, see Bovati, \textit{Re-establishing Justice}, 75-78.

\textsuperscript{33} Bovati, \textit{Re-establishing Justice}, 87. For an example of an accusation with a threatened sanction, see Gen 31:26-29a.
or a protestation of innocence and provision of sufficient reasons for doing so.\textsuperscript{34} While the confession of guilt implies at least implicitly an admission by the accused that his accuser was right in initiating the juridical action, the protestation of innocence directly opposes the claims of the accuser. It may be noted here that the different reactions of the accused determine the different forms of the reply by the accuser which in turn give rise to different forms of conclusion to the controversy.

c). The Conclusion of the controversy

There are two possible conclusions to the juridical controversy.

i. When the accused admits guilt and asks for pardon:
In such a case, the accuser could decide to offer reconciliation and have the conflict resolved or refuse to grant pardon and accept a compensation or a similar offer. In the latter case, he continues to pursue the controversy and to seek its resolution by other means. For instance, the refusal to grant pardon may lead to the intensification of the accuser's anger, and this in turn may lead the accuser to resort to a direct "punitive" action against the accused.\textsuperscript{35}

ii. When the accused maintains his/her innocence and offers sufficient reasons to justify himself/herself:
The declaration of innocence takes more or less the form: "I am innocent, but you/the other is wrong."\textsuperscript{36} In other words, the accused not only seeks to defend himself/herself against the charge levelled against him/her, but also to prove to

\textsuperscript{34} See for instance, the response of Jacob to the accusations of Laban which takes the form of a protestation of innocence (Gen 31:31ff).

\textsuperscript{35} See for instance, the controversy between Saul and Ahimelech (1 Sam 22:11-19).

\textsuperscript{36} See Bovati, Re-establishing Justice, 112-114.
the accuser why he/she is in the wrong. This explains why the protestation of innocence often turns into an accusation against the accuser.\textsuperscript{37} This transformation of the declaration of innocence into an accusation is an integral part of a bilateral controversy;\textsuperscript{38} it constitutes one of the means by which the accused attempts to prove to the accuser that he/she was wrong in accusing him/her falsely.\textsuperscript{39} Additionally, the act of accusing one's accusers facilitates an explicit comparison between the respective behaviour of the two disputants. The purpose is to show who is in the right and who is in the wrong so as to hasten the resolution of the conflict.

A declaration of innocence has two possible effects, depending on the accuser's response. If the accuser is satisfied with the reasons advanced by the accused to justify his/her action, and recognizes that the original accusation was baseless, "the controversy no longer has a reason to drag on and expires for lack of content."\textsuperscript{40} Here, the two parties can reach a compromise and an understanding and so bring about reconciliation.\textsuperscript{41} If the accuser is not convinced by the other party's protestation of innocence and persists in his accusation, then the juridical controversy has not resulted in an agreement that ensures a just and peaceful solution. When this happens, it means that the dispute cannot be resolved without a recourse to an impartial tribunal where a judge will hand down a legally binding sentence in one way or the other. In this

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\textsuperscript{37} A classical example in the Old Testament is to be found in the juridical controversy between Laban and Jacob. The former initiates the controversy by accusing Jacob and threatening him with a sanction (Gen 31:26-29a) and when Jacob begins to defend himself, his defence quickly turns into an accusation against Laban (Gen 31:36ff). See also 1 Sam 24:18; 26:21; Ps 44.

\textsuperscript{38} See Bovati, Re-establishing Justice, 114-117.

\textsuperscript{39} Scholars who mistakenly consider the juridical controversy as a forensic trial explain this transformation of the declaration of innocence into an accusation against the accuser differently. For them, it is an indication that the accused has become the prosecutor as well as the judge. See for instance the authors cited above, 15, n. 13.

\textsuperscript{40} Bovati, Re-establishing Justice, 161.

\textsuperscript{41} See for instance, Gen 31:43-54. See also Josh 22:13-34 on the controversy between the Israelites and the transjordanian tribes, especially vv. 30, 33.
latter case, the two-party dispute changes its juridical character and becomes a forensic trial which has its own juridical procedure.\footnote{The second part of Bovati's excellent study on the OT juridical procedures is entirely devoted to the distinctive characteristics of the judicial procedure. See Bovati, Re-establishing Justice, 168-387.} It must therefore be said that while there is a clear distinction between a bilateral controversy as a juridical procedure and a forensic trial before a judge, there is also a link between the two. A juridical controversy which for various reasons could not be settled within a two-party context might be brought before a judge and submitted to his decision.\footnote{See for instance, Isa 29:21; Am 5:10. It must be stated here that, even though there is a necessary link between the juridical controversy and the forensic trial, from a biblical point of view, it will be *extremely deceptive to undervalue the pre-judicial nature of the two-party controversy, believing it to have less juridical rigour than a trial before a judge.* Bovati, Re-establishing Justice, 33. It will equally be wrong to consider it as merely a prelude to a forensic trial. H. J. Boecker for instance considers Gen 31:25-42 which is a typical example of a two-party controversy as an example of a "pre-forensic" confrontation ("vorgerechtliche Auseinandersetzung"). See Boecker, Redeformen des Rechtslebens, 41-45. See also 25-34. The two-party controversy is a distinct juridical procedure with its own structure and character and which need not be resolved in court. On the prejudicial nature of the juridical controversy, see M. de Roche, "Yahweh's Rib against Israel," 567-569.}

d). Other features of the juridical controversy

Three other features that are sometimes found in a juridical controversy are: invocation of witnesses, the juridical parable, and the defence controversy or the defence \textit{rib}.

i. Invocation of witnesses

In a juridical controversy between two parties, witnesses may be called upon by either side but very often, they do not actually appear in the course of the controversy and do not play any active role in it. According to P. Bovati, the reference to a witness or a third party is an \textit{artifice} used by either of the
parties in the conflict with a triple function. Firstly, it is used to indicate that the opposing party is not paying attention to what is being said; secondly, that the opponent is refusing to speak the truth or to acknowledge it, and finally that the party calling on the witness is speaking the truth and not out of self-interest. Thus, the invocation of a witness has the practical effect of declaring the innocent right and shaming whoever is in the wrong. When it is used by the accused, the invocation of a witness becomes an integral part of his pressing arguments which seek to convince the accuser of the truthfulness of his assertions and the baselessness of the accusation. In sum, it can be said that the purpose of the invocation of a witness or a third party is a rhetorical one, namely, to persuade the opposed party to accept one's point of view in order to bring the controversy to a peaceful conclusion.

ii. The use of a juridical parable

Another important feature that is sometimes found in a two-party controversy is the use of a juridical parable in which one of the parties is called upon to deliver a judgment in a fictitious case. This device is used by one of the parties in the dispute not only as a means to avoid recourse to a juridical third party but also as a ploy to bring the other party in the conflict to indirectly and unknowingly commit himself/herself. When it is used by the accuser, the juridical parable seeks to bring the accused to acknowledge his/her guilt; in the case of its use by the accused, it seeks to lead the accuser to acknowledge the baselessness of the accusation and the truthfulness of the claims of the accused. However, the objective pursued is the same in both cases namely, to convince the other party of one's position so as to hasten the resolution of the conflict.

44 See Bovati, Re-establishing Justice, 81-82. The invocation of witnesses constitutes an artifice because the witnesses do not usually speak, and play no active role in the controversy. An example of an accused having recourse to witnesses can be found in Gen 31:37, 41-42.
Thus, even though the party making use of the juridical parable may appear to have a double role, in reality he/she has a single role either as an accuser or as an accused, and the nature of the controversy remains strictly bilateral.\textsuperscript{45} The use of this device also makes it clear that the desire of both parties in the conflict is not primarily to vanquish but to convince the other party that he/she is in the wrong and therefore needs to admit that his/her opponent is in the right.

iii. The defence controversy

One other important element that may be encountered in a two-party juridical controversy is what we might call "a defence controversy" or "defence rib." The latter takes place when a third party intervenes in an ongoing juridical controversy on behalf of one of the parties in the conflict, usually the accused or the weaker party. This intervention is normally in the form of a position-taking against someone else (the accuser) in favour of the accused with whom the third party makes common cause. It must be stressed here that, as a second stage intervention which presupposes a juridical controversy already under way, the defence controversy does not constitute a separate or an additional

\textsuperscript{45} In view of the above, I cannot but disagree with de Roche's assertion that in passages such as Isa 5:1-7; 2 Sam 12:1-14; and 1 Kgs 20:39-42, the nature of the dispute is trilateral and therefore reflect the legal proceedings in a court. See de Roche, "Yahweh's Rib against Israel," 571-572. It must be stressed here that a juridical controversy takes shape when one party makes an accusation against another party. In Isa 5:1-7, the people of Judah are asked to judge a fictitious case at a time when they have not yet been confronted with an accusation and therefore have not yet become the accused and a party to a controversy. Once the identity of the people of Judah as the accused is established, the controversy between Yahweh and the people gets under way and the facts of the fictitious case as well as the \textit{prise de position} of the now accused are transferred \textit{mutatis mutandis} to the present controversy. This device disarms the accused and therefore obliges him/her to acknowledge the truthfulness of the accusation against him/her, but it does not in any way change the bilateral nature of the dispute. The same can be said of 2 Sam 12:1-14. It is only after the passage of the sentence by David in the fictitious case that Nathan confronts him with an accusation (2 Sam 12:7-9) and therefore initiates the controversy between Yahweh and David. Having already pronounced the sentence in a case identical to the present controversy, all David could do was to admit his guilt: "I have sinned against Yahweh" (v. 13a). It is therefore clear that the use of a fictitious case in which the would-be-accuser is called upon to take a stand in a fictitious case does not alter the bilateral nature of the controversy. What it does is to break down any resistance to the truth on the part of the accused once the controversy gets under way.
controversy, nor does it in any way undermine the nature of the ongoing controversy which continues to be bilateral.\textsuperscript{46}

It is clear from what has been said so far that a clear distinction needs to be made between the controversy as a juridical procedure and the judicial process (forensic trial) from the point of view of form and function, even if there is a necessary link between them. While the forensic trial takes place in a court before a judge whose duty it is to draw the distinction between who is right and who is wrong and to hand down a legally binding verdict, the juridical controversy is a two-party dispute which can proceed to its resolution without outside mediation. As a bilateral process, the juridical controversy is characterized by a clear rhetoric of persuasion which is aimed at convincing one's opponent in order to bring about peace and reconciliation. This is in sharp contrast to the trial where both parties address their arguments to the judge whom they both want to win over to their side. The issue of whether or not one's opponent is convinced by one's arguments is thus irrelevant in the trial. Again, contrary to the forensic trial in which the final decision depends on a judge, in the juridical controversy, it is the accused who is asked for the juridically decisive declaration. In other words, the outcome of the conflict depends essentially on his/her response to the accusation levelled against him/her. Additionally, while the main function of a two-party juridical controversy is to bring about a mutually acceptable agreement between the two parties and thereby effect reconciliation and restore peace, the trial has the function of ending the conflict by means of a legally binding sentence. The latter very often fails to bring about true reconciliation and to restore peace between the two disputants.\textsuperscript{47}

\textsuperscript{46} For examples of "defence rib" or "defence controversy" in the OT, see 1 Sam 25:39 (Yahweh's role in the rib between David and Nabal); Prov. 22:23; 23:11 (Yahweh's defence of the poor in their rib with their oppressors); Jer. 50:34; 51:36 (Yahweh's intervention on behalf of Israel in her rib with Babylon). See Bovati, \textit{Re-establishing Justice}, 39 and 41.

\textsuperscript{47} In whatever way the decision of the judge goes, there is always the likelihood that the party who loses the case may feel unfairly treated. This means that, while the conflict may have received a legally
The above analysis of the *rib*-pattern as a juridical procedure in the Old Testament has demonstrated that far from being a forensic trial, the *rib* corresponds to the controversy as a two-party juridical procedure. This conclusion certainly calls for a reappraisal of the interpretation of the Johannine Sabbath conflicts as trial scenes, an interpretation which was based on the conclusions of the earlier studies on the Old Testament *rib*-pattern as trial scenes. How then is the description of the Johannine Sabbath conflict narratives as "trial scenes" to be evaluated? It may be noted straight away that this way of understanding the Johannine Sabbath conflicts is fraught with many difficulties and inconsistencies.

Firstly, all the scholars who consider the Sabbath conflicts as trial scenes, as already mentioned, point to the strong presence of juridical imagery and to the use of terms such as "witness," "to witness," etc.48 In the words of V. C. Pfitzner, for instance, "the words *krisis* / *krinein* and *martyria* / *martyrein* play a prominent role as the courtroom drama unfolds."49 However, the assumption that the use of juridical imagery and terminology necessarily makes of the Sabbath conflict narratives "judicial" in the sense of a trial in a law court before a judge does not seem to me to be exact. According to Jewish legal procedure, there are instances, as in a two-party dispute, in which the conflict could be settled according to a strict juridical procedure without ever coming before a judge as it is the case in a forensic trial.50 It is the non-recognition of this important fact which, I believe, has led some scholars to consider the Sabbath

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48 See above, 14.

49 Pfitzner, "The Coronation of the King," 2. See also Stibbe, *John*, 76-77.

50 I.e. according to a system of law common to both disputants and which makes the conflict possible. For the structure of this two-party juridical procedure, see above, 20-24.
conflict narratives as trial scenes with the consequence that one of the disputants, and the accuser for that matter, is seen as the judge in a case in which he has vested interests. This however appears to be a legal monstrosity which, to my knowledge, has no precedent in Jewish legal procedure. The judge whose task in a trial is to hand down a verdict in accordance with truth and justice can hardly be at the same time one of the disputants.51

Secondly, the suggestion that in the Fourth Gospel, Jesus is tried again and again for the same offences and each time found guilty but somehow his accusers-judges never managed to carry out the sentence appears untenable.52 Once a trial has been completed and the accused has been found guilty by the presiding judge, the latter hands down a binding sentence which certainly renders further trials on the same offences unnecessary. The fact that the same issues reappear in a series of conflicts between Jesus and "the Jews" clearly shows that what is at stake is something other than a forensic trial.

A third difficulty is linked to the mistaken assumption that in the course of the trial, the tables might be turned so that the accuser becomes the accused and the accused in turn becomes the accuser and the judge. Thus, in Jn 5, when the so-called "trial" begins, Jesus is the accused (vv. 16-18) but as the "trial" progresses he becomes the judge and the prosecutor and "the Jews" the accused (vv. 31-40). How can the accused in a trial become the accuser and the judge? In the view of Harvey, this change in roles is the consequence of the informality of the proceedings but this is far from convincing.53 Again, if Jesus does in fact become the accuser and the judge, then one has to assume that his role in the Sabbath conflict narratives is to try "the Jews" and convict them. This

51 Harvey claims that the Jewish procedure allowed a man's accusers to also be his judges. See Harvey, Jesus on Trial, 13. However, he does not offer any documentation to substantiate his claim which, in my view, is untenable.

52 Against Harvey, Jesus on Trial, 55, 103.

53 See Harvey, Jesus on Trial, 57.
condemnatory role is certainly contrary to what the reader learns about Jesus' purpose in the Sabbath conflict narratives namely, the salvation of those who are questioning his activities and his christological claims (see Jn 5: 34b, 40).

Finally, the fact that the two narratives are set on a Sabbath and within a Jewish feast makes it highly untenable that we are dealing here with a forensic trial or in the words of S. Pancaro, with "a regular judicial hearing."54 It is very doubtful that "the Jews"/the Pharisees who were so scrupulous in observing the Sabbath law would have conducted a formal legal trial, and one moreover relating to a capital charge, on a Sabbath which in addition falls during a feast.55 In the words of J. Blinzler, "all evidence that this could be so seems lacking."56 Thus, in view of all these difficulties and inconsistencies, one has to conclude that the assertion that the Johannine Sabbath conflict narratives constitute trial scenes is untenable.

This then brings me to the examination of the basic assertion of this study that the Johannine Sabbath conflict narratives in 5 and 9:1-10:21 correspond in a general way in their form (structural elements) and function to the controversy as a two-party juridical procedure in the Old Testament.

54 Pancaro, The Law in the Fourth Gospel, 16.

55 Bernard appears to have perceived this difficulty in relation to Jn 9:13-34. He sought to explain it by claiming that the so-called investigation by the Pharisees of the cure of the blind man on the Sabbath "was not on the day of the cure, but on a later day" J. H. Bernard, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel according to St. John, 2 vols. ICC. (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1928) 2: 331. However, the basis of his argument - the use of ποτὲ in relation to the healed man - is rather weak. Firstly, the passage from v. 12 to v. 13 suggests that the two verses share the same temporal unity. Secondly, the evangelist could have used εἰσερχόμενος (see for instance, 1:43) or a similar word if he had intended to indicate a later day. Thirdly, the designation of the healed man as δ’ ποτὲ τουφλάς is a reference to his former state (as a blind man) which no longer exists at the moment of his encounter with "the neighbours and those who had seen him before as a beggar" (9:8a). See A. Loisy, Le Quatrième Evangile, 2e ed. (Paris: Emile Nourry, 1921) 312, who rightly observes that "le texte [9:13-14] ne signifie nullement que le sabbat soit éculé, et qu'on se trouve au lendemain du miracle."

56 J. Blinzler, The Trial of Jesus. (Westminster: The Newman Press, 1959) 76. Even if it is assumed that the evangelist is here using a literary form (which in my view does not imply necessarily that the facts reported here are unhistorical), it is still improbable that he would have sought to portray "the Jews" and the Pharisees as doing something that would seem to be a breach of the sanctity of the Sabbath rest in a case in which they themselves are precisely accusing Jesus of not observing the Sabbath law.
Jn 5 and 9:1-10:21 as a two-party juridical controversy

The Johannine Sabbath conflict narratives in 5 and 9:1-10:21 constitute a two-party juridical controversy between Jesus and "the Jews" on questions of law. The Johannine Jesus is accused by "the Jews" of the non-observance of the Sabbath law and of making false christological claims.\textsuperscript{57} Jesus responds to the accusations with juridically decisive declarations which seek to justify his actions and to convince his accusers of the truthfulness of his claims and thus bring the controversy to an end. The two narratives are therefore marked by a strong rhetoric of persuasion which is aimed at Jesus' opponents in a bid to persuade them about the truthfulness of his claims. However, at the end of the Sabbath juridical controversy, Jesus' accusers are sharply divided over his words. As a juridical controversy, the structural elements of the Johannine Sabbath conflict narratives, which will be fleshed out subsequently, may be schematized as follows:

a. Event leading to controversy (Jn 5:1-9b)

b. The accusation (5:9c-16)

c. Additional accusations and intended sanction (5:18)

d. Response of the Accused (5:17, 19-47)

- Reasons justifying action (5:17, 19-30)
- Invocation of witnesses (5:31-40)
- Transformation of defence into accusation (5:41-47)

\textsuperscript{57} The expression "christological claims" is used throughout the present study to refer to the Johannine Jesus' claims of a unique relationship with God which enables him to work on the Sabbath by exercising the dual divine activity of life-giving and judgment, as well as his status as the sole mediator of the salvation that comes from God.
e. Sabbath controversy not yet concluded.

- There is no reaction from the accusers to the response of the accused. Since there is no indication of withdrawal of initial accusations, the juridical controversy has clearly not ended.

f. Resumption of the juridical controversy (Jn 9:1-10:1-21)

- Event leading to controversy (Jn 9:1-15)
- Re-statement of accusation (Jn 9:16a)
- Call of witnesses (9:17-27)
- Defence controversy and its aftermath (9:28-38)
- The use of juridical parable and its application (9:39-10:1-18)

g. Conclusion of the Sabbath juridical controversy (10:19-21)

The schematic outline presented above can now be examined in some detail.

a). Event leading to controversy (5:1-9b)

Jesus heals a lame man on the Sabbath, and as a proof to establish the reality of the miracle beyond doubt, he orders him to take up his pallet and walk. (5:5-8). The man promptly obeys Jesus' command and begins to walk around (5:9b).

b) The accusation (5:9c-16)

A group of people, "the Jews," become aware of the commission of what they perceive as an illegal act, namely, the carrying of a burden by the healed
man on the Sabbath. They denounce him by formally accusing him of committing an unlawful act on the Sabbath: "It is the Sabbath and you are not allowed to carry your sleeping-mat" (5:10). Within the framework of the two-party juridical controversy, this statement constitutes a formal accusation in a declarative form. It signals the beginning of the controversy and at the same time indicates to the other party the reason for the dispute. The man defends himself by pointing to another person whose identity he presently does not know as the instigator of his action (5:11). He eventually identifies this other person as Jesus to "the Jews" (5:15). This not only enables the healed man to extricate himself from a possible controversy with "the Jews," but it also allows the latter to shift the original accusation to Jesus and thus set in motion a juridical controversy in which the two contending parties are Jesus and "the Jews" (5:16).

c) Additional accusations and intended sanction (5:18)

The narrator intrudes a comment into the narrative by means of which he states all the accusations being made against Jesus which constitute the motive for the conflict. These include the already stated accusation of Sabbath violation (v. 18a) as well as two additional accusations of calling God his own Father and making himself equal to God (v. 18b). The sanction for these accusations is mentioned in the form of an intended punitive action (v. 18a).

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58 The illegality of this act is due not merely to the Pharisaic casuistry in relation to the Sabbath (against K. H. Rengstorff, "ἀπαρχηγέως," TDNT 1 [1964] 317-333. See especially 328). The act of carrying a burden on the Sabbath was forbidden both in the Pentateuch (Num 15:32-36) and in the Prophets (Jer. 17:19-27. See also Neh. 13:15-19). See Pancaro, The Law in the Fourth Gospel, 47, n. 164.

59 Thus, the statement is neither the beginning of an interrogation of the healed man by "the Jews" (against Stibbe, John, 74) nor does it constitute "a formal warning to the man that he is transgressing it [the Sabbath law]" (Harvey, Jesus on Trial, 48 and 76). On the different forms of the accusation in a juridical controversy, see Bovati, Re-establishing Justice, 75-78.
Thus, the assertion that "the Jews" sought all the more to kill Jesus does not constitute a sentence, but a serious threat against Jesus. In the juridical controversy, the sanction is presented in the form of a threat and its implementation depends essentially on the response of the accused. This means that the threatened sanction cannot be regarded as a sentence because it is still subject in the two-party controversy to the defence of the accused after which it may either be confirmed of rebutted. Therefore, for a person to engage in a juridical controversy with another person is to threaten the latter with a possible punitive sanction.


d). Response of the Accused (5:17, 19-47)

Faced with a double accusation of breaking the Sabbath and blasphemy and with a threat of severe sanction, Jesus responds to his accusers with a juridically decisive declaration on which the outcome of the controversy essentially depends. His response is a protestation of innocence; it not only seeks to justify his Sabbath activity, but it also seeks to prove to his accusers why they are in the wrong. The length of Jesus' response (twenty-nine out of the forty-seven verses which constitute the chapter) clearly indicates that the juridical controversy is being presented from the point of view of the Johannine

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60 Against Stibbe, *John*, 77. See Bultmann, *The Gospel of John*, 244, n. 1, who rightly observes that there is no verdict recorded in Jn 5:16, 18.

61 See Bovati, *Re-establishing Justice*, 85 and 88. One needs to maintain a clear distinction between a sanction as a threat in the juridical controversy and a sanction as a verdict which brings all interventions and defence to a close as it pertains to the judicial process. That Jn 5:18a is not a judicial verdict is made clear by the fact that Jesus, after v. 18a, pronounces a long speech in which he justifies his action and responds to the accusations levelled against him.

62 On the two possible ways in which the accused can respond to the accusation, see above, 22-23. See also Bovati, *Re-establishing Justice*, 93-94.
Jesus. In other words, the narrator presents the reasons by which Jesus seeks to convince his accusers of the legitimacy of his actions and of the truthfulness of his christological claims. Jesus' response may be subdivided in three parts, with each part presenting an important element of the defence in a two-party controversy: reasons justifying his action, invocation of witnesses, and transformation of defence into accusation.

i. Reasons that justify the action (5:19-30)

The Johannine Jesus starts his response to the accusations with a justification of his Sabbath activity by appealing to his intimate unity with his Father which allows him to do what he sees the Father doing. As the Son of the Father, he enjoys the same prerogative as the Sabbath God of Israel whose work is uninterrupted by the Sabbath law: "My Father is always working, and I am working too" (5:17). He then goes on to explain the nature of his relationship with God and of the work entrusted to him by the Father (5:19-30). Thus, what Jesus seeks to do in 5:17, 19-30 is to explain to his accusers the profound reasons which not only justify his action but also make it legitimate and necessary.

ii. Invocation of witnesses (5:31-40)

Jesus as the accused invokes three witnesses - John the Baptist, the testimony of the Father as manifested in Jesus' own works (ἐργα), and the Scriptures - as part of his response to his accusers. In a two-party juridical

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63 The same phenomenon can be observed in the OT prophetic ṭīḇ between Yahweh and Israel. In effect, the biblical writers present the controversy from Yahweh's point of view and therefore give prominence to his pronouncements. This may be explained by the fact that it is Yahweh who, by means of the ṭīḇ, is seeking to convince Israel of her sinfulness in order to bring about conversion and therefore reconciliation (see for instance, Isa 1:2-20; Mic 6:1-8).
controversy, the accused may have recourse to witnesses when he/she believes himself/herself to be in the right, and therefore to be able to show the accuser that he/she is not acting out of good faith. As it is often the case in a two-party controversy, none of the witnesses invoked by Jesus actually appears in the course of the controversy. The reference to witnesses is thus a means by which Jesus indicates to his accusers that they are refusing to acknowledge the truth which is confirmed by all the witnesses, and that he himself is speaking the truth and not out of self-interest. The invocation of witnesses is therefore part of his argument which seeks to bring his accusers to acknowledge the truthfulness of his testimony and to bring the conflict to an end.

iii. Transformation of defence into accusation (5:41-47)

Having provided reasons to justify his Sabbath activity and his claims of special intimacy with the Father, Jesus' declaration of innocence now turns into an accusation against his accusers whom he accuses of not having the love of God within them (v. 41), of receiving glory from one another (v. 44) and of not believing the writings of Moses (v. 47). The act of accusing one's accuser constitutes an integral part of a bilateral controversy, especially of the defence of the accused. Thus, far from signalling a reversal of roles which would turn Jesus into a judge and a prosecutor, the accusations are meant to prove to

64 See for instance the controversy between Jacob and Laban (Gen 31:37, 41-42). See Bovati, Re-establishing Justice, 80, n. 42.

65 On the role of witnesses or third parties in a two-party controversy, see above, 24-25. See also Bovati, Re-establishing Justice, 82. The invocation of witnesses by Jesus does not in any way mean that Jesus has now become both the judge and the prosecutor and in that capacity needs supporting evidence (against Harvey, Jesus on Trial, 58).

66 See Bovati, Re-establishing Justice, 114-117. For an example in the OT, see for instance, Gen 31:38-41.

67 Against Stibble, John, 77-79, who entitles 5:41-47 as "the Defendant turned Prosecutor" and speaks of a reversal of roles with Jesus becoming the judge and passing judgment on his accusers.
one's accusers that they are in the wrong and their accusations baseless. As part of the protestation of innocence, these accusations do not seek to condemn but rather to put the other party on the defensive and thus constitute "an invitation and stimulus to speech by the other." They also facilitate an explicit comparison between the different behaviour of the two disputants, namely Jesus and "the Jews." Thus, while Jesus loves the Father and has come in his name (v. 43a), his accusers do not have the love of God within them (v. 42); while Jesus does not receive glory from men (v. 41), "the Jews" receive glory from one another and do not seek the glory that comes from God (v. 44). The accusations with the explicit comparison between the two disputants therefore constitute a means by which the accused (here, Jesus) seeks to show who is in the right and who is in the wrong so as to hasten the resolution of the conflict.

e). Sabbath controversy not yet concluded

The response of Jesus to his accusers had been essentially a declaration of innocence and therefore a rebuttal of the accusations against him. In a two-party conflict, there is normally a reaction on the part of the accuser to the speech of the accused. This reaction can either take the form of an acceptance of the reasons advanced by the latter which then leads to the amicable conclusion of the controversy or the rejection of the accused's reasons which would mean the continuation of the controversy.  

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69 A typical example of accusations of an accused against his accusers which make possible an explicit comparison between the different behaviour of the two disputants is found in the juridical controversy between Laban and Jacob (Gen 31:38-41). While Jacob portrays his relationship with Laban as characterized by selfless service, generosity of heart and absolute honesty, he portrays Laban as mean, dishonest and greedy. See also the juridical controversy between Saul and David (1 Sam 24:10-12).

70 See above, 22-24.
At the end of Jesus' speech in 5:47, no reaction from his accusers is reported. How is one to understand this unusual silence of "the Jews"? Should it be assumed that they were left speechless by the arguments presented by the Johannine Jesus, and had therefore decided to drop the accusations against him? The answer appears to be in the negative because the issues raised are left unresolved and there is no indication of the withdrawal of the initial accusations. This is evident in the fact that the same accusations at the centre of this controversy will be made against Jesus by the same accusers (i.e., "the Jews") on another occasion in circumstances very similar to the present one. This means that the absence of a reaction on the part of "the Jews" suggests that the Sabbath juridical conflict is far from over and is destined to be continued later on in the Gospel, and this takes place in Jn 9:1-10:21 where we find the second Sabbath juridical conflict. This latter in effect constitutes not only the continuation and development of the Sabbath juridical controversy, but it also brings it to its conclusion.

f). Resumption of the Sabbath Controversy (Jn 9:1-10:1-18)

The healing by Jesus of a man born blind on the Sabbath and the subsequent bringing of the man before the Pharisees in an effort to establish the truth of his claims lead to the resumption of the Sabbath juridical controversy


72 I am referring here to the other Sabbath conflict narrative in Jn 9:1-10:21 in which the issues of the Sabbath law and the identity of Jesus form the basis of the controversy.

73 See Pancaro, The Law in the Fourth Gospel, who rightly emphasizes the fact that "Jn 9 represents not only the development but also the conclusion of the Sabbath controversy" (17) and also that "in Jn 5, the controversy had not been brought to its term; it was left unresolved, ... and brought to a close in Jn 9" (161).
between Jesus and "the Jews."\textsuperscript{74} It may be observed here that, even though the ongoing controversy is given a more dramatic development in this second phase, it remains throughout a two-party juridical controversy.\textsuperscript{75} The following elements of importance may be noted as the juridical controversy resumes:

i. Re-statement of the accusation (9:16a)

The opponents of Jesus signal the resumption of the Sabbath juridical controversy by re-stating their accusations against him namely, his non-observance of the Sabbath law and his false claims about his identity: "This man is not from God, for he does not keep the Sabbath" (Jn 9:16a). The re-surfacing of the same accusations as those made in Jn 5:18b shows that Jesus' accusers were not convinced by his arguments in 5:19-47,\textsuperscript{76} and are therefore ready to pursue their juridical controversy with him. However, the division in their ranks becomes a major setback as some of them indicate an openness to Jesus in view of his miraculous deeds.\textsuperscript{77} Since the signs of Jesus appear to be giving him some amount of credibility, the hostile faction among the Pharisees now wants to deny that the miracle ever took place in an attempt to solve the issue dividing

\textsuperscript{74}The frequent alternation in Jn 9:1-10:21 between "the Jews" (see 9:18, 22; 10:19) and "the Pharisees" (see 9:13, 15, 16, 40) strongly suggests that they both represent the same group, namely the opponents of Jesus in the ongoing juridical controversy.

\textsuperscript{75}Against Pancaro, \textit{The Law in the Fourth Gospel}, who maintains that Jn 9 "gives rise to a regular judicial hearing" (16) while at the same time warning against interpreting it "as the faithful protocol of a court case, exact in every detail." (16, n. 34).

\textsuperscript{76}Even though the two Sabbath conflict narratives are distant in time from one another, given that the accusers of Jesus are the same in both instances, it is legitimate to assume that within the narrative framework of the Gospel, the accusers in Jn 9:1ff must have heard the arguments of Jesus during the first Sabbath controversy.

\textsuperscript{77}The expression τοιοῦτα ὑμῖν refers principally to the healing just described, but it might as well refer to other signs such as the one which led to the first Sabbath controversy in Jn 5:1-9; both were performed on a Sabbath.
them: is Jesus a sinner or is he from God? They seek to enlist the support of the healed man and his parents in this regard by calling upon them as witnesses.\textsuperscript{78}

ii. Search for witnesses (9:17-27)

In their search for evidence to support their claim that Jesus is a sinner because he does not respect the Sabbath and cannot be from God, the opponents of Jesus summon the parents of the healed man. They are asked to testify as to whether their son was indeed born blind. If in their testimony, they deny that their son was born blind, then the accusers of Jesus would have succeeded not only in discrediting the fact that a miracle had taken place but also in the suggestion that Jesus was from God.\textsuperscript{79} Thus, the parents' declaration that their son was indeed born blind deals a severe blow to the position of Jesus' accusers; not only can they no longer deny the fact of the miracle, but

\textsuperscript{78} In my opinion, the term "witness" is appropriate for the description of the role of the healed man and his parents in Jn 9:17-27a. Their intervention can be described as that of people who are considered capable of backing up and confirming the charges against Jesus and thus justifying the pursuance of the juridical controversy against him. In other words, if the accusers of Jesus can get the parents of the healed man to testify that their son was not born blind (see v. 19) and therefore no miracle has taken place, and the man himself to confess that Jesus is a sinner (see v. 24b) because he breaks the Sabbath law, then they will be justified in the eyes of the Δικαιοδοτ in their own ranks who are tempted to think that Jesus is from God. Thus, they will have sufficient reason to continue their juridical action against Jesus.

\textsuperscript{79} Pace scholars who use such terms as "examination," "interrogation" etc. to describe the various exchanges or dialogues between the accusers of Jesus and the healed man and his parents. See Bultmann, \textit{The Gospel of John}, 334-335; Lindars, \textit{The Gospel of John}, 345-347. The use of such terms could create the false impression that the blind man or his parents are on trial and are being questioned for a misdeed they would have committed. They have not been charged with any crime or misdeed and are certainly not on trial; they are witnesses in the ongoing juridical controversy between Jesus and "the Jews." Thus, Dodd's assertion that the second encounter between the healed man and the Pharisees (see 9:24-34) is in the form of a trial scene with the man himself on trial appears to me to be incorrect. See Dodd, \textit{Interpretation}, 357 and n.1. See alsoStubbe, \textit{John}, 105, who describes 9:13-34 as "a kind of trial (of the man)" i.e. the healed man. See however, Moloney, \textit{Signs and Shadows}, 124, who suggests that there is a hint of accusation of the parents in 9:19. In his view, the nature of the question in v. 19 points to the fact that "the Jews" think that the parents have been lying about their son. See F. J. Moloney, \textit{The Gospel of John}, Sacra Pagina 4. (Collegeville MN: The Liturgical Press, 1998) 293. The view adopted above is based on the fact that, prior to the question in v. 19, the parents had not yet made known their position on their son's former state to the Pharisees. Thus, what the question in v. 19 seeks to achieve is to invite the parents to confirm or deny a piece of information the Pharisees have obtained from other sources, including from their own son (see 9:13-15). In such a case, the question in v. 19 would not necessarily contain a hint of an accusation against the parents.
also the assertion of the parents of the healed man is a positive testimony in Jesus' favour that he is indeed from God.

Jesus' accusers now turn their attention to the healed man himself who had earlier on affirmed that Jesus "is a prophet" (9:17b), i.e. he is from God. They want him to testify that no miracle has taken place because they "know that this man is a sinner" (v. 24b) implying by this that he cannot perform such an act which would give him divine accreditation. The insistence of the healed man that Jesus did indeed open his eyes makes him an undesirable witness for the Pharisees and a welcome witness for Jesus and their persistent refusal to accept his testimony leads him to engage himself in a defence controversy on behalf of Jesus.

iii. Defence controversy and its aftermath (Jn 9:28-38)

The healed man finds himself in a position where he has to defend Jesus against the accusation that he is a breaker of the law and therefore a sinner (9:28-34). His point of departure is the opening of his eyes by Jesus and he seeks to prove to the Pharisees the absurdity of their accusation against Jesus which is the basis of the ongoing controversy. He argues that since God does not listen to sinners, it will be absurd to accuse a man who has done what nobody else has ever done of being a sinner. This clear-cut position-taking in favour of Jesus infuriates the healed man's interlocutors who are unable to counteract his argument which had already been used by some of the people in their own ranks (see 9:16b). They therefore bring the healed man's defence controversy to an abrupt end by dismissing him from their presence. The

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80 The irony of the situation here is that on the one hand, the Pharisees seek to deny that a miracle has taken place but on the other hand, they want to pursue their juridical controversy against Jesus by maintaining their accusation that he is a sinner, i.e. a breaker of the Sabbath law.

81 On the "defence controversy," see above, 26-27, and n. 46.
immediate aftermath of the defence controversy is marked by an encounter between Jesus and the healed man during which he confesses Jesus as "the Son of Man" (9:35-38). That the healed man should confess his faith in Jesus is a clear indication that the two make common cause in the ongoing juridical controversy between Jesus and his opponents. An earlier encounter between Jesus and his opponents in the ongoing controversy had ended abruptly (5:1-47) and had led to the resumption of the controversy in 9:1-10:21. Another encounter, this time between Jesus' opponents and a man who engages himself in a defence controversy on Jesus' behalf, also comes to an abrupt end. This indicates that the juridical controversy is far from over, and Jesus will have to face his accusers again if a peaceful resolution to the conflict is to become a reality.

iv. The juridical parable and its application (9:39-10:1-18)

Jesus now turns his attention to the ongoing juridical controversy with the Pharisees with a statement which is in reality an accusation against his opponents, namely their refusal to acknowledge the truth about his person and his work (9:39). This statement of Jesus which is overheard by the Pharisees enables the narrator to re-establish face to face contact between Jesus and his opponents. The term κρίμα in v. 39 should not be understood in the sense of a "judicial decision," but rather in the sense of "the dividing of humankind that takes place through the presence [and the activity] of Jesus on the basis of each person's attitude toward him. The consequence is that each either 'sees' or is 'blind'." However, the present context of an ongoing juridical controversy

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could also suggest that the term κριτικός could well have the meaning of a juridical action. The latter would indicate that Jesus' task is to convince the world of the truthfulness of his claims.84 Those like the healed man who make common cause with him and come to faith in him discover the light while those who obstinately refuse to acknowledge the truth remain in their "blindness" and therefore in the dark.

As part of his effort to convince his accusers that they are in the wrong and bring them to recognize the truthfulness of his claims, Jesus resorts to the use of a juridical parable (10:1-5). In the juridical controversy, the use of a juridical parable constitutes a subtle means by which a party in the conflict uses a fictitious case in a bid to get the other party to unknowingly commit himself /herself and therefore to accept the truthfulness of the position of the party making use of the juridical parable. The use of the juridical parable can thus hasten the resolution of the conflict by breaking down any resistance to the truth on the part of one's opponents since the position that the latter is called to take in the fictitious case is later on revealed as applicable to the juridical controversy itself.85 When it is used by the accused, as it is the case in 10:1-5, its juridical function is to be part of the accused's defence by which he seeks to lead the accuser to acknowledge the baselessness of the accusation, and the truthfulness of his/her own claims. However, in the present juridical controversy, Jesus' opponents fail to react to his juridical parable "because they did not

84 The primary objective of the juridical controversy is for each disputant to try and convince the other party of the truthfulness of their position or claims and to seek a solution which is mutually acceptable in order to effect reconciliation and restore peace. Bovati, Re-establishing Justice, 42-59, has observed that sometimes terms which are typical of the trial may occur in the course of a two-party juridical controversy. However, this does not in any way alter the nature of the conflict as a bilateral controversy, given that these "judicial" terms are used as synonymous parallels of the verb/substantive ḫib which is typical of the two-party juridical controversy. And so for instance, the substantive מִשַּׁפָּת in combination with the verb ḥḥ is used as a synonym of ḫib ḫib which denotes a juridical intervention on behalf of one of the parties in an ongoing juridical controversy (see for instance, Lam 3:58-59; Mic 7:9). See Bovati, Re-establishing Justice, 43, 55.

understand what he was saying to them" (10:6b) and so Jesus proceeds to apply it himself to the ongoing juridical controversy (10:7-18).

g). Conclusion of the Sabbath juridical controversy (Jn 10:19-21)

The Sabbath juridical controversy between Jesus and "the Jews" which began in Jn 5 and continued and developed in 9:1-10:18 comes to its conclusion with the accusers of Jesus finally reacting to his words which not only sought to justify his Sabbath activities but also to convince them of the truthfulness of his christological claims. When the two parties in a juridical controversy manage to solve their conflict between them and come to a mutually accepted agreement, the end of the conflict is marked by specific gestures to indicate that peace and reconciliation have been restored.\(^{86}\) However, at the end of the Sabbath juridical controversy, the reader learns that "the Jews" who are Jesus' accusers in the ongoing controversy are sharply divided on account of his words (10:19).\(^{87}\) Many of them flatly reject Jesus' words and appear set to pursue their accusations against him (10:20). Since the two parties have failed to resolve their conflict between them, the only option now is to appeal to an impartial tribunal where the case will be heard and a binding verdict handed down. Once this step is taken, the controversy ceases to be a two-party juridical controversy and becomes trilateral, i.e. a forensic trial before a judge. Within the narrative framework of the Fourth Gospel, this step takes place in the trial of Jesus before Pilate (see 18:28-19:16).

\(^{86}\) And so for instance, Gen 31:43-54 deals fully with the elements that ratify the end of the rib between Jacob and Laban. This example would be the ideal conclusion to a bilateral controversy.

\(^{87}\) The expression \(διὰ τῶν λόγων τούτων\) in 10:19 should most probably be understood as referring not only to Jesus' words in 10:1-18 but also to his main defence speech in 5:19-47 given that 9:19-21 constitutes the conclusion to the whole Johannine Sabbath juridical controversy which began in chapter 5. The same can be said of the \(τὰ ἔργα\) in 10:21a.
However, some of Jesus' accusers appear to be ready to accept his words especially on account of the very deeds that triggered off the present controversy (see 10:21). The reaction of this latter group shows that the Johannine Jesus had succeeded in convincing some of his accusers of the truthfulness of his claims. It is important to note here that the fact that some of Jesus' accusers were prepared to give credence to his words while others adamantly refused to accept them is of special significance. It means that those who rejected Jesus persistently and obstinately refused to acknowledge the truth about his person and his work despite Jesus' attempt to convince them. Thus, their ill-will was the main cause for the continuation of the conflict.

Concluding Remarks.

The analysis presented above demonstrates that the Johannine Sabbath conflict narratives correspond in their formal structure and function to the controversy as a juridical procedure as found in the Old Testament. Faced with the accusations of non-observance of the Sabbath and of making false christological claims in terms of his relationship with God and his singular role as mediator of salvation, Jesus responds with juridically decisive declarations which, in line with the nature and function of the juridical controversy, seek to convince his accusers and bring them to acknowledge the truthfulness of his position. Thus, far from being condemnatory, the discourses of Jesus in the Sabbath conflicts are reconciliatory in that they seek to enlighten his accusers on the true nature of his activities and of his christological claims and thus bring the controversy to an end. If on occasion his language appears accusatory, it is largely due to the nature of the controversy as a juridical procedure.

The greatest difficulty with previous Johannine scholarship on the juridical aspect of the Fourth Gospel in general and the Sabbath conflict
narratives in particular is that it does not maintain a clear distinction between the bilateral procedure as it pertains to a two-party juridical controversy and the trilateral procedure as in a forensic trial. This not only leads to the wrong assumption that the frequent use of juridical imagery and terminology in the Sabbath conflict narratives implies that we are dealing here with "trial scenes," but it also results in a number of inconsistencies in the interpretation of the narratives themselves. The understanding of the Sabbath conflict narratives as a juridical controversy eliminate these inconsistencies and at the same time provide a more coherent sequence of ideas for the two narratives.

In terms of the coherence of ideas in the two narratives, the understanding of the Johannine Sabbath conflict narratives as a juridical controversy brings to the fore the close relationship between the two narratives and demonstrates the need to recognize that they must be analysed as closely related. This is evident in the progression that can be observed in the presentation of the Sabbath conflict narratives as a unique juridical controversy. In this sense, Jn 9:1-10:21 represents the development and the conclusion of the Johannine Sabbath controversy narratives. In Jn 5, the controversy between Jesus and "the Jews" ends abruptly with no indication as to whether or not "the Jews" had been convinced by the long discourse of the Johannine Jesus. In effect, the chapter ends without the reader being told of the reaction of "the Jews" (see Jn 5:44-47). However, the reader is left with the feeling that the controversy might have ended inconclusively and might therefore re-surface later on.

This apprehension is confirmed in Jn 9:1-10:21 when Jesus is once again accused of non-observance of the Law after he performs his second Sabbath healing. It is this second Sabbath conflict narrative which effectively brings the

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88 Bovati has quite judiciously observed that "not keeping in mind the difference between this [i.e. the bilateral juridical contest] and judicial procedure is one of the greatest causes of unconvincing interpretations of many biblical texts" (Bovati, Re-establishing Justice, 25).
controversy to its conclusion by providing the reader with the reaction of "the Jews" (10:19-21). Thus, the reader learns that, not only does the beneficiary of the healing in Jn 9 come to the confession of Jesus as "the Son of Man" (9:35-38) but also that the accusers of Jesus are themselves divided over the question of Jesus' identity (9:16; 10:19-21). While many of "the Jews" flatly reject Jesus' words, others show themselves open to his words and deeds (10:21). By ending the Sabbath controversy narratives on this note of division among "the Jews," the narrator achieves a dual purpose. Firstly, he/she implicitly suggests to the reader that Jesus had succeeded in convincing some of his accusers to be open to his point of view and perhaps to wonder whether he was not from God (see Jn 9:16). Secondly, the narrator prepares the reader for the future continuation of the conflict between Jesus and "the Jews." Thus, when Jesus' conflict with "the Jews" resumes and eventually leads to the only forensic trial in the Gospel (see 18:28-19:16), the reader understands this course of action as entirely due to the refusal of the many among "the Jews" to listen to Jesus' words and to acknowledge the truth about his person and his work. We have here a situation in which some of Jesus' accusers appear to be convinced by, or at least open to his words and deeds while the majority adamantly refuses to accept them. It is this fact which will eventually change the nature of this two-party juridical controversy into a forensic trial before Pilate (18:28-19:16).

Again, the determination of the narrative genre of the Sabbath controversy narratives as a juridical controversy helps to explain some of the important differences that exist between the two narratives. The two major

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89 After Jn 9:1-10:21, the Sabbath conflict motif is not found again in the Fourth Gospel.

90 Among the important differences between Jn 5 and 9:1-10:21, the following may be noted: Firstly, with regard to the form of the two narratives, the dialogue section in 9:8-41 is almost four times as long as the dialogue section in Jn 5:9b-18. This gives Jn 9 an aspect of a dramatic narrative. On the other hand, the discourse in 5:19-47 is twice as long as the discourse in 10:1-18. Secondly, while the latter contains a juridical parable (10:1-5), there is no parable present in 5:19-47 (See, however, C. H. Dodd, "A Hidden Parable in the Fourth Gospel [Jn 5:19-20a]." In More New Testament Studies, 30-40). [Manchester: University Press, 1968] who suggests that vv. 19-20a constitute a parable: a son [generic use of the article] apprenticed to his father who does only what he sees his father doing, but his father shows him all the processes that belong to his craft. For a critique of Dodd's suggestion, see C. K.
differences are: the presence of a juridical parable in 10:1-5 and the different roles of the witnesses in 5 and 9:1-10:21. With regard to the presence of the juridical parable in 10:1-5, this can be explained, as stated earlier, by the fact that the former is often used in two-party controversies by one of the parties in conflict as a ploy either to bring the accused to confess his/her guilt, or to lead the accuser to acknowledge the baselessness of the accusation against the accused. The juridical parable therefore constitutes a subtle way of leading the other party to a situation of self-incrimination. It is meant to draw the other party to take a position in the fictitious case presented in the juridical parable, and in so doing to accept unintentionally a hard truth which he/she would otherwise have refused to acknowledge if he/she had been openly confronted with it. The Johannine Jesus resorts to a juridical parable as the ongoing juridical controversy draws to an end in an effort to convince his accusers of his position, and to bring the controversy to a peaceful end. Thus, even though the use of the juridical parable may appear to be accusatory, its purpose is reconciliatory in as much as it seeks the resolution of the conflict. It is only

Barrett, The Gospel according to St John. 2nd ed. [London: SPCK, 1978] 259-260). Thirdly, the witnesses in the two narratives appear to play different roles. In Jn 5, the witnesses mentioned by the Johannine Jesus (5:31-47) do not actually appear in the course of the controversy and therefore do not play any active role in it. However, those who play the role of witnesses in Jn 9 (the healed man and his parents) do appear in the controversy and the healed man in particular takes centre stage in the absence of one of the main parties to the conflict, namely Jesus (Jn 9:18-34), and plays a significant role in the controversy. I consider the healed man and his parents as witnesses in the controversy between Jesus and "the Jews" because at no stage in the unfolding drama are they themselves accused of any wrongdoing. (However, see above, 40, n. 79). The healed man is questioned by the Pharisees in order to establish the veracity of his claim which is the basis of their accusation against Jesus that he is a law-breaker and therefore a sinner (Jn 9:16). But faced with division in their own ranks, those among them who consider Jesus as a sinner change strategy and seek to deny that the miracle ever took place. It is for this reason that they call upon the parents of the man to testify concerning the claim that their son was born blind (9:18-19). The parents' assertion that their son had been born blind is an explicit testimony in Jesus' favour since it establishes the fact of the miracle beyond doubt. Having failed to enlist the support of the parents, they call the healed man, and this time, without any explicit reference to the reality of the miracle which they can no longer deny, they seek to force on him their opinion that Jesus is a sinner (9:24). The healed man refuses to go along with this and openly acts as a witness for Jesus by engaging himself in what we might call "a defence controversy" (9:28-32). It is this that infuriates the Pharisees who, in an act of desperation, throw him out. See for instance, Bernard, The Gospel according to St. John, 2: 337.

91 See above, 25-26.

92 Reference can be made to such OT passages as 2 Sam 12:1-13; 1 Kgs 20:38-42; Isa 5:1-7.
when the other party fails to grasp the significance of the juridical parable and therefore does not take position which will in turn lead to the resolution of the conflict that the speaker proceeds to apply it to the controversy. The comment by the narrator in Jn 10:6 indicates that this is the case in the present controversy between Jesus and "the Jews." 

Similarly, the fact that the witnesses mentioned in Jn 5:31-47 do not actually appear in the conflict while those mentioned in Jn 9:18-34 do appear and take an active part in the conflict can be explained within the framework of the juridical controversy. The non appearance of witnesses in juridical controversies in general may be due to the desire on the part of biblical writers to respect the bilateral nature of the two-party juridical controversy and more importantly, to the fact that witnesses do not play any active role in the progress and outcome of the controversy. How then does one explain the appearance of the healed man and his participation in the juridical controversy between Jesus and "the Jews" in Jn 9? This may be explained by the fact that the healed man is engaged in what we might call "a defence controversy." As a second stage intervention which presupposes a juridical controversy already underway, the defence controversy implies a certain prise de position in favour of one of the parties (here Jesus) against the other ("the Jews"/the Pharisees). However, this does not in any way change the bilateral nature of the original controversy.

It may also be stated that, understanding the Sabbath conflict narratives as a juridical controversy eliminates a number of inconsistencies that had

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93 If my analysis is correct, then it must be admitted that far from being condemnatory, the Johannine Jesus' intention in Jn 10:1-18 is reconciliatory in as much as he seeks the resolution of the controversy.

94 See Bovati, Re-establishing Justice, 81.

95 See above, 26-27.

characterized previous scholarly effort at their interpretation. The following may be noted:

Firstly, it establishes quite clearly that the Johannine Sabbath conflicts are bilateral in nature. This fact eliminates the rather awkward assumption that one of the disputants in the conflict plays the double role of prosecutor and judge since there is no place for a judge in a two-party juridical controversy.

Secondly, the bilateral juridical contest provides a better explanation of the presence of the occasional polemical language in Jesus' discourses in the Johannine Sabbath conflict narratives. It is an integral part of Jesus' effort to convince his accusers and win them over to his position. There is therefore no need for the untenable view that the tables are turned in the course of the trial so that Jesus the accused becomes the accuser and the judge of his accusers and to ascribe this to the informal nature of the proceedings.⁹⁷

Thirdly, the interpretation of the Sabbath conflict narratives as a juridical controversy explains better why the same issues and accusations are contested over and over again between Jesus and "the Jews." In a bilateral juridical controversy, the two parties can argue their case again and again between themselves until they arrive at a solution that both consider just and equitable or until the conflict changes its nature and become a judicial procedure. The idea that Jesus was tried over and over again for the same offences and each time found guilty appears highly improbable.⁹⁸ In a forensic trial, once the accused has been found guilty and the sentence has been handed down, further trials for the same offences become unnecessary.

In conclusion, one may assert that the elimination of these inconsistencies, coupled with the understanding that the two-party juridical controversy is marked by a strong rhetoric of persuasion, and that Jesus'
discourses seek to convince his accusers and win them over and are therefore reconciliatory rather than condemnatory, certainly open up a whole new perspective for the interpretation of the Johannine Sabbath conflict narratives.

The present study has so far established that, from the point of view of their form (structural elements) and content, the Johannine Sabbath conflicts (5 and 9:1-10:21) correspond to the controversy as a juridical procedure in the Old Testament. Needless to say, this conclusion from the formal analysis of 5 and 9:1-10:21 will constitute the basis for the detailed exegetical reading of the two narratives. Before such an interpretation is undertaken, however, there is the need to examine the two narratives from the point of view of their immediate and overall contexts within the Gospel.
Chapter Two

Context of the Johannine Sabbath Conflict narratives

The first chapter of the study presented arguments for understanding the Sabbath conflicts within the narrative genre of a juridical controversy. This second chapter examines the context of the two narratives. It seeks to elucidate how they relate to their narrative context, as well as their function within the entire Gospel narrative. In this latter perspective, an attempt will be made to establish the important role that the Sabbath motif plays in Jn 5 and 9:1-10:21, as well as in the overall literary construction of the section 5:1-10:42 and the Fourth Gospel as a whole.

Narrative Context of Jn 5

a) Preceding context (Jn 1-4)

After the prologue in which the narrator furnishes the reader with crucial information regarding Jesus' identity (1:1-4), his coming into the word (1:14), as well as his status as the unique Son of the Father and his mission of making God
known in human history (1:16-18), the narrative opens with the sending by "the Jews" of a delegation to John (1:19-28). The encounter between the envoys of "the Jews" and John brings to the fore the issue of the coming of the Christ (vv. 20, 25). John not only denies that he is the Christ (v. 20), but he also affirms unequivocally that the Christ has already come and is present among the people (vv. 26-27). He later identifies Jesus as the expected Christ (v. 30) and describes him as the Son of God (v. 34). The issue of Jesus' divine origin is thus introduced into the narrative, and will continue to dominate the rest of the first chapter of the Gospel as other characters in the narrative acknowledge him as the Messiah (v. 40) and the Son of God (v. 49).

The next section of the Gospel (Jn 2-4) introduces the theme of faith as the appropriate human response to the words and deeds of Jesus, the Son of God.\(^1\) It begins with the episode of the marriage at Cana (2:1-11), where Jesus performs "the first of his signs" (v. 11a) which leads his disciples to a deeper faith in him (v. 11c).\(^2\) The next occasion for a faith response to Jesus is provided by his prophetic act in the Temple (2:14-17). However, instead of a faith response, Jesus' action leads to a confrontation with "the Jews" who demand that Jesus prove his prophetic credentials with a sign (v. 18). The rejection by "the Jews" of the sign that Jesus offers them (2:18-20) means that the relationship of "the Jews" with Jesus can at best be described as a relationship of non-faith.\(^3\) The theme of confrontation between Jesus and "the Jews," as well as the latter's role as Jesus' antagonists are thus introduced for the first time into the narrative. As the encounter between Jesus and Nicodemus continues

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2. I am reading the aorist in ἐπίστευσαν (v. 11c) as a "perfective aorist" since the disciples have already shown some degree of faith in Jesus (see 1:41, 49).

3. See Moloney, Belief in the Word, 104.
the development of the theme of faith as response to Jesus (3:1-21), Jesus specifies the salvific intent of his mission and indicates that faith in him constitutes the required response for the attainment of the eternal life he brings (3:16-18). The same theme of faith as response to Jesus re-emerges in the episode of the Samaritan Woman (4:1-42). Jesus' discussion with the woman revolves around such themes as the giving of living water (vv. 7-15), the place for the true worship of the Father (vv. 20-24), the coming of the Messiah (25-26) and it brings her to acknowledge him as a prophet (v. 19) and to wonder if he is not the Christ (v. 29). Her resultant testimony as well as the subsequent words of Jesus (vv. 39, 41) enable many Samaritans to come to faith in Jesus as "the Saviour of the world" (v. 42).

Additionally, the last episode of the section Jn 2-4 also carries forward the theme of faith as response to Jesus' words and deeds. Jesus' return to Cana is marked by the healing of the official's son which is effected by the mere words of Jesus (4:50a). His action of restoring life to a person at the point of death portrays him as a giver of life, and also brings the father of the sick person and all his household to faith in him (4:53). In sum, it may be argued that the reader comes to the narrative in Jn 5 armed with a repertoire of knowledge about the identity of Jesus, the nature of his salvific mission, and the required faith response to the words and deeds of Jesus. As the logos of God through whom all things were created (1:1-4), Jesus is also the bringer of the fullness of God's gift which is the truth (1:14, 16-17), and the one who reveals God in human history (1:18). The purpose of his mission in the world is the salvation of all who believe in him (3:16). Thus, faith in Jesus is revealed as the only adequate response to the words and deeds by which he makes God known in the world. The episodes narrated in the section 2-4 also enable the reader to be aware of the fact that, while some are able to come to faith in Jesus as they see his deeds and hear his words (2:11; 4:19, 29, 41-41, 50b, 53), others fail to come
to faith and adopt a confrontational attitude vis-à-vis Jesus and his work (2:13-22). Thus, it is to these christological/theological themes which run through Jn 1-4 that the narrative in Jn 5 will have to be related in order to establish the latter's narrative context.

b) Jn 5 in relation to preceding context (Jn 1-4)

Jn 5:1 marks a transition to a new section of the Gospel. This is evident from the use of three markers that appear at significant junctures elsewhere in the Gospel: the phrase μετὰ τῶν (see 3:22), a reference to a Jewish festival (2:13a.), and a change in location (1:43; 2:13b, 43). As the narrative in Jn 5 begins to unfold, the reader becomes aware of a healing miracle accomplished by Jesus (5:6-9a). The means by which the healing is effected namely, the mere words of Jesus recalls to the reader's mind the healing of the official's son which was also accomplished by the spoken word of Jesus (4:50a). The similarity in the mode of healing enables the reader to relate 5:1-47 to its immediate context (4:46-54). Another element which enables the reader to link Jn 5 to its

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5 There is no unanimity on the exact relationship between Jn 4:46-54 and 5:1-47. See A. Feuillet, "La signification théologique du second miracle de Cana (Jn IV:46-54)," in *Etudes Johanniennes.* (Bruges: Desclée, 1962) 34-46; Dodd, *Interpretation,* 319, who maintains that Jn 4:46-54 and 5:1-47 belong together and therefore constitute "a single complete episode;" Brown, *John,* 1: cxl-cxlii, who sees Jn 4:46-54 as a sort of "bridge-passage," which both closes the preceding section and opens the section beginning at Jn 5:1. See also Moloney, *Belief in the Word,* 176-177. It must also be stressed that while I am aware of the numerous displacement theories concerning chapters 5 and 6, I am primarily concerned with the text as it has come down to us. On the reasons for reversing Chapters 5 and 6, see Bultmann, *The Gospel of John,* 209-210; D. M. Smith, *The Composition and Order of the Fourth Gospel: Bultmann's Literary
immediate context is that of Jesus as life-giver. In the discourse in 5:19ff, Jesus describes himself as "ζωοποιοῖν" (see 5:21) and explains that this life is given to those who give an assent of faith to his words and deeds (5:24). The reader recalls that in the narrative immediately preceding Jn 5, Jesus had acted as a giver of life (4:50-53), and the verb ζῶν ("to live") had played a significant role in the narrative (4:50, 51, 53).

Two other motifs of the preceding context which the reader encounters in chapter 5 are those of "water" and "temple." The water motif had played a role in several episodes in the section 2-4. At Cana, Jesus had changed the water for the purification of "the Jews" into wine (2:7-9), and in his encounter with Nicodemus, Jesus had explained to him the need to be born of water and spirit in order to enter the kingdom of God (3:5, 8). Again, Jesus had initiated his conversation with the Samaritan woman with a request for a drink (4:7), and had gone on to offer her living water (4:10). The recurrence of the water motif in Jn 5:2, 7 creates a narrative echo effect, and enables the reader to relate Jn 5 to the episodes of the preceding context. Similarly, the resurgence of the theme of "temple" in Jn 5 enables the reader to establish a link between 5:1-47 and the preceding context. The temple was mentioned for the first time in 2:14-21 when on the occasion of the Jewish Passover, Jesus had disrupted trading in the temple. It reappears in Jesus’ discussion with the Samaritan woman in relation to the place and manner of the worship of the Father (4:20-24). This theme of

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6 This has also been noted by Culpepper, "John 5:1-18," 196. See also Dodd, Interpretation, 319.

"temple" re-emerges in Jn 5:1-47 where Jesus is again in the temple on the occasion of a Jewish feast (5:1, 14).

Another important motif from chapters 2-4 which reappears in chapter 5 is that of "confrontation." In 2:15-20, Jesus had been confronted by "the Jews" after his disruption of the temple trading. Instead of a faith response to his prophetic act, they had opposed him by challenging him to justify his action with a sign (2:18). However, the confrontation did not lead to an extended juridical conflict, and no threat of a possible sanction was issued against Jesus. In Jn 5, the reader discovers a second confrontation between Jesus and "the Jews." As in the first confrontation, it is occasioned by an action accomplished by Jesus, but this time, it leads to a major juridical conflict with the narrator informing the reader about «the Jews'» death threat against Jesus (5:16-18). There is therefore a progression in the narrative in terms of the development of the "confrontation" motif. The decisive factor which makes possible this progression from a simple confrontation (2:15-20) to a major juridical conflict (5:1-47) is the Sabbath motif (5:9b). The Sabbath motif is therefore crucial for the correct understanding of the narrative in Jn 5:1-47.

It may be noted here that some Johannine scholars do not see the Sabbath motif as an integral part of the narrative in Jn 5. They maintain that it is secondary and was only appended as an afterthought to make the healing narrative a suitable introduction to the discourse.8 In the words of Lindars, for instance, "the issue of the Sabbath is arbitrarily attached to a tradition in which originally it played no part."9 The present study takes the view that the Sabbath

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8 See for instance, Dodd, Historical Tradition, 178; Bultmann, The Gospel of John, 239, n. 2, and 242; J. Gnilka, Johannesevangelium, NEB.NT 4. (Würzburg: Echter Verlag, 1983) 39; Schnackenburg, The Gospel according to John, 2: 96-98; Haenchen, John, 1: 246. It must be added here that these scholars do not necessarily deny that the Sabbath motif is important to the narrative as it now stands; their contention is that it was a later addition to the original Johannine Vorlage. See also Labahn, Jesus als Lebensspender, 243-256. However, the issue of "tradition" or the pre-history of the text is outside the scope of the present study.

motif is not only an integral part of the narrative, but is also essential for its correct interpretation. If as argued above,\textsuperscript{10} the narrator of the text as we have it intended 5:1-47 as a juridical controversy, then it must be maintained that the Sabbath theme has always been part of the original composition of the present narrative.\textsuperscript{11} The fact that Jesus' healing of the man and his subsequent command that he take up his pallet and walk take place on the Sabbath (5:8-9) inserts the emerging conflict in Jn 5 within a specific legal and institutional context, which evolves into a Sabbath juridical controversy between Jesus and "the Jews." As a result of his Sabbath activity, Jesus finds himself accused of what "the Jews" perceive as an illegal act, and is threatened with a sanction. He responds to the accusation in a bid to justify himself and bring his accusers to a better understanding of his words and deeds. It is therefore the Sabbath motif which determines the interpretation of Jesus' healing activity in one sense or the other. It provides the legal framework for the emerging controversy, and therefore determines the nature and development of the narrative in Jn 5. Brown is thus right in his observation that "one almost needs the Sabbath motif to give this story significance."\textsuperscript{12} Hence, it would seem incorrect to postulate that the Sabbath motif would be extraneous to the healing narrative.

In terms of the christological ideas of the preceding context (Jn 1-4), Jn 5 resumes and develops the all important issue of the divine origin of Jesus. The reader recalls that in the Prologue, the omniscient narrator had described Jesus

\textsuperscript{10} See above, 32-38.


as the unique Son of the Father (1:18), and in the episode about the cleansing of the temple, Jesus himself had called God "my Father" (2:16), and thereby laid claim to a special relationship with the God of Israel. This theme of "Father/Son relationship" is resumed and given an extensive development in Jn 5. Not only does Jesus speaks of God as "my Father," but he also reveals the fact that, as the Son, he has the right to work uninterruptedly, including on the Sabbath (v. 17). The nature of his relationship with the Father is such that he exercises the dual activity of life-giving and judgment which are the sole prerogative of the God of Israel (5:19-30). Thus, the anticipation in Jn 1-4 of the issue of Jesus' divine origin and his unique relationship with the Father (1:1, 18; 3:34-35; 4:34), and its resumption and development in Jn 5, enable the reader to perceive the relationship between the first Sabbath conflict and its preceding context.

In sum, Jn 5 harmonizes well with its narrative context in the sense that it continues and develops the narrative plot introduced in chapters 1-4. Not only are many motifs in Jn 1-4 resumed and developed in Jn 5, but also the crucial christological theme of Jesus' divine origin and his unique relationship with the God of Israel is given an extensive thematic development in the first Sabbath conflict narrative.

Narrative context of Jn 9:1-10:21

a). Preceding context (Jn 5-8)

The dominant motif that the reader had encountered in Jn 5 was that of a conflict between Jesus and "the Jews" on the issue of Jesus' identity and his relationship with the God of Israel. This conflict had taken place on a Sabbath
and within the context of a Jewish feast (5:1, 9b). The Sabbath motif had inserted the conflict within a specific legal and institutional framework and had determined its nature and development as a Sabbath juridical controversy. Accused of Sabbath violation and false christological claims (5:16, 18), Jesus had sought to justify his action, and to convince his accusers of the truthfulness of his claims (5:17, 19-47). However, at the end of the chapter, no reaction on the part of "the Jews" had been given; a fact which had indicated to the reader that the juridical conflict between Jesus and "the Jews" was far from over. Thus, it comes as no surprise to the reader that the conflict and the christological motives which emerged clearly for the first time in 5:1-47 should continue and develop in the subsequent chapters (Jn 6-8).

The context for Jn 6 is the approach of the Passover feast (6:4). A discussion between Jesus and his audience a day after the multiplication of bread (6:22ff) leads Jesus to reveal himself as "the bread of life" that satisfies the hunger of all who come to him (6:35). This assertion which seeks to induce faith leads rather to the murmuring of "the Jews" against Jesus (6:41-42). Again, they react negatively to Jesus' assertion that he will give them his flesh to eat (6:51), and as a result, a dispute breaks out in their ranks (6:52). Thus, the conflict motif and the ongoing opposition to Jesus' self-revelation are maintained in chapter 6.13 However, it is in chapters 7 and 8 that the christological conflict between Jesus and "the Jews" is fully resumed and given a clear thematic development. Jesus' teaching in the middle of the feast of Tabernacles and the ensuing christological discussion (7:14-29) lead to a series of unsuccessful attempt to arrest him (7:30, 32). The context of the feast of Tabernacles enables the reader

13 There is a geographical shift away from Jerusalem in Jn 6. In spite of this, the debates and conflict relating to Jesus' self-revelation which began in Jn 5 continue in chapter 6. This certainly shows the importance of the emerging christological debate in 5:1-10:42. In the words of P. N. Anderson, by means of the debates and discourses in 6:25-66, "the evangelist seeks to draw the reader into an engaging 'dialogue with the text,' leading to a transforming encounter with Jesus by faith." P. N. Anderson, The Christology of the Fourth Gospel. Its Unity and Disunity in the Light of John 6. WUNT 78. (Tubingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1996) 219.
to perceive the fact that Jesus uses some of the symbols associated with the feast to reveal his identity and mission, so as to invite his audience to faith in him. In reference to the role that water plays in the ceremonies of the Tabernacles,\textsuperscript{14} he declares himself as the source and the giver of living water (7:37-38). Jesus' use of the symbols of the Tabernacles in his self-revelation to "the Jews" continues in chapter 8, when he tells them that he is the light of the world, and that those who come to him receive the light of life (8:12). The resultant debate between Jesus and "the Jews" (8:31-59) enables the reader not only to perceive the continuation of the christological conflict, but also the escalation of the level of hostility towards Jesus (see v. 59). Thus, the reader arrives at the second Sabbath conflict (9:1-10:21) aware of the fact that the preceding chapters had continued and developed, within contexts of Jewish feasts, the conflict and christological motives which emerged in 5:1-47.

b) Jn 9:1-10:21 in relation to preceding context (Jn 5-8)

Jn 9:1-10:21 begins with the narrator depicting Jesus in the process of walking away from the temple.\textsuperscript{15} Jesus had just made his exit from the temple at the end of the preceding chapter (8:59). The association of the two verbs of motion (καὶ ἥλθεν [8:59] and παραγενόμενος [9:1]) indicate to the reader that the action in 9:1ff follows closely upon that of 8:59, and that 9:1ff should be placed in the same setting of the feast of Tabernacles. The context of Tabernacles provides an important link between the narrative in 9:1-10:21 and its preceding context, and enables the reader to understand the recurrence of the themes of

\textsuperscript{14} On the feast of Tabernacles, see for instance, J. C. Rylaarsdam, "Booths, Feast of," \textit{IDB} 1 (1962) 455-458.

\textsuperscript{15} See the use of the present participle παραγενόμενος in 9:1. Several scholars have rightly noted the fact that there is a smooth progression from the end of chapter 8 to the beginning of chapter 9. See for instance, Lindars, \textit{The Gospel of John}, 337; Stibbe, \textit{John}, 103-104.
"light" (9:5) and "water" (9:7) as creating a narrative echo effect. Water played an essential role in the libation ceremonies of the Tabernacles. The water which was drawn in a solemn procession from the Pool of Siloam was used for the daily water libation ceremony in the temple. In relation to the use of water during the feast, Jesus had declared himself as the source and giver of living water (7:37-39). Thus, the recurrence of the image of "water" as well as the mention of Siloam in the account of the healing of the man born blind (9:7) enable the reader to establish a link between 9:1-10:21 and its preceding context. The same can be said for the theme of "light." During the feast of Tabernacles, light was used in a ritual which sought to give expression to the rejoicing aspect of the feast. In reference to this use of light, Jesus had revealed himself to "the Jews" as "the light of the world" and promised τὸ ὕδως τῆς ἡμέρας τῆς γενναίης to anyone who followed him (8:12). The role of Jesus as the giver of light is again emphasized in his healing of the blind man (9:1-7), and especially in his bringing the man to a greater vision, namely, faith in him as the Son of Man (9:35-41).

Jesus' conflict with "the Jews" in Jn 9:1-10:21 also provides an important link between the present narrative and its preceding context (5-8). This conflict motif had emerged clearly for the first time in 5:1-47 where it had been inserted into a specific legal context, and developed as a juridical controversy between Jesus and "the Jews." It had revolved around the issues of Jesus' activities as well as his identity. The conflict and the related christological motifs had continued in chapter 6, and especially in 7 and 8 where Jesus had used the occasion of the celebration of the feast of Tabernacles to reveal himself as the

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source and giver of living water (7:37-39) and as the light of the world (8:12). The resultant christological debate with "the Jews" had not only signalled to the reader the escalation of the hostility of "the Jews" towards Jesus, but had also contributed to the maintenance of the conflict and christological motifs in the unfolding narrative. Thus, the recurrence of the conflict motif (9:16) as well as the issue of Jesus' origin and identity (9: 24, 29 etc.), which had dominated his exchanges with his interlocutors in the temple (see 7:28ff; 8:14, 25), provides a clear link between 9:1-10:21 and its preceding context.

One essential motif that comes to the fore in 9:1-10:21, and helps relate the narrative to its preceding context is the "Sabbath." The Sabbath motif had emerged for the first time in 5:9b and had provided the legal and institutional framework for the emerging two-party conflict between Jesus and "the Jews." Hence, it had served to determine the specific nature and development of the narrative in 5:1-47 as a Sabbath juridical controversy. While the conflict and christological motives of 5:1-47 had continued in 6-8, the Sabbath motif, as a basis for conflict between Jesus and "the Jews," had been absent in these chapters. It is only in 9:1-10:21 that the reader encounters once more the Sabbath motif as reason for a conflict between Jesus and the Pharisees. Jesus' Sabbath activity causes some of the Pharisees to accuse him of Sabbath violation and false christological claims (9:16). The reader recalls that, following his Sabbath healing in 5:6-9, Jesus had been accused of the same two offences (5:16, 18), and the resultant juridical controversy was yet to be resolved. As in 5:1-47, the Sabbath motif (here placed within the context of the feast of Tabernacles) serves to insert the emerging conflict within a specific legal and institutional framework of a two-party Sabbath juridical conflict. This fact

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18 The Sabbath motif reappears in 7:21-24. However, it does not serve as the reason for the conflict in 7:14-24 which is centred on the source of Jesus' authority to teach.

19 Given the indiscriminate use of "the Jews" and "the Pharisees" in the present narrative," it is assumed in this study that they represent the same group. See above, 39, n. 74. See also below, 167, n. 51.
underscores its importance for the correct understanding of the narrative. Thus, the Sabbath motif, coupled with the fact that the accusations and the two parties involved in the present conflict are the same as in the yet-to-be-resolved Sabbath juridical controversy of 5:1-47, enable the reader to understand 9:1-10:21 as the continuation and development of 5:1-47. The close relationship between 5 and 9:1-10:21 strengthens the reader's awareness of the fact that 9:1-10:21 recapitulates many of the motifs and christological themes that have developed across 5-8.

The overall context of Jn 5 and 9:1-10:21

It is generally recognized that Jn 5 and 9:1-10:21 belong to the narrative section of 5:1-10:42. This section deals with several controversies between Jesus and his opponents on the issue of Jesus' origin and identity within the context of a series of Jewish feasts. The narrative in 5:1-47 which opens the section is centred around a healing accomplished by Jesus within the context of the Sabbath and a Jewish feast, and the resultant christological controversy between Jesus and "the Jews." Both the position and content of Jn 5:1-47 enable the reader to understand its function within the section 5-10. The position of 5:1-47 indicates that its function is to set the narrative framework for the entire section which is marked by cycles of controversies and an ever

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20 Pace scholars who consider the Sabbath motif as secondary and unimportant. See for instance, Lindars, The Gospel of John, 52, 345; Becker, Evangelion, 1: 315. See also Labahn, Jesus als Lebensspender, 342.

21 See for instance, Brown, John, 1: 201-204; idem, Introduction, 344-349; Moloney, The Gospel of John, 164-165, and other major commentaries.

22 A series of Jewish feasts runs through the section 5-10 (Sabbath, Passover, Tabernacles, Dedication). Brown, Introduction, 344, rightly observes that, on each of these feasts, "something Jesus does or says plays on and to some extent replaces a significant aspect of the feast."
increasing hostility against Jesus in contexts of Jewish feasts. As for the content of 5:1-47, the presence of the Sabbath motif in 5:9b makes it clear that the function of 5:1-47 is not only to introduce the christological conflict motif, but also to set in motion a juridical controversy between Jesus and "the Jews." In effect, the Sabbath motif inserts the emerging conflict within a specific legal framework, and helps to determine its nature and development as a Sabbath juridical controversy. This fact enables the reader to perceive the importance of the Sabbath motif, and the additional role of 5:1-47 namely, to set in motion a juridical controversy between Jesus and the "Jews," which will however remain unresolved at the end of the chapter.

With regard to the entire Gospel, the importance of 5:1-47 can be seen in the significant development it brings to the unfolding of the plot of the Gospel. It may be noted in this regard that it formally introduces the issue of the legal conflict between Jesus and "the Jews" and states the reasons for the hostility of "the Jews" towards Jesus (5:16,18). Additionally, it defines the role of "the Jews" as Jesus' antagonists. «The Jews'» status as Jesus' antagonists in Jn 5 foreshadows their role in the rest of the Gospel. Finally, 5:1-47 sets in motion the trend of conflict with deadly intent between Jesus and "the Jews" during or at the approach of Jewish feasts. This trend culminates in the trial and crucifixion of Jesus on the day of Preparation of the Passover (παρασκευὴ τοῦ πάσχα. See 19:14). Thus, it can be concluded that the first Sabbath conflict in Jn 5 brings a new and at the same time decisive element to the to the development of the plot in the Fourth Gospel.

In relation to the overall narrative context of 9:1-10:21, it may be noted that, within its specific section of Jn 5-10, it serves not only to carry forward the

23 The first open confrontation between Jesus and "the Jews" is reported in Jn 2:13-25 (the episode of the cleansing of the Temple). This however did not lead to a major juridical conflict, and no threat of a possible sanction was issued against Jesus.

christological conflict motif in general, but also and more importantly to continue the specific conflict of the Sabbath juridical controversy and to bring it to a conclusion. In 5:1-47, the first Sabbath conflict had ended abruptly with Jesus' accusers failing to react to his defence discourse, contrary to what one might expect in a juridical controversy.\textsuperscript{25} In the controversy as a juridical procedure, the accuser always reacts to the declaration of innocence of the accused. This takes the form of an acceptance of the reasons given by the accused to justify himself/herself which then leads to an amicable resolution of the conflict, or to a rejection of them which indicates the accuser's desire to pursue the dispute.\textsuperscript{26} Thus, the absence of a reaction on the part of "the Jews" in 5:47 was an indication that the Sabbath juridical controversy had not ended and could continue and develop in the narrative future.

While the conflict and christological motifs of Jn 5 had continued in chapter 6, and especially in chapters 7 and 8, the specific conflict of a Sabbath juridical controversy was not found in these chapters. The Sabbath motif as the basis for a christological conflict between Jesus and "the Jews" had been absent from 6-8. It is only in 9:1-10:21 that it re-emerges as the cause of another christological conflict between Jesus and his opponents. Once again, it is the Sabbath motif which provides the legal framework for the emerging conflict, and determines its nature as a Sabbath juridical controversy. This unique role of the Sabbath motif underscores its importance for a correct understanding of 9:1-10:21, and also explains the grounds for the insertion of two Sabbath conflicts within the section 5-10. The narrative in 9:1-10:21 constitutes the continuation and development of the Sabbath controversy which began in 5:1-47. Since the Sabbath juridical controversy is eventually brought to an end in 10:19-21 where "the Jews" as accusers finally react to Jesus' words, it may be argued that the

\textsuperscript{25} For details of the structural elements of a juridical controversy, see above, 19-24.

\textsuperscript{26} See above, 22-24.
function of 9:1-10:21 within the section 5-10 is to continue the Sabbath juridical controversy and to bring it to a close. The Sabbath motif is present in 9:14 precisely because 9:1-10:21 is part of a Sabbath juridical conflict between Jesus and "the Jews." Thus, without the Sabbath motif, the setting as well as the literary shape of 5:1-10:21 would be lost.  

Within the overall context of the Gospel, 9:1-10:21 serves the additional function of helping to maintain the plot line of the Gospel narrative. The Sabbath juridical controversy which began in 5 and continued in 9:1ff is brought to a close in 10:19-21 where Jesus' opponents finally react to his words. The reaction of "the Jews" comes in the form of a óψίαμα among them over Jesus' words. While some are prepared to open themselves up to Jesus' claims, many among them flatly reject Jesus' words and accuse him of demon-possession. The narrator thus indicates subtly to the reader that the end of the Sabbath juridical controversy does not in any way signify the end of the hostility towards Jesus because of "the many" among his accusers who are refusing to acknowledge the truthfulness of his words (10:20). Given that the juridical controversy between Jesus and "the Jews" remains unresolved as the narrator brings the Sabbath controversy to an end, the narrative leads inevitably to the escalation of the hostility towards Jesus (see Jn 10:22-39), and ultimately to the formal forensic trial of Jesus before Pilate in Jn 18:28-19:16. It may therefore be affirmed that 9:1-10:21, as the continuation and development of the Sabbath juridical controversy, contributes significantly to the development of

27 *Pace* Becker, *Evangelium*, 1: 315, who maintains that "das Wunder selbst hat nichts mit dem Sabbat zu tun." See also Labahn, *Jesus als Lebensspender*, 342, who thinks that "das Wunder selbst zeigt keinerlei Interesse an der Sabbatthematik."

28 It may be recalled here that in a juridical controversy, the refusal by the accuser of the declaration of innocence of the accused signals the fact that the controversy cannot be resolved peacefully between the two disputants. When this happens, there is a recourse to an impartial tribunal where a judge is expected to hand down a legally binding verdict in favour of one or the other disputant. This automatically changes the juridical nature of the conflict from a juridical controversy to a forensic trial. See above, 23-24.
the plot of the Gospel narrative. This fact also shows that the Sabbath motif, which in both Jn 5 and Jn 9:1-10:21 inserts both narratives within a specific legal framework and determines their nature as a Sabbath juridical controversy, plays an important role in the overall literary construction of the Gospel narrative.

The importance of the Sabbath theme for the overall literary construction of the Fourth Gospel can also be seen in the fact that the whole "feasts" section (5:1-10:42) is almost enveloped between the two Sabbath conflicts (5:1-10:21). The feast of the Dedication (10:22-42) is the only one to fall outside this literary framework of the two Sabbaths. It is however closely related to 5:1-10:21, given that by means of the two crucial affirmations of vv. 30 and 38, 10:22-42 substantiate all the christological arguments presented during the other feasts (5:1-10:21). Thus, it might be suggested, that there are the feasts between the two Sabbath conflicts in which Jesus' origin and his unique relationship with Father are extensively developed and argued out (5:1-10:21), and the feast in which Jesus' affirmations constitute the closure of his claim of oneness with the Father (10:22-42). Even though Jesus' claim in 10:30, 38 is not accepted by his interlocutors, the reader who is already aware of Jesus' earlier christological arguments knows that it is the oneness with the Father that makes all the christological arguments of 5:1-10:21 true.

Concluding Remarks.

The examination of the narrative context of the Johannine Sabbath conflicts has highlighted two important facts. Firstly, the Sabbath conflict narratives harmonize well with both their specific context and the overall

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context of the Gospel narrative. Secondly, the Sabbath motif which is found in 5 and 9:1-10:21 plays a significant role in determining the function of our two narratives both within the section 5-10 and the entire Gospel. It not only provides the legal framework for the christological conflict between Jesus and "the Jews," but it also determines the specific nature of the conflict as a Sabbath juridical controversy. In addition to the important development that the Sabbath juridical controversy brings to the unfolding christology of the Gospel, its failure to resolve the christological issue also contributes substantially to the narrative plot by pointing the reader forward to the formal legal proceedings of Jn 18:28-19:16, during which the case will be heard by a judge and a legally binding verdict handed down. Thus the Sabbath motif and the juridical controversy it generates play an essential role in the overall literary construction of the Fourth Gospel.

The first chapter of the study had established the fact that Jn 5 and 9:1-10:21 constitute a Sabbath juridical controversy and had determined its structural elements and content. The present chapter has examined the context of the two narratives and established the importance of the Sabbath motif within the two narratives themselves as well as within the section 5-10 and the Fourth Gospel as a whole. This concludes the section of the study devoted to the analysis of the formal elements of the text under study. The focus now turns to the exegetical analysis of 5 and 9:1-10:21 which will be undertaken on the basis of these established formal elements.
Chapter Three

Reading the First Sabbath Conflict Narrative (Jn 5:1-47)

The second chapter of the study examined the narrative context of the Sabbath conflicts, and shed light on the importance of the Sabbath motif for the correct understanding of the two narratives and for the overall literary construction of the Fourth Gospel. This third chapter undertakes the exegetical reading of the first Sabbath conflict narrative. It begins with the examination of its narrative shape which will involve the analysis of both its narrative setting and structure. The purpose of the examination of the narrative setting is to discern the narrative space which is depicted in the story,\(^1\) while the analysis of the narrative structure is intended to elucidate the compositional unity of the first Sabbath conflict (5:1-47) as a literary unit.

Narrative setting of Jn 5:1-47

The event narrated in 5:1-47 takes place in Jerusalem on a Sabbath and within the context of a Jewish feast. The narrative space of this first Sabbath

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conflict narrative can therefore be discerned by examining its geographical and religious-cultural setting.

a) **Geographical**

Jn 5:1, which marks a transition to a new section of the Gospel,\(^2\) clearly indicates that Jerusalem is the geographical setting for the narrative which is about to unfold. In Jn 4:3, Jesus leaves Judea for Galilee after his first visit to Jerusalem (Jn 2:13ff) and remains there till the end of chapter four (4:54) and in 5:1, Jesus once again goes up to the holy city (καὶ ἀνεβη Ἰερουσαλήμ εἰς Ἱεροσόλυμα).\(^3\) Within this broad geographical setting of 5:1-47 in Jerusalem, the narrator furnishes the reader with two topographical indications which are of significance for the discernment of the narrative space.

i. ἐπὶ τῇ πρωτακιῇ κολυμβήθρᾳ (5:2)

Soon after Jesus' arrival in Jerusalem, the narrator takes him (and the reader) to a precise location in the city where the subsequent healing is to take place. Despite the confusion that characterizes the available manuscript evidence,\(^4\) most scholars believe that the reference to the location is either to a

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\(^3\) The name "Jesus" is absent from a number of manuscripts including the Sinaiticus (★) and the Ephraemi Rescriptus (C). It is however supported by some of the best uncial and papyri (P66 p75 A B D K L) and is generally retained in critical editions.

Sheep Gate,\textsuperscript{5} or a Sheep Pool.\textsuperscript{6} In either case, the reference would be to the area northeast of the Temple, and the name of this region and / or its pool was Bethesda.\textsuperscript{7} The appropriateness of this setting for Jesus' healing activity is evident from the fact that a pool situated in the northern corner of Jerusalem had long been associated with healing, including pagan healings.\textsuperscript{8}

ii. ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ (5:14a)

The second topographical indication is the temple (5:14a). It is in the temple that the encounter between Jesus and the healed man takes place after the latter had been accused by "the Jews" of breaking the Sabbath law (5:10).\textsuperscript{9} The Temple is mentioned not only because it was a place where many people gathered and where a chance meeting was always possible,\textsuperscript{10} but also because as the most sublime symbol of the presence of God in the midst of Israel, the temple was the most appropriate place for Jesus' christological discourse.\textsuperscript{11}

\textsuperscript{5} Boismard - Lamouille, \textit{L'Evangile de Jean}, 152; B. Lindars, \textit{The Gospel of John}, 211-212. The word "Gate" which is not in the text is supplied on the basis of Neh 3:1, 32; 12:39 where the whole phrase is found. This gate was at the north-eastern corner of the Temple area.

\textsuperscript{6} Brown, \textit{John}, 1: 205-206.

\textsuperscript{7} See Brown, \textit{John}, 1: 206-207. The name of the area and / or its pool constitutes an even more complex textual problem. Some scholars consider "Bethzatha" as a very possible reading. See for instance, B. M. Metzger, \textit{A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament}. 2nd ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1994) 178-179; Labahn, \textit{Jesus als Lebensspender}, 216-217. However, the majority of Johannine commentators prefer the reading "Bethesda." In addition to Brown, cited in this note, see Lindars, \textit{The Gospel of John}, 212-213, and all the other major commentaries. For further comments on this, see below, 80, n. 34.


\textsuperscript{9} Brown prefers to render the expression ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ as "in the temple precincts." See \textit{John}, 1: 205 and 208. In any case, it is clear from the text that there is a shift from the pool which was the scene of the healing to a completely new scene (see for instance the use of the verbs ἐξέθεσαν and εὑρίσκει [vv. 13, 14]).

\textsuperscript{10} This is the view expressed by Bultmann. See \textit{The Gospel of John}, 243, n. 5. See however, Hoskyns, \textit{The Fourth Gospel}, 359.

\textsuperscript{11} One has to assume that everything narrated in vv. 14-47 takes place in the Temple, since there is no indication of a change of place.
b). Religious-cultural

Jn 5:1a makes mention of a feast (ἐορτή) of "the Jews." In a first instance, this reference to a feast seeks to explain the reason for Jesus' journey to Jerusalem, and to indicate to the reader that a major change of direction in the unfolding Gospel narrative is occurring. However, at a deeper level, the mention of a feast is intended to place the whole of chapter 5 within a specific religious-cultural setting. The fact that no precise description of the feast is given may be an indication that the narrator's only concern is to give a religious-cultural setting to the narrative. The celebration of a Jewish feast is a zikkărôn in the sense of a cultic representation of the past. The people recall God's past saving acts in their favour which are rendered present in the liturgical celebration of the feast, and call on God to remember the covenant and ensure the continuance of its blessings for them. Thus, a Jewish feast always

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12 Codex Sinaiticus (S) reads ἐορτή ("the feast") but the manuscript evidence for the omission of the article is overwhelming (P66 p7 5 A B D G W Θ f 13).

13 See Bultmann, The Gospel of John, 240.

14 See Moloney, Signs and Shadows, 2-3.

15 Against Becker who is of the opinion that "das Fest ist für Joh 5 sonst ohne bedeutung." Becker, Evangelium, 1: 230. See also Labahn, Jesus als Lebensspender, 221, who thinks that "das unbekannte Fest selbst spielt ... keine Rolle." It must also be said that the mention of ἐορτή in Jn 5:1a is of significance for the overall structure of Jn 5-10. The ἐορτή in 5:1 constitutes the first of a sequence of Jewish feasts that run through the entire section.


depicts a certain understanding of the people in relation to their God and to his saving work past and present. It is against this backdrop that one needs to understand the mention of ἔορτή in 5:1a. The context of this unnamed feast provides an excellent setting for the Johannine Jesus to make his christological claims which seek to deepen the understanding of "the Jews" in relation to the intimate relationship between the Father and himself in the work of salvation.

One other important precision in relation to the religious-cultural setting of Jn 5 is the indication that the healing takes place on a Sabbath. As a day of rest, the Sabbath is closely related to Yahweh's activities as creator (Ex 20:8-11) and as liberator (Dt 5:12-15). It therefore provides an excellent background for Jesus' discourse on his role as life-giver (ζωοποιών) and judge. Again, the Sabbath setting of the narrative brings to the fore the legal aspects of the unfolding narrative. The prohibition of all work on the Sabbath meant that the command of Jesus that the healed man take up his pallet and walk was an apparent violation of the Sabbath law and consequently a challenge to "the Jews." This triggers off the controversy between Jesus and "the Jews." One can therefore affirm that the Sabbath setting with its legal aspects actually determines the form and the content of the whole narrative in Jn 5 which is presented as a juridical controversy between Jesus and "the Jews."

In conclusion, it may be said that Jn 5:1-47 is set in a well-defined geographical and religious-cultural setting: the event takes place in Jerusalem on a Sabbath and during a Jewish feast. The importance of this narrative setting for a correct understanding of the narrative cannot be overestimated. It not only allows the narrator to present the narrative under the form of a juridical

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18 The rules prohibiting work on the Sabbath could be overruled only in special cases by urgent obligations. See for instance, m. Shabbat, 19:1-5; E. Schürer, A History of the Jewish People in the time of Jesus Christ, 3 vols. (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 2nd reprint 1995) second division, 2: 103-105; E. Lohse, "ΟΔΗΓΟΣ," TDNT 7 (1971) 14-15. It may also be noted that the carrying of objects on the Sabbath is forbidden both in the Pentateuch and in the Prophets (for instance, Num 15:32-36; Jer 17:19-27. See also Neh 13:15-19). It is also one of the 39 works forbidden on the Sabbath in the Mishnah. See m. Shabbat, 7: 2; E. Schürer, History of Jewish People, div. 2, 2: 97.
controversy centred around the issue of the Sabbath law, but it also enables the
Johannine Jesus to make his christological claims against the backdrop of
Jewish liturgical celebrations.

**Narrative Structure of Jn 5**

The unity of Jn 5 as a literary unit results not only from the dramatic and
thematic coherence within the chapter, but also from a number of formal
elements within it. These include the unity of place (in and around Jerusalem),
the unity of time (a feast of "the Jews"), and the unity of the *dramatis personae*
(Jesus, the sick man and "the Jews").  

Most Johannine scholars adopt either a
tripartite or a bipartite division of the first Sabbath conflict narrative.

a). Tripartite division of Jn 5

The main criterion for the tripartite division is the sequence of the three
different literary elements which compose the chapter, namely a healing
account, a dialogical section and a discourse respectively. The passage from
healing account to dialogue is made by way of an exchange between the
healed man and "the Jews" in 5:10. As for the transition from dialogue to
discourse, it is marked by the emphatic words  

\[ \text{75} \]

- vv. 1-9a: healing account
- vv. 9b-18: dialogical section
- vv. 19-47: discourse.  

It must however be added that, while maintaining a tripartite structure of Jn 5, many scholars nonetheless adopt a somewhat different division of the material. These scholars place the first division after v. 15, the reason being that v. 16 initiates the hostility of "the Jews" towards Jesus' on account of his Sabbath activities. The second division would come after v. 30 when the discourse moves to the theme of witness. Thus, Schnackenburg for instance, has the following structure:

- vv. 1-15: The healing of the sick man at the pool of Bethesda
- vv. 16-30: The persecution of Jesus by the Jews and the discourse on the Son's power to give life and to judge.
- vv. 31-47: Jesus' credibility on the basis of God's testimony.  

b). Bipartite division of Jn 5

The scholars who adopt a bipartite division of Jn 5 consider the chapter as consisting basically of a healing narrative and a discourse. Thus, we have:

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- vvs. 1-18: The healing at the pool
- vvs. 19-47: The christological discourse.\textsuperscript{22}

It may also be noted here that, whether it is the tripartite or the bipartite division, there is some hesitation among scholars as to where the narrative should be divided. Thus, while some would like to place a division after v. 18,\textsuperscript{23} others consider it more appropriate to divide the text after v.15.\textsuperscript{24} Brown justifies this second option on the grounds that vvs. 16-18 constitute an Introduction to the discourse since v. 17 supplies the subject for the discourse.\textsuperscript{25}

There is some merit in both the tripartite and bipartite division of the material in Jn 5, but the former seems to be more accurate. In effect, the bipartite division overlooks the importance of v. 17 as a new start in the unfolding narrative, as well as the role of v.16 as a conclusion to vvs. 9b-15.\textsuperscript{26} It must be emphasized however, that while a tripartite structure of Jn 5 may be more acceptable, one should nevertheless object to the constitution of vvs. 31-47 into a major division which would be separate from vvs. 19-30.\textsuperscript{27} The latter admittedly constitutes a well defined unit as shown by the inclusion between vvs. 19 and 30. However, vvs. 31-47 constitute an integral part of Jesus' defence


\textsuperscript{23} For instance, Bultmann, The Gospel of John, 240; Barrett, John, 249; Lightfoot, St John, 138-141; Lindars, The Gospel of John, 209.

\textsuperscript{24} These include Stibbe, John, 76; Brown, John, 1: 212; Schnackenburg, The Gospel according to John, 2: 91. Mention should also be made here of Haenchen who, while adopting a bipartite structure, sees the division as coming after v. 30. Thus, he has: vvs 1-30 (The Miracle at the Pool); vvs. 31-47 (Testimony for Jesus). See E. Haenchen, John, 2 vols., Hermencia. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984) 239, 261.

\textsuperscript{25} See Brown, John, 1: 213.

\textsuperscript{26} See Menken, Numerical Literary Techniques, 103, who in relation to 5:16 rightly observes that it is "not only the beginning of the confrontation, in which Jesus and the Jews are opposed to each other, but also the conclusion of the preceding story."

\textsuperscript{27} Against for instance, Brown, John, 1: 222-223; Schnackenburg, The Gospel according to John, 2: 91.
against the charges levelled against him and are closely linked to vv. 19-30. It is therefore preferable to consider both vv. 19-30 and vv. 31-47 as part of a single major division (vv. 19-47) with vv. 31-47 constituting a subdivision of this major section.

c). **Jn 5 as juridical controversy**

Using criteria based on the nature of Jn 5 as a juridical controversy, one should see a first major division of the text as coming after v. 9a. The healing narrative in vv. 1-9b describes an event which results in the commission of an alleged illegal act. The latter sets in motion a juridical controversy between Jesus and "the Jews." The second major division starts with vv. 9c-10 which states the accusation and therefore formally begins the controversy by indicating to the other party the reason for the dispute. The third major division is to be placed after v. 16. The reason is that v. 17 initiates Jesus' response to the charges being made against him. The discourse which runs from vv. 17-47 should therefore be considered as one major division in the tripartite structure. This last section may be subdivided into three subsections (vv. 19-30; vv. 31-40; vv. 41-47). Vv. 19-30 state the reasons which justify Jesus' Sabbath activity while vv. 31-40 invoke witnesses as evidence of the truthfulness of Jesus' assertions. As for vv. 41-47, they transform Jesus' defence into accusations against his accusers. The narrative structure of Jn 5 may therefore be presented as follows:

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28 It may be recalled here that the formal structure of a juridical controversy is made of three elements: accusation, response of the accused and conclusion of the controversy. See above, 20-24.

29 It must however be noted here that verse 18 is not part of Jesus' response but a comment by the narrator.
Jn 5:1-47: A Sabbath Juridical Controversy

a) Event leading to controversy (healing account)  
vv. 1-9b

b) Beginning of juridical controversy: accusation by "the Jews"  
vv. 9c-16

c) Jesus' response to accusation  
vv. 17-47

i. Reasons justifying Sabbath activity  
vv. 17. 19-30

ii. Witnesses Invoked  
vv. 31-40

iii. Defence transformed into accusations  
vv. 41-47

The above analysis not only demonstrates the importance of the juridical issue for the narrative structure of the chapter, but it also shows that Jn 5 constitutes a unified literary unit with all the sections fully integrated into its overall narrative structure.\(^{31}\) As a juridical controversy, each section of the narrative flows smoothly into the other. As the event leading to the controversy, vv. 1-9a flows into vv. 9b-16 which formally begins the controversy with the juridical act of accusation. This in turn calls for a response on the part of the accused (vv. 19-47). The three sub-sections of the discourse (vv. 19, 19-30; vv. 31-40; vv. 41-47) all contain elements that belong to the response of the accused within the framework of the juridical controversy.\(^{32}\)

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\(^{30}\) Verse 18 is a narrative intrusion. Its importance for the juridical controversy can be seen in the fact that it states all the accusations being levelled against Jesus, and also indicates the intended sanction. For a detailed analysis of v. 18, see below, 102-104.

\(^{31}\) See J. Calloud, and F. Genuyt, L'Evangile de Jean (I). Lecture sémiotique des chapitres 1 à 6. (Lyon: Centre Thomas More, 1989) 103, who rightly observe that "récit et discours sont indissociables ... [ils] sont imbriqués dans une même structure." Against Lee, Symbolic Narratives, 108, who is of the opinion that "the discourse is never fully integrated into a whole narrative structure." See also 100-101 of the same study; Labahn, Jesus als Lebensspender, 215, who merely describes Jn 5:9d-47 as a conflict scene (5:9d-16) to which two discourses of Jesus (5:19-30; 31-47) are attached.

\(^{32}\) See above, 22-25.
Thus, the discourse as a whole has a cohesive unity with the rest of the narrative.

A Sabbath Juridical Controversy: Reading John 5:1-47

Event leading to controversy: healing account (vv. 1-9b)

Jn 5:1-9b opens with an "exposition" in which the narrator presents the reader with the preliminary information needed for a correct understanding of the narrative which is about to unfold. The narrator informs the reader about the place and time of the impending event namely, Jerusalem on the occasion of a Jewish feast (v. 1) and about the exact locality in Jerusalem where the event is to take place: the Bethesda pool (v. 2). He then goes on to paint for the reader a picture of the various categories of people to be found at the pool (v. 3a). Finally, he focuses the reader's attention on one particular person (ινὲ δὲ τὸς

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34 The name of the locality and / or its pool constitutes a complex textual problem due to the confusion that characterizes the available textual evidence. See Nestle-Aland, Novum Testamentum Graecae, critical apparatus, sub. loc. However, archaeological activity and especially the literary evidence from the Qumran Copper Scroll (3Q15 11:12) have presented a strong case in favour of "Bethesda." See J. Jeremias, Wiederentdeckung von Bethesda. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1966); D. J. Weiand, "John V. 2 and the Pool of Bethesda", NTS 12 (1965-66) 392-404; A. Duprez, Jésus et les dieux guérisseurs, 57-127; W. D. Davies, The Gospel and the Land: Early Christianity and Jewish Territorial Doctrine. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974) 302-313 provides a summary of the discussion. See however, Labahn, Jesus als Lebensspender, 216-217, who argues in favour of the reading θεόθ(αφά. On the Qumran Copper Scroll, see J. T. Milik, "Le rouleau de cuivre de Qumran (3Q15). Traduction et commentaire topographique," RB 86 (1959) 321-357.
and describes his physical state (v. 5). Once the reader's attention has been firmly fixed on this man who, together with Jesus (already mentioned in v. 1b) constitute the two active characters of vv. 1-9b, the narrator brings the "exposition" to an end. The transition from "exposition" to "scene" is marked by the shift from "summary" to "dialogue" and the description of the events of the healing (vv. 6-9b). It can thus be said that vv. 1-9b consists of an "exposition" (vv. 1-3, 5) and a "scene" (vv. 6-9b).

a). The "exposition" (vv. 1-3, 5)

The expression μετὰ ταῦτα which opens the "exposition" (v. 1a) alerts the reader of a transition to a new episode in the Gospel story. This is reinforced by the mention of a ἐορτῆ τῶν ἱερατῶν for which Jesus goes up to Jerusalem (v. 1b). The narrator does not indicate the precise nature of this feast. The fact that he fails to provide this information in the context of an "exposition" may well indicate that it is of little importance for the reader's

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36 While the "exposition" is normally characterized by short notices about the place, time and situation of the main characters etc. (see above, 79, n. 33), the "scene" recounts the actual events of the narrative which will never recur as such. In the words of Ska, "the main characteristics of a scene are the presence of dialogue and / or the detailed description of an action." J. L. Ska, Our Fathers Have Told Us: Introduction to the Analysis of Hebrew Narratives, Subsidia Biblica 13. (Roma: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 1990) 22.


38 Almost all Johannine scholars rightly prefer the anarthrous ἐορτῆ because of the strong external evidence. See Schnackenburg, The Gospel according to John, 2: 93; B. M. Metzger, A Textual Commentary, 178.
correct understanding of the narrative. His main intention would seem to be to place the whole of 5:1-47 within a specific religious-cultural setting.\textsuperscript{39} The description of the unnamed feast as "τῶν Ἰουδαίων" creates a certain distance between Jesus on the one hand, and those who celebrate the feast on the other hand.\textsuperscript{40} This negative tone is reinforced by the paratactic construction of v. 1. The image created by the simple juxtaposition of vv. 1a and 1b is not that of a Jesus who goes to Jerusalem as a pilgrim. It is worth noting in this regard that the text does not say that Jesus went up to Jerusalem for a feast but rather that he went up on the occasion of a feast.\textsuperscript{41} The reader recalls an earlier episode in which the expression "τῶν Ἰουδαίων" was used in relation to a feast on the occasion of which Jesus had made his first visit to Jerusalem. On that particular occasion, a confrontation took place between Jesus and "the Jews" (2:13-22). As the reader is informed of Jesus' second visit to Jerusalem on the occasion of a ἐορτὴ τῶν Ἰουδαίων, the question that comes to the fore is whether or not there will be another confrontation between Jesus and his opponents. Thus, v. 1 creates a sense of curiosity and expectation.

Once Jesus arrives in Jerusalem, the narrator leads the reader from the general to the specific as he proceeds to describe a precise location in the city where the subsequent event is to take place (v. 2). Despite the textual difficulties associated with v. 2, the reference is either to a "Sheep Gate,"\textsuperscript{42} or to

\textsuperscript{39} Several Johannine scholars have also observed that the mention of ἐορτὴ in 5:1a is intended to introduce the sequence of Jewish feasts that runs through the entire section of Jn 5:1-10:42. See for instance, Brown, Introduction, 344; F. J. Moloney, The Gospel of John, 167, who remarks that the theme of a feast of "the Jews" in 5:1 "unfolds across the four feasts that set the chronological and theological agenda for 5:1-10:42... The issue of belief has been the leitmotif of 2:1-4:54; now, as Jesus goes up to Jerusalem, the story turns to the feasts of the Jews." See however, H. van den Bussche, "Guérison d'un paralytique à Jérusalem le jour du Sabbat," BVC 61 (1965) 18-28, who is of the opinion that "Jean n’insère pas cette fête dans le rythme des solennités qui conduisent à «la» solennité, la Pâque de la mort de Jésus. La chaîne des fêtes ne commence qu’au chap. 7" (18).

\textsuperscript{40} On the negative usage which the narrator makes of the expression τῶν Ἰουδαίων, see G. Caron, \textit{Qui sont les "Juifs" de l'évangile de Jean?}, Recherches 35. (Paris: Bellarmin, 1997) 63-65.

\textsuperscript{41} See Haenchen, \textit{John}, 1: 182 and 243; Caron, \textit{Qui sont les "Juifs"?}, 63, n. 19.

\textsuperscript{42} See the literature cited above, 72, n. 5.
a "Sheep Pool". In either case, the intended area would be the northeast of the temple. The existence of a pool in the northern corner of Jerusalem which had long been associated with healing, including pagan healings, is now a well established fact and is generally recognized by biblical scholars. The narrator then enumerates the various categories of people to be found in the colonnades at the pool (v. 3a). The reader notices that the narrator is following a particular technique in the enumeration, namely, the use of a general term which is then followed by a specific term. The content of the general term is thus made more precise by the content of the specific term (invalids: blind, lame, paralysed). As the reader takes cognizance of this tableau of invalids, the narrator focuses his/her attention on one particular man whose physical state the reader is informed about (v. 5). This man who is said to have been ill for thirty-eight years enters the stage as the second main character in the narrative. The highlighting of the state of the man's physical condition has the narrative effect of recalling to the mind of the reader Jesus' previous miraculous deeds (2:1-11; 4:46-54), which in turn creates a sense of expectation of a possible miraculous healing by Jesus.

The stage is set for the narrator to move from "exposition" to "scene." Two important elements mark the transition from "exposition" to "scene": the shift from description to dialogue and the change from frequentative verbal

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43 See Brown, John, 1: 205-206; Schnackenburg, The Gospel according to John, 2: 94.

44 See Duprez, Jésus et les dieux guérisseurs, 57-127. See also Idem, "«Probatique» (Piscine)," DBS 8 (1972) 606-621.


46 Most Johannine scholars rightly reject the interpretation of the thirty-eight years of the man's illness as a symbolic reference to Deut. 2:14. See Schnackenburg, The Gospel according to John, 2: 95; Bultmann, The Gospel of John, 241-242, n. 7. The number thirty-eight is intended to create the impression for the reader that the man's situation is very bad, indeed hopeless, so that once the miracle is performed, the reader will be able to appreciate it «à sa juste valeur.» See L. T. Witkamp, "The Use of Traditions in John 5:1-18," JSNT 25 (1985) 19-47. See especially 22. This same technique is used by the narrator in the first miracle at Cana where Jesus is said to have changed between 480-700 litres of water into wine. (On the number of litres, see Strack-Billerbeck, Kommentar, 2: 405-407).
forms and nominal sentences (see vv. 2-5) to verbs of action (see v. 6). One other feature in the "exposition" that may be mentioned here is the "speed" of the narrative. The narrator moves swiftly through Jesus' journey from Galilee (4:46-54) to Jerusalem (5:1). A journey which would certainly have taken a considerable number of days is narrated in just one sentence (v. 1b). This is an indication that "narrative time" is by far longer than the "narration time." The narrator maintains this fast tempo throughout the "exposition" as he describes in a series of sketchy notices the setting at the pool, the presence of a multitude of invalids and the man who had been ill for thirty-eight years (vv. 2-5).

b) The "scene" (vv. 6-9b)

The "scene" begins with the narrator focusing the reader's attention on Jesus for the first time in the narrative. The reader has been aware of Jesus' presence since v. 1 and as the narrator moves him from the background to the foreground, the focus of the reader's attention turns to Jesus' reaction to the situation of the man in the preceding verse (v. 5). Two verbs of action (lēvō; γνοις) in a comment by the omniscient narrator provide Jesus' first reaction to the situation (v. 6a). Jesus saw the man and knew immediately that his condition was a hopeless one. The narrator's comment, no doubt, is a reference

47 An "exposition" is often characterized by a high occurrence of frequentative verbs and nominal sentences. See Ska, Our Fathers, 23.

48 The «narrative time» is "the duration of the actions and events in the «story»," while the «narration time» is "the material time necessary to tell (or peruse) the «discourse»." Ska, Our Fathers, 7-8; G. Genette, Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1980) 33-34.

49 That the Johannine narrator is omniscient is made abundantly clear by the fact that he/she is able to give the reader inside views which no external observer is capable of providing (see for instance, 2:24; 4:1). See R. A. Culpepper, Anatomy, 21-22.

50 The form of the two verbs (second aorist participle) implies the idea of a relative past time. In other words, the actions of the participles are understood as completed before the action of the finite verb (here λέγετ). See F. Blass, A. Debrunner, and W. Funk, A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1961) 174. Again, the use of the same tense for both verbs suggests that the actions they describe are indeed simultaneous. Jesus' seeing of the man and his knowing of his condition are concomitant with one another.
to Jesus' miraculous knowledge of people and their condition in general, and not a reference to an information he may have acquired through others or from observation (see 2:25).51 This mention of Jesus' extraordinary knowledge brings to the reader's mind Jesus' encounter with Nathanael in 1:14-48, and with the Samaritan woman in 4:18, in both of which he displayed a similar miraculous knowledge.52 Directly following Jesus' simultaneous actions of ἴδων and γνῶσις is his second action of engaging the sick man in a dialogue by addressing a question to him: Ἐξέλεξεν ὑγιῆς γινώσκειν.53 Jesus' question may, at first sight, appear superfluous especially in view of his miraculous knowledge of the man's condition. However, within the narrative framework of the story, it is clear that, on the one hand, it is meant to raise the possibility of a healing so as to whet the reader's appetite for another impressive miracle,54 and on the other hand, to facilitate the ensuing dialogue.55 The sick man's response (v. 7) indicates to the

51 Against L. de la Potterie, "Oôda et γινώσκει: Les deux modes de la connaissance dans le quatrième évangile," Bib 40 (1959) 713-714, and Lindars, The Gospel of John, 214-215, who are of the opinion that γνῶσις here has the ordinary meaning of "to learn," "to discover," and Lagrange who maintains that "γνῶσις s'entend plus simplement d'une connaissance naturelle...On peut [donc] en déduire que Jésus s'est informé." M. - J. Lagrange, Evangile selon saint Jean. 5th ed. Études Bibliques. (Paris: Gabalda, 1936) 136. For the view expressed above, see Brown, John, 1, 207, n. 6; Barrett, John, 254; Bultmann, The Gospel of John, 242, n. 2; van den Busche, "Guérison d'un paralytique," 22 and n. 2.

52 See Moloney, Signs and Shadows, 5.

53 The adjective ὑγιῆς occurs 6 times in the Fourth Gospel: 5 times in the present narrative (5:4, 6, 9, 11, 15) and once in 7:23. It has the meaning of "healthy" or "sound" (see BAGD, 832). The present context (see vv. 3a, 5) clearly indicates that ὑγιῆς in Jesus' question has to do with the restoration of physical health.

54 The reader knows of the two earlier miracles accomplished by Jesus (2:1-11; 4:45-54) and has already been offered enough indication in the exposition of the present narrative (see vv. 1-5) in order to be able to figure out that a miracle is imminent. Lagrange, Evangile, 136, rightly remarks that Jesus' question constitutes "une suggestion que celui qui pose la question peut donner la satisfaction souhaitée." See also P. D. Duke, "John 5:1-15," REv 85 (1988) 539-542.

55 See Moloney, Signs and Shadows, 5. See also Haenchen, "Johanneische Probleme," 48: "mit seiner Frage will er [d.h. der Evangelist] Jesus mit dem Kranken ins Gespräch bringen und ihm dabei die Initiative ergreifen lassen." Other interpretations proposed by scholars include the following: If Jesus interrogates the man, "c'est pour le faire réfléchir sur la manière dont il peut être guéri" (see Lagrange, Evangile, 136); Jesus' question in v. 6 is to be understood in the sense of "have you the will to be healed?" and as such, it only makes explicit what is implicit in the synoptic healing narratives. In other words, the will to health is implied in what is meant in the synoptics by πιστίς (see Dodd, Historical Tradition, 176-177. See also H. S. Songer, "John 5-12: Opposition to the Giving of True Life," REv 85 [1988] 459-471. See especially 460. For a critique of this position, see L. T. Witsak, "The Use of Traditions," 23); The question is a provocation since it is obvious that the man wants to be healed. However, Jesus asks the question because "il veut entendre de la bouche même du paralytique la claire
reader that he has no idea who Jesus is and therefore misunderstands the real import of the question. He considers Jesus as an ordinary ʻανθρωπος who is interested in his situation and interprets the question as an offer of help on Jesus' part to assist him in his desire to avail himself of the healing power of the pool. His response therefore seeks to explain to his would-be-helper the nature of the situation at the pool and the procedure to follow in order to acquire the desired healing. The irony of the situation could not have been greater for the reader who is aware of Jesus' divine origin (1:1-2) and of his miraculous powers (2:1-11; 4:46-54). Here is someone who is lamenting that ʻανθρωπος οὐκ ἔχω to assist him (v. 7) when he in fact, has Jesus himself in front of him. Thus, the reader's prior knowledge of who Jesus is and what he is capable of doing makes the poignancy of the situation all the more evident. The sick man is seeking to be healed by means of the miraculous power of the pool (v. 7a), but he is incapable of perceiving the prospect of a miraculous healing

affirmation de son état désespéré" (van den Bussche, "Guérison d'un paralytique," 22); The question of Jesus enables him to establish "his contact with the sick man and at the same time permits the man to depict his deplorable situation" (Haenchen, John, 1: 245); Jesus' question is an indication that the man's malady was psychopathic in nature. It "originated in the unconscious desire to avoid the responsibilities of life" (W. O. Fitch, "The Interpretation of St. John 5:6." In Studia Evangelica. Papers Presented to the Third International Congress on New Testament Studies held at Christ Church, Oxford, 1965. Part I: The New Testament Scriptures, ed. F. L. Cross, 194-197. [Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1968] 195); Becker, Evangelium, 1: 232, is of the opinion that Jesus himself wanted to perform a miracle. "Dabei ist die Frage an den Kranken natürlich rhetorisch.*


57 Several Johannine scholars appear to read too much into the response of the sick man in v. 7. For instance, Brown (John, 1: 209) and Culpepper ("John 5:1-18," 204) are of the opinion that the man's response betrays a lack of determination on his part to get well and a tendency to grumble and blame others for his continued infirmity. In my opinion, his response should rather be seen as a genuine attempt to explain the situation at the pool and his personal predicament to someone he perceives as a would-be-helper. In this sense, "his reply will then appear to be quite dignified and free from bitterness." Lindars, The Gospel of John, 215.

58 In terms of the reading position, we have here a situation of a reader-elevating position. The narrator's prior disclosures to the reader about Jesus' origin and his miraculous powers places the reader in a situation where he/she knows more about Jesus than the character in the narrative, i.e. the sick man. On the three reading positions, see M. Sternberg, The Poetics of Biblical Narrative: Ideological Literature and the Drama of Reading. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985) 163-172.

59 See Culpepper, Anatomy, 171-172, for a discussion on the ironic use of ʻανθρωπος in relation to Jesus in the Fourth Gospel.
Jesus is offering him. The uncertainty of the reader as to Jesus' next move results in the heightening of the narrative tension. Will Jesus' reaction to the sick man's response be a positive one? Despite the man's somewhat oblique response to the offer of healing, Jesus issues a precise command to him: ‘Ἐγείρε ἀρον τὸν κράβαττόν σου καὶ περιπάτει (v. 8). The reader understands immediately from the forms of the verbs ‘Ἐγείρε and περιπάτει that Jesus' command is intended to effect the healing of the sick man. The narrator's comment (v. 9a-b) not only confirms the reality of the healing (ἐγένετο ὑγιὴς) but it also indicates to the reader that the healing was temporally prior (ἐνθὲως ἐγένετο ὑγιής) to the man's action of taking up his pallet and walking, and had therefore been effected solely through the word of Jesus. Thus, the action of taking up the pallet and walking was not the means to being healed, but the proof intended to put the reality of the healing beyond doubt. The reader here recalls the previous miracle narrated in 4:46-54 in which the healing was also effected solely through the spoken word of Jesus (see vv. 50-53). As the healed man picks up his pallet and begins to walk, there is a drop in narrative tension and the narrative slows down considerably as it reaches its peripety. The reader whose sympathies have all along been with the sick man, and whose prior knowledge of Jesus' miraculous powers (2:1-11; 4:46-54) had led him/her to

60 The two verbs are in the present imperative which may be used to express "the notion of an action to be continued, or a general principle to be followed as occasion arises in the future." M. Zerwick, Biblical Greek. (Roma: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 1963) 79. The two verbs may therefore be translated freely as "stand up! [and] from now on be and remain capable of walking." See also M. Zerwick - M. Grosvenor, A Grammatical Analysis of the New Testament, 4th ed. (Roma: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 1993) 299.

61 Against Staley who envisages such a possibility. See J. L. Staley, "Stumbling in the Dark, Reaching for the Light: Reading Characters in John 5 and 9," Semelia 53 (1991) 55-80. See especially 59. In my opinion, it is also inaccurate to sustain that the man's execution of Jesus' command was a sign of his cooperation in his cure and that this co-operation was implied in Jesus' command. See Dodd, Historical Tradition, 176-177. Firstly, the idea that the sick man ought to participate in his healing seems foreign to Johannine thought (see Haenchen, John, 1: 246) and secondly, the man's execution of Jesus' command was subsequent to his healing which was effected solely by means of Jesus' word.

envisage the possibility of a healing miracle in the present context, no doubt, now identifies fully with the favourable outcome of Jesus' encounter with the sick man.

**Beginning of controversy: accusation by "the Jews" (vv. 9c-16)**

The section opens with the narrator's disclosure of an essential piece of information hitherto unknown to the reader namely, that ἃ ἤ καὶ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ. The narrative which had virtually come to its conclusion in v. 9b now bounces back to life with this new disclosure. The new information introduces a decisive element of "complication" into the narrative and this changes the direction of the dramatic action. This information also ruffles the reader's self-identification with the feat accomplished by Jesus. Aware of the fact that the carrying of objects on the Sabbath is unlawful (see Exod 20:8-11; Neh 13:15-19; Jer 17:19-27. See also m. Shabbat 7:2), the reader now senses that the healed man's carrying of his pallet in obedience to Jesus' command could result in a conflict. This creates suspense as the reader pursues the reading experience to discover what happens next. Why did the narrator choose to disclose the information that the day of the event was a Sabbath in medias res? The function of this literary technique here is to force "the reader to review the healing from a new perspective which catches the reader by surprise." The

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63 Bernard, "La Guérison de Bethesda," 7-8, proposes a chiastic structure for vv. 9c-16 which, according to him, shows the centrality of the words of Jesus to the healed man in v. 14b. The above reading of vv. 9c-16 presupposes the following internal structure: v. 9c: narrator's comment providing new information; vv. 10-13: encounter between "the Jews" and the healed man (formal accusation against the man); v. 14: second encounter between Jesus and the healed man; v. 15: disclosure of Jesus' identity to "the Jews;" v. 16: narrator's comment (shift of the formal accusation to Jesus and beginning of juridical controversy). The section is thus enveloped in an inclusion by the two comments of the narrator.

64 In terms of the reading position, the situation here is one of character-elevating position. The two main characters of the narrative namely Jesus and the now healed man have long been aware of the fact which the narrator only now discloses to the reader. See Sternberg, *Poetics of Biblical Narrative*, 165.

technique also contributes to the heightening of the narrative tension and therefore helps to carry the narrative action forward by inserting the narrative within a specific institutional and legal context. The Sabbath motif should therefore be seen as an integral part and indeed a central element in the unfolding narrative. It provides the narrative with a specific juridical context and determines its nature and development as a Sabbath juridical controversy.

Once the reader has been given the hitherto withheld detail about the temporal setting of the healing, the narrator introduces a third character into the narrative: "the Jews." The reader already knows of "the Jews" (see 1:19; 2:13-46).

66 Several Johannine scholars see the Sabbath motif in Jn 5 as somewhat extraneous. In their view, a literary-critical analysis of the text indicates that the Sabbath motif is artificially introduced into the narrative and therefore was originally not an integral part of it. See for instance, Dodd, _Historical Tradition_, 178; Bultmann, _The Gospel of John_, 239, n. 2; Schnackenburg, _The Gospel according to John_, 2: 96-98; Lindars, _The Gospel of John_, 215, who maintains that v. 9c cannot be regarded as "a true part of the story itself;" Haenchen, _John_, 1: 246, who is of the opinion that "the Sabbath conflict is again basically only a transitional motif;" Moreton, _Feast, Sign, and Discourse_, 209, who observes that "the Sabbath question is left behind [after v. 18], and the subject of works is taken up." However, in the perspective of the present study, this position is untenable. The role of the Sabbath motif in determining the juridical nature as well as the development of the story argues in favour of seeing it as both an original and therefore integral part of the narrative. In support of the view expressed here, see Brown, _John_, 1: 210, who rightly emphasizes that "one almost needs the Sabbath motif to give this story significance;" Moloney, _Signs and Shadows_, 3-4; Lee, _Symbolic Narratives_, 102; Painter, _Quest for the Messiah_, 216, who rightly observes that "while the introduced note that it was the Sabbath comes as a surprise to the reader, it has great dramatic force. It changes everything that has happened. By holding back this information to the end, the miracle has been brought forcefully into conflict with the attitude to the Sabbath expressed by the Jews." Bernard has also remarked that "on ne peut séparer la guérison du contexte institutionnel et légis qui lui donne sa signification dans un sens ou dans l'autre." J. Bernard, "La guérison de Bethesda. Harmoniques judéo-hellénistiques d'un récit de miracle un jour de sabbat," _MSR_ 33 (1976) 7. See also above, 57-58.

67 The use of the term "oî ḥouâ diá" in the Fourth Gospel has long been debated in Johannine scholarship and continues to arouse considerable interest among Johannine scholars to the present time. (see for instance, G. Caron, _Qui sont les 'Juifs'?_, 11, n. 2, for the scholarly literature on "the Jews" in the Fourth Gospel, which has been published since 1990. Extensive literature on this same theme can be found in 294-300 of the bibliography). The two basic questions that scholars often pose are: who are these ḥouâ diá and what role or function do they fulfill in the Gospel? In relation to the first question, Lowe maintains that in the controversies between Jesus and the ḥouâ diá, the latter refers to "Judeans," i.e. the Judean population in general or the Judean authorities and not the Jewish people in general (see M. Lowe, "Who were the ḥouâ diá?", _NT_ 18 [1976] 119-124 and 128). For his part, von Wahlde is of the opinion that oî ḥouâ diá refers almost exclusively to the authorities (see U. von Wahlde, "The Johannine 'Jews': A Critical Survey," _NTS_ 28 [1982] 33-60. See especially 54). With regard to the issue of the function of oî ḥouâ diá in the Fourth Gospel, Bultmann thinks that the term has a symbolic function. In this sense, "the Jews" are spoken of as representatives of unbelief (see Bultmann, _The Gospel of John_, 86-87). This view is also shared by Ashton who asserts that Bultmann's position shows a "greater understanding of the meaning of the Gospel" (see J. Ashton, "The Identity and Function of the ḥouâ diá in the Fourth Gospel," _NT_ 27 [1985] 40-75. See especially 68). See also Culpepper, _Anatomy_, 128-131. For a recent overview and critique of the present state of research on the ḥouâ diá in the Fourth Gospel, see G. Caron, _Qui sont les 'Juifs'?_, 19-50. Caron's own position is that the term oî ḥouâ diá represents "une attitude, un esprit, une religion, disons-le, un type de «Judaïsme» que l'on retrouve un peu partout, mais qui émerge surtout chez les pharisiens et les grands prêtres du récit." Caron,
and recalls that their previous and only encounter with Jesus was in the form of a confrontation. On that occasion, "the Jews" had questioned the right of Jesus to accomplish a prophetic act in the temple (see 2:18). Does the appearance of "the Jews" in the present context constitute an ominous sign for the reader that there might be another confrontation in sight? However, the reader soon becomes aware of the fact that, at least for now, "the Jews" take issue with the healed man whom they denounce for committing an unlawful act on the Sabbath: ὁ Ἰάσωμας ἔστιν, καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν οοὶ ἄραι τῶν κρατῶν οοὺ. This denunciation by "the Jews" constitutes a formal accusation against the healed man and signals the beginning of a juridical controversy. The ensuing exchange between the two parties slows down considerably the pace of the narrative as "narrative time" and "narration time" become virtually identical, and at the same time heightens the narrative tension. The healed man, who now

_Quis sunt les "Jews"?_, 263-264. It may be noted here that this position leads Caron to seek to reconcile two apparently contradictory positions. While maintaining on the one hand, that "the Jews" do not constitute a separate group besides other groups like the Pharisees, the Chief Priests, the Crowd, etc., he admits, on the other hand, that "the Jews" constitute a "character" which is completely different from all the other characters (see 253). In the perspective of the synchronic approach in which Caron situates his work (see 52), it is clear from the literary world created by the text itself that "the Jews" as well as the other groups mentioned in the text all constitute distinct characters with distinct and consistent roles in the narrative. It is therefore highly unlikely that "the Jews" can be reduced simply to an attitude or a type of Judaism that manifests itself in the other characters of the narrative. With regard to the term Ἰουδαίοι, the basic presupposition of the present study is that it refers to a specific character within the narrative framework of the Gospel and it is within this framework that it must be understood, and not by reference to the historical world outside of the text. As a character within the text, Ἰουδαίοι refers to a group of people who have made up their minds about Jesus and therefore reject his christological claims. This group of people represents one side of the christological debate which is ongoing within the narrative. Thus, the term Ἰουδαίοι does not refer to the Jewish people and there is always the need to place it within quotation marks. See Moloney, _Gospel of John_, 10. "The Jews" make their first appearance in the narrative in 1:19 in relation to their sending of a delegation to enquire about the identity of John. Their next appearance is in a confrontation with Jesus in the temple in which they challenge Jesus' authority. The next time we hear of them is in our present context. The reader who already knows of their previous confrontation with Jesus understands that their introduction into the narrative after the narrator's comment about the temporal setting of the miracle is an indication that another confrontation is looming in the distance.

68 It may be recalled here that the two-party juridical controversy takes shape when one party makes an accusation against another party. The accusation may be stated either in a declarative (as in the present context) or in an interrogative form, and remains at the centre of the controversy as long as the latter lasts. See above, 21; Boveti, _Re-establishing Justice_, 62, 75-78. The reader who is familiar with Jewish juridical procedures, is here credited with the knowledge of the controversy as a juridical procedure in a two-party conflict.

69 In a dialogue, narrative time and the narration time are almost equal. See Ska, _Our Fathers_, 14; Genette, _Narrative Discourse_, 93-95.
finds himself involved in a juridical controversy with "the Jews," defends himself by pointing to his healer (Ὁ παθησάς με ὑγιή: "the one who made me healthy") as the person behind his action. Should the healed man's response be interpreted as a cowardly act which is meant to shift the blame from himself to his healer? It seems that one must respond in the negative for the following reasons:

Firstly, the reader understands from the word order in the text that the emphasis of the man's response is on the reality of his healing.

Secondly, there is nothing in the response which could suggest to the reader that the healed man is antagonistic toward Jesus or wishes to act malevolently toward his benefactor.

Thirdly, ever since the disclosure by the narrator of the fact that the healing took place on the Sabbath, the reader has been sensing that a confrontation between Jesus and "the Jews" is on the horizon. The reader would therefore understand the response of the healed man as the narrator's way of ensuring that "the Jews" get to know that it was Jesus who had caused the alleged transgression of the Sabbath to take place. Thus, in the final

70 This translation is to be preferred to the standard rendering of "the one who healed / cured me" (RSV; NJB; TOB). It has the advantage of retaining the basic meaning of the verb παθήσας which, as Delebecque has rightly observed, is very often used to emphasize the power of Jesus which is made manifest in the signs he accomplishes (see 2:11; 2:18; 2:23; 3:2). See E. Delebecque, *Evangile de Jean: Texte Traduit et Annoté*, CRB 23. (Paris: Gabalda, 1987) 77, 154.


73 We are here dealing with a literary device by which the narrator seeks to bring Jesus and "the Jews" into a face to face confrontation and thus ensure the continuation of the narrative. Other scholars have also pointed to the fact that the healed man's response is the narrator's subtle way of bringing to the fore the issue of Jesus' authority and its relation to the Mosaic Law. See Thomas, "The man at the Pool," 13; Staley, "Stumbling in the Dark," 61; van den Bussche, "Guérison d'un paralytique," 23; Lindars, *The Gospel of John*, 216; who observes that "rather in the style of a rabbinic disputation, the healed man sets against the halakhic ruling of verse 10 the ruling of another authority - Jesus himself." It may be added here that, from the perspective of the reader-response criticism, one cannot compare at this point, the healed man in the present context with the man in Jn 9 (against for instance, Barrett, *John*, 255; Brown, *John*, 1: 209). The reader who certainly has a knowledge of the Jesus story is however in the process of
analysis, the narrator succeeds in concentrating the reader's attention on the healer (Jesus) who is now out of the scene.

The reaction of "the Jews" to the healed man's response is to seek to find out τίς ἔστιν ὁ ἀνθρώπος who ordered him to break the Sabbath law. The reader notices the significant difference in perspective between the healed man (and the narrator) on the one hand, and "the Jews" on the other hand. While the healed man, in his response, places the emphasis on the reality of his healing (v. 11), "the Jews" on their part choose to ignore completely the ὁ ποιήσας με ὑγιή and focus exclusively on the identity of the person behind the alleged Sabbath violation (v. 12). This means that, for "the Jews," even the possibility of a miraculous healing does not affect their perception of the situation: a man has instigated another person to break the Sabbath and the identity of the instigator must be established so that the appropriate action can be taken against him. In addition to this difference in perspective, the questioning of the healed man by "the Jews" enables the narrator to introduce the issue of Jesus' true identity into the unfolding narrative. In other words, the question τίς ἔστιν ὁ ἀνθρώπος is intended by the narrator not only as a means for "the Jews" to find out who gave the command behind the alleged violation of the Sabbath, but also as a means of introducing the wider issue of Jesus' real identity of which the reader has some idea (see 1:1, 14, 18), but which is unknown to "the Jews." In the meantime, the narrator intrudes a comment into the narrative before the healed man has an opportunity to answer the question of "the Jews" (v. 13). Now that the two issues crucial to the narrative have emerged, namely, the Sabbath and the identity of Jesus, the narrator whisks the

74 See Brown, John, 1: 208 who observes that "the wonderful healing has been lost sight of; only the Sabbath violation is important to the authorities;" Haenchen, John, 1: 247; Pancaro, The Law in the Fourth Gospel, 14-15; Staley, "Stumbling in the Dark," 61; Thomas, "The Man at the Pool," 13.
healed man from the scene.75 By removing the man from the scene and speaking on his behalf (ό δὲ λαβεῖς οὐκ ἔδει τις ἐστιν),76 the narrator effectively brings the dialogue to an end and moves from "scene" to "summary" (v. 14a).

The transition to "summary" enables the narrator to quicken the tempo of the narrative by condensing several elements in one sentence (v. 14a).77 The expression μετὰ ταύτα which opens v. 14 has been used up to this point in the narrative to indicate a break in the story (see 2:12; 3:22; 5:1). However, it is used here to convey the idea of the lapse of time which has occurred between the end of the previous action and the resumption of the narrative in v. 14. The narrator’s comment in v. 13 had introduced a sudden pause in the narrative action. The healed man does not know the identity of his healer who has in the meantime disappeared into the crowd. However, if his defence is to be credible in the sight of "the Jews," the least he can do is to provide the identity of the person who commanded him to break the Sabbath law. His lack of knowledge of his healer’s identity therefore causes a sudden halt in the narrative action, and were this situation to be permanent, it would be the end of the narrative. This

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75 In the exchange between "the Jews" and the healed man which takes place in Jesus’ absence, the narrator, in a subtle way, brings to the fore the deeper issues arising from the healing, i.e. the Sabbath and the issue of Jesus’ identity. This device is intended to arouse the interest of the reader as he/she wonders what Jesus himself may eventually have to say on these issues. See Lindars, The Gospel of John, 216.

76 Moloney, The Gospel of John, 173, notes that the remark by the narrator concerning the healed man’s lack of knowledge about Jesus’ identity and the reason provided for it "may be a hint of the man’s ongoing failure to separate Jesus from the rest of humankind." According to Brown, John, 1: 209, "the fact that he [i.e. the healed man] let his benefactor slip away without even asking his name is another instance of real dullness." The narrator, however, does not blame the man for his failure to know his healer’s name and gives the reader a reason for the man’s lack of knowledge: "For Jesus had slipped away, as there was a crowd in the place." The verb ἐκχειρία literally means "to turn the head out of its normal position" in a bid to shun or avoid someone (see H. G. Liddell-R. Scott-H. S. Jones, A Greek - English Lexicon, 9th ed. [Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1940] 514); it therefore carries the nuance of to "slip away / turn away." On the need to translate ἐκχειρία (aorist) by the pluperfect in English, see Zerwick, Biblical Greek, 290, § 290.

77 The movement of Jesus from the scene of the healing to the temple as well as that of the healed man from the place of his confrontation with "the Jews" to the temple must certainly have taken some amount of time and yet, everything is narrated to the reader in half of a verse (v. 14a). "Narration time" is thus much shorter than "narrative time," a fact which indicates that we are dealing here with a "summary." See Ska, Our Fathers, 22.
heightens the narrative tension as the reader continues his/her reading experience in order to discover what happens next. V. 14a which is introduced by the expression μετὰ ταῦτα (i.e. after a passage of time) informs the reader of Jesus’ finding of the healed man in the temple. Jesus’ action of finding him enables the narrative action to resume. Hence, the narrator would have intended v. 14a to be understood as a deliberate action on the part of Jesus who sought the man out and found him in the temple, rather than just being a reference to a chance meeting. The first part of Jesus’ address to the man in this second encounter is an observation: Ἰδε ὦ γινής γέγονας. It not only reminds the reader of Jesus’ initial question in v. 6 (Θέλεις ὦ γινής γινέσθαι;) but it also establishes the fact of the permanent nature of the healing. The second part of Jesus’ address to the healed man is in form of an admonition: μηκέτι ἄμαρτανε, ἵνα μὴ χείρόν σοί τι γένηται. This admonition comes as a surprise to the reader. Firstly, the narrator has as yet said nothing about sin in the present narrative, and secondly no immediate clues are offered to the reader to assist

78 Against Bultmann, The Gospel of John, 243, n. 5. See also Bauer, Johannesevangelium, 40, 81, who is of the opinion that εὑρίσκει should be understood in the sense of treffen (“to encounter,” "to come across”).

79 On the use of the perfect tense to express the permanent effect of an action accomplished in the past, see Blass-Debrunner-Funk, A Greek Grammar, 176-177, § 342; Zerwick, Biblical Greek, 96, § 285.

80 There has been a variety of attempts to explain Jesus’ warning to the healed man. The following may be noted: Jesus’ warning is to be understood in terms of the conventional connection between sin and sickness (A. T. Robertson, The Divinity of Christ in the Gospel of John. [New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1916] 66; Bultmann, The Gospel of John, 243; Lindars, The Gospel of John, 217; van den Bussche, “Guérison d’un paralytique,” 24; Morris, John, 307); It is an indication that the healing also involved forgiveness of the man’s sins as well (Boismard-Lamouille, L’évangile de Jean, 162; Schnackenburg, The Gospel according to John, 2: 97; “The man is healed and at the same time forgiven by God for his sin”); The warning is a moralistic note inserted by an editor (Haenchen, John, 247); The warning is an indication that the man is a sinner (Culpepper, "John 5:1-18," 204); Jesus’ warning is an invitation to the man "to take his newly gained health as a spur to strive to live well" (Lindars, The Gospel of John, 217). Moloney makes an interesting suggestion that by his warning, Jesus "proclaims that the man who is now whole physically must not sin if he wishes to retain his wholeness into eternal life" (Moloney, Signs and Shadows, 7 and n. 31). It may be noted here, that most of the scholars cited above seek to explain Jesus’ warning by making reference to Jn 9:3 and / or Mk 2:9-11. However, from the perspective of the reader-response approach which is being followed in the present study, one cannot appeal to these other texts. The reader who is in the process of discovering John’s version of the Jesus event does not yet know what is to be said later on in the Johannine narrative. On the interpretation of 5:14 by some of the early Church Fathers, see M. Mees, "Die Heilung des Kranken vom Bethesdaeich aus Joh 5. 1-18 in frühchristlicher Sicht," NTS 32 (1986) 596-608. See especially 601-604.
him/her to understand correctly the meaning of Jesus' assertion. Is Jesus here establishing a direct connection between sin and sickness as many scholars have assumed? The answer would have to be in the negative. The force of the present imperative suggests that the expression μηκέτι ἁμάρτανε should be understood as "stop sinning" or better still "do not continue to sin." This would imply that at the time of the second encounter, the man is seen as still living in sin. The initial healing would thus not be related to any forgiveness of sin. How then is Jesus' admonition (v. 14b) to be understood in this context?

The reader is aware that the only previous allusion to sin was in the context of John's testimony about Jesus whom he described as "the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (1:29). The reader recalls that this testimony, among other things, led to the "following" of Jesus by two of John's disciples (1:37), who were thus enabled to come to initial faith in Jesus. The narrator may therefore be suggesting to the reader, in a very subtle way, that there is a relationship between Jesus' mission as the one who takes away the sin of the world and the act of coming to faith in him. In other words, the sin par excellence which Jesus has come to take away is the sin of unbelief. Those

81 In addition to the literature cited in the previous note, see also Beasley-Murray, John, 74; Carson, John, 245-246; Thomas, "The man at the Pool," 14-17.


83 See Staley, "Stumbling in the Dark," 73, n. 31, who rightly observes that "an aorist imperative would have meant «Don't start sinning (again), or something worse may happen to you» implying that the act of healing was also an act of forgiving sins and that there was a causal connection between the illness and sin." The present imperative, however, implies an ongoing action suggesting that the man was still living in sin even after his healing. See however, Carson, John, 246 and n. 1, who thinks that the argument based on the grammatical «rule» on the use of the present imperative is insufficient since there are too many exceptions to it. However, he does not provide any examples. His position is that the present imperative is here chosen "to stress urgency." For other views similar to the one I am defending here, see Barrett, John, 255; P. Borgen, "The Sabbath Controversy in John 5:1-18 and Analogous Controversy Reflected in Philo's Writings." In Heirs of the Septuagint: Philo, Hellenistic Judaism and Early Christianity. The Studia Philonica Annual, vol. III, ed. D. T. Runia, 209-221. (Atlanta GA: Scholars Press, 1991) 217.

84 On the link between 1:29-34 and the "following" of the disciples, see Moloney, Belief in the Word, 67.
who, like the two disciples, come to faith in him have eternal life while those who persist in their unbelief condemn themselves to death (3:16-18). The context of 1:29-39 may therefore offer a clue to the reader as to how to understand Jesus' admonition in 5:14b. Jesus would be reproaching the healed man for his inability to come to faith in him and would be warning him against the risk he faces if he should continue to sin (i.e. if he should persist in his unbelief). The reader is already aware of the strict correlation between faith and salvation on the one hand, and between unbelief and condemnation on the other hand (2:16-18). He/she therefore understands the χειρὸς τῆς which would happen to the man should he persist in his unbelief as a reference to the loss of eternal life (3:16-18) which is the fate reserved for all refuse to come to faith in Jesus.

There is no reaction on the part of the healed man to Jesus' admonition. The narrator simply notes the fact of his going away (v. 15a) and there is no indication that he came to faith in Jesus by accepting his word (see 2:5; 4:42, 50). The healed man went away to report to "the Jews" that Ἰησοῦς ἔτην ὁ ποιήσας αὐτὸν ὑψιφ. The man's action should not necessarily be understood

85 In the miracle immediately preceding the present narrative (4:46-54), the reader is expressly informed by the narrator that the official whose son was healed came to faith in Jesus (see also 2:11, where as a result of the first Cana miracle, ἔπιστευσαν εἰς αὐτὸν οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ). The present narrative would thus be the first instance in which absolutely nobody comes to faith in Jesus following a sign performed by him. Thus, in my opinion, Kysar is right in his observation that 'Jesus' words to the man... may be suggestive of the dim view John takes of this failure to see through the sign to the sign-doer." See R. Kysar, John's Story of Jesus. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984) 34. While it is true that the narrator does not fully endorse those who believe in Jesus solely because of his signs (see 2:23-25), it is equally true that the narrator envisages Jesus' signs as a means to at least coming to an initial faith in Jesus (2:11; 4:53).

86 Most scholars interpret the χειρὸς τῆς either in the sense of physical death in punishment for sin (Schnackenburg, The Gospel according to John, 2; 98) or as a reference to some sort of eternal consequences due to sin (Morris, John, 307; Lindars, The Gospel of John, 217; Barrett, John, 255). For a similar view as the one expressed above, see Moloney, Signs and Shadows, 7 and n. 31.

87 The use of the verb ἀνήγαγέν in v. 15b has prompted some scholars to suggest that the man's action should be understood positively as a proclamation to "the Jews" that it was Jesus who had healed him. See Staley, "Stumbling in the Dark," 63; Thomas, "The Man at the Pool," 18; Borgen, "The Sabbath Controversy," 217, who is of the view that "when the man went away and told the Jewish authorities that Jesus had healed him (John 5:15), he gave his witness to them about Jesus as his healer." See however, Culpepper, "John 5:1-18," 204-205, for a critique of this position.
as a cowardly betrayal of his benefactor. He had earlier been accused by "the Jews" of breaking the Sabbath law and was still under the threat of a sanction in the juridical controversy that had been initiated with the accusation of "the Jews." Since he had claimed that some one else had ordered the action at the centre of the controversy, he could only extricate himself from the juridical controversy by providing the name of the one who commanded the action. On the other hand, from the point of view of the narrative action, the healed man's report to "the Jews" enables the action to resume. This seems to be the intention and indeed the interest of the narrator. The narrator has already made the healed man cite his healer as the person behind his breach of the Sabbath (v. 11). Hence, the juridical controversy could only be resolved by a confrontation between Jesus and "the Jews," and this is what the narrator seeks to achieve with the man's report to "the Jews."

The narrator's comment in v. 16 indicates that once Jesus has been identified to "the Jews" as the one who caused the Sabbath to be broken, the accusation made against the healed man is automatically shifted to him. This sets up a juridical controversy between Jesus and "the Jews" on the issue of the

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88 This is the view expressed by such scholars as Morris, John, 307; Brown, John, 1: 209. See however, van den Bussche, "Guérison d'un paralytique," 25, who notes that "sans mauvaise intention, poussé simplement par la joie d'être guéri, le miraculé va raconter aux juifs que le guérisseur s'appelle Jésus;" Lindars, The Gospel of John, 217. On his part, Bernard maintains that the man's action was prompted by the words that Jesus had spoken to him in v. 14b. See Bernard, "La Guérison de Bethesda," 8.

89 Bultmann, The Gospel of John, 243, n. 10 and Morris, John, 307, n. 37, explain the action of the healed man along similar lines.


91 See Becker, Evangelium, 1: 232-233, who rightly observes that the modern reader may consider the healed man's action as a betrayal, but this idea "ist dem Erzähler fern und unwichtig. Er will auf Jesus gerichtete Verfolgung anführen." The term ὑπερθέντωμα appears for the fifth and the last time in the present narrative in v. 15. It is found in the mouth of Jesus (vv. 6, 14b), the narrator (vv. 9, 15) and the healed man (v. 11) but it is never used by "the Jews." This frequent repetition of ὑπερθέντωμα is an indication to the reader of the importance the narrator attaches to this word. On the one hand, its repetition sustains the thematic development of the narrative by emphasizing that what Jesus had done was to make a man whole (see Painter, Quest for the Messiah, 222; on the use of the technique of repetition in biblical narratives, see Alter, Biblical Narrative, 92-94); on the other hand, it indicates to the reader the essential unity of perspective between the narrator, Jesus and the healed man - a perspective that the reader is also invited to adopt. This perspective is in stark contrast to the perspective of "the Jews" whose only concern is with the one who gave the command (v. 12).
Sabbath law. The verb διωκεῖν can either mean "to persecute" or "prosecute," "to accuse someone." In the present context, it is more appropriate to understand it as indicating an act of accusation which signals the beginning of the juridical controversy. However, the meaning of "to persecute" may also be implied here. The imperfect form of the verb (ἐδιωκόν) is iterative and indicates that Jesus' actions on the Sabbath resulted in repeated accusations on the part of "the Jews." The reason given by the narrator for these repeated accusations is that ταῦτα ἐπηοεῖ ἐν οἰκßήτω. Even though the only alleged breach of the Sabbath by Jesus mentioned so far by the narrator is the case in the present narrative, the use of the imperfect ἐπηοεῖ together with ταῦτα suggest to the reader that there had been other cases of Sabbath violations which the narrator had not deemed necessary to inform the reader about. Thus, the narrator is here making reference to what appears to be a habitual attitude of Jesus to the Sabbath law. However, the use of the iterative imperfect makes it clear to the reader that the situation described by the narrator in v. 16 includes the particular case which has just been narrated. Jesus has now been accused of

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92 Several scholars have described the confrontation between Jesus and "the Jews" as a trial scene or judicial proceedings. See for instance,Stubbe, John, 76-80; Harvey, Jesus on Trial, 14-15. However, our earlier analysis has established the fact that what we have here is a two-party controversy which, as a juridical procedure, has its own juridical character and structure. See above, 30-44. Bultmann is therefore right when he observes that "it is not the Evangelist's intention here to describe [judicial] proceedings against Jesus under Jewish law." Bultmann, The Gospel of John, 244, n. 1.

93 See Liddell-Scott-Jones, Lexicon, 440, s.v., § I V.

94 It may be recalled here that, in the two-party juridical controversy, it is the act of accusation which signals the beginning of the conflict. See Bovati, Re-establishing Justice, 62.

95 This is the standard translation adopted in most of the modern versions (e.g. RSV, NRSV, NJB, TOB). Within the context of the juridical controversy, the idea of persecution can be justified in the sense that the accusation which sets in motion the juridical controversy brings with it elements of aggression and force which the accuser seeks to impose on the accused (see for instance, Gen 31:26-29a; Ps 35:1; Prov 23:11; Jer 50:34). See Bovati, Re-establishing Justice, 49.

96 See however, Blass-Debrunner-Funk, A Greek Grammar, 170, § 330, where it is said that the imperfect can be understood as expressing "relative time." It would then be rendered by the German or the English pluperfect. In this case, the expression διί ταῦτα ἐπηοεῖ ἐν οἰκßήτω would mean "because he had done such a thing on the Sabbath." See also Haenchen, John, 1: 248.

97 See Bultmann, The Gospel of John, 244, n. 1.
Sabbath violation and is involved in a Sabbath juridical controversy with "the Jews." He will therefore have to respond to the accusation in a bid to justify his action and to bring the controversy to a peaceful end.

**Jesus' response to accusation (vv. 17-47)**

a). Reasons justifying Sabbath activity (vv. 17, 19-30)

Verse 17 opens with the expression ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς ἀπεκρίνατο αὐτοῖς. The use of the verb ἀπεκρίνατο enables the reader to perceive that what is about to unfold is Jesus' response in answer to the accusation levelled against him by "the Jews." The formal and almost legal overtones of this verbal form establishes beyond doubt that a juridical controversy is under way. Jesus begins his defence against the accusation of breaking the Sabbath with a cryptic statement: ὁ πατὴρ μου ἔως ἁρτί ἐργάζεται κἀγὼ ἐργάζεται ("My Father is always working and I am working too"). The paratactical

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98 Verse 18 is a narrative intrusion. See above, 79, n. 30.

99 The name Ἰησοῦς is absent from some of the major manuscripts including P75 & B. It is however found in f11 12 13. Even though most scholars are uncertain as to whether it was an addition to provide a subject for the verb or a deletion prompted by stylistic considerations, it is included in critical editions (see for instance The Greek New Testament; Novum Testamentum Graece). See Metzger, A Textual Commentary, 179-180.

100 The verb ἀπεκρίνατο in the aorist middle is found only here and in v. 19 in the Fourth Gospel.


102 C. Maurer, "Steckt hinter Joh 5:17 ein Übersetzungsfehler?" WJD 5 (1957) 130-140, has argued that ἔως ἁρτί (which literally means "till now," "up to the present") is a rather clumsy translation ("eine ungeschickte Übersetzung") into Greek of the Hebrew word 'āḏāḏ which, like the Greek ἔως ἁρτί, may indicate a terminus ad quem (i.e. "till now") or an uninterrupted period (i.e. "always," "continually"). This understanding of ἔως ἁρτί as coming from the Hebrew 'āḏāḏ and connoting the idea of "continuation" is behind the translation proposed above. It has the added advantage of doing away with the idea that the time has now come, or will soon be, for the Father's work to stop which seems to be implied in the understanding of ἔως ἁρτί as "till now," "up to the present." See F. Grob, «Mon Père
construction of Jesus' statement indicates already to the reader that there is a special relationship between Jesus' activity, including the Sabbath healing, and that of the Father. Jesus' activity has its basis in the divine activity with which it forms a unity. Thus, the reader understands that Jesus is here appealing to his status as "son" to claim the same prerogative as God the Father who does not observe the Sabbath pause. It is as if Jesus were saying "since my Father works without interruption, I also have the right to work without interruption." In other words, whatever reasons justify God's continuous work also justify Jesus' own work on the Sabbath. "The Jews" are therefore wrong in accusing him of Sabbath violation which is the basis of the present juridical controversy. The idea that God's work in creation continues uninterruptedly suggests to the reader that creation has, in a way, yet to be completed. Thus, the reader who already accepts the fact that Jesus is the "Word" through whom all things were made (1:3) understands v. 17 to mean that Jesus' own Sabbath work is a participation in, and a bringing to completion of God's ongoing creative and saving activity.

Most Johannine scholars have observed that, behind the statement of defence of Jesus in v. 17 lie the debate and speculation in Jewish circles concerning God's Sabbath rest. Despite the clear assertion of God's Sabbath rest in Gen 2:3, it was clear to Jewish thinkers that God could not really cease to

\[\text{travaille toujours}.\ Jn \ 5:17 \ \text{et la tradition des Logia de Jésus,}^* \ RevSR \ 69 \ (1995) \ 19-27. \ \text{See especially } 25-26. \ \text{See also G. Ferraro, "Il senso di } \varepsilon \omega \varsigma \ \dot{d} \rho \tau \iota \ \text{nel testo di Giovanni 5, 17," RivBib} \ 20 \ (1972) \ 529-545. \ \text{See especially 537-545; S. Bacchiocchi, "John 5:17: Negation or Clarification of the Sabbath?" AUS}^\text{S} \ 19 \ (1981) \ 3-19. \ \text{See especially 11-13.}

103 \ See J. Blank, \textit{Krisis: Untersuchungen zur johanneischen Christologie und Eschatologie}. (Freiburg: Lambertus-Verlag, 1964) 110.

104 Hoskyns thinks that "the significance of the words } \textit{even until now} \ \text{does not ... consist in the fact that His work cannot cease with the Sabbath, but, as in ix. 4,... that the hour of his death is not yet}" (see Hoskyns, \textit{The Fourth Gospel, 267}). In my opinion, the reference to Jn 9:4 prevents Hoskyns from examining the statement within its present context. The expression } \varepsilon \omega \varsigma \ \dot{d} \rho \tau \iota \ \text{in v. 17 is not applied to Jesus but to the Father's work.}

work on the Sabbath, for otherwise nature and life would come to an end. God's continuous activity was seen in the fact that children were born and people died on the Sabbath. In other words, God continued his activities of life-giving and judging even on the Sabbath. The Rabbis sought to explain this apparent tension between God's Sabbath rest and his uninterrupted activity in the world by insisting on the fact that the whole world is God's private domain (Isa 6:3) and therefore God may work in the world without breaking the Sabbath law (Exod. Rab. 30:9; see also Gen. Rab. 11:10). On his part, Philo of Alexandria explains that God's Sabbath rest does not mean abstention from good deeds since God is by nature active and never ceases doing the most excellent things. Thus, there seems to have been a general consensus among Jewish thinkers that God continued working on the Sabbath without breaking his own Sabbath law. The two areas that were singled out for particular emphasis were his activities as life-giver and judge of the dead. These activities were seen as the exclusive prerogative of God (see 1 Sam 2:6; 2 Kgs 5:7) and they could not be usurped by any creature. The people, on their part, were called upon to observe scrupulously the Sabbath rest as a memorial of God's activities as creator (Exod 20:8-11) and as liberator (Deut 5:12-15).

In the light of the above, it is appropriate to maintain that Jesus' assertion in v. 17 that God works uninterruptedly would certainly go down well with his accusers. However, his claim that he has the same right as God to work on the Sabbath would be seen by "the Jews" as an usurpation of God's exclusive

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106 See Barrett, John, 256. Lindars, The Gospel of John, 218, dates the episode referred to in Exod. Rab. 30:9 to c. 95 C.E. This would indicate that Rabbinc theology was dealing with the question of God's Sabbath work around the time of the composition of the Fourth Gospel.

107 See Philo, De Cher., 86-90; Leg All., 1:5-6. For an ample discussion on the Jewish background to the idea that God gives life and judges even on the Sabbath, see Bernard, "La guérison de Bethesda," 13-34; Dodd, Interpretation, 320-323.

prerogative and therefore as a blasphemy. The comment of the narrator in v. 18 is an indication to the reader that "the Jews" immediately understand the implications of Jesus' argument and perceive it as an even greater offence than his violation of the Sabbath law. This reinforces their desire to pursue the juridical controversy against Jesus and have him sanctioned. The significance of the narrator's intrusion in v. 18 can be seen in the fact that it states clearly for the reader all the accusations being made against Jesus after his response in v. 17, and at the same time indicates to the reader the intended sanction. There is now a three-fold accusation against Jesus:¹⁰⁹

i. The breaking of the Sabbath (v. 18b).

ii. The claim of a special relationship with God whom he calls his "Father" (v. 18cα).

iii. Equality with God by claiming to have the same prerogative as God to work on the Sabbath (v. 18cβ).

In the light of the three-fold accusation against Jesus, it may be argued that the main bone of contention between Jesus and "the Jews" concerns Jesus' relationship with the God of Israel. Firstly, for Jesus, his special relationship with God entitles him to the same prerogative as God who is not bound by the Sabbath rest, and enables him to exercise the divine functions of life-giving and judgment. "The Jews" consider this claim as outrageous and an attempt to usurp God's exclusive right and duties. Secondly, Jesus' claim that God is his own Father offends "the Jews" who rightly understand that Jesus is claiming to have a unique relationship with God.¹¹⁰ However, it is also possible that the

¹⁰⁹ See Moloney, Signs and Shadows, 9.

¹¹⁰ Johannine scholars generally agree that the adjective ἑαυτοῦ in v. 18c is used here emphatically and therefore carries a special nuance. See for instance, Schnackenburg, The Gospel according to John, 2: 101; Bultmann, The Gospel of John, 244, n. 7. While recognizing that ἑαυτοῦ is sometimes used in the koinè unemphatically (see Blass-Debrunner-Funk, A Greek Grammar, 149-150, § 286; Bauer,
accusation against Jesus is not so much about calling God his Father as his doing so in a context where he claims to have the same right over the Sabbath as God.\textsuperscript{111} Finally, "the Jews" understand that Jesus' equation of his Sabbath work with that of God and his claim that God is his Father amount to a claim to equality with God. For "the Jews," such a claim can only constitute a blasphemy. In this sense, the verb ποιεῖν with the reflexive pronoun ἑαυτὸν signals what "the Jews" perceive as Jesus' "crime": he made himself ὑον θεὸν.\textsuperscript{112} The reader, however, knows better. The reader is aware that Jesus has not "made himself equal with God" as if to usurp divine power and authority; on the contrary, he was ὁ λόγος who from the beginning, ἦν πρὸς θεὸν, καὶ ἥς ἦς ἦν (1:1).\textsuperscript{113} The reader also knows that, as the Word made flesh (1:14), Jesus has come into the world to reveal God to humankind (see 1:18) and to do the will of the one who sent him, and to accomplish his work (see 4:34). Jesus carries out his work in complete dependence on God. The irony of the situation could not have been greater. In effect, while the reader knows that the three-fold accusation against Jesus actually reflect the truth, he/she is also aware that "the Jews" misunderstand Jesus' claims because "they can only conceive equality with God as independence from God, whereas for Jesus it means the very opposite."\textsuperscript{114} It is on account of this misunderstanding that "the Jews" have initiated the ongoing Sabbath juridical controversy against Jesus.

\textit{Johannevangelium}, 39), Bultmann rightly insists that, in speaking of God as his Father, Jesus lays claim to a particular relationship with God; Panaro, \textit{The Law in the Fourth Gospel}, 55, n. 10.

\textsuperscript{111} See the suggestive article of J. Bligh, "Jesus in Jerusalem," \textit{HeyJ} 4 (1963) 115-134. See especially 125.

\textsuperscript{112} It must be noted here that the expression ἠσος θεος is found only on the lips of "the Jews," and never on the lips of Jesus who understands his relationship with the Father in terms of functional unity (v. 17).


The intended sanction in the present juridical controversy which is presented as a threat is indicated in v. 18a as "death." This sanction does not constitute a sentence, but an intended action whose implementation depends essentially on the response of the accused to the accusation being levelled against him. In other words, the intended sanction, in a juridical controversy, is still subject to the defence of the accused after which it may either be confirmed or rebutted. Now that the narrator has explicitly stated the accusations as well as the intended sanction against Jesus, the stage is set for the resumption and the development of Jesus' defence started in v. 17.

The narrator signals the resumption of Jesus' response to the accusations against him with the repetition of the verb ἀπεκρίνατο (see v. 17). The use of οὐν in v. 19a enables the reader to perceive the fact that what Jesus is about to say constitutes his response to the three-fold accusation of "the Jews" in v. 18.

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115 Against for instance, Stibbe, John, 77.

116 A clear distinction must be maintained between a sanction as a verdict which brings all interventions and defence to a close as it pertains to the judicial process and a sanction as a threat in the juridical controversy which prompts the accuser to defend himself/herself against the accusation. The fact that Jesus, after v. 18a, defends himself against the accusations levelled against him makes it abundantly clear to the reader that we are dealing here with a sanction as a threat as it pertains to the juridical controversy. See above, 34, and n. 61. See also Bovati, Re-establishing Justice, 85, 88. An example of a sanction as a threat in the juridical controversy can be seen in the controversy between the Israelites and the transjordanian tribes in Josh 22:13-34. The Israelites accuse the transjordanian tribes of being unfaithful to Yahweh by building an altar for themselves and threaten to wage war against them so as to avert Yahweh's retributive sanction (vv. 16-20). The transjordanian tribes respond to the accusation by explaining the motive behind their action (vv. 21-29). The Israelites accept the explanation of the transjordanians and drop the accusation and the intended punitive action and peace is restored (vv. 30-32). The narrator's comment in v. 33 provides a fitting conclusion to the resolution of the controversy: "The report was pleasing in the eyes of the people of Israel and the people of Israel blessed God; and they spoke no more of going up against them in war to destroy the land in which the Reubenites and the Gadites dwell" (my own literal translation).

117 Most Johannine scholars have rightly observed that the discourse in v. 19ff develops further the theology of Jesus' statement in v. 17 and therefore constitutes a justification of Jesus' Sabbath activity. See Bultmann, The Gospel of John, 244: "The starting point for Jesus' subsequent discourse is provided by the statement in v. 17," Barrett, John, 257; Dodd, Interpretation, 320; Brown, John, 1: 217; Moloney, The Gospel of John, 177: "This discourse develops Jesus' claim to work also on the Sabbath, as his Father is working still (v. 17)." See however, A. C. Sundberg, "Isos To Theo" Christology in John 5:17-30, BR 15 (1970) 26-29, who is of the opinion that vv. 17-18 are transitional between 5:1-16 and 5:19-30. Thus, in his view, since vv. 17-18b refer back to the Sabbath controversy, they cannot be taken "as introductory to and thus setting the subject for what follows" (28). He sees the introduction to what follows in the remainder of v. 18 which constitutes the new element (see v. 18c). However, in my opinion Sundberg mistakenly separates v. 18c from vv. 17-18b. The construction of v. 18: οὐ μόνον... δὲ δὲ δὲ καί clearly shows that all the elements go together and constitute the accusations which, in the light of his Sabbath activity and his statement in v. 17, Jesus now has to defend himself against.
and is therefore directly linked to it. At the beginning of his response in v. 17, Jesus had claimed that the perfect functional unity between the Father and himself gave him the authority to carry out his work, like the Father, even on the Sabbath. This claim had been interpreted by "the Jews" to mean equality with God in the sense of independence from God (v. 18). For them, it is as if Jesus was claiming equality of status and "setting himself up as a rival to God." As he resumes his discourse in v. 19, Jesus attempts to clarify the nature of his relationship with the Father which gives him the same prerogative as God to work on the Sabbath without breaking the Sabbath law. The issue of the Sabbath therefore continues to be crucial for a correct understanding of the ongoing juridical controversy which continues to be bilateral. The same two actors are present: Jesus is the speaker and "the Jews" are the ones being addressed. In other words, within the narrative framework of the ongoing juridical controversy, Jesus is addressing "the Jews" in a bid to justify his Sabbath activities and to convince them to accept his christological claims.

118 On the various uses of ὅντος, see Blass-Debrunner-Funk, A Greek Grammar, 234, § 451. I understand the ὅντος in v. 19a as providing a causal connection between v. 18 and v. 19f. Thus, v. 19a may be loosely rendered as: "In view of this (consequently), Jesus answered and kept saying to them." On the use of the imperfect ἔλεγεν in v. 19a, see Zerwick, Biblical Greek, 91, § 272. He rightly notes, among other things, that where they introduce direct speech (especially if it is of some length), verbs of saying tend to be put in the imperfect when used of past time. The reason is that "the interest falls normally not on the fact that this was or was not said (aorist) but on the exposition of what was said."

119 For the expression "functional unity," see Blank, Krisis, 110, who speaks of a "Wirkens-Einheit" zwischen Jesus und Gott." It may be noted here that "unity of activity" signifies a complete unity between the Father and the Son, and therefore includes the idea of "unity of being." See Pancaro, The Law in the Fourth Gospel, 237, and n. 146.

120 Pancaro, The Law in the Fourth Gospel, 55.

121 Against Lindars, The Gospel of John, 219 who maintains that in vv. 19-47, "the issue of the Sabbath is left on one side."

122 Some Johannine scholars tend to consider vv. 19-30 as a sort of christological compendium which the evangelist addresses to the Christian reader, and in the process, they lose sight of "the Jews" to whom the arguments of the Johannine Jesus are addressed in the text. Behind this interpretation lies the idea that it is only the Christian reader who is capable of understanding the words of Jesus in vv. 19-30. See for instance, N. A. Dahl, "Do not wonder! John 5:28-29 and Johannine Eschatology Once More." In The Conversation Continues: Studies in Paul & John. In Honor of J. Louis Martyn, eds. R. T. Fortna and B. R. Gaventa. 322-336. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1990). He maintains that the discourse in Jn 5 is addressed to Christians who share the same presupposition as the evangelist, rather than to the Jewish discussion partners of Jesus. His reason is that only a Christian audience will find the arguments
Jesus' statement in v. 19 affirms that the equality of the Son with God is to be understood in the sense of a total dependence of the Son on the Father. 123 This is expressed negatively and then positively. The negative statement (v. 19b) is as follows:

οὗ δύναται ὁ υἱὸς ποιεῖν ἀφ' ἕαυτοῦ οὐδὲν
ἐὰν μὴ τι βλέπῃ τὸν πατέρα ποιοῦντα

The operative word which indicates the general theme of the statement is the verb ποιεῖν. The action which is indicated by ποιεῖν is negated (οὗ...οὐδὲν) in relation to the Son alone (v. 19bα) and affirmed in relation to the Father and the Son (v. 19bβ). 124 The emphasis is thus on the historical activity of the Son (including the one which is presently the object of a juridical controversy) and its relation to the activity of the Father. This negation of the action implied by ποιεῖν in reference to the Son alone as well as its assertion in reference to the Father and the Son enable the reader to understand that the negative statement

persuasive (see especially 330-334). See also F. Vouga Le cadre historique et l'intention théologique de Jean. (Paris: Beauchesne, 1977) 39. In relation to vv. 19-30, he asserts that "ce n'est qu'au lecteur - c'est-à-dire à la communauté johannique en premier lieu - qu'est donnée l'explication christologique de l'attitude de Jésus." It is however clear that, from the point of view of a narrative-critical reading of the text, the discourse of Jesus is addressed to "the Jews," and it is intended to convince them, and to legitimize Jesus' Sabbath activity and his christological claims which have provoked the ongoing juridical controversy. Additionally, the use of the juridical controversy as a narrative strategy here suggests that narrator is aiming at people who oppose, or at least do not as yet share his christological point of view. However, this does not exclude the fact that the evangelist may have had his Christian readers also in mind. However, to make this the sole objective of the evangelist would mean ignoring completely the narrative framework in which the discourse is situated. See Caron, Qui sont les "Juifs"?, 82-83.

123 The solemn introductory formula in v. 19b: ἵνα ἐρωτήσῃς, found only in the Fourth Gospel (24 times), does not only serve to draw the attention of the listeners, but also and more especially to introduce a significant statement that is linked to what has gone before and to which it adds a new and a more vigorous argument. See Bernard, The Gospel according to St John, 1: 67; van den Bussche, Jean, Evangile Spirituel, 326-327. Brown, John, 1: 214, has observed that the words of Jesus in v. 19 are similar to those of Moses in Num 16:28: "...Yahweh himself has sent me to do all these works, and I am not doing them of my own accord." Jesus would thus be "hurling Moses' words back at the legalists."

constitutes an absolute denial that the Son can act independently of the Father. "The Son is not another Sabbath God, but [is] in a totally dependent relationship" with the Father.\textsuperscript{125} This dependency is to be seen in the use of the reflexive pronoun with the negative particle (οὐ...ποιεῖν ἀφ ἑαυτοῦ οὐδεν) which points to someone else (i.e. the Father) as the source of Jesus' activities.\textsuperscript{126} It is this relationship which accords the Son a privilege of intimacy which, in turn, enables him to do what his Father does.\textsuperscript{127} This idea is expressed positively in the two stichs of v. 19c:

\[ \text{ὁ γὰρ ἂν ἐκεῖνος ποιή,} \\
\text{ταύτα καὶ ὁ υἱὸς ὁμοίως ποιεῖ.} \]

This positive statement which stands in antithetic parallelism with the statement in v. 19b is even of a greater significance for the understanding of the relationship between the Father and the Son. It indicates to the reader that the functional unity between the Father and the Son is so great that it enables the Son to act exactly as his Father does. Jesus' activity "is both coincident with

\textsuperscript{125} Moloney, The Gospel of John, 178.

\textsuperscript{126} See Blank, Krisis, 112.

and co-extensive with all that the Father does."\(^{128}\) The reader who here recalls the fact that Jesus is the Word made flesh (v. 14), now perceives that Jesus' actions and words can only be correctly understood and interpreted in the light of his functional unity with the Father which enables him to do as he sees his Father doing.\(^{129}\) Thus, within the framework of the ongoing juridical controversy, the Johannine Jesus is seeking to correct the mistaken view of his accusers that his person and his action (here the Sabbath healing) can be interpreted outside of his functional unity with the Father. It is this mistaken view which has led "the Jews" to consider his Sabbath activity as a violation of the Sabbath law. On the other hand, Jesus seeks also to convince his accusers and to bring them to interpret the issues in dispute - his Sabbath activity and his relation with the Father - from his perspective.\(^{130}\)

V. 20 opens with an explanatory γάρ which alerts the reader that what is about to be said explains how the Son is able to do whatever the Father does: the relationship between the Father and the Son is characterized by love.\(^{131}\)

\(^{128}\) Carson, *John*, 251. It is obvious from the context that the ἐκεῖνος in v. 19cα refers to the Father mentioned in v. 19β. Barrett has remarked that οὖν would have been better grammatically, but ἐκεῖνος "lays the stress on the separate divine Person, pointing the contrast with ὁ υἱός." Barrett, *John*, 259.

\(^{129}\) Schnackenburg has rightly observed that "this does not mean that the Son acts after or alongside the Father... but that the activity of the Father and the Son takes place at the same time and that they act as one." See Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to John*, 2: 103. See also R. Beauvery, "Mon Père et votre Père," *LV* 20 (1971) 75-87. He highlights the fact that ὁ πάτερ (v. 19c) "est à comprendre au sens fort de «pariter» et non au sens affaibli de «similiter»" (79).

\(^{130}\) It must be borne in mind, that Jesus' argument in v. 19, and indeed throughout the whole discourse, is intended to persuade his accusers and to bring them not only to recognize their mistake, but also to accept his christological claims. This rhetoric of persuasion which is aimed at the accuser, corresponds to the function of the response of the accused in the juridical controversy, in the situation where the accused protests his/her innocence. See above, 22-23; Botavi, *Re-establishing Justice*, 112-114.

\(^{131}\) The Fourth Gospel normally uses the verb ἀγαπάω to denote the love between the Father and the Son (6 times in the Gospel). V. 20 is the only instance where the verb φιλάω is used for this purpose. However, most scholars think that both verbs are used interchangeably in this Gospel. V. 20a would thus have the same meaning as in 3:35 where the verb ἀγαπάω is used. See Brown, *John*, 1: 214; Barrett, *John*, 259; Carson, *John*, 251. See however, Beauvery, "Mon Père et votre Père," 80, who is of the opinion that φιλάω expresses the added nuance of "aimer d'amitié." The tense of the verb φιλάω in v. 20a (present indicative) indicates that the Father loves the Son in a way that is permanent and durable. On the use of the present indicative to denote a continuous state, see Blass-Debrunner-Funk, *A Greek Grammar*, 167, § 319; Zerwick, *Biblical Greek*, 92, § 274.
The reader is already familiar with the idea of the love of the Father for the Son (3:35). In this latter text, the love of the Father for the Son is made manifest in the fact that he has entrusted all things into his hand. In the present context, the Father's love for the Son is to be seen in the fact that he shows the Son all that he himself does. If the Father out of love shows the Son all he does and the Son always acts in perfect unity with the Father (v. 19c), then "the Jews" have no reason to take offence at Jesus' Sabbath activity. The Sabbath work of Jesus is part of what the Father himself (αὐτὸς in v. 20a) does, and which out of love he shows the Son.

If "the Jews" have been offended by Jesus' Sabbath activity and his subsequent pronouncement (v. 18), then Jesus assures them that they are in for an even bigger surprise (ἵνα ὑμεῖς θαυμάζετε). The reason is that the Father will show the Son even greater works that certainly exceed anything "the Jews" could imagine. The rhetorical effect of Jesus' a maiorit argument here is not lost on the reader. It is as if Jesus is telling "the Jews": "since you have taken offence at my Sabbath work, you will then be even more surprised to learn of the greater works which my Father will show me." The mention of "greater works than these" (μείζονα τοῦτων ἔργα) is a clear reference back to the Sabbath healing, and is meant to impress upon Jesus' opponents that the Sabbath miracle is an integral part of the ἔργα that his Father has shown him and

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132 The verb θαυμάζειν, "to marvel," "to wonder," implies an element of surprise and / or shock. See Brown, John, 1: 214, who translates ἵνα ὑμεῖς θαυμάζετε as "much to your surprise." The verb is used here to describe the unbelieving attitude of Jesus' opponents in the ongoing juridical controversy. On the use of θαυμάζειν in the Fourth Gospel, see G. Bertram, "θαυμάζειν," TDNT 3 (1965) 27-42. See especially 40. The personal pronoun ὑμεῖς in v. 20b is emphatic and refers to "the Jews." Brown thinks that it may even be perhaps derogatory, to be understood as "people like you." Brown, John, 1: 214. Against F. Gryglewicz, "Die Aussagen Jesu und ihre Rolle in Joh. 5, 16-30," SNTU.A 5 (1980) 5-17. He is of the view that in v. 20b, "das Personalpronomen «ihr» würde sich ... auf die Gläubigen beziehen" (8).

133 The future δείξει (v. 20b) highlights two essential points: firstly, the greater works are yet to be made known to "the Jews," and secondly, all of Jesus' actions in his ongoing ministry are revelatory in character. See Hoskyns, The Fourth Gospel, 268; Bultmann, The Gospel of John, 254, n. 8.

134 The use of τοῦτων (gen. plur.) suggests that the reference is not only to the Sabbath healing but also to the other miracles narrated so far in the Gospel.
therefore should not be a source of shock and unbelief. The plural term ἐργα refers to the many miracles and deeds which Jesus is in the process of accomplishing as part of the salvific mission (ἐργον) he has received from the Father.\textsuperscript{135} In the present context of Jesus’ defence discourse, the assertion about the greater works to come has a dual function. Firstly, it looks back on the Sabbath healing and challenges Jesus’ opponents to believe in him by accepting his words and deeds. Secondly, it looks forward to the issues which are yet to be explained to "the Jews." In so doing, Jesus arouses their curiosity and interest and prepares them for what is to come. The rest of this section of Jesus’ defence (vv. 21-30) explains to "the Jews" what these "greater works" are.

Once again, the use of the particle γάρ indicates that v. 21 constitutes an explanation or a justification of the statement in the preceding verse, and the expression ὥσπερ...οὕτως makes it clear to the reader that there is a perfect parallelism between the two parts of the verse. Just as the Father raises the dead and grants them life, so also does the Son give life to those he wants.\textsuperscript{136} The power to raise the dead was understood in the Old Testament as a prerogative of the God of Israel alone (see 1 Sam 2:6; 2 Kgs 5:7; Wis 16:13; Isa 25:8; Ezek 37:13). This same understanding is amply attested in later Jewish tradition (see b. Ta’anit 2a-2b). God is said to possess three keys which he never entrusts to his representatives: the key of rain (Deut. 28:12), the key of the womb (Gen 30:22), and the key of the resurrection of the dead (Ezek 37:13).\textsuperscript{137} With regard to the key of raising the dead, Elijah and Elisha are sometimes considered as

\textsuperscript{135} On the use of ἐργον / ἐργα in the Fourth Gospel to indicate the totality of God’s saving activity in Jesus and its manifestation in individual miracles, see G. Bertram, "ἐργον," \textit{TDNT} 2 (1964) 642-643. See also below, 135, and n. 210

\textsuperscript{136} It is important to note here that all the verbs which express the actions attributed to the Father (ἐγέρειτο, ἐγείροντοι) and the Son (ἐγείροντοι) are in the present. The implication is that, these actions are continually carried out and can therefore not be seen as actions to be accomplished at the end-time.

\textsuperscript{137} See Strack-Billerbeck, \textit{Kommentar}, 1: 523-524, 737, 895. See also K. H. Rengstorff, "ἀπόστολος," \textit{TDNT} 1 (1964) 49; see also Schürer, \textit{History of Jewish People}, 2 / 11: 85-86, for the text of the Shemoneh Esreh, especially the second benediction in which God is praised as the giver of life to the dead and the sustainer of the living.
exceptions, since both of them as God's representative, raised the dead (1 Kgs 17:17-24; 2 Kgs 4:32-37). It is this exclusive power of God to give life that the Johannine Jesus is claiming for himself in v. 21. The authority that Jesus is claiming here exceeds by far that of Elijah or Elisha, who both acted as mere representatives of God. The Son on his part, has the authority to give life to anyone he wants (οὐχ θέλειν). The Son can act in absolute freedom because of the perfect unity of action between himself and the Father (see vv. 19, 20). In claiming to exercise an authority which was understood as the prerogative of the Sabbath God, Jesus justifies his Sabbath healing and indicates to "the Jews" that his Sabbath activity was but a sign of his power to give life which, like that of God himself, can be exercised on the Sabbath without breaking the law.

As Jesus continues to justify his Sabbath activity and his claim of a unique relationship with the Father, he offers a further explanation to "the Jews" concerning the μείζονα ἔργα by turning his attention to the issue of judgment (v. 22). Like the authority to give life, judgment was understood as the prerogative of the God of Israel (see Pss 94:2; 105:7; Isa 2:4; 26:9; 33:2; Ezek 30:3). Jesus claims that he has the authority to exercise judgment. The source of his judging activity is the Father who τὴν κρίναν πᾶν διδοκεν τῷ υἱῷ. The reader recalls an earlier statement of the narrator that "God did send the Son into the world, not to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through him" (3:17). The verb κρίνειν in 3:17 obviously carries the nuance of outright condemnation which is negated in relation to Jesus' work while the salvific purpose of the Son's mission is affirmed. Since the nature of the Son's judging activity is not described in the present context (v. 22), the question that faces the reader here is what this might entail. What is however clear to the reader is that the two main Sabbath activities of Israel's God are now being

138 For Lindars, The Gospel of John, 222, οὐχ θέλειν "means that those who are healed, or raised to life, by Jesus are selected examples of what is to be universal at the end of the age."
associated with Jesus, the Son of the Father. Within the framework of the ongoing juridical controversy, the arguments of Jesus so far can be summed up as follows. As the Son of the Father with whom he enjoys a perfect unity of action, Jesus exercises the dual activity of giving life and judging which is the sole prerogative of the Sabbath God. If this is the case, then "the Jews" have no reason to accuse him of breaking the Sabbath law. His healing activity on the Sabbath is a sign of his life-giving activity.

Jesus now draws the logical conclusion of his arguments in vv. 20-22 for "the Jews" who are his accusers. The complete identity in function and authority between the Father and the Son requires logically that πάντες τιμῶσι τὸν υἱὸν καθὼς τὸν πατέρα (v. 23a). This means that, anyone who refuses honour to the Son refuses it also to God himself (v. 23b). Thus, in line with Jesus' purpose in the ongoing discourse, v. 23 is intended to correct the mistaken view of "the Jews" that they can honour the God of Israel while at the same time showing dishonour to the Son. Positively, it can be said that v. 23

139 See Moloney, The Gospel of John, 179. On his part, Bultmann understands vv. 21-23 as dominated by the idea of judgment namely, the Son who, as the eschatological Judge, has the power to give life and to condemn (see The Gospel of John, 256). However, this interpretation is only partially correct because it overlooks the earlier emphasis in the Gospel on the Son's redemptive mission (see 3:17). Moreover, within the framework of the ongoing controversy, the mention of the dual activity of giving life and judging in relation to the Son is intended as a proof that the Son enjoys the same prerogative as the Sabbath God of Israel. Thus, it does not necessarily evoke an eschatological context just as the mention of God's activities of giving life and judging does not always occur in an eschatological context (see 2 Kgs 5:7; Deut 32:39; Wis 16:13). The emphasis in vv. 21-22 is on the dual activity of giving life and judging which, according to Jewish thinkers, constitute God's activities per excellence (see b. Ta'anit 2a-2b). These two activities are now associated with Jesus as a proof that establishes his prerogative to work on the Sabbath and thus justify his Sabbath healing activity. Again, within the narrative framework of the ongoing juridical controversy, it is clear that the primary focus is on Jesus as the life-giver. This fact is established by the obvious link between vv. 21-22 and Jesus' Sabbath healing activity, which as a result, is portrayed as an expression of his power to grant life and strength, to bring wholeness to those at the point of death. See Carson, John, 253; Schnackenburg, The Gospel according to John, 2: 105.

140 Several scholars make the ἵνα-clause in v. 23 dependent solely on v. 22. The implication is that the Father has entrusted the activity of judging to the Son for the express purpose of ensuring that all honour the Son just as they do to Himself. See Morris, John, 315; Carson, John, 254; Haenchen, John, 1: 251. The position adopted above is that the honour due to the Son flows from all that has been said in vv. 20-22. After the general statement in v. 19 which the Johannine Jesus explains and justifies in vv. 20-22 (note the three connective ὅτι in 20, 21 and 22), a major implication of all that is drawn for his listeners ("the Jews") in v. 23. For a similar view, see Lindars, John, 223. While Brown agrees that the ἵνα-clause in v. 23 makes reference to the Son's power to give life and to judge, he nevertheless maintains that "grammatically the final clause... can be left in dependence on v. 22 alone and still reflect the two ideas." See Brown, John, 1: 214.
aims at persuading "the Jews" of the absolute necessity to honour the Son if they wish to honour the Father. It is clear to the reader who, since the prologue (see 1:1-5) is aware of Jesus' divine origin, that in accusing Jesus of Sabbath violation and of dishonouring God by making himself his equal, accusations which have resulted in the ongoing juridical controversy, "the Jews" have not honoured the Son, and therefore have not honoured the Father either.

The discourse of the Johannine Jesus returns to the themes of life giving and judgment in v. 24. The introductory formula ἀμὴν ἀμὴν signals to the reader that a new development concerning the two themes is about to be unfolded. In v. 21b, Jesus had made it clear to "the Jews" that the Son gives life (ζωοποιεῖ) to whom he will. Now he explains to them (λέγω ὑμῖν) the identity of those to whom the Son gives life: ὁ τὸν λόγον μου ἀκούων καὶ πιστεύων τῷ τεθυμάτι με ἔχει ζωὴν αἰώνιον. The replacement of "the Son" with the pronoun of the first person singular in v. 24a-b (μου, με) makes explicit what the reader had suspected all along. Jesus is indeed the Son who is also life giver and judge. Those who listen to Jesus' words and believe the Father who sent him have eternal life.141 There is a relationship of equivalence between "hearing Jesus' words" (v. 24b) and "believing the Father" (v. 24c). Thus, v. 24c should be taken as an apposition and the καί which links the two expressions as epexegetical.142 In this sense, v. 24a-c constitutes a justification of Jesus' authenticity as the envoy of the Father and a legitimation of his revelatory words and deeds.143 The life that Jesus gives to those who give an assent of

141 The absence of a second article before πιστεύων indicates that "the two participles are co-ordinate features of a single, twofold, description." Barrett, John, 261.

142 V. 24b-c could be translated freely as "whoever hears my word, that is, whoever believes the one who sent me has eternal life." This interpretation would also explain the omission of the article before the second participle. See Blass-Debrunner-Funk, A Greek Grammar, 145, § 276, 3. The verb πιστεύω with the dative τῷ τεθυμάτι με means "to believe the one who sent me" rather than "to believe in the one who sent me." It indicates here the authority on which faith is established. See Schnackenburg, The Gospel according to John, 2: 464, n. 57.

143 In relation to v. 24, A. Stumpfe rightly observes that "es geht hier um die Rechtfertigung der Authentizität Jesu als des Gesandten Gottes, um die Legitimation seines Offenbarerseins, seiner
faith to his words is here described as "eternal." The reader is already familiar with the expression ζωή αἰωνίος (see 3:15, 16). It designates the fruit that flows from the salvific mission of Jesus to the one who believes in him. In other words, it is the sharing by the believer of the divine reality which is present in the person of Jesus, and which he gives here and now.144 Within the framework of Jesus' response to "the Jews" in the ongoing juridical controversy, v. 24a-c is an expression of Jesus' desire to convince his opponents and to win them over. Thus, v. 24a-c constitutes an appeal to "the Jews" not "to close themselves to the Son who wants to give them life."145

That v. 24a-c constitutes an appeal supports the thesis of the present study that what we have here is a juridical controversy rather than a judicial procedure. In a juridical controversy, in the situation where the accused declares himself/herself innocent of the accusation(s), his/her response constitutes a means of self-defence as well as a means to convince the accusing party of the truthfulness of the accused's position. This explains why the language used is characterized by persuasion and appeal.146 It is only by hearing Jesus' word that "the Jews" can have life and avoid judgment because the one who hears Jesus' words "does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life" (v. 24d).

How is the term κρίοις to be understood in this context by the reader? The reader already knows that κρίοις in the sense of a judicial condemnation is

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145 Schnackenburg, The Gospel according to John, 2: 108. See also Morris, John, 316-317: "These words also constitute an invitation, a challenge. They are a call to hear Christ and to take the step of faith." It must however be added, as Bultmann has rightly observed, that "the statement [in v. 24a-c] is not to be confined to the external situation and time described in ch. 5. It is true of all time and for all places." Bultmann, The Gospel of John, 257. See also Lindars, The Gospel of John, 224.

146 See above, 22-23.
not the purpose of the Son's mission (3:17). Thus, the κρίσις here has to do with the decision which "the Jews" and indeed every hearer of Jesus' word is confronted with. It is the decision to come to faith in Jesus and have life or to refuse to believe and remain dead.\(^{147}\) This means that the idea of "judgment" in the sense of condemnation is only present in the Johannine κρίσις as self-condemnation. It is the consequence which the unbelieving person brings upon himself/herself by the deliberate refusal to come to faith in Jesus. It is not the result of a judicial action on the part of Jesus whose mission is not to "judge" (i.e. condemn) but only to "save" (3:17).\(^{148}\) Since this life (ζωή) is presented as a fact of the present and therefore available to Jesus' listeners ("the Jews"), the term θανάτος should not be understood in the sense of physical death. It should rather be taken as "the state out of which a man has passed when he hears and obeys the word of the Lord, in other words, believes in Him."\(^{149}\) The reader is thus prepared for the equally important statement in v. 25.

As Jesus justifies his Sabbath activity and explains the nature of his unique relationship with the Father to "the Jews," the theme of life and death of v. 24d continues in v. 25, even though the image is somewhat different and the verbs are in the future. The expression ἔρχεται ὁ ἄρα καὶ νῦν ἐστὶν reminds the reader of 4:23 where the moment of the true worship of God is said to have arrived already with the presence of Jesus and in his ongoing ministry.\(^{150}\) The expression has the same meaning in the present context. The moment when the dead (οἱ νεκροὶ) will hear the voice of the Son of God and live is "now," i.e. in

\(^{147}\) See Bultmann, \textit{The Gospel of John}, 257. The perfect tense (μεταβήκεν) indicates that the passage from death to life as a result of faith in Jesus is a permanent and durative action. See however Barrett, \textit{John}, 261, who thinks that the κρίσις here includes the future judgment.


\(^{149}\) R. H. Lightfoot, \textit{St. John}, 143-144. See also Stimpfle, \textit{Blinde sehen}, 78-80.

\(^{150}\) The words καὶ νῦν ἐστίν are missing from N\(^*\) a b. However, there is unanimity among scholars that they constitute an integral part of the text, and they are therefore found in all critical editions. Blank, \textit{Krisis}, 135, has rightly remarked that "die Präsenz Jesu als des Messias,... ist der entscheidende Grund für die Aussage καὶ νῦν ἐστίν."
the present. However, the use of future verbs (ἀκούσουν, ζητοῦν) indicates that even though the action of granting life is envisaged as already under way, its full accomplishment still lies in the future. While the aorist participle (ἀκόουσαντες) does not of itself express any temporal relation, since the hearing is the condition for having life (see v. 24bc), it is appropriate to consider it as expressing a relative time here. Those among the "dead" who hear, i.e. those who would have listened in faith to the voice of the Son of God will live.\footnote{151} The reader observes here the change in the designation of Jesus from "ὁ νιώτα" to "ὁ νιώτα τοῦ θεοῦ." However, the christological meaning given to the term "Son" in the present discourse leaves the reader in no doubt that "the Son" and "the Son of God," as christological titles, have the same basic meaning. Even though this is the first time Jesus refers to himself as "the Son of God,"\footnote{152} the title itself has already been applied to him by the narrator (see 3:18) who, right from the beginning of the Gospel narrative, has accustomed the reader to see Jesus as the only Son of God. (see 1:1-5, 14, 17-18).

Who are those referred to as ὁ νεκρός? The parallelism between vv. 24 and 25 as well as the expression καὶ νῦν ἐκτίνωσιν suggest that ὁ νεκρός refer to the spiritually dead.\footnote{153} It is clear that, within the context of the ongoing

\footnote{151}{On the use of the aorist participle, see Zerwick, *Biblical Greek*, 85, § 261. On the need to understand the second ἄκουειν in the sense of "to listen in faith and obedience," see Lightfoot, *St. John*, 144; Brown, *John*, 1: 215; Lindars, *The Gospel of John*, 225; Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to John*, 2: 111. The article in ὁ ἀκούοντες is missing in P66 8 sy. It is probable that the two ἀκούειν were here perceived as having the same meaning since the article makes it clear that the second "hearing" refers to a specific group who, among the "dead" as a whole, listen in faith to the voice of the Son of God.}

\footnote{152}{This is the first of the three instances in the Fourth Gospel in which Jesus applies the title "Son of God" to himself. The two other instances are: 10:36, 11:4. See also 19:7. The expression ὁ νιώτα τοῦ θεοῦ with its two articles is unusual in Greek. It is therefore possible that philologically, it derives from a semitic construction. See F. Hahn, "ἄτοι," *EDNT* 3 (1993) 381-392. See especially 387. Lindar’s suggestion that τοῦ θεοῦ in v. 25 is perhaps a very early gloss has no textual support and should therefore be considered as a pure conjecture. See Lindars, *The Gospel of John*, 225.}

\footnote{153}{This opinion is shared by many scholars. See for instance, Brown, *John*, 1: 215; Bultmann, *The Gospel of John*, 259; Vanhoye, "La composition de Jean 5:19-30," 269-270; van de Watt, "A new look," 72; See however Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to John*, 2: 111, who is of the opinion that the "dead" refers to all human beings in their present existential situation.}
juridical controversy, ὁι νεκροί refers to "the Jews" who are Jesus' accusers and who are being addressed by him. Their unbelieving attitude shows that they do not have in them the "eternal life" that Jesus gives and are therefore spiritually dead. Jesus' statement in v. 25 would thus be a further invitation to them to listen in faith to the voice of the Son of God so that they can share in the life which, already now, he gives to the believer.

Jesus now indicates the basis of the Son's authority to give life now to those who believe in him. Just as the Father has life in himself, so also has he granted the Son to have life in himself (v. 26). The construction of the verse (ὥσπερ γὰρ...οὖνως καὶ) recalls v. 21, and although the two verses are closely related, there is a clear progression in terms of the ideas expressed. The emphasis in v. 21 was on the prerogative of the Father to give life which the Son also shares. In the present verse, Jesus indicates the grounds for the Son's authority to give life to his listeners (see vv. 24-25) namely, the Son's sharing in God's divine life. The ζωή which the Father has in himself and which he has granted the Son to have in himself is "the creative life-giving power which is exercised toward men."154 It is in virtue of this creative life-giving power that Jesus healed the man on the Sabbath (v. 8) and since the Father continually exercises this creative life-giving power (v. 17a), the Son also exercises this power uninterruptedly in his earthly ministry (v. 17b).

Earlier in v. 22, Jesus indicated the grounds for the Son's authority to judge namely, that the Father has entrusted all judgment to the Son. Now in v. 27, he deals with the Son's judging activity. The reader recalls that, with regard to the theme of life-giving, the Son's life-giving activity was dealt with first (v. 21) before the basis for such an activity was given (v. 26). Thus, there is an interplay between the basis of Jesus' authority and his exercising of such authority in relation to the dual activity which he shares with the Sabbath God.

of Israel.\textsuperscript{155} Jesus' judging activity takes the form of a κρίνων ποιεῖν, for which
the Father has given him authority (v. 27). The reader knows that this κρίνων
ποιεῖν cannot be taken to mean "to sit in judgment" or "to pass Judgment."\textsuperscript{156}
since the Son's mission now is not to condemn but to save (3:17). It should
rather be understood as "to bring about / to provoke judgment." In other words,
through his words and deeds, the Son confronts people with the decision either
to come to faith in him and to have life, or to refuse to believe and condemn
oneself. This is the judgment that the Son is provoking here and now in his
earthly ministry. Given the relationship between v. 27 and v. 22, and in the light
of the idea of judgment present in v. 24, the κρίνεις here can only refer to this
self-condemnation that people bring upon themselves as a result of their
unbelieving attitude vis-à-vis Jesus in his ongoing ministry.

Thus, even though the judgment which Jesus brings about is a logical
consequence of his mission to save and his power to give life, in the final
analysis, it depends on people's response to his ministry.\textsuperscript{157} It may also be added
here that, within the context of the ongoing juridical controversy, the
expression κρίνων ποιεῖν could be understood as a reference to the juridical
action which Jesus undertakes in the world on behalf of the Father who sent
him. In this sense, κρίνων ποιεῖν would be the equivalent of the Old Testament
expression 'āšāh mishpāt (see Lam 3:58-59; Mic 7:9) which is used as a
synonym of ryb rīb with the meaning of a juridical intervention on behalf of
another person in an ongoing juridical controversy.\textsuperscript{158} As the one whom the
Father has sent for the salvation of the world (3:17), Jesus' juridical action on

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{155} See Moloney, \textit{Signs and Shadows}, 15-16.
\item \textsuperscript{156} Against Bultmann, \textit{The Gospel of John}, 260, n. 6; Schnackenburg, \textit{The Gospel according to John},
2: 112.
\item \textsuperscript{157} See Blank, \textit{Krisis}, 160-161.
\item \textsuperscript{158} See Bovati, \textit{Re-establishing Justice}, 43 and 55. This means that the term κρίνεις cannot here be
taken to mean "judgment" in the sense of a judicial verdict.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
behalf of his Father consists of bearing witness to what he has seen and heard from him (see 3:32-35), and of convincing the world to accept God's gift of "truth" which he brings (see 1:17). Those who accept Jesus' word and come to faith in him receive eternal life (3:16, 18a, 36a); those who refuse to believe exclude themselves from the life that he brings (3:18b, 36b). This is the κρίουν ποιεῖν that the Father has entrusted to Jesus and which he is carrying out on his behalf in his ongoing ministry. It is in view of this κρίουν ποιεῖν that Jesus is seeking to convince "the Jews" of his christological claims in order to lead them to faith in him.

The Son has received the authority to undertake a juridical action on behalf of his Father in the world ὅτι υἱὸς ἄνθρωπον ἐστίν. The expression "Son of Man" is anarthrous, but it is unlikely that it should be understood here simply as "man," or "human being."159 The context of judgment in the sense of a juridical action suggests that the expression be understood in the sense of the established christological title which would be a direct allusion to Dan 7:13ff.160 The reader here recalls that the expression was used on several occasions earlier in the Gospel narrative. It occurred for the first time in 1:50-51 where Jesus promised those who believe a heavenly vision involving angels and the Son of Man. Here, "the Son of Man" was a reference to Jesus' role as the one through whom God is revealed in human history. In his person and ministry, those who believe come to experience the revelation of God.161 It reappeared in the

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159 This is the only instance in the Fourth Gospel where the expression "Son of Man" is found with no articles before either noun. This fact has led some scholars to suggest that it should be understood here simply as "man." See for instance, Lightfoot, St. John, 144; Lagrange, Evangile, 148.

160 This view is shared by most scholars. See for instance, Barrett, John, 262; Brown, John, 1: 220; Carson, John, 257; Morris, John, 320; Lindars, The Gospel of John, 225-226. See however, J. P. Brown, "The Son of Man: «This Fellows»," Bib 58 (1977) 361-387. He is of the opinion that "in origin, [=Son of Man] was a usage by which third parties referred to him [i.e. Jesus], mostly in criticism" (377). The view of Bultmann, The Gospel of John, 261 that ἀνθρώπου would be an editorial addition designed to prepare for the supposed interpolation of v. 28f is unlikely and should be regarded as a pure conjecture. For a full discussion of "Son of Man" in 5:27, see Moloney, The Johannine Son of Man, 77-82; D. R. A Hare, The Son of Man Tradition. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990) 90-96.

161 For a detailed discussion of "the Son of Man" in 1:51, see Moloney, The Johannine Son of Man, 37-41.
encounter between Jesus and Nicodemus (3:1-21), where it was revealed that the Son of Man descended from heaven, and that at some point in the future, the Son of Man will be "lifted up" (3:13-14). The verb ὑψωθήνατί here has the dual meaning of "a physical lifting up," and "an exaltation."162 Both activities are of divine necessity (see δεῖ in 3:14b),163 and through them Jesus will reveal God in human history. Those who believe in him by accepting this revelation of God will have eternal life (3:15), while those who refuse to believe will bring judgment upon themselves (3:18). Thus, as the Son of Man, Jesus not only reveals God to humanity, but he also shares in the Father's dual activity of life giving and judging. He exercises judgment as people accept or refuse the revelation he brings in his ongoing ministry. The basis of his judging activity is the authority given him by the Father because of his status as the Son of Man (5:27).

The expression τοῦτο μὴ θαυμάζετε which opens v. 28 refers back to Jesus' statements in the preceding verses. He had explained to "the Jews" that he was in the process of carrying out his dual activity of life giving and judgment in his ongoing ministry (vv. 24-27). It is in relation to these claims that he now says to "the Jews" μὴ θαυμάζετε τοῦτο. Even though this expression can be taken as a negative question ("You are not surprised at this, are you?"),164 it is better to understand it as an imperative: "Do not be surprised by this." The διὰ after τοῦτο is causal; it introduces the clause explaining why "the Jews" should not be surprised by "τοῦτο." The argument of vv. 28-29 can therefore be summed up as follows: that Jesus should exercise the functions of life-giver and judge now should not surprise "the Jews" because he will exercise

162 See BAGD, 850-851, s.v. ὑψωθήνατι, 1 & 2.

163 On δεῖ with the nuance of "something which is of divine destiny," see BAGD, 172, s.v. δεῖ, 1.

164 See Blass-Debrunner-Funk, A Greek Grammar, 220, § 427, 2. However, most scholars prefer to take it as an imperative.
the full corresponding functions in an even greater context, namely, the end of

In other words, Jesus is telling "the Jews" not to be taken aback by his
earlier assertions since something even more remarkable is in store. What we
have here is an argument a maiori. Thus, within the framework of Jesus' response which seeks to justify his Sabbath activity and related christological
claims so as to win over his accusers, vv. 28-29 "serve as a warrant [to "the
Jews"] for the credibility of the preceding assertions."166 The reader recalls that
a similar type of argument was used by Jesus in the encounter with Nicodemus
(see 3:5-8). In this latter context, the formula μη θαυμάζητε functions in the
same way as μη θαυμάζετε in the present context with the reason why
Nicodemus should not be surprised stated as an argument a minori. 167

Jesus' assertion in vv. 28-29 presents an understanding of the end-time
which his opponents also share (see Dan 12:2; 4 Ezra 7:32; Sib. Or. 4:175-190;
T. Benj. 10:7-8 etc.). The only new element for them would be the role of Jesus
in the future resurrection. The dead will come forth from their tombs when they
hear the voice of the Son. It is this new element (remarkable and certainly
unprecedented from the point of view of "the Jews") that Jesus presents to his
opponents as a warrant of credibility in a bid to persuade them to accept his


166 Dahl, "«Do not wonder!»," 323. This understanding of vv. 28-29 shows that there is no contradiction
between vv. 24-27 and vv. 28-29, nor can it be sustained that "vv. 28f. have been added by the editor, in
an attempt to reconcile the dangerous statements in vv. 24ff. with traditional eschatology." Bultmann,
The Gospel of John, 261. It may be recalled here that scholars are divided over the history of the traditions
that may stand behind the text in vv. 25-29. Some for instance, consider vv. 28-29 as a late
interpolation by the editor and regard them as a betrayal of the original realized eschatology of the
evangelist (In addition to the text of Bultmann cited in this note, see also Haenchen, John, 1: 253-254).
Others like Schnackenburg, The Gospel according to John, 2:114-119, while conceding that vv. 27b-29
may not come from the hand of the evangelist, maintain nonetheless that they do not betray the
eschatological ideas of the evangelist. For a discussion of the various positions defended by scholars, see
Moloney, The Johannine Son of Man, 77-81; van der Watt, "A new look," 71-76. The position adopted
in this study which is also that of the majority of contemporary scholars is that, vv. 28-29 constitute an
authentic part of vv. 19-30 as a whole and that the end-time eschatology is an integral part of Johannine
thought See Carson, John, 258-259; Vanhoye, "La composition de Jn 5:19-30," 268-273; Dahl, "«Do
not wonder!»," 322-336.

167 For a discussion on the Rabbinic texts which provide parallels to the Johannine usage of the
argument a maiori (kal wa homer), see Dahl, "«Do not wonder!»," 324-325.
earlier statements concerning his ongoing life-giving and judging activities.\textsuperscript{168} The expression Πάντες οἱ ἐν τοῖς μνημείοις should be interpreted as referring both to believers and unbelievers.\textsuperscript{169} However, while all will be called forth from their tombs, Jesus does not say in v. 29 that those who believe in him will be subjected to judgment, because the believer "does not come to judgment" (v. 24b). It is only those who have done "evil things" (τὰ φαῦλα) who will rise to "the resurrection of judgment" (v. 29b). Those who have done τὰ ἄγαθα ("good things") will rise to "the resurrection of life" because they already possess in themselves "eternal life" which is given now by the Son. The reader understands the two expressions: "those who have done good things" and "those who have done evil things" within the general context of the narrator's remarks in 3:18-21. The doers of good deeds are those who believe in Jesus and come to the light, so that it may be seen that their deeds are done in God (see 3:21). The evil doers are those who refuse to believe in Jesus because they love darkness rather than light (see 3:19).

As Jesus' response to the accusations levelled against him continue to unfold, v. 30 opens with an expression which resembles closely the opening expression in v. 19b:

\textsuperscript{168} Dahl has rightly observed that "the argument a maiori does not have the logical force of a syllogism, but it can persuade even if it does not prove." Dahl, "«Do not wonder!»," 323. It must always be borne in mind, that at the origin of the ongoing controversy is the refusal of "the Jews" to accept Jesus' Sabbath healing activity (v.16) which was intended as a sign of his authority to give life and judge in his ongoing ministry. Thus, all the arguments in the present discourse, including vv. 28-29, are primarily intended to persuade "the Jews" that Jesus does indeed have the authority to give life and to judge now, and that his Sabbath healing was an illustration of that fact and does not constitute a violation of the Sabbath law.

\textsuperscript{169} Against Barrett, John, 263, who maintains that the resurrection envisaged here does not include believers, since they have already been raised by Jesus to the divine life. See also van der Watt, "A new look," 76-85, who is of the opinion that vv. 28-29 refer to those who were in their graves before the incarnation. It is for these people that a moment of final judgment will be necessary. It must however be emphasized that, those who hear the word of Jesus and, believing in him, come to possess already now "eternal life" are still subject to physical death and will therefore need to be raised at the end of time. See Moloney, The Gospel of John, 181.
The only difference is that "the Son" in v. 19 is replaced by the first person pronoun in v. 30a which evidently refers to the speaker. This makes it clear to the reader that all that has been said so far applies to Jesus who is in the process of addressing "the Jews." In both vV. 19b and 30a, the emphasis is on ποιεῖν and its negation οὐ ... οὐδὲν, an indication of the total dependence of Jesus on the Father in relation to his work in the ongoing ministry. The almost exact repetition of the expression of v. 19b in v. 30a, coupled with the fact of the close affinity in vocabulary between v. 30 and vv. 19-29 indicate that vv. 19 and 30 envelope the whole of vv. 19-30 in an inclusion. Thus, as the reader gets to v. 30, he/she perceives that this part of Jesus' discourse is drawing to a close. Jesus' total dependence upon the Father in his ongoing ministry is the direct result of the perfect functional unity he shares with the Father. In terms of his judging activity, this implies that καθὼς ἀκούω κρίνω. The expression reminds the reader of v. 19 where it was said that the Son can only do what he sees the Father doing. The verb ἀκούω is a reference to what Jesus hears from the Father, and which constitutes the basis of his own judging activity. Such a κρίνως can only be just, ὅτι οὐ ζητῶ ... τὸ θέλημα τοῦ πέμψαντός με. The reader is already familiar with the description of Jesus as "the one sent"

170 This fact is recognized by most Johannine scholars. There has also been a number of attempts to discern a chiastic structure for vv. 19-30. See for instance, Léon-Dufour, "Trois chiasmes johanniques," NTS 7 (1961) 253-255; Vanhoye, "La composition de Jn 5:19-30," 268-274; Bernard, "La guérison de Bethesda," (suite) 17-20; G. Miškužhyl, Christocentric Literary Structure, 126-128.

171 There is no essential difference between the "seeing" the Father (v. 19) and the "hearing" Him in v. 30. Both express an aspect of Jesus' present work on the basis of one fundamental principle namely, the perfect unity of action between the Father and the Son. See Bultmann, The Gospel of John, 253: "All these different phrases, that the Son does or says what he has seen or heard with the Father, give expression to the same idea, namely, that he is the Revealer in whom we encounter God himself speaking and acting."
(see 3:17, 34, with the verb ἀποστέλλειν; 4:34 with πέμπειν). The course of the present discourse, the reader has also remarked that, on occasion, the terms "Father" and "Son" have been replaced by the expression "the one who sent me" (see vv. 23 and 24 with the verb πέμπειν). Thus, the reader understands and accepts the fact that God is the one who sends and Jesus is the who is sent. As the one sent by God, Jesus can only seek the will of the one who sent him.

The awareness that Jesus is the Sent One of God enables the reader who is familiar with the Jewish principles of agency to understand even better the arguments of Jesus in the ongoing juridical controversy. As the authoritative envoy of the Father who, as life-giver and judge, works continuously including on the Sabbath, Jesus also has the authority to give life and to bring about judgment, authority which he also exercises uninterruptedly. This means that he can work on the Sabbath without violating the Sabbath law. Thus, the reader perceives that the accusation of "the Jews" in the ongoing controversy is based on a misunderstanding of what the Sabbath, in its relation to the God of Israel, stands for. The Sabbath celebrates the God of Israel as a creator (Exod 20:8-11) and a liberator (Deut 5:12-15) who continually gives life to his people. By his Sabbath healing, Jesus, as the Son of the Father and his authentic envoy, brings God's continuous life-giving activity to bear on human history in a more

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concrete way. In this regard, to "the Jews" who have initiated the present juridical controversy against Jesus and are seeking (see σημεῖον in v. 18a) to kill him, Jesus replies that in all his activities, the Sabbath healing included, he only seeks (ζητῶ, pres. indic. act.) to do the will of the one who sent him. The reader has no doubt as to the objective pursued by Jesus namely, to convince "the Jews" who are his accusers and to bring them to accept his words and deeds in his ongoing ministry. As the reader comes to the end of this part of Jesus' discourse (vv. 19-30) which is marked by a clear rhetoric of persuasion intended to lead his opponents to faith in him, the question that comes to the fore is: what would the reaction of "the Jews" be to the arguments put forward by Jesus in defence of his Sabbath activity and his christological claims?

b). Witnesses Invoked (vv. 31-40)

In vv. 17, 19-30, Jesus had justified his Sabbath activity by claiming that his perfect unity of action with the Father enables him to exercise the dual activity of giving life and judging which are considered as divine prerogatives. Contrary to what the reader might expect, the narrator does not state any reaction on the part of "the Jews" to Jesus' self-justification which was intended to convince them of his right to work on the Sabbath as the Father himself does. Instead, the narrator has Jesus move from a direct justification of his Sabbath action to the theme of witness. However, this shift of emphasis itself suggests to the reader, at least implicitly, the possibility of an unstated objection on the part

174 See Zevini, Vangelo secondo Giovanni, 1: 193. He observes among other things that by means of Jesus' Sabbath healing, "l'opera di salvezza del Padre viene realizzata nella storia umana da Gesù."

of "the Jews." They could have, for instance, retorted to Jesus: "upon what evidence do you base your claims?" or "why should we accept your evidence as entirely reliable given that it is nothing but self-testimony?" Thus, it is probably in answer to the possible objection(s) of "the Jews" that Jesus invokes a series of witnesses.

The invocation of a witness, within the framework of the two-party juridical controversy, is not meant primarily to prove a fact, or even to reinforce and corroborate the testimony of the party calling upon the witness. It is more importantly a means by which one party seeks to indicate to the opposing party that it is refusing to speak or acknowledge the truth and that the party calling on the witness is speaking the truth and not out of self-interest.  

Thus, in calling upon witnesses, Jesus is not so much seeking to offer proofs to "the Jews" in support of his christological claims as to indicate to them, on the strength of the reliability of his witnesses, that they are deliberately refusing to acknowledge the truth about his person and his work. The invocation of witnesses is thus intended to lead Jesus' opponents to faith in him.

The internal unity of vv. 31-40 is ensured by the frequent use of μαρτυρεῖν and μαρτυρία (11 times). On the basis of the number of witnesses presented by Jesus, this section of Jesus' discourse may be structured as follows:

i. vv. 31-32: Introduction - the problem of acceptable witness.
ii. vv. 33-35: The testimony of John.
iii. vv. 36-38: The testimony of the Father as manifested in Jesus' works.

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176 On the invocation of witnesses and on their functions in a two-party juridical controversy, see above, 24-25.

177 In the words of Caloud - Genuyt, L'Evangile de Jean (1), 122, "le témoignage s'offre à «croire»."

178 Vv. 31 (2x); 32 (3x); 33; 34; 36 (2x); 37; 39. For a comprehensive study of the theme of μαρτυρία in the Fourth Gospel, see J. Beüler, Martyria: Traditionsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen zum Zeugnisthema bei Johannes, FTS 10. (Frankfurt: Josef Knecht, 1972).

In his response to the accusations of violating the Sabbath and making himself equal with God which "the Jews" had levelled against him (v. 18), Jesus had made a number of christological claims (vv. 17, 19-30). Now, in v. 31, Jesus tells his opponents that ἔγνω μαρτυρῶ περὶ ἑαυτοῦ, ἠ μαρτυρία μου οὐκ ἐστιν ἀληθὴς (v. 31). The reader understands Jesus' assertion to mean that, were the burden of evidence in support of his claims to depend exclusively on his own self-attestation, his opponents would be justified to doubt its reliability, but this is not the case.179 The reader, in effect, accepts that Jesus comes from above, and that he bears witness to what he has seen and heard from the Father and utters the words of God (see 3:31, 32, 34). This means that, what Jesus says concerning his relationship with the Father (vv. 17, 19-30) can only come from the Father himself, and therefore is absolutely reliable.180 Within the juridical framework of the ongoing controversy, the term ἀληθής should not only be understood to mean "valid," or "conform to the truth,"181 but also "reliable," or "trustworthy."182 The acceptability or not of a testimony in the Jewish legal

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179 This is made abundantly clear by the use of ἔγνω with the subjunctive (μαρτυρῶ) which expresses an unreal (contrary-to-fact) condition, and the emphatic ἑαυτοῦ. It is as if Jesus is telling his opponents: "If I were alone in bearing witness to myself, but I am not, my witness would not be reliable." On the use of the unreal condition, see Blass-Debrunner-Funk, A Greek Grammar, 182, § 360; M. Zerwick, Biblical Greek, 107-109, §§ 313-319.

180 In relation to Jesus' assertion in v. 31, several scholars make reference to Deut 19:15, where it is said that a person cannot be convicted of a crime on the testimony of one witness; the evidence of two witnesses or three is required to sustain the charge (see also Deut 17:6; Num 35:30). See Lightfoot, St John, 145; Brown, John, 1: 223; Morris, John, 324. But as Brown rightly observes, "John is not dealing with witnesses necessary to condemn a man, but with witnesses to confirm someone's testimony" (223). Moreover, Jesus' assertion is made within the framework of a juridical controversy. In other words, v. 31 should not be understood as if it was uttered "dans un décor de tribunal, mais dans une discussion...[où] il n'est pas question...de sentence judiciaire à prononcer." J.-P. Charlier, "L'exégèse johannique d'un précepte légal: Jean VIII 17," RB 67 (1960) 503-515. (The quotation is from p. 507). It may also be noted here that many scholars are of the view that 5:31 contradicts 8:14, where Jesus defends the truthfulness of the testimony he bears to himself. See for instance, Barrett, John, 264; Pancaro, The Law in the Fourth Gospel, 210. However, at this stage of the reading process, the reader has no knowledge of what is in 8:14, and so seeks to understand 5:31 within its own context.

181 See for instance, Caron, Qui sont *les Juifs*?, 125; Carson, John, 259.

system did not so much depend on the facts of the testimony as on the trustworthiness and the reliability of the witness.\textsuperscript{183} This is especially true in the juridical controversy where the invocation of the witness is part of the effort to persuade the other party of the truthfulness of one's claims. It is for this reason that the absolute reliability of the witness to be adduced must be "obvious" and acceptable to the other party.\textsuperscript{184}

Having said that he is not alone in bearing witness to himself, Jesus indicates that ἀλλος ἔστιν ὁ μαρτυρῶν περὶ ἐμοῦ (v. 32a). The narrator does not immediately identify this "other" who bears witness to Jesus. This technique of "delayed identification," as an attention getting device, is meant to heighten the sense of expectation among "the Jews" as they wait to discover who the "ἀλλος" is.\textsuperscript{185} However, for the reader, there is no doubt that the "other" refers to the Father.\textsuperscript{186} The reader knows that Jesus is the Word made flesh and the only Son from the Father (1:14); that Jesus, as the one who comes from heaven, bears witness to what he has seen and heard (3:31, 32), and that he always acts in perfect unity with the Father (5:19). Thus, the Father is the only one who can truly bear witness to Jesus. This testimony which the Father continuously gives

\textsuperscript{183} See Harvey, Jesus on Trial, 20-21.

\textsuperscript{184} In the juridical controversy between Yahweh and Israel, natural elements are usually invoked as witnesses. See for instance, Isa 1:2 (heavens, earth); Jer 2:12 (heavens); Hos 6:1-2 (mountains, hills, foundations of the earth). These elements are invoked because they are seen as stable and unchangeable, and therefore reliable as witnesses.


\textsuperscript{186} This view is generally recognized by Johannine scholars. See Beutler, Martyria, 257; Becker, Evangelium, 1: 252, and all the major commentaries on the Fourth Gospel. One would have expected ἐτέρως instead of ἄλλος to be used in a reference to the second of two parts (ἐγὼ...ἐτέρως), but it seems that the use of ἐτέρως and ἄλλος by NT authors is not always entirely correct. See Blass-Debrunner-Funk, A Greek Grammar, 160, § 306, 2, 3. However, some scholars have justified the use of ἄλλος in v. 32 on the grounds that while ἄλλος denotes "another of the same kind", ἐτέρως has the meaning of "another of a different kind." See Abbott, Johannine Grammar, 517, § 2675; Morris, John, 325, n. 95. If this distinction is correct, then the meaning of ἄλλος in v. 32 would be "another of the same kind as myself" ... by which the evangelist suggests Christ's unique unity with the Father." Abbott, Johannine Grammar, 567, § 2730.
in Jesus' favour has a permanent value. For the moment, though, the narrator does not specify what constitutes the witness of the "other" which will enable Jesus' opponents in the ongoing controversy to acknowledge the validity and the reliability of his own testimony. The narrator only has Jesus affirm that he is conscious of the absolute reliability and validity of the testimony which this "other" bears in his favour: οἶδα ὅτι ἀληθής ἐστιν ἡ μαρτυρία ἡ μαρτυρεῖ περὶ ἐμοῦ (v. 32b). The reader observes here that the word order places the emphasis on the term ἀληθής. This means that Jesus wants to impress on his opponents the fact that the testimony of this "other" is absolutely reliable and that they can base themselves on it. However, since the reliability of the witnesses to be adduced, within the framework of the juridical controversy, must be obvious to the opposing party, Jesus now turns to witnesses "the Jews" have seen and heard: John (vv. 33-35), the works of Jesus as testimony of the Father (vv. 36-38), and Scriptures (vv. 39-40).

Jesus reminds "the Jews" that they themselves had sent a delegation to enquire about John's person and activity: ὑμεῖς ἀπεστάλματε πρὸς Ἰωάννην (v. 33a). The emphatic ὑμεῖς suggests to the reader that in sending a delegation to John, "the Jews" had shown that they regarded him highly and were

187 This is the idea implied in the use of the present tense: μαρτυρεῖ (v. 32b). See Lagrange, Evangile, 151. He correctly observes that "ce témoignage est toujours rendu et a une valeur permanente." The use of the present participle μαρτυρῶν in v. 32a is also of particular significance. Given that the present participle does not express time but only the aspect of the verb (see M. Zervik, Biblical Greek, 129, § 371), the use of μαρτυρῶν is meant to express God's timeless quality as the one who always bears witness to Jesus. The Father always speaks and acts through Jesus and, in so doing, bears witness continuously to Jesus' words and deeds.

188 The variant reading, οἶδα ὅτι, which is attested by 8 4 547 Pq, is rightly considered as secondary by Johannine scholars. It appears to have originated from the wrong understanding of the "other" in v. 32 as referring to John who is mentioned in the subsequent verse. It could also be due to the scribal tendency "to heighten the argument by forcing "the Jews" to admit that they know the evidence of Jesus' μαρτυρία to be true." Metzger, A Textual Commentary, 180.

prepared to assign some weight and authority to his activity and testimony.\footnote{See for instance, M. C. Tenney, "The Meaning of «Witness» in John," \textit{BS} 132 (1975) 229-241. See especially 233.} Thus, Jesus mentions John as a witness given that John's reliability has, in a way, already been acknowledged by "the Jews." The outcome of the enquiry was that John \textit{μεμαρτύρηκεν τῷ ἀληθείᾳ} (v. 33b). The use of the perfect \textit{μεμαρτύρηκεν} instead of an aorist is of particular significance. It underlines the fact that the testimony given by John in the past has an enduring effect.\footnote{See Lagrange, \textit{Evangile}, 151, Morris, \textit{John}, 326; Barrett, \textit{John}, 264: "The effect of the perfect tense is to present his testimony as an established datum."} The narrator had earlier informed the reader about the sending of a delegation by "the Jews" to John (1:19-34). The evocation of this event here therefore constitutes an "internal analepsis."\footnote{Genette defines an "analepsis" as "any evocation after the fact of an event that took place earlier than the point in the story where we are at any given moment." Genette, \textit{Narrative Discourse}, 40. An "analepsis" is described as "internal" when it evokes an event which occurred within the narrative itself. See Culpepper, \textit{Anatomy}, 57-58. Genette designates "internal analepses" such as the one which occurs in our present context (5:33) as "repeating analepses," since they serve to recall earlier portions of the narrative. See Genette, \textit{Narrative Discourse}, 54.}

How is the expression \textit{μαρτυρεῖν τῷ ἀληθείᾳ} to be understood? The use of the \textit{dativus commodi} indicates to the reader that the expression is to be taken in the sense of "bearing witness in favour of the truth,"\footnote{On the meaning of the \textit{dativus commodi} (dative of interest / advantage), see M. Zerwick, \textit{Biblical Greek}, 20, § 55; Blass-Debrunner-Funk, \textit{A Greek Grammar}, 101-102, § 188.} a \textit{prise de position} in favour of "the truth." The term "truth" should not be taken here as referring to Jesus as the embodiment of truth.\footnote{This is the opinion expressed by Morris, \textit{John}, 326. On their part, Boismard-Lamouille, \textit{L'Évanglie de Jean}, 175, are of the view that "truth" here refers to "la fidélité de Dieu à ses promesses de salut."} The present juridical context of the ongoing controversy suggests that it should be understood as referring to Jesus' words and deeds in his ministry by which he confronts his interlocutors with the choice between faith and eternal life on the one hand, and unbelief and self-condemnation on the other hand. The "truth" would thus
designate the eschatological revelation that Jesus brings as the Messiah. The reader who already knows that John's testimony was intended to lead his listeners to faith in Jesus (see 1:6-8) understands that it is for this same reason of inducing faith that Jesus reminds "the Jews" of John's testimony in the present context. It is as if Jesus is telling "the Jews" that their lack of faith in him, as evidenced by the ongoing juridical controversy, is in no way due to a lack of witnesses whose reliability "the Jews" themselves acknowledge. They have already heard the testimony of John for whom they have a high regard, but they have chosen to ignore it. In choosing to close their eyes to a reliable testimony they themselves have provoked in the first place, "the Jews" imprison themselves in their own contradictions. The irony of the situation is not lost on the reader.

In v. 34, however, the Johannine Jesus indicates to his opponents the essential difference between them and himself in terms of the importance of human testimony. This contrast between "the Jews" and Jesus is made evident by the use of ἔγεις at the beginning of v. 33 on the one hand, and the use of ἐγὼ δὲ at the beginning of v. 34 on the other hand. While they depend on the audible testimony of a person like John whose authority they have recognized by sending a delegation to him, ἐγὼ δὲ οὐ παρὰ ἀνθρώπου τὴν μαρτυρίαν λαμβάνω. The expression οὐ... λαμβάνω is to be understood here as

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195 See I. de la Potterie, "L'arrière-fond du thème johannique de vérité." In Studia Evangelica. Papers Presented to the International Congress on "The Four Gospels in 1957" held at Christ Church, Oxford, 1957, ed. K. Aland, F. L. Cross et al, 277-294. (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1968) 287-288. de la Potterie makes reference to the expression "witnesses to the truth" (ὁμοθέτης τῆς ἀλήθείας) which is used in an eschatological context in 1QS 8:6, and which, according to him, is the only significant parallel to the Johannine expression of μαρτυρεῖν τῇ ἀλήθεια (287). See also idem, La vérité dans saint Jean. 2 vols., AnBib 73-74. (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1977) 1: 91; "Faire la vérité": Devise de l'orthopraxie ou invitation à la foi? Suppl. 118 (1976) 283-293. See especially 287. See however, Barrett, John, 264, who is of the opinion that the thought of "witnesses to the truth" is "too commonplace for the parallel to be significant."

196 See Boismard-Lamouille, L'Evangile de Jean, 175, who see v. 33 as an example of a Johannine irony in relation to the attitude of "the Jews."

197 See Lagrange, Evangile, 151; Bernard, The Gospel according to St John, 1: 248; Beutler, Martyria, 257.
"I do not rely on," rather than "I do not receive," or "I do not accept." Jesus does not depend on human testimony to establish the reality of his unique relationship with the Father which enables him to work uninterruptedy as his Father does. Any acceptance of human testimony in this regard would create the false impression that "there is a commensurable relationship between human and divine standards." This does not mean, however, that Jesus is here rejecting the testimony of John whom the narrator has already presented to the reader as a man sent from God who came to bear witness to the light (see 1:6, 7). What it means is that John's divinely inspired mission had the sole purpose of leading people to faith in Jesus (1:7b: ἵνα πάντες πιστεύσω σοι ἀπ' αὐτοῦ), and not to confirm Jesus' claims regarding his relationship with the Father. This can only be done by the Father himself (see v. 32). Nevertheless, if Jesus still mentions the testimony of John, it is solely in view of the salvation of his opponents: ἵνα ὑμεῖς οὕτως τελέσητε (v. 34bβ).

The nature of the juridical controversy requires that the reliability of the witness to be adduced be acknowledged by the opposing party. Since "the Jews" had themselves recognized the authority of John by sending an official delegation to him, Jesus evokes his testimony as a means of persuading them to accept his christological claims, come to faith in him, and be saved. In other

198 While the NJB correctly renders the expression as "I do not depend on," most modern versions retain the literal meaning of the verb and render the expression as "I do not receive" (see RSV, NRSV, TOB). Lagrange, Evangelie, 151, rightly renders it as "je ne m'en sens pas."


200 See Pancaro, The Law in the Fourth Gospel, 231, who observes, among other things, that "the manner in which the testimony of the Baptist is referred to indicates that those who are being addressed attach such great importance to the figure of the Baptist that the evangelist thinks it necessary to call attention to the relative value of his testimony." It must however be emphasized, that the relative value of John's testimony is not in relation to its content or its objective to lead people to Jesus, but rather with regard to its ability to establish the uniqueness of Jesus' relationship with the Father. This can only be done by the absolute witness of the Father which manifests itself in the words and deeds of Jesus.

201 See above, 128, and n. 184.

202 Like the ἐκεῖ at the beginning of the verse, ὑμεῖς is also used here emphatically.
words, Jesus appeals to the testimony of John because of its potential to help "the Jews" to be saved by coming to faith in him. The Johannine Jesus' intention in the ongoing juridical controversy is the salvation of the very people who have accused him and are threatening him with death (vv. 16-18). His purpose is not only to defend himself against the charges levelled against him, but also and especially to persuade his opponents to accept his claims and be saved. This is a clear indication that what we have here is not a forensic process, but a controversy as a juridical procedure in which Jesus the accused seeks to convince "the Jews" who are his accusers of the truthfulness of his claims.\footnote{See my earlier analysis of the controversy as a juridical procedure, 19-24. See also 43, and n. 84.}

The emphatic use of ἐκείνος introduces Jesus' description of John as ὁ λύχνος ὁ καιόμενος καὶ φαίνων (v. 35a). The reader recalls that in the prologue, the narrator had presented John as "a man sent from God" (1:6) and had insisted that he was not the light (φῶς), but a witness to the light (1:8). The reader therefore understands the description of John as λύχνος to mean that, as a lamp, John was a bearer of a light of which he was not the source. He is kindled (καιόμενος) from a self-subsistent light, and shines continuously as a testimony to this true light (1:9a: τὸ φῶς ἀληθινόν).\footnote{The use of the two present participles (καιόμενος and φαίνων) is intended to highlight the timeless quality of both the light from which John draws his light as well as the testimony he bears to the light. See above, 129, n. 187.} This image of John as "a lamp that is kindled and shining" reminds the reader of the Old Testament image of the lamp that becomes a witness to the Messiah (LXX Ps 131:16b-17; see especially v. 17b: ἥτοιμασα λύχνον τῷ χριστῷ μου).\footnote{See Barrett, John, 265; Carson, John, 261, Moloney, The Gospel of John, 186-187; Boismard-Lamouille, L’Evangile de Jean, 176. See, however, Haenchen, John, 1: 263, who thinks that "at all events, such allusions do not belong to the style of the Evangelist." The description of John as a lamp could also be an echo of Sir 48:1, where it is said of Elijah that his word ὡς λαμπάς ἔκαλετο (burned like a torch). See Brown, John, 1: 224; Lindars, The Gospel of John, 228.} If John whose authority "the Jews" recognized in their sending of a delegation to him was the light that shone and pointed to Jesus, why is it that "the Jews" have been
unable to come to faith in Jesus, as the ongoing juridical controversy shows? The reason is that ὑμεῖς δὲ ἠθέλησατε ἀγαλλιᾶθήναι πρὸς ὦραν ἐν τῷ φωτὶ αὐτοῦ (v. 35b). The recognition of John by "the Jews" as a lamp as well as their willingness to exult in his light effectively placed them on the path to faith in Jesus and to salvation. However, their coming to faith did not materialize on account of the transient nature of their commitment, which was only "for a time." The ephemeral nature of the commitment of "the Jews" (πρὸς ὦραν) contrasts sharply with the permanent nature of John's testimony, as expressed by the perfect μεμαρτύρηκεν in v. 33b. The use of both the aorist ἠθέλησατε and the aorist infinitive ἀγαλλιᾶθήναι also points to the short space of time signified by πρὸς ὦραν. Thus, the reader perceives that it was the lack of a lasting commitment on the part of "the Jews" which prevented them from going beyond the initial excitement provoked by John's testimony to the acceptance of the one to whom he bore witness. This not only made it impossible for "the Jews" to grasp the meaning of the great figure that was John, but also to understand his message and to draw the necessary conclusions which would have led them to faith in Jesus.

Jesus himself relies on τὴν μαρτυρίαν μείζω τοῦ Ἰωάννου (v. 36a). Despite the incorrect Greek construction, the context suggests to the reader that the expression is to be understood in the sense that Jesus possesses a testimony which is greater than the one given by John. The reader who

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206 On the use of ἀγαλλιᾶθήναι in the sense of "to exult" to denote an overflowing, enthusiastic happiness, rather than simply "to rejoice," see Barrett, John, 265; Morris, John, 327; R. Bultmann, "ἀγαλλιᾶθαι κτλ.," TDNT 1 (1964) 19-21.

207 See Barrett, John, 265. Bultmann, The Gospel of John, 265, n. 2, considers the expression "in his light" as a semitism which should not be understood in "the sense of the place where they rejoiced, but of the object in which they rejoiced."

208 See Schnackenburg, The Gospel according to John, 2: 122.

209 For the meaning given above, one would have expected μείζω ἃ τοῦ Ἰωάννου. See Blass-Debrunner-Funk, A Greek Grammar, 99, § 185, 1. Instead of μείζω (masculine or feminine accusative), read by the majority of manuscripts, D reads the alternative accusative form μείζωνα. However, the variant reading μείζων (nominative) found in P66, A B E G M N AL produces an antithesis which hardly fits the context. See Metzger, A Textual Commentary, 180.
already knows that the ἀλλος who bears Jesus reliable and continuous witness is the Father (v. 32) understands that τὴν μαρτυρίαν refers to the testimony of the Father. In what then consists the testimony of the Father? τὰ γὰρ ἔργα ἡ δεδωκέν μοι ὁ πατὴρ. Within the context of Jesus' ongoing defence against accusations provoked by his Sabbath healing activity, the reader understands the ἔργα as referring to Jesus' miracles which are part of the salvific work (ἔργον) that the Father has entrusted to him.210 These works have been given to Jesus by the Father, and therefore constitute the works of the Father himself. They are a manifestation of his love for humankind (see 3:16 where the verb δίδωμι is also found), and they are given to Jesus so that he may bring them to a perfect completion.211 These are the very works that Jesus is in the process of accomplishing (αὕτα τὰ ἔργα ἡ ποιῶ), and which place his credentials as the authentic envoy of the Father beyond doubt (v. 36cβ). The accomplishment of miraculous deeds by an envoy of God as a means of persuading people to accept his message is well known in the Old Testament (see for instance Exod 4:1-17) and "the Jews" themselves allude to it in their confrontation with Jesus in 2:18. Thus, a miraculous deed constitutes the kind of testimony that Jesus' opponents would consider as reliable and valid, and therefore appropriate in a juridical controversy.212 It is for this reason that Jesus appeals to the works he does in unity with his Father, including the very one over which they have

210 Against Bulmann, The Gospel of John, 265, who maintains that ἔργα "refers to the whole of Jesus' activity as the Revealer," and more precisely to "the κρίματα and the ἔσωσις." See also Becker, Evangelium, 1: 253-254. Most Johannine scholars agree, however, that a distinction needs to be made between the singular ἔργον which refers to the whole of Jesus' salvific mission, and the plural ἔργα which has to do with the many individual miracles and deeds which are all part of Jesus' mission. See Brown, John, 1: 224; Barrett, John, 266; Schnackenburg, The Gospel according to John, 2: 123; Beutler, Martyria, 259-260; Morris, John, 684-691; Moloney, The Gospel of John, 187; Caron, Que sont "les Juifs"?, 129-131. See also W. Thüsing, Die Erhöhung und Verherrlichung Jesu im Johannevangelium, NTA 21/1-2. (Münster: Aschendorff'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1960) 58-59.

211 For a comprehensive exegetical and theological analysis of 5:36, see A. Vanhoye, "L'œuvre du Christ, don du Père (Jn. 5:36 et 17:4)," RSR 48 (1960) 377-419. On the verb τελεῖν as evoking the idea of perfect completion, see 409-410.

212 See above, 128, and n. 184.
taken issue with him (see vv. 1-16) as an obvious witness which should have allowed his opponents to come to faith in him. The healing of the sick man (vv. 1-9b) constitutes a carrying out by Jesus of God's creative and saving activity which remains uninterrupted on the Sabbath. It is therefore a sign of Jesus' unique status as the Son of the Father.\footnote{See B. Klappert, "Mose hat von mir geschrieben": Leitlinien einer Christologie im Kontext des Judenstums. Joh 5, 39-47." In Die Hebräische Bibel und ihre zweifache Nachgeschichte. Festschrift für Rolf Rendtorff zum 65. Geburtstag, eds. E. Blum, C. Macholz, and E. W. Stegemann, 619-640. (Neukirchen: Neukirchener Verlag, 1990). He observes among other things that "die Heilung des Kranken als Vollzug des schöpferschienen und erlösenden Handeln Gottes am Sabbat ist ein Zeichen und Zeugnis für die Messianität Jesu" (626).}

Since the works accomplished by Jesus are the works of the Father himself (v. 36), it is quite understandable that Jesus should see in them the testimony of the Father. The reader understands therefore that vv. 36 and v. 37 do not constitute two different witnesses, the works and the Father, but one, namely the Father's witness through the works. This means that the assertion in v. 37a constitutes in fact the logical conclusion which Jesus draws from his statement in the preceding verse (v. 36). In other words, καὶ ὁ πέριψας μὲ πατήρ ἐκεῖνος μεμαρτύρηκεν περὶ ἐμοῦ (v. 37a) should be rendered as: "And so, the Father who sent me has himself borne witness to me." The καὶ which opens the verse is here understood as consecutive,\footnote{See Bligh, "Jesus in Jerusalem," 132, n. 1. On the use of the "consecutive" καὶ, see Blass-Debrunner-Funk, A Greek Grammar, 224, § 422, 2; Zerwick, Biblical Greek, 153, § 455y. Many scholars consider the καὶ either as a simple conjunction ("and"), or as an adjunction ("also," "moreover"). The reference would then be to some new testimony. See Brown, John, 1: 222, Morris, John, 322; Beutler, Martyria, 260. See also the various translations of the καὶ in RSV; NRSV ("and"); NAB; NJB ("moreover," "besides"). The rendering adopted above means that the Father's testimony which is present in Jesus' works does not constitute a separate testimony. Even though Schnackenburg considers the καὶ as exegetical rather than consecutive, his understanding of v. 37 is virtually the same as the one proposed above. See Schnackenburg, The Gospel according to John, 2: 123-124.} and the perfect μεμαρτύρηκεν indicates that we are dealing here with an "internal analepsis."

That we have here an "internal analepsis" is evident to the reader from the earlier uses of the perfect of μαρτυρεῖν in instances where the narrator had resorted to the technique of "internal analepsis." The first such instance of "internal analepsis" with the perfect of μαρτυρεῖν is found in 1:34. This was
within the context of John's testimony to Jesus the day after his encounter with the envoys of "the Jews." John had seen and borne witness (ἐὼρεικα καὶ μεμαρτύρηκα) that Jesus was the Son of God. In the second instance (3:26), the disciples of John make reference to the testimony which John had borne Jesus (μεμαρτύρηκας) beyond the Jordan, an event which was narrated to the reader in 1:24-28. Finally, in 5:33, the Johannine Jesus refers to the testimony which John had borne to the "truth" when "the Jews" sent a delegation to him. The reader was informed of this event in 1:19-28. Thus, the reader perceives that, each time that the narrator makes use of the technique of "internal analepsis" to recall an earlier event in the narrative that has to do with "testimony," the perfect form of the verb μαρτυρεῖν is employed.

V. 37a is to be understood along the same lines. What event within the narrative would the perfect μεμαρτύρηκεν be referring to then? The proximity of v. 37a to v. 36 in which Jesus speaks of the works he does as a testimony of the Father, coupled with the functional unity between the Father and Jesus (v. 19), the understanding of the introductory καί in v. 37a as "consecutive," as well as the general context of the ongoing juridical controversy, all point to the ἔργα already accomplished by Jesus as the events through which the Father has already borne witness to Jesus. In other words, what Jesus would be telling "the Jews" in vv. 36-37 is that, the works he performs constitute the testimony of the Father, and those works he has already performed (2:1-11; 4:46-54; 5:1-9a) make it obvious that the Father has already borne witness to him in his ongoing ministry. The testimony that the God of Israel has himself borne

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215 In this particular instance of 1:34, the reference is to an event which has already occurred in the narrative, but which has not yet been narrated. Genette designates this type of "internal analepsis" as "completing analepsis." See Genette, Narrative Discourse, 51.

216 To my knowledge, this explanation of μεμαρτύρηκεν as an "internal analepsis" which refers to the works already accomplished by Jesus in the Gospel has not yet been noted by Johannine scholars. The view of Schnackenburg, The Gospel according to John, 2: 124, differs from the one proposed here because he maintains that the reference of μεμαρτύρηκεν is to "everything which, in the Johannine view, can be perceived in the concrete: Jesus' works, his words... and the Holy Scriptures." A number of modern scholars explain v. 37a in reference to 1 Joh 5:9-10 and speak of the Father's internal witness within the hearts of believers. (see for instance, Bernard, The Gospel according to St John, 1: 250-251;
Jesus through the ἐργα of which the Sabbath healing (vv. 1-9a) is one, not only lends credence to Jesus' christological claims, but it also shows that there are no grounds for the ongoing juridical controversy against him. "The Jews" have initiated the juridical controversy because they have chosen to ignore completely the act accomplished by Jesus, and had sought to uphold exclusively the priority of the Sabbath law (v. 11). 217 In doing so, they had failed to perceive Jesus' Sabbath healing as a testimony of the Father himself, and had therefore mistakenly concluded that God could not have done it. In vv. 36-37a, Jesus asserts the primacy of his healing work over the Sabbath law since it is the work of the God of Israel himself who, by means of it, has borne witness to him in his ongoing ministry.

If the Father has already borne witness to Jesus in the ἐργα, why have "the Jews" failed to recognize the Father's testimony to Jesus and been unable to come to faith in him? Verses 37b-38 provide the reader with the answer: "the Jews" who are Jesus' accusers have never heard the Father's φωνή, nor have they seen his ἔλεγχος. The reader knows that Jesus is the ὁ ἀρχηγός ἐργατικῶν and who bears witness to what he has seen and heard (3:31, 32); Jesus is the only one who has descended from heaven (3:13) and therefore possesses a direct experience of God which constitutes the basis of his ability to speak of God. 218 This means that, it is through the mediating agency of Jesus that God's

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Brown, John, 1: 227-228; Barrett, John, 266-267). However, the fact that Jesus is here concerned with adducing concrete witnesses that "the Jews" have seen or heard makes this interpretation unlikely. Others are of the opinion that the testimony of the Father refers to the OT revelation at Sinai. (see Beutler, Martyria, 261-262; Pancaro, The Law in the Fourth Gospel, 216-218. (For a full discussion of Pancaro's view, see the whole of 216-226). This position, in my opinion, mistakenly assumes that the τιμωσία who are Jesus' interlocutors in the present context are the Jewish people, past and present. See below, 137, n. 221. See also U. C. von Wahle, "The Witness to Jesus in John 5:31-40 and Belief in the Fourth Gospel," CBQ 43 (1981) 388-389. However, von Wahle himself mistakenly suggests that the sense of μαρτυρεῖν is "has little or no significance" (388). As the only instance in which the perfect of μαρτυρεῖν is used in relation to the testimony of the Father in Jesus' favour, the use of μαρτυρεῖν cannot in any way be underestimated as shown in the analysis above.

217 See above, 92, and n. 74.

φωνή can be heard. Again, the reader knows that, as the only Son from the Father (1:14), Jesus is the only one who makes God, whom no one else has ever seen, present in human history (1:18). While the term εἰδος is not found in this context of the prologue,219 the reader rightly perceives Jesus as the εἰδος of the invisible God. Thus, for the reader, Jesus is indeed the φωνή and the εἰδος of God in human history. God is heard in the words of Jesus, and he is seen in the person and deeds of Jesus.220 Since "the Jews" have been unable to perceive in Jesus and his work the presence and the words of God whom he makes present, it means that they have neither heard God's voice or seen his form.221

V. 38a continues the thought of the preceding verse (v. 37b) as Jesus tells his opponents καὶ τὸν λόγον αὐτοῦ οὐκ ἔχετε ἐν ὑμῖν μένοντα. The reader who accepts that it is through Jesus that God's φωνή can be heard, understands τὸν λόγον here as a reference to "the word of the Father which he has given to Jesus and which Jesus gives to the world."222 "The Jews" do not have God's λόγος in them because of their failure to believe in Jesus' words (v. 38b). The δείκτης which opens v. 38b is here understood as causal.223

219 Apart from 5:37b, the term εἰδος does not occur anywhere else in the Fourth Gospel.


221 Pancaro, The Law in the Fourth Gospel, 216-226, argues that the φωνή and the εἰδος of God allude to the revelation of God on Mount Sinai (see especially 220-224). Since Jesus is addressing himself to "the Jews" (see v. 19, and the use of the two 2nd pers. plur. perfects in v. 37b: ἐκκαθάρισε, ἐφάρμακε), the major difficulty which arises from this interpretation is that, it creates the false impression that Jesus' statement refers to the whole Jewish people, past and present. Thus, the term of ἡ λαβάς is given a sense which, in my opinion, it does not have in the Fourth Gospel (see above, 88, n. 67). Jesus continues to address himself to "the Jews" in the narrative who, since v. 16, have initiated a juridical controversy against him; they are the ones who, through their action in the ongoing controversy, have shown that they have neither heard God's voice nor seen his form. See Caron, Qui sont les "Juifs"?, 134-135, and n. 154.

222 von Wahlde, "The Witness to Jesus," 390. See however Pancaro, The Law in the Fourth Gospel, 225, who maintains that λόγος refers to the Torah described in general terms as the revelation given to Moses and Israel at Sinai. Others think that it refers to the internal witness of God in the believer. See for instance, Bernard, The Gospel according to St John, 1: 251.

223 The δείκτης-clause can also be understood in the sense of: "that you do not have his word dwelling in you is clear from the fact that you do not believe in the one he has sent." Several scholars have rightly
The reader now perceives the full import of Jesus' assertions in vv. 37b-38. The Father who sent Jesus can only be known through the words and deeds of Jesus who is God's φωνή and εἰσοδός. This means that whoever pretends to possess God's word while refusing to come to faith in Jesus by accepting his word is not being truthful. This, the reader perceives, is the situation of "the Jews" in the present narrative.

After the testimony of John (vv. 33-35), and the testimony that the Father has borne Jesus through the ἔργα which are the Father's own works (vv. 36-38), the emphasis now shifts to the testimony of Scriptures (vv. 39-40). As with the other two witnesses, Jesus adduces a witness whose absolute reliability is acknowledged by his opponents in the ongoing juridical controversy. The Johannine Jesus acknowledges his opponents' practice of diligent study of the Scriptures (v. 39aa), 224 ὅτι ὑμεῖς δοκεῖτε ἐν αὐταῖς τὴν ζωὴν αἰώνιον ἐχειν ("because you think that in them you have eternal life"). 225 However, while Jesus does not disapprove of the intensive study of the Scriptures, the use of ὅτι and δοκεῖτε suggests to the reader that "the Jews" are mistaken in their belief that their study of the Scriptures constitutes an end in itself. The Scriptures do not possess life independently of God who is the source of all life. In order words, the correct study and understanding of the Scriptures lead back necessarily to God. If "the Jews" had conducted their investigations into the Scriptures properly, they would have understood that ἐκεῖνοι ἐλον αἰ

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224 Several scholars have rightly observed that the form of the verb ἐρωτάτε may either be an indicative or an imperative, but the context shows that the indicative is intended. The verb corresponds to the Hebrew ḏārās, the technical term for biblical study and exposition. See Dodd, Interpretation, 329-330; Barrett, John, 267; Carson, John, 263.

225 The idea that the Torah was the source of life was not only present in the Torah itself (see Deut 30:15-20; Ps 119; Sir 17:11; 45:5), but also in later Jewish thinking. see Strack-Billerbeck, Kommentar, 2: 467. Of particular interest are: m. Aboth, 2:7 ("If a man has gained a good name he has gained [somewhat] for himself; if he has gained for himself words of the Law he has gained for himself life of the world to come"), and 6:7 ("Great is the Law, for it gives life to them that practice it both in this world and in the world to come").
μαρτυροῦσαι περὶ ἐμοῦ (v. 39b). The permanent value of the γραφαί is to be found in their timeless testimony (μαρτυροῦσαι: present participle) to Jesus as the Son of the Father. Thus, far from being life-giver in themselves, the Scriptures bear witness to Jesus who is both life-giver and judge (see vv. 21-30). It is only by listening to his word and coming to faith in him that one receives eternal life (see v. 24).

Jesus' statement in v. 40 not only sums up the attitude of his opponents vis-à-vis the testimony of the γραφαί, but also their attitude in relation to the two witnesses mentioned earlier. In other words, v. 40 has a double duty function. On the one hand, as part of the unit vv. 39-40, καὶ οὗ θέλετε ἔλθεῖν πρὸς με ἵνα ζωὴν ἐχήτε highlights the fact that, despite the testimony of the Scriptures in his favour, "the Jews" are still antagonistic towards Jesus and refuse to come to him to be saved. The introductory καὶ is adversative and should be understood in the sense of "and yet." The use of the θέλειν makes it clear to the reader that the refusal of "the Jews" is deliberate, a conscious act of the will. On the other hand, as the concluding verse to the section on "witness," v. 40 sums up the attitude of Jesus' accusers in relation to all the three witnesses mentioned in vv. 31-39. Despite the obvious reliability and trustworthiness of all three witnesses which they themselves acknowledge, "the Jews" persist in the refusal to acknowledge the truth about Jesus' work and his christological claims.

It was precisely for this reason, in the first place, that the three witnesses were adduced by Jesus. He wants to show his opponents that their hostile attitude towards his Sabbath work (v. 16) as well as their refusal to accept his christological claims constitute a deliberate refusal to acknowledge the truth which is evident to them as shown in the testimony of the three witnesses. This

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226 For a slightly different interpretation, see Klappert, "<Mose hat von mir geschrieben>," 627.

227 On the adversative καὶ, see Blass-Debrunner-Funk, A Greek Grammar, 227, § 442, (1); Zerwick, Biblical Greek, 153, § 455α.
fact supports the thesis of the present work that what we have here is a juridical controversy rather than a forensic procedure. In a juridical controversy, witnesses are adduced as a means of indicating to the opposing party that it is refusing to acknowledge the truth, and that the party calling on the witnesses is speaking the truth and not out of self-interest. This has the practical effect of shaming the opposing party, as well as the rhetorical effect of seeking to persuade it to accept finally the truth in order to bring the controversy to a peaceful end.\textsuperscript{228} That this is the objective of the Johannine Jesus can be seen in the fact that Jesus adduces witnesses "the Jews" have either seen or heard, and whose reliability is acknowledged by them. Additionally, it is obvious to the reader that v. 40 has a clear rhetorical function. It is intended to persuade "the Jews" to accept Jesus' claims by pointing out to them that the end result of their acceptance of Jesus' claims (i.e. the action of coming to faith in him) is the attainment of salvation ( ἵνα ζωὴν ἐχεῖτε).

c). Defence transformed into accusations (vv. 41-47)

The defence of Jesus in the ongoing juridical controversy began with a justification of his Sabbath activity and of his claims of a special relationship with the Father (vv. 17, 19-30). It then moved on to adduce three witnesses in a bid to show "the Jews" who are his accusers that they are deliberately refusing to acknowledge the truth (vv. 31-40). The purpose was to persuade them to accept finally the truth which, as shown by the witness, should have been obvious to them. Now, as part of his ongoing defence, Jesus transforms his discourse into a series of accusations against his accusers.

\textsuperscript{228} See above, 24-25, and n. 44.
The act of accusing one's accusers is an integral part of the accused person's defence in a bilateral juridical contest. It has a dual function.\textsuperscript{229} Firstly, it seeks to prove to the accusers why they are in the wrong and to put them on the defensive. Secondly, it facilitates an explicit comparison between the different behaviours of the two disputants in order to establish who is in the right and who is in the wrong so as to hasten the resolution of the conflict.\textsuperscript{230} It is within this context of the transformation of defence into accusation in the bilateral juridical contest that one must seek to understand vv. 41-47 of Jesus' discourse. It can therefore not be sustained that vv. 41-47 signal a reversal of roles with Jesus becoming the prosecutor and judge and passing judgment on his accusers.\textsuperscript{231} The controversy continues to be bilateral with "the Jews" as the accusers and Jesus as the accused. This means that vv. 41-47 are part of Jesus' defence as the accused, and they are addressed to "the Jews" who are his accusers.

At this point in the reading experience, the question which the reader is confronted with is this: after the reasons advanced by Jesus and in the face of such an impressive array of reliable witnesses, why are "the Jews" still refusing to come to faith in Jesus? The answer to this question is provided by Jesus by way of a series of accusations directed against "the Jews," which takes the form of an explicit comparison between himself and his opponents in relation to their respective attitude towards God (vv. 41-44).\textsuperscript{232} Jesus first states of himself that δόξαν παρα ἀνθρώπων οὐ λαμβάνει. The term δόξα here has the meaning of

\textsuperscript{229} See above, 22-23, and n. 38.

\textsuperscript{230} A typical example of this is found in the juridical controversy between Laban and Jacob (Gen 31:38-41). See also 1 Sam 24:10-12. See above, 37, n. 69.

\textsuperscript{231} This is the position of many scholars. See for instance, Hoskyns, The Fourth Gospel, 274-276; Stibbe, John, 77-79, who mistakenly think that we are dealing here with a trial scene. However, as shown repeatedly throughout the present study, what we have here is a bilateral juridical controversy between Jesus and "the Jews."

\textsuperscript{232} Beutler, Martyria, 264, correctly remarks that "durch diese Verse [41-47] zieht sich der scharfe Gegensatz zwischen Jesus und den Juden."
"praise," "recognition," and "honour." The reader is aware of the fact that, as the Son and the authentic envoy of the Father, Jesus always seeks to "do the will of him who sent me, and to accomplish his work" (4:34), and it is in doing this work that he manifests his glory as the Son and leads people to faith in him (see 2:11). Thus, Jesus' Sabbath healing as well as the reasons he has given to justify it and the witnesses he has adduced to support the truthfulness of his claims are not intended to attract the δόξαν παρὰ ἀνθρώποιον.

Jesus' work is done in perfect union with the Father (v. 19). This is a union of love. The Father "loves the Son and shows him all that he himself is doing" (v. 20a), and out of love, the Son accomplishes perfectly the works that the Father has entrusted to him (v. 36b). By contrast, Jesus is aware that "the Jews" τὴν ἀγάπην τοῦ θεοῦ οὐκ ἔχετε ἐν ἑαυτοῖς. In other words, Jesus knows that his opponents are ill-intentioned and their actions, as the ongoing juridical controversy testifies, show that they do not love God, which in turn indicates that they have failed to keep the very Law they pretend to uphold in their juridical action against Jesus.

In v. 43a, Jesus emphatically states (see position of ἐγὼ) that he has come in the name of his Father. As the envoy of the Father, he accomplishes the work of the Father himself (v. 36) and speaks to people not of himself, but of what he has heard and seen from the Father (see 3:32). If "the Jews" loved God, they would have received him, but since they show no sign of loving God (v. 42),

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234 I read the genitive in the expression τὴν ἀγάπην τοῦ θεοῦ, together with many other scholars, as an objective genitive. See Lagrange, Evangile, 153; Lightfoot, St John, 150; Barrett, John, 269; Moloney, The Gospel of John, 188; B. J. Malina, and R. L. Rohrbaugh, Social-Science Commentary on the Gospel of John, (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998) 121, are of the view that the term ἀγάπη here has the connotation of "loyalty," or "attachment." Jesus would thus be challenging the loyalty of "the Jews" to God. Several scholars have also noted that, in v. 42, the subject of the subordinate clause is attracted to the main clause as its object. See Barrett, John, 269; Brown, John, 1: 226.

235 In Deut 6:4-9, the love of the Israelite for Yahweh is presented as the essence of the Law.
they refuse to receive his envoy. However, should another person (ἀλλος) come in his own name, they would be prepared to receive him and lend credence to what he says (v. 43b). It is evident to the reader that the term ἀλλος does not refer to any particular messianic claimant whom "the Jews" uncritically acknowledged. Jesus is here establishing a contrast between two radically different perspectives namely, ἐν τῷ ὄνοματι τοῦ πατρὸς μου and ἐν τῷ ὄνοματι τῷ ἰδίῳ. While they reject Jesus who speaks and acts with the authority of the Father (and therefore does not seek the praise of men), they will be prepared to accept any other person who makes claims for himself and who, like themselves, seeks the praise of men. In other words, in contrast to Jesus who looks to God and totally depends on him (v. 19), "the Jews" are more interested in themselves and in the praise of men (see also 12:43).

V. 44 now makes explicit what the reader may have been suspecting all along namely, that the refusal of "the Jews" to come to faith in Jesus is motivated by pride and self-interest, as shown by their willingness to receive δόξαν παρὰ ἄλληλων, καὶ τὴν δόξαν τὴν παρὰ τοῦ μόνου θεοῦ οὐ ζητεῖτε. The desire of "the Jews" for mutual human praise and esteem makes them unwilling to seek the glory that comes from the only God. The reader perceives that once again, Jesus establishes a contrast between himself and "the Jews." The points of comparison are the δόξαν παρὰ ἄλληλων and the δόξαν τὴν παρὰ τοῦ μόνου θεοῦ. In his person (1:14b) and in his work (2:11), Jesus manifests the δόξα of God. This δόξα which Jesus seeks is the glory of the one and unique God of Israel, and it entails that people recognize the unity of action

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236 On the Jewish principles of agency, see above, 124, n. 173 and the literature cited there.

237 See for instance, Lagrange, Evangile, 155; Carson, John, 265, who are of the opinion that ἀλλος is a reference to false messianic claimants.

238 Some early and important witnesses (p66 p75 B W al.) omit θεοῦ. Some scholars (see for instance, Lagrange, Evangile, 165) opt for this reading. However, the context strongly suggests that θεοῦ be retained. Its omission from the above-cited witnesses may have been due to transcribers. See Barrett, John, 269; Lindars, The Gospel Of John, 232; Metzger, A Textual Commentary, 180.
between the Father and the Son. On their part, in refusing to acknowledge this unique relationship between the Father and Jesus, "the Jews" have shown that they do not seek the glory of God. They are more interested in the human praise and mutual recognition that they accord to each other (δόξα παρὰ ἀλληλῶν). Hence, their accusation against Jesus, according to which he is depriving God of the "glory" due to him (v. 18c) in actual fact applies to themselves. By taking offence at a deed which manifests the Father's glory and refusing to acknowledge the unity of action between the Father and the Son (vv. 16, 18), "the Jews" have failed to seek the δόξα τοῦ μόνου θεοῦ. In their ongoing juridical controversy against Jesus, far from seeking the glory of God, "the Jews" are in fact seeking the δόξα παρὰ ἀνθρώπων.

As part of his ongoing accusations against "the Jews" by which he seeks to show them why they are wrong in accusing him and refusing to come to faith in him, Jesus now makes an explicit reference to Moses (v. 45). The verb δοκεῖτε which opens the verse reminds the reader of v. 39, and at the same time alerts him/her that Jesus is seeking to correct a mistaken idea of his opponents. Jesus will not be the one to accuse (κατηγορήσω) them before the Father (v. 45a). His present accusations against "the Jews" are part of his effort to persuade them to accept the truth about his person and work. Jesus seeks the salvation of his accusers (vv. 34b, 40. see 3:17), and even if they persist in their unbelief, someone else other than Jesus will be their accuser before the Father: ἔστιν ὁ κατηγορῶν ὑμῶν Μωυσῆς, εἰς δὲν ὑμεῖς ἠλπίκατε. Moses is not here mentioned as intervening in the ongoing juridical controversy between Jesus and "the Jews" which continues to be bilateral.

239 Pancaro, The Law in the Fourth Gospel, 237, n. 146, remarks that "this unity of activity which signifies unity of being is the point of the whole section of Jn 5:17-30."

240 There is a subtle play on the common usage meaning ("praise," "esteem," "recognition") and the biblical meaning ("glory") of the term δόξα in v. 44.
Moses' role as accuser of "the Jews" is spoken of as a future event which lies outside the scope of the present juridical controversy. This means that the participle κατηγορῶν, coming as it does after a verb in the future (κατηγορήσω), should have the same future force. The reference is clearly to a future judgment in which Moses will be their accuser. Jesus' description of Moses as a would-be-accuser of "the Jews" will certainly come as a shock to his opponents because of the hope they have placed in him (εἰς δὲ ὑμεῖς ἠλπίκατε). The reader no doubt perceives this as a reference to the role of Moses as the mediator between God and Israel. This idea which is already present in a number of Old Testament passages (see Exod 32:11-14, 30-33; Num 12:13; 14:19-20; 21:7; Deut 9:18-20, 25-29) is further developed in later Judaism (Exod. Rab. 18:3; Test. Moses 11:17; Jubilees 1:19-21). Jesus' assertion in v. 45 does not constitute a denial of Moses' intercessory role in favour of Israel. As a statement addressed to "the Jews" in the narrative, it is a warning to Jesus' opponents that, given their present attitude of hostility and unbelief towards Jesus, instead of mediating on their behalf, Moses will accuse them before God. Thus the reason for this reversal of the role of Moses in relation to "the Jews" of the narrative is their refusal to come to faith in Jesus which, in itself, is an indication that contrary to their claims, they have never really believed Moses.

The connective γὰρ which opens v. 46 alerts the reader that what is about to be said is an explanation of the idea implied in the preceding verse namely, that "the Jews" have never believed Moses. The first two parts of the verse (46a and 46b) constitute a "contrary-to-fact" (unreal) condition: εἰ γὰρ

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241 See Blass-Debrunner-Funk, A Greek Grammar, 175, § 339, 2b. Some scholars do not take this fact into consideration and therefore understand κατηγορῶν as indicating that Moses is already fulfilling his role as the accuser of "the Jews" (see Lagrange, Evangile, 156; Barrett, John, 272; Morris, John, 334).

242 For a similar opinion as the one expressed above, see Carson, John, 265.

ἐπιστεύετε Μωϋσεῖ, ἐπιστεύετε ἂν ἔμοι. If "the Jews" believed Moses (but they do not), they would believe the present claims of Jesus. The irony of the situation is not lost on the reader. "The Jews" who have initiated the ongoing juridical controversy against Jesus in a bid to protect the Mosaic traditions concerning the Sabbath have now been exposed as not even believing Moses, because περὶ...ἐμοῦ ἐκεῖνος ἔγραψεν (v. 46c). The Mosaic writings point to Jesus and the refusal of "the Jews" to come to faith in him is an indication that they have never believed in the Mosaic writings. The Johannine Jesus does not point to any particular passage from the writings attributed to Moses; the emphasis is clearly on Scriptures as the revelation of God's redemptive purpose for humankind which now finds its fulfillment in Jesus.

V. 47 explains further the idea that to believe in the writings of Moses leads to the acceptance of Jesus' claims. There is a continuity between the writings of Moses and the words of Jesus. The gift of the Law which was given through Moses leads to the second gift, the gift of the truth which is given διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (1:17), and which perfects all that had been written by Moses. If "the Jews" do not believe in the written word (γράμμα) of Moses, how will they believe the spoken word (ῥήμα) of Jesus? It is now clear to the reader that Moses was introduced into the discourse (vv. 45-47) to serve as a foil for Jesus in his accusations against "the Jews," and at the same time to

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244 On the "contrary-to-fact" (unreal) condition, see above, 127, n. 179. It is not necessary to envisage the verb in the protasis (ἐπιστεύετε) as referring to the present time (see Pancaro, The Law in the Fourth Gospel, 258). The imperfect in the protasis is due to the fact that a past time is referred to, but in the "present" aspect. See Zerwick, Biblical Greek, 107, § 314.

245 Despite Pancaro's view to the contrary (The Law in the Fourth Gospel, 258-263), it is clear that there is a relationship of equivalence between "believing Moses" and "believing in his writings" in v. 46. The use of the dative in ἐπιστεύετε Μωϋσεῖ points to the fact that the issue at stake is not so much believing in Moses as a person as believing in what he wrote. See Barrett, John, 270. In other words, πιστεύσῃ with the dative indicates the object or the authority on which faith is established. In the present context, it is the writings of Moses.


247 See Moloney, Belief in the Word, 47; Klappert, "Mose hat von mir geschrieben," 637.
underline the contradictory nature of the attitude of "the Jews" towards Jesus. The fact that the γράφη of Moses testifies in Jesus' favour (v. 46c) clearly shows that Jesus and Moses are on the same side in the present controversy, and that "the Jews" are wrong in regarding belief in Jesus as disloyalty to Moses. The implication is that, by their refusal to acknowledge Jesus' claims, "the Jews" are now opposing Moses, the very person on whom they claim to have set their hope (see v. 45b). Thus, in the perspective of the Johannine Jesus, if "the Jews" really believed in the writings of Moses, then they could not but acknowledge his christological claims.

**Concluding Remarks.**

Jesus' response to the accusations of "the Jews" in the ongoing juridical controversy began with a justification of his Sabbath activity, and then moved on to adduce three reliable witnesses, and finally transformed itself into a series of accusations against his accusers. The cohesive unity of the discourse is evident from the fact that each section flows smoothly into the other. Accused of Sabbath violation and blasphemy, Jesus' response not only seeks to provide reasons to justify his action and his claims (vv. 17, 19-30), but also to establish the absolute truthfulness of his claims by adducing reliable witnesses (vv. 31-40) as well as to show his opponents why they are in the wrong and need to acknowledge the truth (vv. 41-47). The whole discourse is clearly marked by a rhetoric of persuasion which is aimed at his accusers as it is typical of the controversy as a juridical procedure. Jesus seeks throughout the discourse to convince his accusers and to bring them to accept the christological claims made in defence of his Sabbath activity. As Jesus' defence discourse comes to

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248 See above, 108, n. 130. It must be stated here that, from the point of view of the reader-response criticism, the rhetoric of persuasion which characterizes the discourse in 5:17, 19-47 is ultimately aimed at the reader whom the narrator seeks to persuade about the christological claims of the narrative. This point will be dealt with in detail in chapter 5 of the present study.
an end, his accusers "the Jews" are now expected to react to the discourse in line with the déroulement of the two-party juridical controversy. Thus, the question here is: will "the Jews" accept Jesus' reasons which would enable a peaceful resolution of the conflict to take place, or will they reject them and choose to continue the conflict?

However, at the end of Jesus' discourse, no reaction from "the Jews" is reported. How is this unexpected silence on the part of "the Jews" to be understood? Have they been left so speechless by the arguments of Jesus that they have decided to drop the accusations against him? The answer to this latter question must be in the negative for two reasons, namely, the issues raised in the ongoing controversy are left unresolved, and there is no indication that the initial accusations against Jesus are withdrawn. Thus, far from being over, the present controversy which is centred around the issue of the Sabbath law appears destined to continue in the narrative future. The resumption of the Sabbath juridical controversy takes place in 9:1-10:21 where the issues of the Sabbath law and the identity of Jesus are again at the centre of another conflict. The fact that the same accusations form the basis of the two controversies and are made in similar circumstances, and also that the same two parties (Jesus and "the Jews") are involved, indicate that 9:1-10:21 constitutes the continuation and the development of the Sabbath juridical controversy which began in 5:1-47. It is in 9:1-10:21 that this controversy centred around the Sabbath law will be brought to its conclusion.

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249 See above, 22-24.

250 See above, 38, n. 73.
Chapter Four

Reading the Second Sabbath Conflict Narrative (Jn 9:1-10:21)

Narrative setting of Jn 9:1-10:21

a). Geographical setting

Jn 9:1-10:21 begins without any explicit mention of its geographical setting. However the general context of Jn 7-10 clearly suggests that the events narrated in 9:1-10:21 take place in Jerusalem. In 7:10, Jesus goes up to Jerusalem for the feast of the Tabernacles and he appears in the temple around the middle of the feast and begins to teach the people (7:14). The narrator signals a change in geographical setting with the mention of Jesus' exit from the temple at the end of chapter 8 (8:59: ἑτοιμασάτο καὶ ἐξῆλθεν ἀπὸ τοῦ ἱεροῦ). This leads to 9:1 where Jesus is mentioned as "passing by" (παραγόντω). The association of the two verbs of motion indicates that the action in 9:1ff follows closely upon that of 8:59. In other words, Jesus is depicted here as in the process of walking away from the Temple. One is therefore justified in affirming that not only is Jerusalem the narrative setting for 9:1ff, but also that the action takes place in the vicinity of

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1 On 9:1-10:21 as a literary unit, see above, 2, n. 5, and the literature cited there.
2 This explains the use of the present participle form of the verb παραγόντω.
the temple. It may also be noted that the mention of the pool of Siloam which is situated at the southern extremity of the eastern hill of Jerusalem clearly points to Jerusalem as the geographical setting of the narrative in Jn 9:1-10:21.³

b). Religious-cultural setting

The temporal unity that runs through Jn 7:1-10:21 suggests that the evangelist has consciously placed 9:1-10:21 within the religious-cultural setting of the celebration of the feast of Tabernacles.⁴ In Jn 7:2, the narrator mentions the approaching feast of Tabernacles for which Jesus and his brothers go up to Jerusalem (7:10). In 7:14, Jesus goes to the temple. The latter is the topographical setting for a series of events that take place "about the middle of the feast" (7:14) and "on the last day of the feast" (7:37). The temple events extend from 7:14-8:59 after which there is a change in geographical setting with the departure of Jesus from the temple (8:59).⁵ This change in geographical setting leads immediately to the events narrated in 9:1-10:21. The latter clearly continues within the temporal framework of the feast of Tabernacles. This is evident from the fact that it is only in 10:22 that the evangelist indicates a change in temporal setting with the expression: ἐγένετο τότε τὰ ἐγκαίνια (see 6:4; 7:2).

³ See Brown, John, 1: 372.

⁴ See Moloney, Signs and Shadows, 65-66.

Again, the indication by the evangelist that the events of 9:1-10:21 take place on a Sabbath adds a new dimension to the religious-cultural setting of the narrative. This not only adds a sense of solemnity to the setting, but it also brings to the fore the legal issues surrounding Jesus' healing of the man born blind which would be considered as a violation of the Sabbath law. Firstly, the making of clay would be unlawful under the prohibition of kneading on the Sabbath, and secondly, any form of healing or medical assistance was permitted on the Sabbath only on the assumption that life was in danger.

In conclusion, it may be said that the narrator sets the second Sabbath conflict narrative within a well-defined geographical and religious-cultural setting: it takes place in Jerusalem on a Sabbath and during a major Jewish pilgrim feast. The importance of this narrative setting is obvious to the reader. It enables the narrator to present this second Sabbath conflict as the continuation and the development of the ongoing juridical controversy (5:1-47) between Jesus and his opponents on the issues of the Sabbath law and Jesus' identity, and to bring it eventually to its conclusion.

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6 As the temporal sequence of the events in Jn 7:37-10:21 now stands, the Sabbath mentioned in 9:14 can very well be identified with "the last and greatest day of the feast" mentioned in 7:37. In effect, the transition from the scene in the temple on the last day of the feast (7:37-8:59) to the events of 9:1ff indicates a temporal unity between the two scenes. If this observation is correct, then the Sabbath adds to the solemnity of this "last and greatest day of the feast". Menken expresses a similar view with regard to the temporal sequence of 7:37-10:21 when he asserts that "9:1-10:21 is - at least, when we take seriously the evangelist's indication of time in their dramatic function - still part of the events of the last and greatest day of the Festival of Tabernacles." Menken, *Numerical Literary Techniques*, 190. See also A. Loisy, *Le quatrième évangelie*, 312. He observes, among other things, that "dans la perspective du récit, l'on est toujours au sabbat, qui est en même temps, dans la perspective actuelle de l'évangelie, le dernier jour de la fête des tabernacles."

7 See m. Shabbat, 7:2.


9 See above, 7-9, for an analysis of the extensive parallels between chapters 5 and 9:1-10:21 which favour their being studied together. On the relevant literature regarding these parallels, see above, 7-8, nn. 14 and 15.
Narrative structure of Jn 9:1-10:21

Even though several Johannine scholars have rightly emphasized the temporal, spatial and thematic unity between Jn 9:1-41 and 10:1-21, they normally structure them separately with no attempt to present an explicit unified structure for 9:1-10:21. However, C. H. Dodd constitutes one notable exception. He rightly maintains that 9:1-10:21 has "a sequence of narrative, dialogue and monologue... [and that] at the end of ch. ix the judicial sentence pronounced by Jesus leads without interruption to the discourse of the shepherd and the flock." In other words, for Dodd, the so-called judicial sentence in 9:39-41 should be considered as the beginning of the discourse in 10:1-21. The structure of 9:1-10:21 would then be as follows:

- healing narrative (9:1-7)
- dialogical section (9:8-38)
- discourse (9:39-10:18)

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11 Dodd, Interpretation, 356, 358. One may recall here that the first Sabbath conflict narrative (5:1-47) also has a similar sequence of narrative, dialogue and discourse. See above, 7.


13 One may draw attention to the sevenfold division proposed by J. L. Martyn which however, is limited only to Jn 9 (vv. 1-7: Jesus, his disciples and the blind man; vv. 8-12: The blind man and his neighbours; vv. 13-17: The blind man and the Pharisees; vv. 18-23: The Pharisees and the blind man's parents; vv. 24-34: The Pharisees and the blind man; vv. 35-38: Jesus and the blind man; vv. 39-41: Jesus and the Pharisees). See his History and Theology in the Fourth Gospel. 2nd ed. (Nashville: Abingdon, 1979) 26-27. See however, Moloney, Signs and Shadows, 118, who has developed Martyn's sevenfold division into eight scenes to include Jn 10:1-21 and thereby underlying the fundamental unity between 9:1-41 and 10:1-21.
The above structure, it must be emphasized, has the merit of highlighting the fundamental unity between 9:1-41 and 10:1-21, a fact which the understanding of 5 and 9:1-10:21 as a single juridical controversy also brings to the fore.\(^{14}\)

**Jn 9:1-10:21 as juridical controversy.**

As the development and the conclusion of the Johannine Sabbath juridical controversy, 9:1-10:21 contains certain elements of the juridical controversy which provide a key to its structure.

- It begins with a healing account and its aftermath (vv. 1-15) which constitute the circumstances leading to the resumption of the juridical controversy which began in 5:1-47. The first division should therefore be placed after v. 15.

- Then come the re-statement of the accusation and the search for witnesses to substantiate the accusation. This means that the next division should be seen as coming after v. 27.

- The presence of a defence controversy and its immediate aftermath in vv. 28-38 marks the latter out as a distinct unit and calls for a break in the material after v. 38. The defence controversy (vv. 28-34) ends with the casting out of the healed man (v. 34), and its immediate aftermath (vv. 35-38) is marked by the encounter between Jesus and the healed man.

- This takes us to 9:39-10:18 which is essentially a discourse by the Johannine Jesus in which he makes use of a juridical parable to which he also offers an explanation.

- The conclusion to the ongoing juridical controversy between Jesus and "the Jews" is to be found in 10:19-21.

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\(^{14}\) See above, 31-44.
On the basis of the above analysis, 9:1-10:21, as the continuation and the conclusion of the Johannine Sabbath juridical controversy, may be structured as follows:

- 9:1-15 Healing account and its immediate aftermath
- 9:16 Resumption of controversy (re-statement of accusations)
- 9:17-27 Search for witnesses
- 9:28-38 Defence controversy and its aftermath
- 9:39-10:18 Juridical parable and its application
- 10:19-21 Conclusion of the Sabbath juridical controversy

A Sabbath Juridical Controversy: Reading John 9:1-10:21

a). Healing account and its immediate aftermath (9:1-15)

In 9:1-15 opens with Jesus passing by (παράγων) after his exit (ἐξῆλθεν) from the temple at the end of the preceding chapter (8:59). The association of the two verbs of motion in which the aorist (ἐξῆλθεν) closes one episode and the present participle (παράγων) opens the next indicates to the reader that the action in 9:1 follows closely upon Jesus' exit from the temple.\(^\text{15}\) As the narrative gets under way, the narrator focuses the reader's attention firstly on Jesus who is subject of the actions indicated by the verbs παράγων and ἐλθεν,\(^\text{16}\) and

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\(^\text{15}\) See however, Bultmann, The Gospel of John, 330; P. L. Tite, "A Community in Conflict: A Literary and Historical Reading of John 9," *RSIT* 15 (1996) 77-100. See especially 80. For the view stated above, see Moloney, The Gospel of John, 290; Brown, John, 1: 371, who admits, albeit with some hesitation, that "as the Gospel now stands, Jesus could be thought of as walking away from the Temple."

\(^\text{16}\) Even though Jesus is not mentioned by name in v. 1, it is clear from 8:59b that he is the subject of the verbs παράγων and ἐλθεν.
secondly on an individual who is described as blind from birth (τυφλὸς ἐκ γενετῆς). The reader who recalls an earlier situation in which Jesus saw (ἰδὼν) a sick person and took the initiative to heal him (see 5:6-9b) begins to envisage the possibility of an intervention on Jesus' part to heal the man. However the reader's expectation is cut short as the narrator introduces the disciples into the narrative and has them ask Jesus a question: Ἄρα, τίς ἡμαρτεν, οὗτος ἢ ὁ γόνεις αὐτοῦ, ἵνα τυφλὸς γεννηθῇ (v. 2b). The narrator had earlier in the narrative indicated to the reader that the term Ἄρα by which the disciples here address Jesus means "teacher" (1:38). The term undoubtedly evokes the disciples' trust in Jesus' authority and competence to answer their question. The reader recalls that earlier uses of the term are found in close proximity to terms and expressions which evoke Jesus' divine origin. One such instance is found in 1:49 where Nathanael addresses Jesus as Ἄρα and goes on to describe him as "the Son of God." Again, in an address to Jesus, Nicodemus not only calls him Ἄρα, but also describes him as "a teacher come from God" (3:2). Jesus is not any ordinary teacher in Israel, but a teacher with divine authorisation. Thus, the use of Ἄρα in the present context would remind the reader of Jesus' authority as a teacher come from God, and prepare him/her to accept Jesus' reply. The question of the disciples presupposes the idea that there is a causal connection between sin and suffering. This means that the blindness of the man is perceived by the disciples as the direct consequence of some evil deed that either the man while still in the womb, or his parents might have committed.

17 Several scholars have noted that the description of the man as τυφλὸς ἐκ γενετῆς corresponds to Greek usage, and that the Semitic equivalence would be τυφλὸς ἐκ κοιλιᾶς μητρὸς. See Bultmann, The Gospel of John, 330, n. 6; Brown, John, 1: 371; Barrett, John, 356.


19 The ἵνα-clause in v. 2b is here understood as expressing result rather than purpose ("with the result that he was born blind"). See Blass-Debrunner-Funk, A Greek Grammar, 198, § 391, (5). On the OT background to the relationship between sin and suffering, see J. P. Comiskey, "<Rabbi, who has sinned...?>" (John 9:2). "BiTod 26 (1966) 1808-1814. The idea that the punishment for the sins of parents could be inflicted on their children is presupposed in OT passages such as Exod 20:5; Num 14:18;
Jesus' reply addresses itself to the specific question of the disciples and states unequivocally that neither the man nor his parents sinned (v. 3a), ἀλλὰ ἵνα φανερωθῇ τὰ ἔργα τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ (v. 3b). Jesus' answer shifts the emphasis from the cause of the man's blindness which was the focus of the disciples' question to its inherent possibility for God's purpose. The purpose of the defect is to be "a signal and destined occasion for a manifestation of the divine action." Thus, Jesus' reply is not intended to raise the issue of theodicy. It is not concerned with the issue of whether or not God intentionally made the man blind for the sole purpose of revealing his works in him. It simply takes into consideration the fact of the man's blindness and indicates that God is to use his condition to reveal his works. It therefore points forward to the healing miracle which is to follow, the possibility of which the reader had envisaged since the opening verse of the narrative. The construction ἐν αὐτῷ (v. 3b) should here be understood as a dative of respect and rendered as "in him," "in respect of him," rather than as a dative of instrument ("by him," "with the help of him").

Deut 5:9; Tob 3:3. Later Rabbinic thinking, on the basis of such OT passages as Gen 25:22, held the idea that a child could sin while in the womb. See Strack-Billerbeck, Kommentar, 2: 528-529.

20 Lightfoot, St John, 202. See also Delebecque, Evangile de Jean, 170. Some scholars consider the ἵνα in v. 3b as imperatival and render the sentence as "but let the works of God be made manifest in him." See N. Turner, Grammatical Insights into the New Testament. (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1965) 145-147; M. Zerwick-M. Grosvenor, A Grammatical Analysis, 314; Beasley-Murray, John, 151.

21 See X. Léon-Dufour, Lecture de l'évangile selon Jean. 3 vols, Parole de Dieu. (Paris: Seuil, 1988, 1990, 1993) 2: 335: "Il [Jésus] se réfère à la situation de l'aveugle qui est là et auquel il va donner la vue, manifestant ainsi Dieu à l'oeuvre dans le monde." See also J. Gnilyka, Johannevangelium, 75. Several scholars have proposed an alternative punctuation for v. 3 namely, joining v. 3b with the first part of v. 4 by placing a comma after αὐτῷ. Verses 3-4a would then read as follows: "It is not that this man sinned, or his parents (v. 3a). But that the works of God might be made manifest in him (v. 3b), we must keep on working the works of God as long as it is day (v. 4a)." See for instance, J. C. Poirier, "Day and Night' and the Punctuation of John 9:3," NT 42 (1996) 288-294; G. C. Campbell, The Gospel according to John. (London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1976) 50-61; B. M. Neuman, and E. A. Nida, A Handbook on the Gospel of John. (New York: United Bible Societies, 1980) 299-300.

22 In relation to v. 3b, Mollat aptly observes that "en termes voilés, il annonce le miracle." Mollat, "La guérison," 23.

23 On the dative of respect, see Blass-Debrunner-Funk, A Greek Grammar, 105-106, § 197. On the ἐν with dative to express instrument, see idem, 117-118, § 219, (1); BAGD, 260, s.v. ἐν, III (b).
The reader already knows that Jesus is the one who accomplishes τὰ ἔργα τοῦ θεοῦ (5:36) which refer to the individual miracles and deeds accomplished by Jesus as part of his salvific mission. The thematic emphasis is therefore on what Jesus, in unity with the Father, is about to accomplish in the life of the man born blind. Jesus' assertion about "the works of God" (v. 3b) leads to the statement in v. 4a about the necessity to accomplish the works of the Father: ἡμᾶς δεῖ ἔργας ζεοθαν τὰ ἔργα τοῦ πέμψαντός με ἐὼς ἡμέρα ἑστίν. The reader understands the ἡμᾶς in the present context as referring primarily, if not exclusively, to Jesus alone. He is the only one who, up to this point in the narrative, is explicitly entrusted with the task of bringing to a perfect completion τὰ ἔργα τοῦ πέμψαντός με. Again, the context of Jesus' assertion in v. 3b which points forward to the impending healing miracle would suggest that the ἡμᾶς is best understood as referring primarily to Jesus alone.

The use of ἡμᾶς in reference to Jesus, and in combination with the expression ὁ πέμψας με is not surprising since the latter is a standard expression to refer to the Father as the one who sends and Jesus as the one who is sent (see 3:17; 4:34; 5:24, 30 etc.). However, ἡμᾶς may also be interpreted, at least implicitly, in the sense that the disciples are here being associated with the task of accomplishing the works of the Father. The reference would then be to the future works which the disciples will accomplish in continuation of Jesus' present ministry. The expression ἐὼς ἡμέρα ἑστίν is

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24 Even though there is some confusion in relation to the textual evidence of v. 4, the plural ἡμᾶς δεῖ found in p66, p75, K, B, D etc. should be preferred to the singular ἐπεί δεῖ because of the somewhat superior external support, and also because this is a more difficult reading and it is more probable that copyists would have changed ἡμᾶς to ἐπεί than vice versa. See Metzger, A Textual Commentary, 194.

25 C. H. Dodd, Historical Tradition, 186, followed by Pancaro, The Law in the Fourth Gospel, 18, and Lindars, The Gospel of John, 342, is of the opinion that the use of ἡμᾶς is an indication that a proverbial wisdom may be behind v. 4.

26 See for instance, Morris, John, 479; Carson, John, 362; Schnackenburg, The Gospel according to John, 2: 241; Léon-Dufour, Evangile, 335, and n. 19; Moloney, Signs and Shadows, 121. In my opinion, while this interpretation is quite plausible, it is only implicit in the present context. The disciples' future association with Jesus' mission will be explicitly stated in texts such as 14:12; 15:20, 27, which, in the methodological perspective of the present study, the reader is yet to discover. See
to be understood as: "as long as it is day."  It points to the urgency that characterizes Jesus' task of accomplishing the works of the Father. The reason for this sense of urgency is stated in v. 4b: ἔρχεται νῦν ὅτε οὖν ἔσται δύναται ἔργα ζησθαι. There is here a clear contrast between day and night. The "day" refers to the historical presence of Jesus and his ongoing ministry by means of which he accomplishes the works of the Father and also reveals himself as the μονογενεύς παρὰ πατρός (see 1:14b). In contrast, the "night" points to Jesus' departure from the physical world which will bring the revelatory works of his present ministry to an end. This does not however mean that the "night" puts an end to the "light" which is Jesus himself and which he brings into the world (see 1:5; 8:12). What is being emphasized here is the absolute necessity for Jesus to carry on with the works of the Father "as long as it is day" (v. 4b), i.e. as long as his ongoing ministry lasts. These works have to be accomplished by Jesus himself because they form part of his revelation about God and about himself without which his true identity as the only Son of God cannot be known.

It is through the accomplishment of the ἔργα τοῦ πέμψαντος με which Jesus carries out in the world that he reveals himself as the light of the world. Thus, he can affirm in v. 5: ὅταν ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ ὁ, φως εἶμι τοῦ κόσμου. The reader recalls that Jesus had made a similar statement in 8:12. Even though the personal pronoun ἐγώ is lacking in the present context, the meaning is basically the same. Jesus' presence in the world as well as the works of the Father which he accomplishes bring light into the world by revealing the unique relationship between the Father and the One he has sent. The reader now perceives the importance of Jesus' statements in vv. 4-5; they provide the hermeneutical key


27 On the interpretation of ἔγω in v. 4a, see Blass-Debrunner-Funk, A Greek Grammar, 238, § 455, 3.

28 See Lindars, The Gospel of John, 343, who rightly observes that these revelatory works of Jesus must be distinguished from the works which in continuation of Jesus' ministry "the disciples, and the Church after them, will perform after his exaltation."
to the correct understanding of what is to follow. This means that the healing of
the man born blind is an integral part of the works of the Father which Jesus, his
authentic envoy, accomplishes in the world and by means of which he brings
light into the world. This is the perspective in which the narrator wants the
reader to view and evaluate the events that are about to unfold.

The expression ταῦτα εἰπόν which opens v. 6 provides a close
connection with the preceding verses (vv. 3-5). Having stated that his mission is
to accomplish the works of the Father by which he brings light to the world,
Jesus now turn his attention to the man born blind and on his own initiative
proceeds to heal him. Jesus spits on the ground, forms mud from the dust of the
earth and smears the man's eyes with it (v. 6). The reader is already aware of
the fact that, as the Word of God, not only is Jesus the one through whom all
things in the created world were made (1:3), but also that, as the only Son of the
Father, he shares in the creative power of God which he exercises in his
ongoing ministry (5:17, 19-30). Thus, the mention in the present context of
Jesus making clay and smearing the blind man's eyes with it suggests to the
reader that Jesus is here engaged in a creative act. The mention in v. 1 that the
man was blind from birth already alludes to this interpretation of Jesus' gesture
as an act of creation. Just as in the beginning, the human person was shaped
from the dust of the ground (see Gen 2:7), so does Jesus grant sight to the man
born blind by a symbolic application of mud to his eyes. Jesus' creative act

29 The word here rendered as "smear" (ἐπέχρωσεν) is the best attested reading (see P66, P75, B, C, D,
L, W etc.). See however Barrett, John, 358, who opts for the reading of the Codex Vaticanus (ἐπέθηκεν)
on the grounds that ἐπέχρωσεν may be due to assimilation to v. 11, and also that it would have been
followed by an accusative instead of the ἐπι in the text. See also Lindars, The Gospel of John, 345.

30 This interpretation of v. 6 goes back to Irenaeus. See his Adversus Haereses, V, 15:2-4. For a
translation, see for instance, A. Roberts, J. Donaldson and A. Menzies, eds. Ante-Nicene Fathers:
Translations of the Writings of the Fathers down to A.D. 325. 9 vols. (Buffalo: The Christian Literature
Publishing Company, 1887-1896) 1: 543-544. Modern scholars who adopt this interpretation include:
Hoskyns, The Fourth Gospel, 354; Lightfoot, St John, 202; Léon-Dufour, Lecture, 2: 337, 351-353, F.
85. See however Lagrange, Evangile, 261, for a different interpretation of the mud used by Jesus.
brings to perfect completion (see the ἔνα τελειῶσω in 5:36) God's creative work in the man born blind.31

Jesus' action of smearing the man's eyes with mud is followed by a command to the blind man (v. 7a): ὑπαγε νῦφα εἰς τὴν κολυμβήθραν τοῦ Σιλωάμ,32 to which the narrator adds an interpretative note regarding the name of the pool: δὲ ἐρμηνεύεται Ἀπεσταλμένος. The reader who already knows and accepts Jesus as the One whom the Father has sent (3:17, 34) understands the narrator's interpretation of Siloam as a reference to Jesus himself. The healing of the man born blind will be effected in the waters of Siloam which symbolically represents Jesus who is himself the Ἀπεσταλμένος (3:17, 34; 5:36 etc.).33 The man born blind promptly obeys Jesus' command. The reader perceives the swiftness of the man's response as well as the immediacy of the result in the narrator's use of four active verbs in v. 7b: ἀπέθεεν οὖν καὶ ἐνύψατο καὶ ἤρθεν βλέπων. The blind man's prompt obedience and the equally swift miraculous consequence remind the reader of the earlier miracles of the Gospel narrative in which one finds the same sequence of command, execution, and miraculous effect (see 2:1-11; 4:46-54; 5:1-9a). In the first two instances, the disciples (2:11) and the royal official (4:53b) came to a deeper faith in Jesus, in contrast to the sick man in 5:1-9a who failed to come to faith as a result of the

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33 The Hebrew name פֶּלֶח (sīloḥ) which is found in Isa 8:6 is rendered by the LXX as Σιλωάμ. The original Hebrew form (qal infinitive) has an active meaning of "the sending forth" (of waters), rather than the passive meaning of "the sent one." However the presence of the consonants of the verb "to send" (in Hebrew שָלָה) in the name "Siloam" might have led popular etymology to establish the link with Jesus, the Sent One. For a complete discussion of the Jewish and Christian significance of "Siloam," see, in addition to the major commentaries, K. Müller, "Joh 9,7 und das jüdische Verständnis des Siloh-Spruches," BZ 13 (1969) 251-256; G. Reim, "Joh 9 - Tradition und zeitgenössische messianische Diskussion," BZ 22 (1978) 250-252; Manx, "Racines juives," 81-90; (see also his L'Evangile de Jean à la lumière du Judaïsme, SBFA 33. [Jerusalem: Franciscan Printing Press, 1991] 196-203); B. Grigsby, "Washing in the Pool of Siloam - A Thematic Anticipation of the Johannine Cross," NT 27 (1985) 227-235.
miraculous healing. Will the gift of sight lead the formerly blind man to faith in Jesus who is the light of the world (9:5)?

In v. 8, the emphasis in the narrative shifts from Jesus to the healed man as the narrator introduces a group of new characters into the narrative namely, οἱ γείτονες καὶ θεωροῦντες. The narrator informs the reader that these neighbours and acquaintances were those who were used to seeing the man as a beggar.34 Thus, the reader learns for the first time that the healed man used to be a beggar. The neighbours and acquaintances are mentioned here as those who knew him best and were fully aware of his state before the healing effected by Jesus. Their utter amazement at the fact that the man they knew so well as a blind beggar can now see is reflected in their first statement: οὐχ οὗτος ἐστιν ὁ καθήμενος καὶ προσωπιτῶν. Even though the form of the question indicates that an affirmative answer is expected, it still shows "the great difficulty they had in accepting the evidence of their senses."35 The question would thus be a reflection of the magnitude of the healing miracle. This question in v. 8b which quite naturally demands an answer divides the neighbours and acquaintances into two groups (vv. 9a-b). While some think that οὗτος ἐστιν (v. 9a), others are of the opinion that he is not the one, ἀλλὰ ὁμοιός. οὗτος ἐστιν (v. 9b). The frequent use of the imperfect tense in v. 9 (ἐλεγον: 2 times; ἐλεγεν) is an indication that the narrator is here describing a situation in which the people, in their excitement, keep talking all the time.36

The reader who already knows of the miraculous healing of the man by Jesus recognizes that, ironically, both answers of the man’s neighbours and

34 It may be noted here that the subject of the ὅτι-clause in v. 9a is anticipated in the main clause as its object. See Barrett, John, 359; Zerwick, Biblical Greek, 66, § 207.


36 See Morris, John, 482, n. 23. On the correlative use of ἄλλοι...ἄλλοι to express contrast as in vv. 9a-b, see BAGD, 40, s.v. άλλος, 1c.
acquaintances are true. He is both the same person and a new person who is "like him." In any case, the healed man himself intervenes to put an end to the speculations about his identity with an emphatic statement: ἔγω εἶμι (v. 9c). This brings the issue of the man's identity to a close. The reader is now in a position to evaluate correctly the role of the neighbours and acquaintances in vv. 8-9. As people who did not assist at the original event, their observations and remarks are intended by the narrator as a confirmation of the reality of the healing miracle. The reader here recalls that the narrator had used the same technique of making independent witnesses confirm the reality of a miracle accomplished by Jesus in two previous narratives (see 2:9 - ὁ ἄρχιτρίκλινος; 4:51 - οἱ δοῦλοι). Now that the identity of the healed man has been established, the interest of the neighbours and acquaintances shifts naturally to how he had received his sight: πῶς [ὅν] ἥνεκ' χθονάν σοι οἱ ὀφθαλμοί (v. 10). The healed man understands the question not only in terms of the means by which he came to see, but also and more importantly in terms of the person through whom he had received his sight. The reader perceives this as the reason why he places the identity of his healer in an emphatic position in his reply: ὁ ἄνθρωπος ὁ λέγωμενος Ἰησοῦς (v. 11a). This is the first time that Jesus' name is mentioned since he made his exit from the narrative scene in v. 7. The man's description of

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38 Several scholars have rightly observed that the use of the formula ἔγω εἶμι by the man has no particular theological significance. It is simply meant to establish his identity. See Blank, *Krisis*, 254, n. 6; "Das ὁτι ἔγω εἶμι ist hier nicht Selbstprädikation, sondern einfacher Identitättausweis." See also Brown, *John*, 1: 373.

Jesus may not have any particular theological significance, however, it plays the important role of keeping Jesus' name in the narrative. Having revealed the identity of his healer, the man proceeds to state the facts of the miracle: Jesus made clay, smeared his eyes with it, gave him a command which he obeyed, and as a result of which he has received his sight (ἀνεβάλες ἐπὶ τοῖς). It is clear to the reader who already knows the details of the healing that the healed man has here described the facts of the healing as he experienced them as a blind man. And so for instance, he makes no mention of Jesus' use of spittle which, as a blind person, he would not have seen.

Now that the facts of healing have been stated, it is the man's revelation of the identity of his healer which becomes the focus of attention in the ongoing exchange between him and his neighbours and acquaintances. Jesus moves into the centre of the discussion as the neighbours and acquaintances inquire about his whereabouts (v. 12a). To this question, however, the healed man simply responds: οὐκ οἶδα. The reader recalls that so far in the narrative, the issues of where Jesus "dwells" (1:38-41), where he comes from (3:31-34; 7:28-29), and where he is going back to (8:21-22) are all closely linked to the question of Jesus' true identity. Thus, the man's admission of ignorance concerning Jesus' whereabouts suggests to the reader that he is yet to discover his healer's true identity. "He too still has a long way to go to reach full faith in Jesus." In the meantime though, the narrator brings the exchange between the man and his curious neighbours and acquaintances to a close, having already

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40 See however Manns, "Racines juives," 90-94, who is of the opinion that the man's use of ἀνεβάλες in v. 11 has messianic overtones, and evokes the terms geber and ἸΣ which are used in a messianic sense in the Jewish context. See also his Evangelie, 203-207.

41 The verb ἀνεβάλες literally means "to see again," "to look up to." However it is used here (and also in vv. 15, 18) with the wider meaning of "to receive one's sight," since the man had never seen before. For this latter meaning, see BAQD, 50, s.v., 2 a, β.


achieved his aim of placing Jesus at the centre of the discussion. The reader is now aware of the fact that even though Jesus may be physically absent from the narrative, he is at the centre of the discussion, and perceives that Jesus will continue to be the focus of attention in the unfolding narrative.\textsuperscript{44}

In v. 13, the neighbours and acquaintances take the healed man to the Pharisees who for the first time make their entry into the narrative.\textsuperscript{45} The narrator does not explain why they took this course of action, and so leaves it to the reader to guess why this was done in order to fill in the gap in his/her knowledge. The healed man's confessed ignorance of his healer's whereabouts may have caused the neighbours and acquaintances to doubt the credibility of his story. In that case, they would have turned to the Pharisees to seek their opinion as to what they should make of the extraordinary claims that the man is making on behalf of Jesus. Whatever the reason, the reader senses that this was the wrong course of action, given that the Pharisees had in the past been suspicious of, if not downright hostile to Jesus (see 7:32, 45-52; 8:13).\textsuperscript{46} And as if to confirm the suspicion of the reader that trouble is looming in the distance, the narrator informs the reader for the first time that the day on which Jesus made clay and opened (\(\delta\nu\varepsilon\omega\zeta\varepsilon\nu\)) the man's eyes \(\eta\nu\ \omega\alpha\beta\alpha\tau\omega\nu\) (v. 14). Once again, the narrator has chosen to disclose a vital piece of information regarding the day of the event \textit{in medias res} (see 5:9b), and thus obliges the reader to re-evaluate the healing miracle and its immediate aftermath from a new perspective.\textsuperscript{47}


\textsuperscript{45} Even though the subject of the verb \(\delta\gamma\upsilon\omicron\upsilon\omicron\upsilon\nu\) in v. 13 is not explicitly stated, it is clear from the preceding verses (vv. 8-12) that those being referred to are the neighbours and acquaintances.


\textsuperscript{47} See above, 88-89, and n. 65. The delayed disclosure that the day of the healing was a Sabbath does not make of this fact a late addition to the text as suggested for instance by Becker, \textit{Evangelium}, 1: 315. In
Firstly, the reader now understands that in bringing the man to the Pharisees, the neighbours and acquaintances had served to bridge the scenes and to carry forward the narrative action. With the disclosure that the healing had taken place on a Sabbath and the active involvement of the Pharisees, the narrative takes a new turn. It is now firmly inserted within a specific institutional and juridical context. It is however highly improbable that the intention of the neighbours and acquaintances in bringing the man to the Pharisees was to have them determine whether or not the Sabbath has been violated.\textsuperscript{48} The Sabbath is not mentioned to explain the behaviour of those who brought the man to the Pharisees, but rather to place the narrative within a specific legal context and to help explain what is yet to unfold in the narrative. In this sense, the importance of the Sabbath motif is to be seen in the fact that it determines both the nature and the development of the narrative as a Sabbath juridical controversy.\textsuperscript{49}

Secondly, the reader is aware that, in making clay and effecting a healing in which the person's life was not in danger on the Sabbath, Jesus stands the chance of being accused of Sabbath violation. The making of clay would be unlawful under the prohibition of kneading, and healing on a Sabbath when life was not in danger was also forbidden.\textsuperscript{50} The reader is aware that there is already a juridical controversy under way between Jesus and "the Jews" centred around the issue of the Sabbath law occasioned by a Sabbath healing effected by Jesus (5:1-47).\textsuperscript{51} Given that the issues raised are yet to be resolved to the

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\textsuperscript{51} Given the apparent indiscriminate use of "the Jews" and "the Pharisees" in the present narrative (see 9:13, 15, 16, 40 [Pharisees], 9:18, 22, 24, 26, 34; 10:19 ["the Jews"]), the reader rightly assumes that
satisfaction of both parties, the reader rightly perceives that this second Sabbath healing may lead to the resumption of the juridical controversy.

In the meantime, the Pharisees turn to the healed man and inquire about how he had received his sight (v. 15a). The imperfect ἔπαθεν conveys the idea that the Pharisees were persistent in their quest for information regarding the event. The reader perceives here that, not only does the question presuppose that the neighbours and acquaintances have already repeated the man's story to the Pharisees, but also that the latter assume that a healing miracle has indeed taken place. The man gives the same account of the healing, but this time in a more succinct manner: ηλόν ἔπαθεν μου ἐπὶ τοὺς ὁφθαλμοὺς, καὶ ἐνυψώθην καὶ βλέπω. He not only leaves out Jesus' name, but he also omits such details as Jesus' making of clay and his smearing his eyes with it as well as the command to "go and wash" (see v. 11). What is the reader to make of these omissions? Are they to be attributed to the fact that the narrator does not want to bore the reader by repeating in detail facts already known to him/her?, or that the healed man intends to protect his healer and therefore omits details which could be considered as a violation of the Sabbath? If indeed the intention of the healed man was to protect Jesus from his opponents, then he certainly did not succeed. Not only do the Pharisees deduce that Jesus has violated the Sabbath, but they also link Jesus' Sabbath activity to the issue of his identity (v. 16a). The reader who recalls that the issues of Jesus' Sabbath

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they represent the same group. See Rein, *Heilung*, 86-99. See especially 86-87, 99. See however von Wahlde, "The Johannine 'Jews'," 33, who is of the opinion that the parallel use of "the Jews" and "Pharisees" suggests "the possibility of separate literary strata." See also idem, "The Terms for Religious Authorities in the Fourth Gospel: A Key to Literary Strata?" *JBL* 98 (1979) 231-253.

52 The question of how the man came to see will be repeatedly asked throughout the narrative (vv. 10, 15a, 19, 26), and the man's response providing the facts of the healing will remain basically the same (see vv. 11, 15a, 27).


activity and his true identity are at the centre of a juridical controversy which is still unresolved (5:1-47) now knows that the emergence of these same issues here will inevitably lead to resumption of the ongoing juridical controversy.\textsuperscript{55}

b). Resumption of controversy: re-statement of accusations (9:16)

The reader is now aware that the healing miracle took place on a Sabbath. The mentioning of the Sabbath, coupled with the current involvement of the Pharisees suggest to the reader the possibility of the resumption of the yet-to-be-resolved Sabbath juridical controversy between Jesus and his opponents. However, it is especially the reaction of the Pharisees to the man's account of his healing by Jesus which leaves the reader in no doubt as to the nature and future development of the narrative. On the basis of the testimony of the man and probably that of those who brought him to them, some of the Pharisees immediately attack Jesus' credentials with the claim: οὐκ ἔστιν οὗτος παρὰ θεοῦ ὁ ἀνθρώπος, ὅτι τὸ οὐκέτατον οὐ τῆρεῖ. In their view, Jesus' non observance of the Sabbath law is an indication that his claims about his identity are false. The reader recalls that Jesus' opponents made the same two accusations against him (5:18), and the resultant juridical controversy has not been brought to its term and the two issues remain unresolved.\textsuperscript{56} Thus, the reader understands that the re-statement of the two accusations in the present context signals the resumption of the Sabbath juridical controversy already under way between Jesus and his opponents.\textsuperscript{57} In other words, far from being a

\textsuperscript{55} See above, 38, n. 73.

\textsuperscript{56} See above, 150.

\textsuperscript{57} Haenchen, John, 2: 39, for instance, does not notice the fact that the role of v. 16a is to signal the resumption of the ongoing juridical controversy. This explains his position that the Pharisees' assertion that Jesus does not come from God because he breaks the Sabbath comes as a surprise in the context.
forensic trial, what has just began to unfold with the accusations in v. 16a constitutes a continuation and a development of the Sabbath juridical controversy between Jesus and "the Jews" which started in 5:1-47.58

The understanding of 9:1-10:21 as a Sabbath juridical controversy marks a significant shift from previous Johannine scholarship which had interpreted the Johannine juridical metaphor here as a trial. The difficulty with this latter interpretation is evident from the fact that, while sustaining that the text is cast in the form of a trial scene, scholars could not agree on who exactly was on trial. Some claim that it is the healed man who is on trial, and on whom "sentence is imposed on the grounds that the man acknowledges as a prophet one who is a breaker of the Law."59 Others are of the view that Jn 9 constitutes a trial of Jesus in absentia.60 However, both these positions are untenable. It is clear from the text that the healed man is not on trial because he has done nothing illicit and has not been charged with any wrongdoing. He is involved not as a defendant, but rather as a witness.61 That Jesus himself is not on trial is evident from the often repeated argument of the present study that what we have here is a purely bilateral procedure as it is found in a two-party juridical controversy, which must be distinguished from the trilateral procedure as in a trial.62

58 This thesis is one of the fundamental elements which distinguish the present study from previous Johannine scholarship on the juridical aspect of the two Sabbath conflict narratives.

59 Dodd, Interpretation, 79. See also Stibbe, John, 105; Holleran, "Seeing the Light," 6; Beasley-Murray, John, 158.

60 See Pancaro, The Law in the Fourth Gospel, 17; Weiss, "The Sabbath," 319. See also Dodd, Interpretation, 357. On his part, P. D. Duke, Irony in the Fourth Gospel. (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1985) 126, maintains that both Jesus and the healed man are tried and condemned by the Pharisees in John 9. However, it may be noted here that there is some evidence to suggest that the concept of a trial in absentia would be foreign to the Jewish legal process of the period. The Fourth Gospel itself gives a hint of this in 7:51. The Law requires that a man be present at his trial so that he can personally mount a defence, and be judged on the evidence of his claims. This principle is alluded to in Deut. 1:16. The Rabbinic principle to this effect is found in Exod. Rab. 21:3: "Unless a mortal hears the pleas that a man can put forward, he is not able to give judgment." See Brown, John, 1: 325; Barrett, John, 332.


62 See above, 27, et passim.
two-party juridical controversy, the present narrative continues the Sabbath juridical controversy between Jesus and "the Jews" which began in 5:1-47.

Jesus' opponents were apparently not convinced by his explanations of his Sabbath activities on the basis of his special relationship with the Father (see 5:17, 19-30), and are therefore ready to pursue the juridical controversy against him. As in chapter 5, those who are accusing Jesus of Sabbath violation and false christological claims disregard the fact that a healing miracle has been accomplished by Jesus, and concentrate exclusively on the evidence that it had been done on the Sabbath.63 However, there is a new development here. Some of the Pharisees present argue that the ἁμαρτωλός of Jesus cannot possibly be accomplished by a ἄνθρωπος ἁμαρτωλός (v. 16b). If he is able to perform such signs, then probably he must be from God. The use of the plural ἁμαρτωλοί is an indication that these Pharisees also have in mind the other signs performed by Jesus.64 The reader naturally calls to mind the healing miracle in chapter 5 which raised similar problems and led to the commencement of the ongoing Sabbath juridical controversy. The use of the plural ἁμαρτωλοί would thus be the narrator's subtle way of reminding the reader that the present controversy is to be placed within the wider perspective of the Sabbath controversy which started in chapter 5.

The position of the second group of Pharisees leads to a σχίσμα in the ranks of Jesus' opponents (v. 16c). Now two radically opposed views are being expressed concerning Jesus' Sabbath activity and his identity: either his Sabbath activities constitute a violation of the Law which makes him a sinner and therefore not from God, or his ἁμαρτωλός testify that he is from God and therefore not a sinner, i.e. breaker of the Law. The reader has no difficulty in

63 See J. Calloud, and F. Genuyp, L'Évangile de Jean (II). Lecture sémiotique des chapitres 7 à 12. (Lyon: Centre Thomas More, 1987) 62. In their view, it is the religious prejudice of these Pharisees which prevent them from acknowledging the miracle accomplished by Jesus.

making his/her own decision in the issue at stake. He/she is well aware that Jesus is the Word of God and the only Son from the Father (1:1, 14). Again, unlike Jesus' opponents, the reader accepts that Jesus enjoys a perfect unity of action with the Father who is himself not limited by the Sabbath observance (5:17, 19-30, 36), and that he was sent by the Father to accomplish his works (4:34; 9:4a). The conclusion is clear: Jesus' Sabbath activities do not constitute a violation of the Law; on the contrary, they testify to the fact that he is from God.

The division in the ranks of the Pharisees evidently weakens the position of those who are eager to pursue the just resumed juridical controversy. It prevents them from taking joint action against Jesus. A way needs to be found to escape from this problem. So they turn to witnesses in an effort to gather evidence which will enable them to present a unified front and pursue their accusations of Sabbath violation and false christological claims against Jesus.

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66 See Alison, "The Man Blind from Birth," 89.

67 In contrast to chapter 5 where juridical terms such as μαρτυρία and μαρτυρεῖν occur quite frequently (11 times in vv. 31-40), there is a noticeable lack of "witness" language in chapter 9. The difference is due to the fact that while in 5:31-40 we have a discourse, 9:17-27 constitutes a dramatic action. In other words, in 5:31-40, it is Jesus who adduces witnesses as part of his effort to convince his opponents of the truthfulness of his christological claims. The use of the appropriate juridical terms is therefore important in order to establish the reality of the testimony of these witnesses. On the contrary, in 9:17-27, it is through their participation in the dramatic action that the healed man and his parents emerge as witnesses in the ongoing controversy between Jesus and "the Jews." This means that it is their respective functions in the unfolding narrative which cast them in the role of witnesses. There is therefore a lack of explicit "witness" language.
c). Search for witnesses (9:17-27)

The Pharisees first turn to the healed man for his assessment of Jesus in relation to his Sabbath activity and his identity: τί οὖν λέγεις περὶ αὐτοῦ, ὅτι ἰρέωξέν σοι τοὺς ὀφθαλμούς ("what do you say of him in view of the fact that he has opened your eyes"? [v. 17a]). The conjunction ὅτι is here understood as indicating the reason for the question. The question itself suggests that at this stage of the story, the Pharisees still acknowledge the fact that a miracle has taken place, and the emphatic οὖ points to the fact that what the Pharisees are interested in is the man's personal testimony in relation to this event. Thus, the healed man who finds himself unexpectedly caught in the web of the ongoing controversy between Jesus and his opponents is now being called upon as a witness. That the healed man is a witness in the present controversy is evident to the reader from the fact that he himself has done nothing that may be deemed illicit and he has not been charged with any wrongdoing by anyone. The reader still remembers vividly that the last time the healed man had something to say about Jesus, it was nothing but ordinary, describing him as "the man called Jesus" (see v. 11). Will he now side with the Pharisees against Jesus or will he make common bond with Jesus and testify on his behalf?

The healed man is definite in his testimony: προφήτης ἔστιν. Like the Samaritan woman who, impressed by Jesus' miraculous knowledge, designates Jesus as a prophet (4:19), the healed man's experience of Jesus' healing power

68 See Blass-Debrunner-Funk, A Greek Grammar, 238, § 456 (2); Zerwick, Biblical Greek, 143-144, § 420. See also Bultmann, The Gospel of John, 334, n. 7; Barrett, John, 360. In v. 17a, the Codex Sinaiticus has περὶ αὐτοῦ instead of περὶ αὐτοῦ. E. Bammel, "Johannes 9:17," NTS 40 (1994) 455-456, thinks that this variant reading of the Sinaiticus "findet im Zusammenhang seinen Rückhalt" (455).

69 See Moloney, Signs and Shadows, 124.

70 See above, 40, n. 79.
leads him to bear witness to him as a prophet (v. 17c). While the title "prophet" in the mouth of the man may simply indicate his perception of Jesus as an extraordinary individual in whom God's power is at work, it nevertheless constitutes a clear testimony in Jesus' favour. His assertion that Jesus is a man accredited with divine power means that he sees his Sabbath healing not as an act of a sinner, but rather as an act of a man who is ἁρὰ θεοῦ (v. 16a). The similarity between the man's testimony and the position of the "dissident" Pharisees in v. 16b is not lost on the reader namely, that the magnitude of the sign which has been accomplished necessarily calls for the recognition of Jesus as a man "from God." No reaction on the part of Jesus' opponents to the healed man's testimony is reported as the narrator abruptly brings the exchange to a close. However, the discomfort of those Pharisees who are accusing Jesus of Sabbath violation and false christological claims is already evident to the reader. The position of the "dissident" Pharisees and now the testimony of the healed man have in a way established that the healing is an indication of Jesus' divine accreditation.

The case of Jesus' opponents, now designated as "the Jews" is faltering. Their accusation of Jesus of Sabbath violation and therefore of being a sinner has been weakened, and so they change their approach (v. 18). Now they refuse to believe that the man had ever been blind (v. 18a), and consequently that a miracle has ever taken place. The expression ἐως ὁτου ("until,"

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73 The term "Pharisees" and "the Jews" refer to the same group of people namely, the opponents of Jesus in the ongoing juridical controversy. See Lagrange, *Evangile*, 264-265, Gourgue, "L'aveugle-né," 388, n. 10. See also above, 167, n. 51.

"without first") indicates to the reader that "the Jews" only now decide to withhold their acknowledgement of the reality of the miracle which was presupposed by their earlier statements (see vv. 16, 17). Their strategy is clear: they seek to put the reality of the healing in doubt and thereby discredit any idea of divine accreditation of Jesus. In view of this, ἐφώνησαν τοὺς γονεῖς αὐτοῦ τοῦ ἀναβλέψαντος. The pronoun αὐτοῦ is used here proleptically, i.e. as an introduction to the noun which follows. The irony behind the narrator's description of the healed man as ὁ ἀναβλέψως in a context where "the Jews" are refusing to believe that the man was ever blind is not lost on the reader. In other words, by describing the man as ὁ ἀναβλέψως, the narrator reaffirms for the reader's belief the very thing "the Jews" are seeking to deny in disbelief.

"The Jews" want the parents of the healed man to testify in relation to three issues: the man's identity as their son, whether or not he was born blind, and how he is now able to see (v. 19). The nature of the information which "the Jews" are seeking shows that they consider the testimony of the healed man as unreliable, and think that his claim to have been born blind is false. The parents confirm the identity of their son and the fact that he was born blind: οἶδαμεν ὅτι οὗτος ἐστιν ὁ υἱὸς ἡμῶν καὶ τυφλὸς ἐγεννήθη (v. 20). This declaration certainly deals a severe blow to the position of Jesus' opponents. It puts the reality of the miracle beyond doubt, and at the same time gives further strength to the argument that Jesus is indeed from God. The parents understand the question of how their son is now able to see not only in the sense of "by what means," but also "by whom" he has been healed. And so they reply that they do not know (οὐκ οἶδαμεν) how or by whom their son had been healed (v.

75 On the proleptic use of pronouns, see Zerwick, Biblical Greek, 65, § 204-205.

76 See Holleran, "Seeing the Light," 369. See also Staley, "Stumbling in the Dark," 66, on the significance of the narrator's use of different epithets to describe the healed man in vv. 8, 13, 17, 18, 24. The expression τοῦ ἀναβλέψαντος is omitted in P66 and some minor witnesses. They seem to have considered it as repetitious and therefore dispensable, a fact which would point to its originality. See Brown, John, 1: 373; Schnackenburg, The Gospel according to John, 2: 498, n. 29.
21a). The reader already knows that a similar question about the how of the man's ability to see had been understood in the sense of "by what means" and "by whom" his eyes had been opened (see vv. 10-11). This enables the narrator to keep the central issue of Jesus' identity within the view of the reader. Thus, the reader does not consider the parents' allusion to τίς ἡμοιός αὐτοῦ τούς ὑπερλαμοῦς as an indication that they are dissimulating.77 After all, there is no indication in the narrative that the parents were present when the healing took place, or even that they have already learnt about the healing of their son by Jesus.78 Since the parents consider themselves incapable of bearing witness to an event at which they have not assisted, they naturally refer their interlocutors to their son whom they describe as ἡλικίαν ἔχει. In the context of the ongoing juridical controversy, the reader no doubt understands ἡλικίαν ἔχει as a reference to the age of legal acceptability.79 The parents would thus be saying that their son is old enough to testify in a juridical context about how and by whom he came to see. The humour and the irony are overwhelming. "The Jews" had refused to accept the testimony of the healed man (v. 18a), and had summoned his parents in the hope of learning something new which might help them in their juridical controversy against Jesus.80 In testifying that their son had been born blind (v. 20), the parents have irrefutably confirmed that a miracle has indeed taken place. Now, on the crucial question of how and by whom the miracle had been performed, they refer "the Jews" to their son, and ironically, to the testimony he has already given, and which they are refusing to


78 Several Johannine scholars seem to take this fact for granted. See for instance, Schnackenburg, The Gospel according to John, 2: 249; Carson, John, 369. However, see Morris, John, 487.

79 See Brown, John, 1: 374; Barrett, John, 361, and the other major commentaries.

80 See Zevini, Vangelo secondo Giovanni, 1: 297, who rightly observes that the nature of the information which "the Jews" were seeking from the parents of the healed man shows that they are engaged in "una affanosa ricerca di un'antitestimonia su Gesù."
accept.\textsuperscript{81} What will "the Jews" do next? The reader will have to wait for the answer to this question as the narrator intrudes a comment into the narrative at this point.

The narrator informs the reader that the parents of the healed man spoke as they did ὅτι ἐφοβοῦντο τοὺς Ἰουδαίους (v. 22a). This new information obliges the reader to revisit his/her earlier understanding of the statement of the parents in the preceding verse (v. 21). It is now clear to the reader that their response to the last question of "the Jews" (v. 19b) was motivated by their fear of "the Jews." This means that it was likely that they already knew that it was Jesus who had healed their son. Thus, the disclosure in v. 22a enables the reader to fill the gap in his/her knowledge and to come to a more complete understanding of the parents' response in v. 21. The narrator then proceeds to explain the reason for the fear of the healed man's parents to the reader by means of an analepsis.\textsuperscript{82} The reader is told that at some unspecified point in the narrative past, "the Jews" had agreed to put out of the synagogue (ἀποστολὴ γέννηται) anyone who acknowledged publicly Jesus as the Christ (v. 22b). It is for this reason that the parents are unwilling to get involved in the ongoing juridical controversy (v. 23).\textsuperscript{83} The narrator's use of the verb

\textsuperscript{81} See P. D. Duke, \textit{Irony}, 120-121.

\textsuperscript{82} On the literary technique of "analepsis," see above, 130, n. 192.

ἐπερωτήσατε (v. 23) instead of the ἐρωτήσατε employed by the parents (v. 21b) is a subtle reminder to the reader of the juridical context within which the present exchange is taking place.  

The testimony of the healed man's parents has failed to yield the kind of results those "Jews" opposing Jesus were hoping for. It is now obvious that the man had indeed been born blind, and that his claim to have been healed by Jesus needs to be taken seriously. However, since "the Jews" have already made up their mind that Jesus was not the Christ (v. 22b), any recognition of the reality of the healing would contradict their stand on Jesus and undermine their ability to pursue the ongoing juridical controversy against him. So they summon the healed man for the second time. Since they have been unable to get around the fact that a notable miracle has taken place, "the Jews" leave aside the issue of the miracle, and adjure him to "give glory to God" (v. 24a). The expression δὸς δόξαν τῷ θεῷ is an oath formula employed before taking testimony or a confession of guilt (see Josh 7:19; 1 Chron 30:6-9; Jer 13:16; 1 Esdr 9:8; m. Sanhedrin 6:2). The use of the formula here indicates that "the Jews" want the man to testify under oath to the truth. The truth they want the man to declare is what they themselves have in mind: ἴμεῖς οἴδαμεν ὅτι σῶτος ὁ ἁμαρτωλός ἔστιν (v. 24b). In their view, Jesus has broken the Sabbath law, and is therefore a sinner.  

The emphatic position of the pronoun ἴμεῖς together with the use of the verb οἴδαμεν indicate to the reader that "the Jews" are here employing the "argument of authority" in order to get out of the healed man what they want to

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84 On the use of ἐπερωτάω in juridical contexts, see BAGD, s.v., 1, b; Staley, "Stumbling in the Dark," 68.

85 Pancaro, The Law in the Fourth Gospel, 30-52, has convincingly argued that ἁμαρτωλός in Jn 9 is explicitly connected with the Sabbath law, and that ἁμαρτωλός ἔστιν "represents a judgment based upon a specific understanding of Jesus' relationship to the Law: he is a «sinner» because he does not have a correct attitude toward the Law, because he habitually violates the Sabbath" (47). This attempt to accuse Jesus of being a ἁμαρτωλός, i.e. breaker of the law, is to be carefully distinguished from what, in the view of the Fourth Gospel, is the impossibility of accusing Jesus of ἁμαρτία (see 8:46) which would imply the commission of morally reprehensible acts. Jesus is "from above," and as such, he is ἡ χάρις ἁμαρτίας (see 49-51).
hear. What they perceive as Jesus' breach of the Sabbath leaves them in no
doubt that he is a sinner (see v. 16), and they want the man to testify to this fact
in deference to their authority (v. 24a). The issue of the Sabbath law
continues to be crucial to the unfolding narrative as the focal point around
which the ongoing juridical controversy is centred. It can therefore not be
considered as "incidental in the development of ch. ix."  

However, the reader perceives that a testimony to the effect that Jesus is
a sinner, i.e., breaker of the Law, will mean that the man will have to withdraw
his earlier declaration that Jesus is a prophet (v. 17b), i.e., a man endowed with
divine power. This will in turn constitute a denial of the fact that he has been
healed by Jesus. In sum, it means that, in order to tell "the Jews" what they want
to hear from him, the healed man will have to give a false witness under oath
(see v. 24a). The irony of the situation could not have been greater. The
healed man has been adjudged to tell the truth in order to get out of him what he
and the reader know to be a lie. There is no wonder then that he refuses to
give in to their demands. He rejects their attempt to make him interpret what he
has experienced in Jesus from their perspective. And so, to their arrogant claim
of knowing (ἵμεῖς οἴδαμεν) that Jesus is a sinner, the healed man simply replies:
εἰ ἀμαρτωλός ἐστιν οὐκ οἶδα (v. 25a). This statement does not mean that the
healed man is acknowledging that Jesus may have broken the Sabbath law, and
may therefore be technically a ἀμαρτωλός. It is simply a polite way of
dissociating himself from the claim of "the Jews." It should therefore be rendered

86 See Blank, Krisis, 259.

87 Brown, John, 1: 379. See also Lindars, The Gospel of John, 346. Beasley-Murray, John, 156, has
rightly observed that "the fact that the healing took place on the Sabbath controls much of the discussion
and course of events."

88 See Alison, "The Man Blind from Birth," 90.

89 See Lagrange, Evangelie, 267.

90 Such a position is held by scholars such as Brown, John, 1: 374; Bultmann, The Gospel of John,
336, n. 2, who then sees a certain contradiction between εἰ ἀμαρτωλός ἐστιν οὐκ οἶδα and v. 17.
as: "That he is a sinner, of that I know nothing."\(^*^91\) The man is fully aware that "their arrogant certitude conflicts with his own experience that he has been healed by Jesus and he will not relinquish his hold on this fact."\(^*^92\) It is the only thing he claims to know: \(\varepsilon\nu\ \omega\delta\alpha\ \omega\tau\iota\ \tau\upsilon\phi\lambda\omicron\varsigma\ \dot{\omega}\nu\ \dot{\alpha}r\iota\ \beta\lambda\epsilon\iota\nu\). The use of \(\varepsilon\nu\) adds a special nuance of insistence and certitude to what the man claims to know.\(^*^93\) The concessive present participle \(\dot{\omega}\nu\) is here used in place of the imperfect \(\eta\mu\eta\nu\) to highlight the continuous aspect of the man's previous state: "though I was blind, now I see."\(^*^94\) This knowledge is totally based on his personal experience of the power which is at work in Jesus.\(^*^95\) Thus, if the intention of "the Jews" was to push aside the divisive issue of the reality of the healing (v. 16) and focus exclusively on the alleged Sabbath violation (v. 24), then their efforts have ended in a failure. The healed man once again places the fact of the healing squarely before them and challenges them to face up to the dilemma already enunciated in v. 16b and to draw the inevitable conclusion regarding the identity of Jesus.

The healed man succeeds in his attempt to put the issue of the healing at the centre of the ongoing exchange. However, contrary to his expectation of forcing "the Jews" to draw the logical conclusion of acknowledging that Jesus is from God, the only thing they choose to do is to inquire for the third time (see vv. 15a, 19b) how he had received his sight (v. 26). Are they hoping that the

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\(^*^91\) On this interpretation of the particle \(\epsilon\iota\) as "that" instead of the usual rendering of "whether," see C. Burchard, "El. nach einem Ausdruck des Wissens oder Nichtwissens: Joh 9:25; Act 19:2; 1 Cor 1:16; 7:16," ZNW 52 (1961) 73-82. He rightly observes that \(\epsilon\iota\) "würde gut in den Zusammenhang passen ... wenn man [9:25a] übersetzt: «Davon, daß er Sünder sein soll, weiß ich nichts» (81); Bligh, "The Man Born Blind," 140; Pancaro, The Law in the Fourth Gospel, 21, and n. 48.

\(^*^92\) Schnackenburg, The Gospel according to John, 2: 251.

\(^*^93\) See de la Potterie, "\(\Omega\delta\alpha\ \epsilon\tau\gamma\nu\varsigma\omicron\varsigma\)\)," 712-713, who rightly observes that "La nuance est ici: «mais il est une chose que je sais fort bien»."\n
\(^*^94\) On the use of the concessive participle, see Blass-Debrunner-Funk, A Greek Grammar, 215, § 418 (3); on the use of the present tense in place of the imperfect to denote a continuous state, see Zerwick, Biblical Greek, 92, § 274.

man might contradict himself, and thus provide them with a new information which would count decisively against Jesus. In any case, their repeated questions about how the man had been healed leave the reader in no doubt as to their frustration and their insincerity which has resulted in their present dilemma. Once again, the questions of "the Jews" presuppose that they acknowledge that a miracle has occurred (see v. 15a). The use of the transitive form ἠνοίξεν (v. 26b) points to Jesus as the healer.

However, the insincerity of "the Jews" is by now obvious to the healed man; he knows that they are not in the least interested in knowing what exactly happened, but rather they simply expect him to tell them what they want to hear. The man therefore refuses to go over his story again on the grounds that ἐπον ὑμῖν ἤδη καὶ οὐκ ἡκούσατε (v. 27a). The reader understands οὐκ ἡκούσατε here not only in the sense of "not paying attention," but also in the sense of "refusing to believe" (see v. 18). "The Jews" have refused to believe his testimony, and for that reason, the man now wonders τι πάλιν θέλετε ἀκούειν. Since the verb θέλειν by nature prefers an aorist dependent infinitive, the use of the present infinitive (ἀκούειν) here may carry a special nuance. In that case, the meaning of the question will be: "why do you want to hear it over and over again?" The healed man follows his first question with another one: μή καὶ ὑμεῖς θέλετε αὐτοῦ μαθήται γενέσθαι (v. 27b). The negative μή which introduces the question indicates that the expected answer is "No." The force of this μή of "cautious assertion" is best conveyed by rendering the question as


98 p66 and a few manuscripts of the Old Latin (lat) and the Syrus Sinaiticus (sy9) omit the negative οὐκ, giving the meaning: "I told you and you heard me." This however appears to be a lectio facilior, and it is rightly rejected by modern scholars. See for instance, Schnackenburg, The Gospel according to John, 2: 498, n. 37.

99 See Blass-Debrunner-Funk, A Greek Grammar, 174, § 338 (2). See for instance v. 27b where θέλειν is followed normally by an aorist infinitive (γενέσθαι). See also Lagrange, Evangelio, 267; Morris, John, 491, n. 39; Delebecque, Evangile de Jean, 171.
follows: "Don't tell me that you too want to become his disciples?" Thus, the reader understands the man's question as constituting a tentative suggestion rather than as a mockery of "the Jews." However, the reader is also aware that the question of the healed man is not without its irony. "The Jews" who are Jesus' opponents in the ongoing juridical controversy have shown nothing but hostility and contempt toward Jesus (see 5:16, 18; 9:16a, 24); a fact which makes the healed man's tentative suggestion to them all the more ironical.

"The Jews" understand the καὶ ὑμεῖς ("you too") of the man's question not only as an affront to them personally, but also an indication that the man is himself a disciple of Jesus. However, the reader knows better. The healed man is not yet a disciple, but can at best be described as a prospective disciple. In any case, there is the possibility that their perception of the healed man as a disciple of Jesus may modify radically the nature of the exchange between "the Jews" and the healed man. Up until now, "the Jews" had considered the man as a witness from whom they could gather information which could be used in their juridical controversy with Jesus. In other words, "the Jews" considered him as a witness on their side in the present bilateral dispute. However, so far the man has failed to tell them what they want to hear. It is natural then that their perception of him now as a disciple of Jesus should lead to a change of attitude towards the man which will in turn modify the nature of the ongoing exchange.

100 For this translation, see for instance, Brown, John, 1: 370; Barrett, John, 362. On the use of ὑμεῖς in cautious assertions, see Moulton-Howard-Turner, Grammar, 1: 192-194.

101 See Lindars, The Gospel of John, 348; Moloney, Signs and Shadows, 126. Against Staley, "Stumbling in the Dark," 68, and Dockery, "John 9:1-41," 21, both of whom are of the opinion that the question is meant to be sarcastic.
d). **Defence controversy and its aftermath (Jn 9:28-38)**

The healed man's interpretation of the insistence of "the Jews" that he goes over the facts of the miracle again as an indication that perhaps they too want to become Jesus' disciples (v. 27) changes not only their perception of him as witness in the present controversy, but also the very nature of the exchange between "the Jews" and himself. Up until this point of the narrative, "the Jews" have treated the man with respect, trying to get out of him something which they hope would count decisively against Jesus in the ongoing juridical controversy. However, now that they perceive him as an undesirable witness for their case, their attitude towards him changes as they heap abuse on him: καὶ ἐλοιδόρησαν αὐτόν (v. 28α). The fact that now for the first time, "the Jews" insult the man is an indication not only of their frustration, but also of their perception of him as an ally of Jesus. That they now perceive him as siding with Jesus is confirmed by their next statement: οὐ μαθητεύει τὸ ἐκείνου (v. 28β). The present context of anger and insults suggests to the reader that the demonstrative pronoun ἐκείνου is used here with a touch of contempt, and should therefore be rendered as "that fellow."  

While they speak disparagingly of the healed man as "a disciple of that fellow," "the Jews" describe themselves, no doubt with a sense of pride, as

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102 As explained above (see 26-27), the defence controversy is a third party intervention in an ongoing juridical controversy on behalf of one of the parties in the conflict. In the present context, the defence controversy is found in vv. 28-34 where the healed who had hitherto acted as a witness begins to side openly with Jesus against his opponents. The end of the defence controversy is marked by the casting out of the healed in v. 34, as well as the entrance of Jesus onto the narrative scene. Thus, vv. 35-38 are best understood as the aftermath of the defence controversy and it is marked by the encounter between Jesus and the man who has just defended him before his opponents. Since what transpires between the two in vv. 35-38 is the direct consequence of the man's activity both as a witness and in the defence controversy, it is preferable, in my opinion, to read both vv. 28-34 (defence controversy) and vv. 35-38 (aftermath) together. It must however be made clear that there is no question of the defence controversy continuing beyond v. 34.

disciples of Moses: ἡμεῖς δὲ τοῦ Μωϋσέως ἐσμέν μαθηταί (v. 28γ). The particle δὲ is intended to establish a contrast between "the Jews" and the man on the one hand, and between Jesus and Moses on the other hand. The basis of the opposition is the Sabbath law. On the one hand, "the Jews" speak scornfully of the healed man as Jesus' disciple because of his refusal to testify against someone they consider as a breaker of the Sabbath law, and therefore a sinner. On the other hand, they describe themselves as disciples of Moses because they scrupulously observe the Law, including of course the Sabbath law, given through Moses. Thus, the Sabbath question continues to be important to the unfolding narrative. The reader however knows that this opposition between Jesus and Moses, i.e., between Jesus and the Law, is completely wrong. Firstly, as the unique Son of the Father, Jesus enjoys the same prerogative as the Father. This means that, far from being a violation of the Law, Jesus' Sabbath work is a participation in and a continuation of God's uninterrupted work of creation (5:17, 19-30). Secondly, the Law which is God's former gift given through the mediation of Moses finds its perfection in God's new gift which is the truth, and which is given through Jesus Christ (1:17-18). This means that the two are not opposed in any way; on the contrary, the writings of Moses in the Law bear witness to Jesus and, properly understood, lead to faith in him (see 5:39-40).

After describing themselves as disciples of Moses, "the Jews" now indicate the reason for their acceptance of Moses: ἡμεῖς οἴδαμεν ὅτι Μωυσῆς λέει λήμνηκεν ὁ Θεός, τούτων δὲ οὐκ οἴδαμεν πόθεν ἐστίν (v. 29). The emphatic use of ἡμεῖς underscores the absolute certainty of "the Jews" about their knowledge that God has spoken to Moses, and that these words have an enduring value (the perfect λέει λήμνηκεν). Since Moses' words are of divine origin

104 On the expression "disciples of Moses," see Barrett, John, 362-363.
105 See Moloney, Belief in the Word, 46-48.
(see Exod 33:11; Num 12:2-8), it follows logically that anyone who does not observe the Sabbath law given through him opposes God himself, and cannot come from God (v. 16). This means that the assertion of "the Jews": τούτων δὲ οὐκ ὑπάρχειν πόθεν ἐστίν seeks to question the credibility of Jesus' claim to be from God. In other words, what "the Jews" are saying is that they do not know who could possibly have mandated Jesus to act in the way he is doing. In their view, it could not be God, since the Sabbath law which, to their understanding, Jesus keeps violating had been given by God himself through Moses. The reader however knows that what was intended by "the Jews" in v. 29b as an expression of contempt is in reality an admission of their failure to understand God's works as manifested in the ongoing mission of Jesus. The issues of Jesus' origin and identity, as well as that of his mission are intimately related (7:28-29), and his Sabbath activities can only be understood in the light of his unique relationship with the Sabbath God of Israel (5:17, 19-30). Thus to the reader, for "the Jews" to admit their ignorance about Jesus' origin means that they neither know his true identity nor do they understand his ongoing mission. It also means that they do not understand the words which God spoke to Moses (5:45-47). It is this ignorance and this lack of understanding which have occasioned their present Sabbath juridical controversy.

The change in the attitude of "the Jews" towards the healed man whom they now perceive as an ally of Jesus leads to a corresponding change in the attitude of the healed man. Up until this point of the narrative, the healed man has taken no initiative of his own, and has limited himself to a bare description of the facts of the healing as he experienced it (vv. 15b, 25b). Even when the Pharisees explicitly asked for his testimony, he described Jesus with the rather general term of "prophet" (v. 17b). Now however, the latest attempt by "the

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106 See de la Potterie, "οἶδα et γινώσκω," 717, n. 2; Lagrange, Evangile, 267.

Jews" to question Jesus' divine mandate (v. 29b) leads him to take a clear stand for Jesus and to portray himself as his defender.

If earlier in the narrative, the man had simply been the occasion for the resumption of, and an independent witness in the Sabbath juridical controversy between Jesus and "the Jews," now he enters into the dispute, and engages himself in a defence controversy on behalf of Jesus. The reader who is familiar with Jewish juridical procedures knows that, as a second stage intervention, the defence controversy presupposes an ongoing controversy, and is therefore not an additional or separate controversy. As a prise de position in favour of one of the two disputants, the defence controversy does not in any way undermine the bilateral nature of the ongoing controversy.

The healed man begins his defence controversy with an ironic expression of amazement at the declared ignorance of "the Jews" concerning Jesus' origin despite the unprecedented healing miracle he has performed: ἐν τούτῳ γὰρ τὸ θαυμαστὸν ἑστιν, ὅτι ὑμεῖς οὐκ οἴδατε πόθεν ἑστίν, καὶ ἥνοιξέν mou τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς (v. 30). The truly astonishing thing (τὸ θαυμαστὸν), in the view of the healed man, is that while they claim to know (ἡμεῖς οἴδαμεν) that Moses' mission was of divine origin (v. 29a), they should be so unbelieving as to pretend to be ignorant of Jesus' divine origin, even though there is a compelling evidence to this effect. The καὶ which has an adversative sense here ("and yet") is intended to highlight the contradiction inherent in the attitude of "the Jews." What the healed man would thus be saying to them is that the knowledge of the word of God given through Moses which they claim to possess should have enabled them to discern Jesus' origin in the light of the

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108 On the nature of the "defence controversy," see above, 26-27, and n. 46. P. Varro, "Lire Saint Jean. L'aveugle guéri," Evangelie (cahiers bibliques) 86 (1972) 5-22, has observed that the repeated questioning of the healed man by his interlocutors, coupled with their persistent refusal to accept his testimony transform him into a "témoin conscient" on Jesus' behalf. "De la passivité de l'ignorance, il est arrivé à la lumière et à l'engagement" (15).

109 On the adversative use of the καὶ, see Blass-Debrunner-Funk, A Greek Grammar, 227, § 442 (1); Zerwick, Biblical Greek, 153, § 455a.
miracle he has performed. The emphatic ὑμεῖς not only underscores the self-proclaimed ignorance of "the Jews," but it also implies with subtle irony that the healed man after all knows more than they do.\textsuperscript{110} The reader here perceives the importance of the motif of "knowing" (οἶδα) and "not knowing" (οὐκ οἶδα) in the unfolding narrative, as the narrator keeps contrasting what both "the Jews" and the healed claim to know or not to know. The reader recalls that earlier in the narrative, "the Jews" had claimed to know that Jesus is a sinner (v. 24). To this claim, the healed man had simply replied: οὐκ οἶδα (v. 25a). Now, "the Jews" make another claim of not knowing the origin of Jesus (v. 29a), and this time, with an ironic expression of astonishment, the healed man suggests that he knows the origin of Jesus (v. 30).

The healed man is ready to take his defence controversy in Jesus' favour a step further by indicating to "the Jews" what he sees as Jesus' origin. His point of departure is a principle concerning the way God relates to human beings: οἶδαμεν ὅτι ἀμαρτωλῶν ὁ θεὸς οὐκ ἀκούει, ἀλλ' ἔως τις θεοθείης ἡ καὶ τὸ θέλημα αὐτοῦ ποιή τούτου ἀκούει (v. 31). The expression οἶδαμεν ὅτι has already been used by the narrator to convey the idea of a fact which is universally known and accepted by all.\textsuperscript{111} The reader, for instance, calls to mind a similar use of this expression by Nicodemos in his conversation with Jesus (3:2). Thus, in the present context, the healed man's use of οἶδαμεν ὅτι is intended to remind "the Jews" of a principle which they know and acknowledge as true.\textsuperscript{112} The principle is stated both negatively and positively. On the one hand, that God does not listen to sinners, and on the other hand,

\textsuperscript{110} See Holleran, "Seeing the Light," 375.

\textsuperscript{111} See de la Potterie, "οἶδα et γινώσκω," 712; Haenchen, John, 2: 40, interprets οἶδαμεν as "It is generally acknowledged."

\textsuperscript{112} See Blank, Krasis, 260; Morris, John, 492. In the view of Ressegue, "John 9," 300, the use of "we know" underscores the authoritative posture of the healed man. See also Holleran, "Seeing the Light," 209. On his part, Bultmann, The Gospel of John, 337, sees in the use of οἶδαμεν an indication that the healed man is claiming that "he too is a disciple of Moses."
that God listens to anyone (τούτου ἀκούει) who worships him and does his will. The verb ἀκούειν with the genitive of the person (here τούτου) carries the added nuance of "to listen / hear with one's own ears."\(^{113}\) What the healed man would thus be saying is that God listens to the prayer of the just person in a swift and immediate manner as he experienced in his encounter with Jesus (see v. 7b). The basis of this principle is to be found in the OT traditions (see Pss 66:16-19; 109:7; Prov 15:29; Isa 1:15; Job 27:8-9; 35:12-13).\(^{114}\) The conclusion of the healed man is obvious to the reader: since God has bestowed his divine power on Jesus as evidenced by the healing, Jesus must be a devout person who does God's will. He cannot therefore be a sinner, i.e., a breaker of the Law. This is the healed man's response to the accusation that Jesus is a sinner (9:16ab, 24).

As for his response to the accusation of false christological claims (9:16aa, 29b), he bases his argument on the uniqueness of the healing accomplished by Jesus. He has opened the eyes of a man born blind, something nobody has ever done ἐκ τοῦ αἰῶνος (v. 32).\(^{115}\) The expression ἐκ τοῦ αἰῶνος οὗ ("from eternity...not") here refers to the beginning of the world, and therefore to God's creative activity. This allusion to creation recalls to the mind of the reader both Jesus' earlier claim to exercise the same creative power as the Sabbath God of Israel (5:17, 19-30), and the fact that the healed man had been blind ἐκ γενετῆς (9:1). In healing the man born blind on a Sabbath, Jesus continues the creative work of God which is not interrupted by the Sabbath rest. This means that by giving him something he was born without, Jesus, as it were, brings God's

\(^{113}\) See Delebecque, Evangile de Jean, 171; BAGD, 32, s.v. ἀκούει, 1 (c).

\(^{114}\) The term θεοφόβος constitutes a hapax legomenon in the New Testament. It has the basic meaning of "god-fearing," "devout." See BAGD, s.v., 358. Bultmann, The Gospel of John, 337, n. 2, thinks that the combination of this rather hellenistic term with the more Jewish expression τὸ θέλημα αὐτοῦ ποιεῖ "is most unusual."

\(^{115}\) There is no record of a miraculous healing of a person born blind in the OT. Tobias who is the only person whose sight was restored (Tob 11:12-13) was, of course, not born blind. See Brown, John, 1: 375.
creative work in this man to its perfect completion (see 5:36). The healed man
now draws the logical conclusion of his argument in relation to Jesus' origin: \( \varepsilon \mu \eta \ \dot{\eta} \nu \ \sigma \sigma \omega \tau \sigma \tau \ \pi \rho \alpha \ \theta \varepsilon \sigma \upsilon ', \) \( \dot{o} \kappa \ \dot{h} \dot{d} \nu \nu \alpha \tau \sigma \ \pi \omega \lambda \acute{e} \nu \ \dot{o} \dot{d} \dot{e} \nu \) ("if this man were not
from God [but he is], he could do nothing [but he has accomplished an unheard
of healing"]).\(^{116}\) To state it in positive terms, Jesus is from God as it can be seen
from what he has accomplished.\(^{117}\)

The healed man has defended Jesus against the accusations of Sabbath
violation and false christological claims on the basis of shared beliefs and
traditions. The reader could not agree more with him. Firstly, the fact that God's
power is at work in Jesus means that he cannot possibly be a sinner, i.e., a
breaker of the Sabbath law. Secondly, the unprecedented nature of the healing
shows that there must be a special relationship between Jesus who brings God's
creative work in the man to completion and the God of creation himself.\(^ {118}\)
These are the basic truths that Jesus' opponents have so far failed to grasp, but
which the narrator on his/her part, seeks to communicate to the reader. Jesus'
Sabbath healings (5:1-47; 9:1-10:21), far from being a violation of the Sabbath,
underscore both the unique relationship between Jesus and the Father and

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\(^{116}\) The particle \( \dot{d} \nu \) is missing in this "unreal" apodosis. For an explanation of this, see Zerwick,
*Biblical Greek*, 109, § 319. The use of the double negative is intended for emphasis. See Blass-

\(^{117}\) Several scholars maintain that the argument that Jesus' miracles indicate his divine origin is at best a
weak one. The text which is often cited in support of this view is Exod 7:10-11 where it is said that
Pharaoh's sorcerers were able to imitate Aaron's miracle. See Brown, *John*, 1: 373; Carson, *John*, 368,
375. However, in my opinion, the argument here is not based simply on the fact that Jesus performed a
miracle, but rather on the *unheard-of-nature* of the miracle accomplished by Jesus. Thus, while the text
does not seek to contradict the idea that miracles can come from other spiritual powers beside the true God
(see for instance Deut 13:1-5; Matt 24:14 etc.), it maintains that the uniqueness of Jesus' miracle which
is here to be understood as a creative act (see vv. 6, 32, and above, 161-162) undoubtedly points to the
fact that he is from God. See Haenchen, *John*, 2: 40, who rightly points out that the unique character of
the miracle makes it "an entirely certain and reliable form of legitimation." See also Labahn, *Jesus als
Lebensspender*, 337: "Jesus als Blindenheiler, noch dazu als Heiler eines von Geburt an Blinden,
partizipiert an der göttlichen Macht, mehr noch, er trägt selbst göttliche Züge."

\(^{118}\) Dockery, "John 9:1-41," 21, aptly observes that "the hearers and readers can only embrace this truth
or blind their own eyes to such." The claims that the healed man is here making in Jesus' favour namely,
that Jesus has a special relationship with the God whose creative work he continues are quite similar to
the claims that Jesus himself makes in defence of his Sabbath healing at the beginning of the ongoing
controversy (see 5:17, 19-30).
"God's creative power mediated through Jesus." The stage is now set for the reaction of "the Jews" to the healed man's defence controversy. Will they accept his arguments based on shared beliefs and traditions? (v. 31), or will they reject them and in so doing distance themselves from a principle which is part of the OT beliefs and traditions they claim to uphold?

However, the reply of "the Jews" makes no attempt to address the substance of the healed man's argument. It concentrates solely on the person of the healed man: ἐν ἀμαρτίαις σὺ ἐγενήθης ὅλος καὶ σὺ διδάσκεις ἡμᾶς. The fact that "the Jews" respond to the man's argument with insults is a clear indication that they are at a loss as to how to counter the argument, and therefore seek to silence him. The expression ἐν ἀμαρτίαις σὺ ἐγενήθης ὅλος suggests to the reader that "the Jews" have in mind the particular state of the healed man who was born blind. They imply that the man's congenital blindness was the punishment for some prenatal sin. However, the reader knows that such an explanation of the man's previous state has already been rejected by Jesus and is therefore not only unacceptable, but also ludicrous (v. 3). The irony of the situation though is that, in admitting that the man had been born blind, "the Jews" actually contradict themselves. They now unwittingly acknowledge that the man had been born blind and that Jesus had indeed opened his eyes, the very facts they had earlier on refused to believe (see v. 18).

That "the Jews" only accept facts when they suit them shows not only how inconsistent they are, but also that they have reached a dead end in their argument. The indignation and the outrage of "the Jews" at what they perceive as the man's attempt to lecture them (καὶ σὺ διδάσκεις ἡμᾶς) is graphically expressed in their final act: καὶ ἐξέβαλον αὐτὸν ἐξω. The reader

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understands this to mean that they ejected the man from their presence.121 So "the Jews" bring the healed man's defence controversy on Jesus' behalf to an abrupt end. But the healed man has already made his point which the reader wholeheartedly accepts. Thus, to the question of "the Jews": καὶ οὖ διδάσκεις ἠμῶς, the reader responds in the affirmative. "He of all people has taught them, and done so with savvy as well as insight."122 What happens next to this man who, at the cost of personal insults, has defended Jesus before his opponents?

The immediate aftermath of the defence controversy is marked by an encounter between the healed man and the person he had defended before "the Jews." The passage from the end of the defence controversy to its immediate aftermath is indicated by the narrator's introduction of Jesus onto the narrative scene (v. 35). The reader has been aware all along that even though Jesus has been bodily absent since v. 8, he has remained the real centre of the discussion up to this point. He is the one who is involved in a juridical controversy with "the Jews." Now the narrator reintroduces Jesus physically into the narrative action, and this results in the second encounter between Jesus and the healed man (v. 35). Once again, the initiative belongs to Jesus (see vv. 6-7). He is the subject of three active verbs: he hears (ὢκουεῖν) about the man's plight, finds him (ἐὑρόν), and addresses him (ἐπιθεῖν). As was the case with the healed man in 5:14, the reader understands εὑρόν as indicating a deliberate and conscious effort on the part of Jesus to seek the man out, rather than suggesting a chance meeting between the two of them.123 Jesus' action of finding the man is a clear

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121 This is also the view of Bernard, The Gospel according to St John, 2: 337; Brown, John, 1: 375; Moloney, The Gospel of John, 295. However, other scholars understand the expression as indicating some kind of formal excommunication of the healed man. See for instance, Barrett, John, 364; Morris, John, 493; Carson, John, 375. In my opinion, Lagrange, Evangile, 269, is right in maintaining that the idea of a formal act of expulsion or excommunication is not present in the text, and should therefore be considered as a conjecture.

122 Duke, Irony, 123.

123 Pace Bauer, Johannesevangelium, 40, 81, 137. See however, Hoskyns, The Fourth Gospel, 359, who rightly observes that in the Fourth Gospel, the verb εὑρίσκειν "is never descriptive of a merely fortuitous meeting." See also Lindars, The Gospel of John, 350.
indication that the two are making common cause in the ongoing controversy between Jesus and "the Jews." However, the reader is aware that even though the man may have defended Jesus before "the Jews," he is yet to come to a full understanding of Jesus' identity. This is evident in his earlier description of Jesus as "prophet" (v. 17b) and as a man "from God" (v. 33), which, as the reader already knows, falls short of who Jesus truly is. This encounter between Jesus and the man is therefore intended to enable the latter to come to full faith in Jesus.124

The first words of Jesus to the healed man is in the form of a question: οGeneratedValue εἰς τὸν ὤλον τοῦ ἀνθρώπου (v. 35b).125 The personal pronoun οὗ is emphatic, and it is intended to contrast the healed man with "the Jews" who in rejecting his testimony, have refused to believe in Jesus. The question may therefore be translated freely as: "Do you, in contrast to those who cast you out, believe in the Son of Man?"126 The time for decision-making has finally arrived for the healed man. Jesus is asking of him a commitment of faith in the Son of Man. The reader is already familiar with the expression "Son of Man" as applied to Jesus (see 1:51; 3:13-14; 5:27; 6:27, 53, 62). It describes Jesus in his capacity as the one who makes God known in human history. Jesus as the Son of Man is the place where people judge themselves. In other words, his presence as life-giver also provokes judgment, depending on people's attitude of belief or unbelief towards him.127 What will the response of the healed man be? Having


125 Many manuscripts (A K L X Δ Θ Ψ it Vg al) read υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ in place of υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου. However, the almost universal position of scholars is that υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου is the correct reading. It not only has a strong external evidence (𝔓66 Ψ75 B D W syr* al), but it is also unlikely that θεοῦ would be altered to ἀνθρώπου by copyists. See Metzger, A Textual Commentary, 194.

126 Schnackenburg, The Gospel according to John, 2: 253, rightly notes that the pronoun οὗ "carries a polemical stress." Bernard, The Gospel according to St John, 2: 337, and Léon-Dufour, Lecture, 2: 346, are of the opinion that Jesus' question indicates that an affirmative answer is expected.

so courageously defended Jesus before "the Jews," will he now be able to come to full faith in him as the one who uniquely reveals God in human history?

The healed man's initial response to Jesus comes by way of a question: καὶ τίς ἐστιν, κύριε, ἵνα πιστεύω εἰς αὐτὸν (v. 36). The expression καὶ τίς ἐστιν which is here to be understood in the sense of "who is he then?" indicates to the reader that the healed man has some idea as to what the title "Son of Man" means, and only wants to know who that person is. The term κύριε can either mean "sir" or "Lord," but it is preferable to understand it here as "sir" given that the healed man is yet to discover the true identity of Jesus.

The healed man has successively described Jesus as "a prophet" (v. 17b), a devout person who does God's will (v. 31b), and a man "from God" (v. 33). Now, he declares his readiness to believe in the Son of Man and wants to know who that person is. His eagerness to know the identity of the Son of Man and to come to faith in him is rewarded with a solemn declaration from Jesus in the form of a direct self-identification: καὶ ἐγώ ἀνθρώπος αὐτὸν καὶ ὁ λαλῶν μετὰ σοῦ ἐκείνος ἐστιν (v. 37). The καὶ ... καὶ construction alerts the reader that the actions implied by the two verbs describe the identity of the Son of Man. He is both the person the healed man is presently looking at (ἐγώ ἀνθρώπος), and the one who is in the process of speaking with him (λαλῶν). The reader is already familiar with the use of both ὁρῶ and λαλῶ in contexts of revelation. He/she

suggests that "Son of Man" here is not a christological title, but merely a "circumloquion for the speaker." In my view, his arguments are far from convincing.

128 See Brown, John, 1: 375; Barrett, John, 364; Haenchen, John, 2: 40. On the use of καὶ to introduce an apodosis in a question with or without a protasis, and with the meaning "who then?" see Blass-Debrunner-Funk, A Greek Grammar, 227-228, § 442, (8); Zerwick, Biblical Greek, 155, § 459.

129 Duke, Irony, 123, sees in the man's use of κύριε in v. 36 an instance of what he calls "irony of identity," i.e. "a character, not knowing who Jesus is, addresses him as kurie and makes reference to Messiah / Son of Man / Jesus - thought to be absent."

130 On καὶ ... καὶ with the meaning of "both...and," see Zerwick-Grosvenor, Grammatical Analysis, 316. The perfect ἐγώ ἀνθρώπος is here describing an experience of the subject lasting into the present moment, and therefore has primarily a present connotation. See Blass-Debrunner-Funk, A Greek Grammar, 176, § 342. The second clause in Jesus' response (ὁ λαλῶν μετὰ σοῦ ἐκείνος ἐστιν) is almost identical with the statement of Jesus to the Samaritan woman in 4:26 (ἔγω εἶμι, ὁ λαλῶν σοι).
knows for instance, that no one has ever seen God, except the only Son (1:18), who reveals what he has seen (1:34; 3:11; 3:32; 8:38); that Jesus speaks of what he has seen with the Father (8:38), and those who believe in him will see (1:50-51).\textsuperscript{131}

The reader therefore understands the present context as one of revelation. Jesus is revealing himself as the Son of Man, i.e., the one in whom God can be seen and heard in human history, to the man who has courageously defended him. The ultimate answer to the question of Jesus' identity which arose as a result of his Sabbath activities has now been given. Jesus is the divine agent of God's revelation in human history. In his words and actions, one can see and hear God himself. This is the fundamental truth about Jesus which the narrator has been seeking all along to communicate to the reader, and which, like the healed man, he/she is being called upon to embrace. As Jesus seeks to offer the healed man a superior vision which is that of faith,\textsuperscript{132} will he now show the same courage as he did before "the Jews" in the defence controversy and take the final step in his faith journey?

The healed man's eagerness to make a faith commitment to Jesus, the Son of Man, is reflected in the instantaneous nature of his reply: πιστεύω, κύριε (v. 38a). In contrast to Jesus' opponents for whom his Sabbath activities indicated that he is a sinner, i.e., law breaker, and therefore not from God, the healed man had seen in his healing by Jesus on the Sabbath a sign that Jesus is from God. Now, Jesus' identification of himself as the Son of Man has enabled him to discover his true identity and come to full faith in him. If the man's use of κύριε in v. 36 was simply a mark of respect ("sir"), the reader now perceives that in the present context of a confession of faith, κύριε carries its full christological

\textsuperscript{131} See Moloney, Johannine Son of Man, 154-155.

\textsuperscript{132} See Boismard-Lamouille, L’Evangile de Jean, 256-257; Leon-Dufour, Lecture, 2: 347.
meaning of "Lord." The narrator underscores for the benefit of the reader the healed man's realization of the magnitude of the revelation he has received as well as the depth of his faith commitment by a short but significant comment: καὶ προσεκύνησεν αὐτῷ (v. 38b). This climactic gesture constitutes the pinnacle of what the narrator seeks to communicate to the reader namely, that Jesus, as the one in whom God is seen and heard in human history, is himself an object of worship in much the same way as the Father. The verb προσεκύνησεν should therefore be rendered as "to worship," rather than simply "to show reverence," or "to do obeisance to."

As the encounter between Jesus and the healed man reaches its climax, there is a drop in narrative tension and the narrative action slows down to a virtual halt. Were this situation to become permanent, the narrative action would be at an end. The reader is however aware that the inner logic of the juridical controversy requires that Jesus once more come face to face with his opponents. This will not only enable him to pursue his defence in a bid to convince them of the truthfulness of his claims, but it will also enable his opponents either to react favourably to his defence and bring the controversy to an end, or to react negatively and change the juridical nature of the controversy.

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133 See Brown, John, 1: 375; Morris, John, 495; Carson, John, 377. See however, Schnackenburg, The Gospel according to John, 2: 254, who though translating κυρίε in v. 38a as "Lord," maintains that it is here "a simple form of address with no Christological significance."

134 pace Schnackenburg, The Gospel according to John, 2: 254; Carson, John, 377. For the view expressed above, see Lagrange, Evangile, 270; Haenchen, John, 2: 40; Moloney, The Gospel of John, 296. Several witnesses lack all of v. 38, and the introductory words of v. 39: "And Jesus said" (P75 R⁸ W ᵃᵃᵇ at ). This omission, coupled with the presence of the rare form ἐκή (elsewhere only at 1:23) as well as the use of προσεκύνησεν with Jesus as object have led some scholars to consider vv. 38-39a as an addition which arose from the liturgical usage of the narrative in the early Christian community. See for instance, C. L. Porter, "John IX, 38, 39a: A Liturgical Addition to the Text," NTS 13 (1966-67) 387-394; Brown, John, 1: 375; Lindars, The Gospel of John, 351. However, in view of the overwhelming textual evidence in support of the longer text, it is best to consider vv. 38-39a as original. The omission may be due to an editorial modification which was probably made with the view to unifying Jesus' teaching in vv. 37 and 39. See Metzger, A Textual Commentary, 195; Carson, John, 379.

135 See above, 20-24, on the structural elements of the controversy as a juridical procedure.

V. 39 opens with a statement by Jesus which is addressed to an unnamed audience.\(^{137}\) The first part of Jesus' assertion states the purpose of his coming into "this world": εἰς κρίμα ἐγώ εἰς τὸν κόμης τούτον ἃλθον (v. 39a). The word order alerts the reader that the emphasis is on the term κρίμα. This is the first time that the reader encounters this term.\(^{138}\) However, the reader knows that it cannot be understood here in the sense of a "judicial decision," which would portray Jesus as exercising already his judicial activity mentioned in 5:22, 27-30.\(^{139}\) The reader recalls the important programmatic statement of Jesus regarding his mission which is to save rather than to condemn the world (οὐ ἴνα κρίνῃ ... ἀλλὰ ἴνα σωθῆ, see 3:17). Thus, in the context of the ongoing juridical

\(^{136}\) Johannine scholars are divided over the issue of the place of 9:39 in the narrative. Several of them consider it as the conclusion of 9:1-39. See for instance, Hoskyns, *The Fourth Gospel*, 360; Carson, *John*, 377; Léon-Dufour, *Lecture*, 2: 348-351; H. Thyen, "Johannes 10 im Context des vierten Evangeliums." In *The Shepherd Discourse of John 10 and Its Context*, MSSNTS 67, eds. J. Beutler and R. T. Fortna, 116-134. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991) 123; Kysar, *John's Story*, 50-51. However, others see it as a statement that opens the new section which leads to the shepherd discourse. See Bultmann, *The Gospel of John*, 339; U. Busse, "Offene Fragen zu Joh 10," *NTS* 33 (1987) 516-531. See especially 518; idem, "Open Questions in John 10." In *The Shepherd Discourse of John 10 and Its Context*, MSSNTS 67, eds. J. Beutler and R. T. Fortna, 6-17. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991) 8; Moloney, *Signs and Shadows*, 129-130. See also, Menken, *Numerical Literary Techniques*, 193, who claims that v. 39 serves both to close 9:1-39 and to open what follows. The position adopted in the present study is that v. 39 serves as a starting point for the shepherd discourse. Firstly, vv. 39-41 form the basis for the discourse in 10:1-18. Jesus' statement (v. 39) provokes a response on the part of "some of the Pharisees" (v. 40), which in turn leads to Jesus' discourse which begins in v. 41 and continues without any break in 10:1-18. Secondly, in the perspective of the ongoing juridical controversy, v. 39 constitutes a narrative device by which the narrator re-establishes the face to face contact between Jesus and his opponents which is necessary for the conclusion of the juridical controversy (see 10:19-21). See above, 195, and n. 135. It may also be noted that several scholars have proposed a rearrangement of the material in John 10 which in their opinion, provides a better logical and chronological sequence. See for instance, Bernard, *The Gospel according to St John*, 2: XXIV-XXV; Bultmann, *The Gospel of John*, 358-360; D. M. Smith, *Composition and Order*, 163-166. This rearrangement is not taken into consideration in the present study. Firstly, the narrative-critical perspective in which this study is situated requires that the text be examined as it has come down to us. Secondly, the all too obvious subjectivity which characterizes such rearrangements constitutes a major drawback. See Brown, *John*, 1: 390; Carson, *John*, 379-380.

\(^{137}\) It is difficult to accept the position of, for instance, Carson, *John*, 377, that Jesus' statement is addressed to the healed man. It is intended to carry the narrative action forward after the climactic gesture of the healed man which brought the narrative action to a virtual stop.

\(^{138}\) It is also the only occurrence of κρίμα in the Fourth Gospel.

\(^{139}\) Pace Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to John*, 2: 255.
controversy in which Jesus seeks to convince his opponents of the truthfulness of his claims ἵνα ὑμεῖς ὁφθήτε (5:34b), the term κρίμα has the sense of "the dividing of humankind that takes place through the presence [and the activity] of Jesus on the basis of each person's attitude toward him."\(^{140}\) This means that the judgment for which Jesus came into the world (ἐλεύθερος κρίμα) has to do with the decision with which every hearer of Jesus' word is confronted. It is the decision to come to faith in Jesus and be saved, or to refuse to believe and exclude oneself from the life which he brings. In this sense, the term κρίμα is closely related to the idea of κράως which is a major concern of the narrator in the wider Gospel narrative. The κράως Jesus confronts his listeners with leads to life for those whose accept his word in faith, and to self-condemnation for those who reject it (see 3:17-19; 5:24).\(^{141}\)

The second part of Jesus' assertion states the results of his mission in the world: ἵνα οἱ μὴ βλέπουντες βλέπωσιν καὶ οἱ βλέπουντες τυφλοὶ γένωται (v. 39b). The ἵνα is here understood as expressing consequence, i.e. the result of Jesus' mission of confronting his hearers with his message which challenges them to take a stand. The purpose of Jesus' mission is the salvation of the world (see 3:17). However, the attainment of this salvation depends upon each person's acceptance or otherwise to come to faith in him (3:18; 5:24). On the one hand, those who, conscious of their blindness (μὴ βλέπουντες), believe in Jesus, receive the gift of spiritual sight (βλέπωσιν). On the other hand, those who think they see and therefore take a stand against Jesus deprive themselves of the light he brings and become blind. Thus, it is the free decision of each person to accept Jesus' message and to come to faith in him or not which determines a person's sharing in salvation or otherwise (see 5:40). In the light of this, it would be inaccurate to understand the ἵνα in v. 39b as expressing


\(^{141}\) See above, 114-115.
purpose. Firstly, this creates the false impression that the deliberate choice that some people make not to believe in Jesus which results in their becoming blind is the purpose of Jesus' mission in the world. Secondly, if Jesus' κρύπτα has as part of its purpose that some people become blind, then this situation can be ascribed to "divine purpose" as something which was decreed before the coming of Jesus. The reader however knows that God's purpose in sending the Son is the salvation of the world (3:17). That some people choose to reject Jesus and deprive themselves of the light of salvation he brings is only a tragic consequence of the κρύπτα with which he confronts his hearers, but certainly not its purpose.\(^ {142} \) The reader knows that this has been illustrated in the present narrative. On the one hand, we have the healed man who has confessed his faith in Jesus and received spiritual sight (v. 38), and on the other hand, "the Jews" who so far have refused to come to faith in Jesus and have thus deprived themselves of the light which Jesus brings. Thus, their present state of blindness excludes any idea of determinism.\(^ {143} \)

Jesus' remark in v. 39 which states the purpose of his coming into "this world" and the consequence of the κρύπτα with which he confronts his hearers is overheard by ἐκ τῶν φαρισαίων ... ὁ μετ' αὐτοῦ ὄντες. The reader already knows that the internal logic of the ongoing Sabbath juridical controversy requires that Jesus and his opponents once again face each other in order to bring the controversy to its conclusion. The mention of the Pharisees here is inferred from the context and the reader's understanding of the situation.

\(^ {142} \) The interpretation of v. 39b proposed here marks a significant shift from the standard interpretation which considers the ἵνα here as expressing purpose. See for instance, Bernard, The Gospel according to St John, 2: 340; Bultmann, The Gospel of John, 340-341; Schnackenburg, The Gospel according to John, 2: 255; Carson, John, 377-378. It may be noted here that, given the blurring of the distinction between "purpose" and "result" in the NT, the ἵνα + subjunctive is sometimes used in place of the infinitive to express consequence ("the consequent ἵνα"). See G. B. Winer, A Grammar of the New Testament Diction, 5th ed. (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1864) 351-358; Moulton-Howard-Turner, Grammar, 1: 210; Blass-Debrunner-Funk, A Greek Grammar, 197-198, § 391, (5). See however, Brown, John, 1: 376, who is of the opinion that "the line of distinction between the result of Jesus' ministry and its purpose is not drawn sharply because of the oversimplified outlook which attributes everything that happens to God's purpose."

\(^ {143} \) J. M. Lieu, "Blindness in the Johannine Tradition," NTS 34 (1988) 83-95. She has aptly observed that "sin is not independent of the response to Jesus, but neither does it determine it. Rather sin is defined by the response to Jesus: it is not the blind man who sinned but those who claim to possess sight" (84).
thus understood as the narrator's subtle way of re-establishing face to face contact between Jesus and "the Jews."\textsuperscript{144} This means that the \( \varepsilon \kappa \tau \omega \nu \varphi \alpha \rho \mu \sigma \alpha i\omega \nu \) refers to the same group of Pharisees/"the Jews" who are Jesus' opponents in the present Sabbath juridical controversy.\textsuperscript{145} These "Jews" rightly suspect that Jesus' statement is directed at them, and they respond swiftly to it by way of a question: \( \mu \nu \kappa a\iota \\nu \epsilon \epsilon i\zeta \tau \upsilon \phi \lambda \iota \iota \varepsilon \sigma e\mu e\nu \): "surely we are not to be considered blind too?" (v. 40).\textsuperscript{146} The irony of the question is particularly dramatic. While the form of the question suggests that "the Jews" are expecting the answer "no" (see the use of \( \mu \nu \)), the reader on his/her part knows that the answer is "yes." Thus, the reader perceives that the narrator is here employing the narrative technique of "the unanswered question" in order to portray "the Jews" as unknowingly speaking the truth, and at the same time exposing the error of their own assumptions.\textsuperscript{147} Throughout the ongoing juridical controversy, "the Jews" have assumed that they possess an absolute knowledge which they derive from the Mosaic traditions (see 5:16, 18, 39-40; 9:24, 29). However, the reader is aware that it is this attitude of self-sufficiency which is preventing them from coming to faith in Jesus and has consequently made them blind. Therefore the reader has no hesitation in responding in the affirmative to their question: "\( \mu \nu \kappa a\iota \\nu \epsilon \epsilon i\zeta \tau \upsilon \phi \lambda \iota \iota \varepsilon \sigma e\mu e\nu \)."

However, Jesus does not respond to their question with a simple "yes" or "no" answer. Instead, he replies with a statement which is at the same time a rebuke of "the Jews" for, and an admonition against their attitude of unbelief.

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\textsuperscript{144} "The Jews" and "the Pharisees" continue to designate the same group of Jesus' opponents in the ongoing juridical controversy.

\textsuperscript{145} See however, Lagrange, Evangile, 271, who thinks that the Pharisees mentioned here are not the same as those mentioned earlier in the narrative, but rather "des curieux comme il pouvait toujours y en avoir autour de Jésus." In my opinion, the internal logic of the narrative makes this position untenable.

\textsuperscript{146} This translation is from Brown, John, 1: 371.

\textsuperscript{147} See Stibbe, John, 111. On the literary technique of "the unanswered question," see Culpepper, Anatomy, 176-177.
The first part constitutes an unreal (contrary-to-fact) condition: εἰ τυφλοὶ ἦτε, οὐκ ἀνέχετε ἁμαρτίαν (v. 41a). The term τυφλός is used here not in the sense of physical blindness, but rather in the metaphorical sense of incapacity to understand.148 Jesus would thus be saying to "the Jews" that, if they were genuinely incapable of understanding God's ongoing self-revelation in human history through his mediation, they would not be guilty of any sin, but this is not the case. The second part of Jesus' statement indicates the real situation of "the Jews": νῦν δὲ λέγετε ὅτι βλέπομεν, ἡ ἁμαρτία ὑμῶν μένει (v. 41b). They claim (λέγετε) to "see." In other words, they claim to understand God's revelation and in doing so, have closed themselves to his ultimate revelation which Jesus brings. It is this refusal to open themselves to the work and message of Jesus who is God's self-revelation in human history and to come to faith in him which constitutes the blindness and the sin of "the Jews." The implication is that, as long as they refuse to come to faith in Jesus, ἡ ἁμαρτία ὑμῶν μένει. Thus, the reader understands that Jesus' statement in v. 41 does not constitute a judicial verdict which would indicate that the blindness of "the Jews" is incurable.149 Far from being condemnatory, Jesus' answer seeks to open the eyes of "the Jews" to their real situation of spiritual blindness in order to make them fully aware of the consequence of their refusal to believe in him, and to bring about a change in attitude. In other words, Jesus' words in v. 41 are marked by a clear rhetoric of persuasion; they are intended to indicate to "the Jews" in a very subtle way that the only way their present state of sin (ἡ ἁμαρτία ὑμῶν μένει) can be changed is to come to faith in Jesus.150


149 This is the standard position held by the majority of scholars who consider Jn 9 as a trial scene. See for instance, Dodd, Interpretation, 358; Barrett, John, 366; Carson, John, 378; Resseguie, "John 9," 301; Holleran, "Seeing the Light," 381.

150 See Lagrange, Évangile, 271; Léon-Dufour, Lecture, 2: 350-351, who rightly observes among other things that in v. 41, "Jésus ne condamne pas les pharisiens, il les avertit afin qu'ils prennent conscience de l'ennui auquel ils sont confrontés, maintenant qu'est apparue la lumière d'en haut, pour le salut que Dieu prépare" (351). See also Varro, "Lire Saint Jean," 22; Zevini, Vangelo secondo Giovanni, 1: 306.
sense, v. 41 constitutes an invitation to "the Jews" to abandon all false security and to open themselves up to the revelation that Jesus brings. That Jesus is here engaged in a rhetoric of persuasion which seeks to convince "the Jews" of the truthfulness of his christological claims is also evident from the fact that v. 41 leads without interruption to the discourse in 10:1-18. This means that, rather than being a verdict which would bring all interventions to an end, v. 41 constitutes the beginning of the discourse in 10:1-18 which will also be marked by the same rhetoric of persuasion. Thus, within the framework of the ongoing juridical controversy, v. 41 is to be seen as an integral part of Jesus' ongoing effort to persuade his opponents and win them over.

The shepherd discourse in 10:1-18 continues without interruption Jesus' discourse which was introduced in 9:41.\footnote{See above, 2, n. 5. See also G. de la Potterie, Gesù Verità. Studi di Cristologia Giovanni. (Torino: Marietti, 1973) 60-61; Labahn, Jesus als Lebensspender, 307. See however, P.-R. Tragan, Le parabole du "Pasteur" et ses explications: Jean 10, 1-18. La genèse, les milieux littéraires, Studia Anselmiana 67. (Roma: Editrice Anselmiana, 1980) 191.} Firstly, there is no indication of a change of place or time between 9:41 and 10:1-18. Secondly, the discourse is addressed to the same audience namely, the Pharisees/"the Jews" who are Jesus' opponents in the ongoing juridical controversy. The shepherd discourse consists basically of a "juridical parable" (vv. 1-5) and its application to the ongoing juridical controversy (vv. 6-7-18).\footnote{Even though the understanding of 10:1-18 as a juridical parable (vv. 1-5) which the Johannine Jesus explains within the context of the ongoing juridical controversy (vv. [6]7-18) is specific to the present study, the basic structure adopted here namely vv. 1-5 and (6)7-18 has already been noted by scholars. See for instance, J. Schneider, "Zur Komposition von Joh. 10," CNT 11 (1947) 220-225. The term "juridical parable" is used by scholars to describe a specific literary genre which is often found in the Old Testament. It refers to a fictitious legal case or a story which is used by one of the two disputants in a juridical controversy. It is intended to get one's opponent to take a stand which obliges him/her to acknowledge the truth and therefore hasten the resolution of the conflict. On the literary genre of "juridical parable," see U. Simon, "The Poor Man's Ewe-Lamb: An example of a Juridical Parable," Bib 48 (1967) 207-242. See especially, 220-225. See also, A. Graffy, "The Literary Genre of Isaiah 5:1-7," Bib 60 (1979) 400-409; G. A. Yee, "A Form Critical Study of Isaiah 5:1-7 as Song and a Juridical Parable," CBQ 43 (1981) 30-40. In my opinion, the παροιμία in Jr 10:1-5 corresponds in content and form to the juridical parable. Thus, the term "juridical parable" will be used in the text to refer to the Johannine παροιμία in 10:1-5.} Its internal structure may be presented as follows:
i. vv. 1-5: Juridical parable about entering the sheepfold.\footnote{J. A. T. Robinson, "The Parable of the Shepherd," ZNW 46 (1955) 233-240; reprinted in Twelve New Testament Studies, SBT 1/34. (London: SCM Press) 1962, 67-75, has argued that vv. 1-5 are the result of a fusion of two parables on related themes. According to him, verses 1-3a deal with two figures who seek to enter a sheepfold while vv. 3b-5 are concerned with the difference in relationship of the sheep to a stranger and to their own shepherd. His position is more or less closely followed by Dodd, Historical Tradition, 382-385; Brown, John, 1: 391-393; Liddars, The Gospel of John, 354-355. Against this position, see for instance, Becker, Evangelium, 1: 325; Painter, Quest for the Messiah, 346-348.}

v. 6) Transition from juridical parable to application

ii. vv. 7-18: Application of juridical parable to ongoing controversy

α) vv. 7-13: Jesus, Door and Good Shepherd

β) vv. 14-18: Relationship of Good Shepherd to his sheep and the Father

The juridical parable is an important feature which is sometimes found in a two-party juridical controversy. It consists of a fictitious legal case or an imaginary story which is presented by one of the two disputants to the other party, and on which this other party is then called upon, or at least expected to take a stand. When it is used by the accuser, the juridical parable has the purpose of bringing the other party to unwittingly acknowledge his/her guilt and thus accept the claims of the opponent. In other words, in taking a stand in the fictitious case, the one to whom the juridical parable is presented effectively takes a position which is later revealed as self-condemnatory.\footnote{See above, 25-26; Graffy, "Literary Genre," 408; Yee, "Form Critical Study," 33.} The use of the juridical parable by the accused, on the other hand, is intended to bring the accuser to take a position which reinforces the defence of the accused and justifies his/her protestation of innocence. Hence, it is intended to convince the accuser and to bring him/her to accept the truthfulness of the claims of the accused. In this sense, it may be argued that the use of a juridical parable by either the accuser or the accused has the same basic purpose namely, to break
down any resistance to the truth on the part of one's opponent in order to hasten the peaceful resolution of the conflict. The effectiveness of the juridical parable depends on the concealment of its connection with the actual case in the yet-to-begin or the ongoing juridical controversy. This not only explains why figurative language is frequently used, but also why several important motifs which later surface in the application of the juridical parable to the actual controversy are often without parallels in the juridical parable itself. In a situation where some motifs are intentionally left out in the juridical parable, the latter's application to the actual controversy will necessarily go beyond the situation depicted in the juridical parable itself. This means that the application has to be understood not only as a clarification and development of important motives mentioned in the juridical parable, but also as an occasion to introduce other ideas. However, it must be stressed that even though these ideas may appear to be new, they must be seen as reflecting those motifs of the juridical parable which, for the purposes of concealment, were intentionally not mentioned in it.\footnote{See Simon, "The Poor Man's Ewe-Lamb," 223-226, 233. A typical case of the situation depicted above can be found in the juridical parable of 2 Sam 12:1-14. In order to avoid any similarity with the actual accusations which he intends to level against David in the juridical controversy, Nathan transforms the real accusations of adultery and murder into a mere robbery. Again, the Prophet mentions the robbery of the ewe, and not the killing of the poor man which is only mentioned in the application. It may also be added that, while the juridical parable stresses the lack of pity of the rich man for his poor neighbour, the application focuses on the attitude of contempt of the king for Yahweh. This shows that the application of the juridical parable can always exploit additional motifs which are not explicitly mentioned in the juridical parable itself. It is equally possible that a motif mentioned in the juridical parable is not developed at all in the application. In the case of 2 Sam 12:1-14, the motif of the traveller (v. 4) is not taken up in the application. What all this reveals is that the relationship between the juridical parable and its application to the actual controversy is quite flexible. While a motif mentioned in the juridical parable may not be developed in the application, additional motifs which for reasons of concealment were left out in the juridical parable may be clarified and developed in the application. This, in my opinion, is the case in Jn 10:1-18, and it would therefore not be entirely correct to argue, as does Painter, Quest for the Messiah, 348, that "10:1-5 does not provide an adequate basis for the following discourse." It is interesting to note in this regard that BAGD, 629, s.v. παροιμία, 2, understands the Johannine παροιμία to refer to a "dark saying, figure of speech, in which especially lofty ideas are concealed." For other attempts to explain the introduction and development of new ideas in vv. 7-18, see for instance, R. Kysar, "Johannine Metaphor - Meaning and Function: A Literary Case Study of John 10:1-8 [sic.]," Semest 53 (1991) 96-101; J. L. de Villiers, "The Shepherd and his Flock," Neotest. 2 (1968) 89-103. See especially 93.}
It is within the framework of the recourse to a juridical parable in a two-party juridical controversy that the reader seeks to understand the shepherd discourse in 10:1-18. As the accused in the ongoing juridical controversy, Jesus' use of a juridical parable is intended to convince his opponents and to bring them to accept the truthfulness of his christological claims, and therefore bring the controversy to a peaceful conclusion.156

i. Juridical Parable about entering the sheepfold (vv. 1-5)

The juridical parable opens with the expression Ἄμην ἄμην λέγω ὑμῖν. The reader is already familiar with the narrator's use of this expression. It serves to elucidate an earlier point made by Jesus either by expanding it with a new and more detailed argument or by setting it in a new light (see for instance 3:11; 5:19, 24; 6:47; 8:34, 51, 58).157 Its use in 10:1 therefore alerts the reader that what is about to unfold constitutes a direct continuation of Jesus' discourse which began in 9:41, and also that 10:1-21 is closely related in content to the preceding narrative (9:1-41).158 This means that the pronoun ὑμῖν refers to the Pharisees/"the Jews" who are Jesus' interlocutors as well as his opponents in the ongoing juridical controversy.159 The juridical parable itself begins in earnest

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156 While the use of a juridical parable by the accuser is intended to bring the unsuspecting would-be-accused to unwittingly condemn himself/herself, its use by the accused in a juridical controversy, as in the present context, is meant to convince the accuser of the truthfulness of the accused's claims. However, the objective pursued in both cases is the same namely, to hasten the peaceful resolution of the dispute (see above, 202-203).


158 Against Becker, Evangelium, 1: 311, who thinks that 10:1-18 "hat inhaltlich mit seinem Kontext nichts zu tun."

159 Pace Tragan, Le parabole du "Pasteur," 192, who thinks that "la parabole même (v. 1-5) et ses explications (v. 7-18) sont proposées sans la moindre référence à un auditoire déterminé."

with the mention of a man who, instead of entering the sheepfold by the door (διὰ τῆς θύρας), chooses to make his entry by some other way (ἀναβαίνων ἄλλαξάθεν). The deliberate use of the rather vague adverb of place ἄλλαξάθεν points not only to the fact that the door is the sole legitimate access to the sheepfold, but also to the dubious character of this person who uses a different means of access to the sheepfold. It therefore comes as no surprise to the reader that this individual is described as ἐκεῖνος κλέπτης καὶ λῃστής. The use of ἐκεῖνος suggests that the terms "thief" and "robber" refer to a single character and are meant to underline the destructive nature of the activity of such a person.  

V. 2 introduces a new major character who, in contrast to the "thief and robber," enters διὰ τῆς θύρας and is described as "the shepherd of the sheep." Thus, the reader perceives that the shepherd in v. 2 is set in opposition to the thief and the robber in v. 1. The main point of contrast is the means of access into the sheepfold; one enters by the door and the other does not. This means that the door constitutes the central element of vv. 1-2 on the basis of which the two ἔσερχόμενοι are more closely identified as "thief and robber" or as "shepherd." From the grammatical point of view, κλέπτης καὶ λῃστής (v. 1) and ποιμήν τῶν προβάτων (v. 2) are predicates and the criterion

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160 The term κλέπτης has more to do with a sneak-thief while λῃστής refers to a robber, i.e. someone who resorts to violence, but there is perhaps no need to insist on this sharp distinction here. See however, J. D. M. Derrett, "The Good Shepherd: St. John's Use of Jewish Halakah and Haggadah," *StTh* 27 (1973) 25-50. He insists on a clear distinction between the two terms and interprets the καὶ in the sense of "or" ("a thief or a robber"). According to him, in Jewish law, "thief" would refer to a fellow member of society, while "robber" would indicate a stranger, perhaps an outlaw (see 41). On the use of καὶ for ἤ in negative clauses, see Moulton-Howard-Turner, *Grammar*, 3: 334. See also Barrett, *John*, 369; Neuman-Nida, *Handbook*, 322-323. Some scholars have suggested that λῃστής be understood as a reference to "all those, including the Zealots, who try to bring in God's kingdom without regard to the person of Jesus and His divine approval." K. H. Rengstorf, "λῃστής," *TDNT* 4 (1967) 261. (see also 257-262). The use of λῃστής would thus constitute a hint about false messianic choices. See also A. J. Simonis, *Die Hirtentrede im Johannesevangelium: Versuch einer Analyse von Johannes 10, 1-18 nach Entstehung Hintergrund und Inhalt*, AnBib 29. (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1967) 127-142; M. Hengel, *The Zealots: Investigations into the Jewish Freedom Movement in the Period from Herod until 70 A.D.* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1989) 24-46.

161 The term ποιμήν is here understood as a determinate noun. The omission of the article is due to the fact that ποιμήν as the predicate here precedes the verb. See Zerwick, *Biblical Greek*, 56, § 175.
according to which they are assigned to the two ἐωερχόμενοι is the contrast between διὰ τῆς θύρας and ἄλλαξαίθην; a fact which underscores the central role of the door in vv. 1-2.\(^{162}\)

In v. 3a, a new character is introduced into the juridical parable namely, the doorkeeper (ὁ θυρωφόρος). As a minor figure, the doorkeeper is simply part of the pastoral imagery behind the parable.\(^{163}\) His main role is to confirm the legitimacy of the one seeking to enter by the door as the shepherd, and also to focus the reader's attention on the door as the sole legitimate access to the sheepfold. Thus, once the shepherd presents himself at the gate, the doorkeeper has no hesitation in opening the door for him (v. 3a). As the shepherd enters the sheepfold, the focus of the juridical parable shifts from the entering through the door to what takes place inside the sheepfold: καὶ τὰ πρὸβατα τῆς φῶνης αὐτοῦ ἄκουει (v. 3ba). The verb ἄκουει with the genitive of the thing heard indicates an immediate perception and also carries the added nuance of obedience.\(^{164}\) This action of swiftly heeding the voice of the shepherd is consequent upon another action: καὶ τὰ ἴδια πρὸβατα φωνεῖ κατ' ἵνα (v. 3bβ). In other words, the sheep respond immediately to the voice of the shepherd as he calls each one of them by name. The term ἴδια is not intended here to establish a contrast between the sheep belonging to the shepherd and those belonging to other shepherds, but sharing the same sheepfold.\(^{165}\) It is

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\(^{164}\) See Blass-Debrunner-Funk, *A Greek Grammar*, 95, § 173 (2); Delebecque, *Evangile de Jean*, 172.

used with a qualitative nuance to stress the fact that the sheep belong to the shepherd as owner and, together with κατ’ ὄνομα, to highlight the intimate relationship which exists between the shepherd and his sheep. As the sheep assemble at the shepherd’s behest, he leads them out (v. 3b) and once he brings out (ἐκβάλλῃ) all his sheep, he walks in front of them and the sheep follow him (vv. 4a-b). The ὅτι-clause in v. 4b explains the reason why the sheep so willingly follow the shepherd: ὅτι οἶδαν τὴν φωνὴν αὐτοῦ. The use of οἶδαν suggests that they have an intimate knowledge of their shepherd which enables them to recognize immediately his voice.

In v. 5, the behaviour of the sheep vis-à-vis the shepherd is contrasted with the way they react to the ἀλλότριος whom the reader rightly identifies with the thief and robber mentioned in v. 1 as the enemy of the sheep. While they gladly follow the shepherd (v. 4b), the reader is informed in no uncertain terms (see the emphatic negative ὦ μή) that the sheep ἀλλότριος... ὦ μή ἄκολουθοςουσιν (v. 5a). Instead of following the stranger, the sheep will flee...

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Lecture, 2: 360-361; Haenchen, John, 2: 46. The expression κατ’ ὄνομα, here rendered as "by name," can also be translated as "individually" or "one by one" as is the case in 3 Jn 15. See Dodd, Historical Tradition, 384, n. 4.

166 On the qualitative use of ἴδος, see BAGD, 369, s.v. ἴδος, 1. See also Haenchen, John, 2: 47.

167 Several scholars consider the verb ἐκβάλλειν as having here its usual meaning of "to throw out," "to cast out." They therefore understand v. 4a as implying that a certain measure of constraint is applied by the shepherd to get the sheep out of the sheepfold. See for instance, Bernard, The Gospel according to St John, 2: 350; Hoskyns, The Fourth Gospel, 373; Brown, John, 1: 385. It seems however preferable to maintain that ἐκβάλλειν is used here with a much weakened force to mean "to bring forth / out." See Moulton-Milligan, Vocabulary, 191; BAGD, 237, s.v. ἐκβάλλω, 2.

168 Since τὰ πρόβατα (v. 4b) is neutral plural, one would have expected the singular verb οἶδα instead of the plural οἶδαν. However, there is no consistency, and plural and singular verbs keep occurring with τὰ πρόβατα throughout 10:1-18. See for instance, vv. 3, 4, 12, 16 (singular) and vv. 4, 5 (3x), 8, 10, 14, 16 (plural).

169 The substantiv ἀλλότριος meaning "stranger" also has the connotation of "a hostile person," or "an enemy." See BAGD, 41, s.v. ἀλλότριος, 3; H. G. Liddell, R. Scott, and H. S. Jones, A Greek - English Lexicon, 9th ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1940) 70-71, s.v. ἀλλότριος, II, 1.

170 In place of the usual construction of ὦ μή plus the aorist subjunctive, we have here a future indicative. The other two instances of ὦ μή with the future indicative in the Fourth Gospel are 4:14 and 6:35. In the view of Moulton-Howard-Turner, Grammar, 1: 190, ὦ μή with the future is "a possible, though moribund, construction." This would explain why, in the case of 10:5, certain manuscripts (𝔓66𝔓75ᵃ L W etc.) simply replaced the future with the aorist subjunctive. The reading with the future is
from him because his voice is unknown to them (v. 5b) and they rightly perceive him as an enemy.

The reader is now in a position to determine the two important elements of the juridical parable which the Johannine Jesus presents to "the Jews" who are his opponents in the ongoing juridical controversy. Firstly, there is the means by which two individuals gain access into a sheepfold which identifies them either as a shepherd or a thief and robber, and secondly, the different reactions of the sheep to their shepherd and to the stranger they perceive as an enemy. The legal issues involved in this juridical parable are not lost on the reader. And so for instance, the assertion that the person who enters a sheepfold by any other way other than the door is a thief and robber states an important aspect of the legal provision of Exod. 22:1. This provision which assumes the illegality of breaking into someone's property, states that if the thief is caught breaking in (presumably in the night) and killed, his relatives have no right to avenge his blood (see Exod. 22:1). In other words, the person who enters into a compound other than through the door is readily presumed to be in breach of the law and does so at the risk of his own life.\(^{171}\)

Since the juridical parable has been presented within the context of a juridical controversy, the reader rightly expects "the Jews" to react to it by taking a stand in relation to the legal issues involved. They could for instance condemn the person who climbed into the sheepfold \(\alpha\lambda\alpha\chi\omicron\theta\omicron\nu\) as not having the welfare of the sheep at heart and point to the danger he faces for such an action. It is precisely with the view to getting his opponents to take a position in this juridical parable which would eventually lead to the resolution of the

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\(^{171}\) Even though Exod. 22:1 does not specifically state that the compound in question is a cattle or sheepfold, the general context suggests precisely that (see Exod 21:37 which immediately precedes our text, and also Exod. 22:3). For a more detailed discussion of the Jewish background to Jn 10:1, see Derrett, "The Good Shepherd," 28-33.
conflict that the Johannine Jesus ταύτην τῆν παρομίαν ἔπεμ αὐτοῖς (v. 6a). However, there is no reaction on the part of "the Jews" to Jesus' juridical parable. The narrator provides the reader with the reason for their lack of response: ἐκεῖνοι δὲ οὐκ ἐγνώσαν τίνα ἢν ἢ ἐκάλει αὐτοῖς. Jesus' opponents fail to understand the message he is seeking to communicate to them by means of the παρομία, and therefore do not take any position. Given the level of hostility shown by Jesus' opponents, their failure to understand may be interpreted as not so much an intellectual problem as an unwillingness to respond to the legal challenge involved in Jesus' use of the juridical parable. In any case, a sense of expectation is created as the reader continues his/her reading experience in order to discover Jesus' next move. Will he proceed nonetheless with the application of the juridical parable to the ongoing juridical controversy?

172 See above, 199-200. On the background and usage of the word παρομία, see, in addition to the major commentaries, L. Cerfaut, "Le thème parabolique dans l'évangile de Jean," CNT 11 (1947) 15-25; de la Pouterie, Gesti Verità, 57-59; A. Reinhardt, The Word in the World: The Cosmological Tale in the Fourth Gospel, SBL MS 45. (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992) 50-70. It may be recalled here that παρομία is understood in the present study in the sense of a "juridical parable." See above, 201, n. 152.

173 See Brown, John, 1: 393. See however, Robertson, Divinity of Christ, 86, who is of the view that the failure of the Pharisees to respond to the παρομία is due to the fact that they "are too dull and too prejudiced to understand the words of Jesus."

174 What we have in vv. 7-18 is not so much an explanation of the juridical parable in vv. 1-5 as an application of a number of its elements to the ongoing juridical controversy between Jesus and "the Jews." As already noted above (see 202-203, and n. 155), this application allows for a further development of the motifs mentioned in the juridical parable as well as introduction of new ideas. The recognition of this fact alleviates most of the tensions and difficulties which are usually mentioned by scholars with regard to the relationship between vv. 1-5 and vv. 7-18. See for instance, Léon-Dufour, Lecture, 2: 363-364. It must also be noted that, since all the issues at stake in the ongoing juridical controversy are christological, the focus of the application of the juridical parable in vv. 7-18 will be Jesus himself. See however, J. P. Martin, "John 10:1-10," Interp, 32 (1978) 171-175, who is of the opinion that vv. 7-10 constitute a "restatement of the figure" in vv. 1-5 (see especially 171-172).
ii. Application of juridical parable to ongoing controversy (vv. 7-18)

a). Jesus, Door and Good Shepherd (vv. 7-13)

V. 7 opens with Jesus once again addressing "the Jews": ἐὰν ὁ ζωὸς πάλαι ὁ Ἰσραήλ, Ἄμῆν ἀμῆν λέγω ὑμῖν. The use of ὁ ζωὸς here alerts the reader that what is about to unfold constitutes Jesus' response to the failure of "the Jews" to react to the juridical parable. Thus, Jesus' addressees continue to be "the Jews" who are his opponents in the ongoing juridical controversy.175 Since v. 7ff are closely linked to the preceding paragraph by means of the double Ἄμῆν ἀμῆν, the pronoun ὑμῖν (v. 7b) can only refer to the addressees in vv. 1-5. After the introductory formula in v. 7b, the reader encounters the first words of Jesus as he seeks to explain the juridical parable to "the Jews" within the context of the ongoing juridical controversy: ἐγὼ εἰμί ἢ θύρα τῶν προβάτων.176 The reader is already familiar with the Jesus' use of "I am" sayings by means of which he predicates something to himself (see 6:35; 8:12). In all the "I am" sayings, the Jesus does not so much describe who he is as what he alone is capable of doing. Thus, the "I am" is always an explanatory statement which serves to identify Jesus as the one to whom something is being attributed, and also to lay claim to uniqueness. It is in this same sense that the reader understands the ἐγὼ εἰμί in the present context. In addition, the ἐγὼ εἰμί here in v. 7 indicates to the reader that the emphasis in the application of the juridical parable to the ongoing juridical controversy is christological. It focuses on the

175 Pace Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to John*, 2: 288, who is of the opinion that, in vv. 7ff., "neither the Pharisees (9:40) nor the Jews (10:19) are expressly addressed."

176 The reading ὁ ζωὸς which is found in place of ἢ θύρα in P75 and in several coptic manuscripts (sahidic; achimnic, and middle fayyumic) is rightly considered by most scholars as secondary. It appears to be an early attempt by copyists to correct the expression "the door of the sheep" which they found too difficult to understand. See Metzger, *A Textual Commentary*, 195. On the christological use of ἐγὼ εἰμί with a predicate, see for instance, Bultmann, *The Gospel of John*, 225-226, n. 3; Barrett, *John*, 291-293; Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to John*, 2: 88-89.
person of Jesus by revealing something about himself in terms of what he uniquely does, in a bid to convince his opponents of the truthfulness of his christological claims which constitute the bone of contention in the present juridical controversy.

Jesus identifies himself as "ἡ θύρα τῶν προβάτων." The reader recalls that in the juridical parable, the door was the sole means of legitimate access into the sheepfold for shepherd and sheep alike (vv. 1-2; 3b3). The expression "the door of the sheep" can thus be understood to mean the door that gives access to the sheep or the door that is used by the sheep. In claiming to be the door of the sheep, Jesus would be reminding his opponents that it is only through him that they can obtain the eternal life that they claim to be looking for. In other words, it is only a response of faith in Jesus which opens the way to eternal life. Earlier in the Sabbath juridical controversy, Jesus had pointed out to "the Jews" their mistaken attitude of searching for eternal life while at the same time refusing to come to faith in him to whom the Scriptures bear witness and who is the giver of eternal life (5:39-40). They long for eternal life but then they look for it the wrong way because they refuse to believe in Jesus who is the unique access to eternal life. This contradictory attitude of "the Jews" reminds the reader of the "thief and robber" who seeks to enter the sheepfold by a way other than the sole legitimate one namely, the door. This means that their refusal to believe could lead to the loss of the eternal life they long for, just as the thief in the juridical parable runs the risk of being killed for his illegal action. Jesus' identification of himself as the door of the sheep is therefore to

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179 See above, 208.
be understood as a reminder to his opponents of his unique role as the giver of life as well as an urgent appeal to them to come to faith in him.

Having asserted his role as the unique access to eternal life, Jesus goes on to describe all those who came before him as thieves and robbers: πάντες ὁδοι ἡλικον πρὸ ἓμου κλέπται εἰσὶν καὶ λιποῖα (v. 8a). How is this statement of the Johannine Jesus to be interpreted? The reader seeks to understand it not only within the immediate context of the juridical parable and its christological application to the ongoing juridical controversy, but also within the wider context of the Gospel narrative as he/she has experienced it up to this point. In terms of the wider Gospel narrative, v. 8a would refer to "the Jews" who came onto the narrative scene "before" Jesus. Already in 1:19-28, they send envoys to John to inquire about his identity and mission, a move which the reader interprets as an indication of the "religious" authority which "the Jews" believe they possess. Again in 2:13-20, "the Jews" confront Jesus in the temple and demand a sign from him which would justify his prophetic action of cleansing the temple of vendors and money changers. In both instances, the image which the reader forms of "the Jews" is one of a group of people who not only consider themselves as the guardians of religious orthodoxy, but also as being knowledgeable about the things of God and therefore have nothing to learn from anybody. It is precisely this attitude of self-sufficiency which has prevented them from accepting the christological claims of Jesus and has resulted in the ongoing controversy. In relation to the immediate context of the juridical parable and its christological application to the ongoing juridical controversy, v. 8a again points to "the Jews" who, while refusing to accept

180 There is considerable uncertainty surrounding the available textual evidence of v. 8a. Several witnesses (D, itb, d) lack πάντες, and the words πρὸ ἓμου are also absent from P45a, P75, P8, E F itb, b, c, e, vg, syr, cop, sah etc. However, the longer text (πάντες ὁδοι ἡλικον πρὸ ἓμου) which is attested by P66, 8, 2, A, K, L, W, f 13, etc. should be retained because of its status as the lectio difficilior. This means that the shorter readings may have resulted from attempts by copyists "to lessen the scope and [what they probably saw as the] drastic nature of the statement." Metzger, A Textual Commentary, 196.
Jesus as the sole legitimate access to eternal life, believe that they can obtain life by some other means which they also seek to point to others as the right path to follow. They came "before" Jesus because they were already on the religious scene before the Johannine Jesus initiated his ongoing ministry (see 1:19-28).

Similarly, the encounter between "the Jews" and the man born blind earlier in the controversy suggests to the reader that those referred to in v. 8a as coming before Jesus are "the Jews" in the narrative. In this encounter, not only do "the Jews" refuse to accept Jesus whom they describe as a sinner because he breaks the Law (9:16a), but they also seek to turn the healed man away from Jesus by urging him to testify falsely against him (9:24).\(^\text{181}\) Thus, it comes as no surprise to the reader that Jesus should describe them as thieves and robbers. They are refusing to come to faith in Jesus as the unique access to eternal life and also seek to prevent others from doing so. However, their efforts have failed because οὐκ ἦκουσαν αὐτῶν τὰ πρόβατα (v. 8b). The encounter between "the Jews" and the man born blind (9:13-34) is again a case in point of how the sheep have refused to listen to "the Jews." The healed man not only refused to accept the interpretation of "the Jews" with regard to Jesus' Sabbath healing (9:17b, 25), but he also took a clear stand for Jesus and engaged himself in a defence controversy on his behalf (9:28-34).

V. 9 resumes the christological application of the image of the "door" to Jesus with the repetition of the phrase ἐγὼ εἰμι ἡ θύρα (v. 9a). Once again, this expression lays claim to exclusiveness; Jesus is the unique access to the sheepfold. The rest of the verse spells out what the function of Jesus as "the door" is, as well as what benefits there are for the sheep who enter the sheepfold through him: δι' ἐμοῦ εἶναι τίς εἰσέλθῃ σωθῆσεται καὶ εἰσελθοῦσεται καὶ ἔξελθοῦσεται καὶ νομὴν εὑρήσει (v. 9b). In this carefully constructed sentence expressing real condition, the function of the door is

\(^{181}\) See above, 178-179.
stated in the protasis with the benefits for entering by the door in the apodosis.\textsuperscript{182} The protasis proposes the condition: δι' ἐμοῦ ἔάν τις εἰσέλθῃ. It underlines the fact that the function of Jesus as the "door" is to enable people to gain access to eternal life. The words δι' ἐμοῦ are in an emphatic position and are intended to express the uniqueness of Jesus' role as the mediator of eternal life. The use of the indefinite pronoun τις indicates the non-exclusive nature of the invitation implied in the condition; any one may enter, and indeed all are invited to enter by the door.\textsuperscript{183} At the narrative level and within the framework of the ongoing juridical controversy, this implied appeal is addressed specifically to "the Jews" to accept Jesus' christological claims and to come to faith in him.

The benefits for whoever accepts the sine qua non condition of coming to faith in Jesus are stated in the apodosis with the help of four active verbs in the future: σωθήσεται καὶ εἰσελθεῖται καὶ ἐξελεώσεται καὶ νομὴν εὑρήσει. Firstly, the person who enters through the door which is Jesus σωθήσεται. The reader is already familiar with the verb σωθήσεται. In 3:17, it is used to express the ultimate purpose of the Son's mission in the world and signifies much the same as "to have eternal life."\textsuperscript{184} The use of σωθήσεται in the present context would thus point to the eternal life which Jesus, as the unique Son, gives those who come to him in faith. It constitutes yet another attempt by the Johannine Jesus to persuade his opponents to avail themselves of the salvation he offers. This insistence on salvation for his opponents "the Jews" has been a constant feature in the Johannine Jesus' interventions in the ongoing controversy (5:24, 34, 39-40). It corresponds to the nature of the controversy as a juridical procedure which is to convince one's opponent of the truthfulness of one's claims in order

\textsuperscript{182} On the simple or "real" condition, see Zerwick, \textit{Biblical Greek}, 102-103, §§ 303-305.

\textsuperscript{183} See Bernard, \textit{The Gospel according to St John}, 2: 355.

\textsuperscript{184} See Léon-Dufour, \textit{Lecture}, 2: 366, n. 5; Morris, \textit{John}, 508, and n. 32.
to bring about a mutually acceptable resolution of the conflict and effect reconciliation.\textsuperscript{185}

Secondly, the one who accepts to come to faith in Jesus \( εἰσελεύσεται \) καὶ \( εξελεύσεται \). This expression should be understood against the background of the Semitic use of two opposing terms to indicate the idea of a totality.\textsuperscript{186} Thus, in the Old Testament, "to go in and go out" is frequently found in military and other contexts with the meaning of total freedom of movement and security (see Deut 28:6; 1 Sam 29:6; 2 Sam 19:27; Ps 121:8 etc.). In much the same way, \( εἰσελεύσεται \) καὶ \( εξελεύσεται \) in the present context indicates the absolute freedom of movement and security which Jesus provides for those who accept him as their unique access to salvation.\textsuperscript{187}

Thirdly, the one who enters through Jesus \( νομὴν \) εὑρήσεται. Once again, the reader looks to the Old Testament where finding a rich pasture is associated with God's providential care (see Ps 23:2). Finding pasture in v. 9b would then mean finding in Jesus the life-sustaining force that God himself gives.\textsuperscript{188} In sum, what Jesus in v. 9b is offering to "the Jews" and indeed to all who come to faith in him is a share in the divine life which is present in his person. This participation in the divine life takes the form of an attainment in Jesus of absolute freedom and security as well as access to the life-sustaining force which is provided by God in Jesus. Within the context of the ongoing juridical controversy, Jesus' insistence on the benefits of a faith commitment in him seeks to persuade "the Jews" about the truthfulness of his christological claims. He wants to lead his opponents to perceive his true identity as well as his significance for their lives.

\textsuperscript{185} See above, 27.

\textsuperscript{186} See for instance, G. Lambert, "I termini contrari come espressioni della totalità in ebraico," \textit{Bib} 33 (1952) 173-190. On the specific expression of "to go in and go out," see especially 178-185.


\textsuperscript{188} See Neuman-Nida, \textit{Handbook}, 327.
Those who refuse to enter the sheepfold by the door, i.e. come to faith in Jesus had earlier been described as thieves and robbers (see v. 8). Verse 10a spells out their motive for wanting to enter the sheepfold by a way other than the sole legitimate one: ἵνα κλέψῃ καὶ θύσῃ καὶ ἀπολέσῃ. Their only purpose is to harm the sheep in pursuit of their own selfish interests. In trying to turn people away from Jesus (see 9:24) in a bid to portray themselves as those who know and understand God's will as expressed in the Law (see 9:16a, 29), "the Jews" are effectively behaving like a thief who steals and slaughters the sheep for his personal enjoyment. 189 This self-centred action can only lead to the destruction of the sheep (ἀπολέσῃ). The reader recalls here the earlier uses of the verb ἀπαλλάθη in the Gospel narrative. In 3:16 for instance, it is used with the theological connotation of "loss of eternal life." The purpose of Jesus' mission is to ensure that those who believe in him are not eternally destroyed, but rather that they receive eternal life (3:16b. see also 6:39). The reader thus understands the destruction of the sheep (ἀπολέσῃ) which threatens the sheep as a result of the activity of those who refuse to believe in Jesus in the sense of the loss of that true life which can be obtained through Jesus alone. 190

In sharp contrast to the thief whose activity leads to the loss of life, Jesus tells "the Jews" who are his opponents in the present controversy: ἐγὼ ἢλθον ἵνα ζωὴν ἐκωσίων καὶ περισσοῦν εἴσωσίν (v. 10b). The emphatic position of the personal pronoun ἐγὼ is intended to establish a clear contrast between Jesus to whom it refers and the thief spoken of in the first half of the verse (v. 10a). The coming of the thief is presented as an ongoing event (ἐρχέται v. 10a); Jesus' coming is depicted as a unique event (see ἢλθον). The thief comes to kill and

189 The verb θύσῃ has the meaning of "to sacrifice," "to slaughter." However, it also has the nuance of "to celebrate," especially in relation to the slaughter of animals. See BAGD, 367, s.v. θύσῃ, 4. See also G. D. Kilpatrick, "The Meaning of θύειν in the New Testament," BiTr 12 (1961) 130-132. He notes that, in both the LXX and the NT, the verb θύειν has the meaning of both "to sacrifice," and "to kill for food."

190 See Schnackenburg, The Gospel according to John, 2: 293.
destroy (v. 10a). The purpose of the unparalleled event of Jesus' coming expressed by the ἠνα is to grant life to all those who come to faith in him as the unique mediator of salvation. The plural ἐξωσιν which is here interpreted in reference to ἐν τις in v. 9b has nothing restrictive about it. Jesus has come in order that all those who accept him may have life (see 3:16). Thus, the expression ζωὴν ἐξωσιν would include "the Jews" who are Jesus' opponents in the ongoing controversy, and to whom the present discourse is being addressed. As shown repeatedly in the present study, the Johannine Jesus is engaged in a rhetoric of persuasion and therefore seeks to convince his opponents of the truthfulness of his christological claims. If they, like everybody else, would accept to come to faith in him, they will become beneficiaries of the life he brings. The life (ζωὴ) which those who make a commitment of faith receive in Jesus is the eternal life which he alone is capable of giving (3:16, 36; 5:24a, 40 etc.) καὶ περισσὸν ἐξωσιν (10bβ). In what sense is this life abundant? It is abundant in the sense that it flows from the divine reality itself, "and being the consequence of [God's own] action [as mediated through Jesus' words and deeds], it is measureless and unlimited." Thus, the reader perceives that, not only is v. 10 intended to bring into sharp focus the contrast between Jesus who provides abundant life and his opponents whose activities result in the loss of true life, but also to constitute an invitation and a challenge to "the Jews." The choice facing them could not have been made clearer. It is between persisting in their unbelief which, like the

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191 See Delebecque, Evangelie de Jean, 172.

192 Pace Neuman-Nida, Handbook, 328, who choose to render ἠνα ζωὴν ἐξωσιν as "in order that you [second person plural] might have life" on the grounds that "the persons referred to are Jesus' followers rather than the Pharisees to whom the parable is addressed (v. 6)." See also Lindars, The Gospel of John, 360, who thinks that "the unexpressed subject, they, is «the sheep» of v. 8."

193 The adjective περισσὸς is a hapax legomenon in the Fourth Gospel. The words καὶ περισσὸν ἐξωσιν are missing in p56 D. The omission was probably caused by homoeoteleuton.

activities of the thief, leads to destruction and loss of life, and accepting in faith the christological claims of Jesus which leads to the fullness of life.

After the christological application of "the door" image to Jesus (vv. 7-10), the focus of the discourse shifts to the other dominant image of the juridical parable namely, "the shepherd." In v. 11a, Jesus says emphatically of himself: ἔγω εἰμι ὁ ποιμήν ὁ καλὸς. Once again, the use of ἔγω εἰμι with a predicate points to something that is unique to Jesus. He alone is the Good Shepherd.¹⁹⁵ The placing of the attributive adjective (καλὸς) in postposition alerts the reader to the fact that the emphasis is on Jesus who is being described as the Good Shepherd.¹⁹⁶ How is the adjective καλὸς to be understood in the present context? The reader calls to mind an earlier use of καλὸς in 2:10 (τὸν καλὸν οἶνον) where the adjective carries no nuance either of moral or aesthetic beauty, and simply means good in the sense of being of the highest quality.¹⁹⁷ The steward reproves the bridegroom for serving the "inferior wine" first, and keeping the excellent wine which is most appropriate for the occasion till the last moment. That the wine served first should now be described as "inferior" (τὸν ἔλασσων) only goes to show the unique quality of the wine provided by Jesus. The reader understands καλὸς in much the same way in the present context. Thus, the description of Jesus as the Good Shepherd conveys the idea that he is the shepherd par excellence in the sense that he fulfils the role of shepherd in a unique and incomparable way.¹⁹⁸ This would then imply that

¹⁹⁵ What is being stressed in the ongoing christological application of the juridical parable is the uniqueness of Jesus and of his christological claims which call for a commitment of faith. Jesus is the unique Good Shepherd. It therefore seems inaccurate to interpret the article ὁ as generic as suggested by Lindars, The Gospel of John, 360.

¹⁹⁶ On the various nuances related to the position of the attributive adjective, see Blass-Debrunner-Funk, A Greek Grammar, 141, § 270.

¹⁹⁷ Léon-Dufour, Lecture, 2: 372-373, rightly observes that καλὸς in 2:10 and 10:11, as well as in the rest of the New Testament, refers to "la qualité d'une chose ou d'une personne qui répond pleinement à sa fonction."

¹⁹⁸ See Bernard, The Gospel according to St John, 2: 356; Delebecque, Evangile de Jean, 172-173. Lagrange, Evangile, 279, understands καλὸς as indicating "la possession avec un certain éclat des qualités voulues." Other suggestions include Brown, John, 1: 386, "model;" Lindars, The Gospel of John, 361,
Jesus is the only "true" shepherd. The second half of the verse (11b) specifies this unique and incomparable way in which the Good Shepherd fulfills his shepherding role: ὁ ποιμὴν ὁ καλὸς τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ τίθησιν ὑπὲρ τῶν προβάτων. It is quite possible to render the expression τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ τίθησιν ὑπὲρ τῶν προβάτων as "risks his life for his sheep." However, since the action being described here is presented as something which is unique to the Good Shepherd, the rendering of "lays down his life for his sheep" is more appropriate. This understanding is further strengthened by the fact that in the Johannine Gospel narrative, the preposition ὑπὲρ almost always carries the nuance of death (see 6:51). Jesus as the Good Shepherd lays down his life for his sheep. Thus, the reader understands v. 11b not as a reference to a general truth about what a good shepherd does, but rather as a specific reference to what Jesus as the Good Shepherd intends to do for his sheep. In other words, Jesus is here speaking of his own distinctive activity.

The context remains the ongoing juridical controversy between Jesus and "the Jews" concerning Jesus' christological claims. Jesus is under the threat of death which is the intended sanction for what his opponents perceive as his

"ideal," Beasley-Murray, John, 170, "genuine." On the application of the expression רֹּה' ה יָּפֶה to David, Moses or even God himself in some rabbinic texts, see Strack-Billerbeck, Kommentar, 2: 537.

199 See Barrett, John, 373, who, in my opinion, rightly observes that καλὸς in the present context "may be compared with δοξῆν ὅς."  

200 A small number of manuscripts and ancient versions (P₄⁵ K* D it vg) have δίδωμι instead of the widely attested τίθησιν (P66 p75 K² A B L W Δ Θ ψ etc.) which is characteristically Johannine. The uniqueness of this Johannine usage (also found in 10:15; 17; 13:37; 38; 15:13; 1 Jn 3:16[2x]) may have prompted some copyists to change it to δίδωμι which is the usual verb found in the Synoptic Gospels (see Mt 20:28; Mk 10:45).

201 This is the opinion of for instance, Bultmann, The Gospel of John, 370, n. 5; Léon-Dufour, Lecture, 2: 369.

202 This view is shared by the majority of Johannine scholars. See, among many, Barrett, John, 374-375; van den Bussche, Jean, Evangile Spirituel, 331-333; Carson, John, 386.


Sabbath violation and his false christological claims (5:18). His ongoing effort to convince "the Jews" of the truthfulness of his claims is not so much motivated by the fear of death as by the desire to bring them to faith in him and give them eternal life (see 5:34, 39-40). It is for this reason that Jesus makes it clear to "the Jews" that his death, when it does happen, will not be a punishment inflicted upon him, but rather a voluntary and deliberate laying down of his life for his sheep. It will be of a unique soteriological significance which will distinguish him as the one and only true Shepherd. This means that, within the context of the ongoing juridical controversy, Jesus' revelation of his death as a deliberate and distinctive act by which he gives life to his sheep should be understood as constituting a warrant of credibility aimed at persuading "the Jews" to accept his christological claims. In other words, his death and its inherent soteriological effect are intended to give credence to his claims of a unique relationship with God and as life-giver.

In sharp contrast to the distinctive life-giving activity of the Good Shepherd, v. 12 describes the relation of the hireling to the sheep. Firstly, there is a statement of fact: ὁ μισθωτὸς καὶ οὐκ ὁ ἤν ποιμήν, οὐκ οὐκ ἐστὶν τὰ πρόβατα ἱω (v. 12a). The use of the negative οὐ with the participle ἤν is intended to highlight the nature of the assertion as a statement of an absolute fact. Thus, the shade of meaning implied in v. 12a may be rendered as follows:

"The hireling is certainly not the shepherd."\(^{205}\) In addition to not being the

\(^{205}\) On the nuance implied in the use of οὐ with the participle, see Moulton-Howard-Turner, \textit{Grammar}, 1: 231-232. The OT abounds in "shepherd" language and the Davidic Messiah is spoken of as a shepherd of his people (see Ps 23:1; Ps 80:2; Isa 40:2; Jer 31:9). In relation to the use of the "shepherd" language in Jn 10:1-18, several Johannine scholars maintain that the Johannine discourse cannot be fully understood without reference to the OT, and especially Ezek 34. See for instance, Dodd, \textit{Interpretation}, 388-361; Carson, \textit{John}, 381-382. However, while Jn 10:1-18 and Ezek 34 may have in common the use of the "shepherd" language, there is one major difference between the two. In Ezek 34, Yahweh rebukes "the shepherds of Israel" (v. 2) for being unfaithful to their task (vv. 4-6 etc.), and expresses his readiness to take charge himself of his sheep (vv. 11-16). In other words, the text speaks about the unfaithful shepherds of Israel and about God as the true shepherd. Since the rulers as delegated shepherds of Yahweh's sheep have failed in their task, Yahweh who is the true shepherd will himself take care of his sheep. On the contrary, in Jn 10:1-18, Jesus is the unique shepherd and there is no mention of other shepherds. The thieves and robbers (v. 8) as well as the hireling (v. 12) are not described as shepherds, not even as "bad shepherds," (pace Dodd, \textit{Interpretation}, 360) and only serve as a foil for the Good Shepherd. See F. Genyut, "Le discours sur le bon pasteur: Analyse sémiotique de Jean 10:1-21," \textit{SémBib} 41 (1986) 20-34. See especially 26-27. The emphasis is on Jesus as the unique Shepherd and on his distinctive
shepherd, the sheep do not belong to him as owner (v. 12aβ). Since he lacks pride of ownership and the care that proceeds from possession, the hireling quickly abandons (ἐφιπτων) the sheep at the approach of danger (v. 12b), flees (φεύγει) for his life and allows the wolf to snatch and scatter the sheep (v. 12c).

The use of present indicative verbs to describe the actions of the hireling points to a habitual and permanent mode of behaviour. The reason why the hireling always flees is that, working solely for money, there is no personal relationship between him and the sheep καὶ οὐ μέλει αὐτῷ περὶ τῶν προβάτων (v. 13).206 He is not concerned about the safety of the sheep and his relation with them is dictated only by self-interest. In the light of earlier developments in the ongoing juridical controversy, the reader rightly links the hireling with "the Jews." Not only have they persistently refused to accept Jesus' christological claims (5:18b; 9:16a, 24, 29), but they have also shown that all their actions are motivated by self-interest and personal gain. Their only concern is the human praise and esteem which they receive from one another (5:44) and their actions are always to the detriment of the sheep (9:24-34). Their self-interest has made them blind (9:40-41) and prevents them from accepting Jesus' christological claims and coming to faith in him.207 Jesus' polemic against "the Jews" in the person of the hireling in vv. 12-13 has the effect of facilitating an explicit comparison between himself and "the Jews." The aim is to establish the truthfulness of his

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206 A number of manuscripts and ancient versions (A C W f 13 Majority Text it syr) have ὁ ἐκ μαθητῶν φεύγει at the beginning of v. 13. This however seems to be an attempt on the part of some copyists to improve the meaning. It should therefore be omitted, as in P46Vid p45 p66 p75 R*Vid B D L Θ etc.

207 See Moloney, Signs and Shadows, 137.
claims by showing his opponents that they are in the wrong, and also to hasten the resolution of the conflict.  

β. Relationship of Good Shepherd to his sheep and the Father (vv. 14-18)

V. 14a picks up the theme of "Jesus the Good shepherd." The reader recalls that the resumption of the theme of "Jesus the door" in v. 9a had led to its further development in vv. 9b-10. Thus, he/she perceives the repetition of ἐγὼ εἰμί ὁ ποιμὴν ὁ καλὸς here as a signal that what is to follow will constitute a further development and clarification of the theme of "Jesus the Good Shepherd." Jesus here offers two reasons to "the Jews" who are his addressees as to why they should acknowledge him as the unique Shepherd.

The first reason is the relationship of mutual knowledge which exists between himself as the shepherd and his sheep: γινώσκω τὰ ἐμὰ καὶ γινώσκοι με τὰ ἐμὰ (v. 14b). This mutual knowledge expresses itself in the reciprocal love of the shepherd and the sheep. On the one hand, Jesus' knowledge and love of those he calls "my own," i.e. those who come to faith in him, flow from his relationship with them as their unique shepherd who through his self-sacrifice gives them abundant life. On the other hand, the knowledge and love of the sheep manifest themselves in their trust and willing obedience to the shepherd whose voice they recognize, and who alone they readily follow (see vv. 3b-4). This mutual knowledge and love between Jesus and those who believe in him leads directly to the important assertion in v. 15a: καθὼς γινώσκει

208 See above, 143, and n. 230, on the significance of the transformation of defence into accusation in a two-party juridical controversy.

209 On γινώσκειν as expressing mutual knowledge and love, see de la Potterie, "Οἶδα ετ γινώσκω," 714.
με ὁ πατέρα καγώ γινώσκω τὸν πατέρα.\textsuperscript{210} The comparative conjunction καθώς here has an explanatory function, and it is used as a connective to establish the basis for the reciprocal relationship between Jesus and those who believe in him. The relationship between the Father and Jesus constitutes the basis for Jesus' relationship with the sheep not only because of its reciprocal character, but more especially because it is the "original model and the reason for Jesus' fellowship with his own."\textsuperscript{211}

The reader knows of the mutual relationship between the Father and the Son. On the one hand, the Father loves the Son, and shows him all that he himself does (5:20a; see also 3:35), and on the other hand, the Son loves the Father and always acts in perfect unity with and in obedience to his will (5:19c, 30). It is in this sense that the Father / Son relationship constitutes "a model" for the loving knowledge between Jesus and the sheep. Jesus loves the sheep and gives them abundant life, and the sheep in turn love Jesus by recognizing his voice and willingly following him. In addition, the reader also perceives that the intimate relationship between the Father and the Son is itself the reason for the loving knowledge between Jesus and the sheep. It is Jesus' unique relationship with the Father which constitutes him as the only true shepherd capable of giving abundant life to those who come to him in faith. It is equally by reason of this unique relationship that Jesus has with the Father that the sheep listen to his voice and follow him. Thus, within the framework of the ongoing juridical controversy, in vv. 14-15a, Jesus would be appealing to his unique relationship with the Father upon which the loving knowledge between himself and the sheep is established as a sign of the truthfulness of his christological claims.


\textsuperscript{211} Schnackenburg, \textit{The Gospel according to John}, 2: 297.
The second reason why "the Jews" should accept Jesus as the only true Shepherd capable of giving them abundant life is that: \( \text{καὶ τὴν φυσιὰν μου τίθημι ὑπὲρ τῶν προβάτων} \) (v. 15b). Jesus' laying down of his life for his sheep was first mentioned in v. 11b. While the meaning of Jesus' assertion is the same in both v. 11b and v. 15b, it serves a different function in each instance. In v. 11b, it was intended to underscore Jesus' distinctive characteristic as the Good Shepherd. His death will be a unique soteriological event and will constitute him as the only true Shepherd. Its repetition in the present context constitutes the climax of Jesus' assertion in the previous verse concerning the loving knowledge between himself and the sheep. In other words, Jesus' ultimate self-sacrifice is here being presented as the sign \textit{par excellence} and the direct consequence of his knowledge of, and his love for those who accept his claims and come to faith in him. Jesus knows and loves his sheep with the result that he is prepared to lay down his life on their behalf. The idea of "consequence" is here introduced by the "consecutive" \( \text{καὶ} \) which opens v. 15b.\(^\text{212}\) In sum, what the Johannine Jesus in vv. 14-15 would thus be telling "the Jews" who are his addressees may be summed up as follows: the reciprocal loving knowledge between himself and those who believe in him which is itself grounded on his unique relationship with the Father, as well as his self-sacrifice on their behalf should convince "the Jews" of the genuineness of his christological claims.

V. 16 introduces a new detail into the ongoing christological application of the image of the good shepherd. The Johannine Jesus speaks of his other sheep who are not \( \text{ἐκ τῆς ἀνθρώπινς ταύτης} \) (v. 16a). How is term \( \text{ἀνθρώπινς} \) to be understood here? Jesus has just spoken of himself as the Good Shepherd who knows his sheep and whose sheep know him (v. 14). The use of the present indicative verbs on that occasion (\( \text{γνωσκὼ ... καὶ γνωσκοῦνες} \)) indicates to the reader that "the sheep" (\( \text{τὰ ἐμὰ} \)) here refers to those who respond to Jesus in

\(^{212}\) See Delebecque, \textit{Evangile de Jean}, 173. On the "consecutive" \( \text{καὶ} \), see Blass-Debrunner-Funk, \textit{A Greek Grammar}, 227, § 442, 2.
faith in his earthly ministry. This means that the term αὐλὴ in the present context should be understood as a reference to those in Israel who already believe in Jesus. On the basis of this understanding of αὐλὴ here, the reader perceives that "the sheep who are not of this sheepfold" refers to all those who have not yet come to faith in Jesus and are therefore not ἐκ τῆς αὐλῆς ταύτης. As the only true shepherd (v. 11a) entrusted with a life-giving authority for the benefit of all (5:24; 10:9), the Johannine Jesus can indeed claim those who are presently outside his sheepfold as "his sheep." However, the reader notes that even though these other sheep belong to Jesus as the unique shepherd, in contrast to the sheep who are already in the sheepfold, they are not specifically designated as τὰ ἐμαύ. They only become Jesus' own when they enter the sheepfold and establish an intimate relationship with him (see v. 14).

It is for this reason that in v. 16b, Jesus says proleptically of these "other" sheep: κἀκείνα δὲ ἐν ἀγαγείν καὶ τῆς φωνῆς μου ἄκουσαν. At some unspecified time in the narrative future, Jesus will have to lead them and they will recognize and obey his voice. The use of the impersonal verb δὲ suggests to the reader that Jesus considers this task as a compelling necessity; something which is incumbent on him as the only true shepherd, and therefore

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213 See Brown, John, 1: 387, 396; Lindars, The Gospel of John, 363. Against Barrett, John, 376, who maintains that "the αὐλὴ is Israel and it contains some who are Christ's own sheep and some (the unbelieving Jews) who are not." In my opinion, this view is untenable because already in the juridical parable, the αὐλὴ contains exclusively sheep who belong to the shepherd, and who recognize his voice and follow him (see vv. 3b-4). The idea that the αὐλὴ in the juridical parable would contain sheep belonging to other shepherds, and from which Jesus calls only his own as sustained by some scholars (see above, 206, and n. 165) neither fits the juridical parable nor its application by Jesus.

214 Most Johannine scholars identify the προβατά in v. 16a almost exclusively with the Gentiles as distinct from those in Israel who had already become believers. See for instance, Bernard, The Gospel according to St John, 2: 361; Lagrange, Evangile, 281; Schnackenburg, The Gospel according to John, 2: 299, and the other major commentators. While this interpretation is plausible, it appears to me to be too restrictive inasmuch as it excludes those in Israel who are yet to come to faith in Jesus. The interpretation adopted above is all-embracing and therefore includes the Gentiles, but also "the Jews" who are Jesus' opponents in the ongoing juridical controversy, and whom he seeks to persuade to accept his christological claims. There can be no denying the fact that, at the narrative level, "the Jews" are Jesus' addressees and they are the ones he is seeking to convince and to bring into the sheepfold. This is certainly in line with the controversy as a juridical procedure which is being used here.

215 On the exact nuance of ἄκουσαν with the genitive of the thing heard, see above, 206, and n. 164.
as something foreordained by God. The end result of this future task of the Johannine Jesus will be that γενήσονται μία ποιμήν, εἰς ποιμήν (v. 16c). The reader here understands the plural γενήσονται as referring to both the sheep who are already part of Jesus' fold and the "other sheep" he must lead. They will become united in one flock. The expression εἰς ποιμήν provides the reason for this unity. It is through the activity of Jesus and in his person as the only true Shepherd that the unity of the flock will be achieved.

The present context (see vv. 11b, 15b) shows that it is through the sacrificial death of the one shepherd that the one flock will come into existence. Within the framework of the ongoing juridical controversy, Jesus' mention of "other sheep" which he must (δεῖ) lead and of the one flock which he will bring into existence as the unique shepherd is directed at his opponents "the Jews," and is intended to convince them of the truthfulness of his claims. If they had imagined that, by threatening the sheep in Jesus' sheepfold (see 9:22-23, 24, 28), they could kill and destroy them (v. 10), then Jesus is telling them now that God's salvific plan that he seeks to accomplish is far bigger than what they imagine it to be; it is intended to bring all including they themselves into one flock under his care. Moreover, the use of δεῖ expresses the inevitable nature of Jesus' task which is part of God's divine purpose. This means that the ongoing attempt on the part of "the Jews" to oppose Jesus by rejecting his claims is bound to end in failure. If they are sincere with themselves and in their

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216 On the impersonal verb δεῖ with the nuance of "something which is of divine destiny," see BAGD, 172, s.v. δεῖ, 1.

217 The available manuscript evidence is almost evenly divided between the plural γενήσονται (Ψ) and the singular γενήσεται (A K ∆ f13 al). However, γενήσονται appears to be the lectio difficilior and should therefore be retained. Furthermore, "the singular number appears to be a stylistic correction." Metzger, A Textual Commentary, 196. See However, Schnackenburg, The Gospel according to John, 2: 509, n. 99, who is of the opinion that the singular is preferable. There is no other textual support for the Vulgate's reading of ovile ("fold") instead of greg (ποιμήν) which is attested by all the available Greek manuscripts. However, the difference is hardly significant.

218 See Léon-Dufour, Lecture, 2: 376; Schnackenburg, The Gospel according to John, 2: 300.
claim that they seek eternal life (see 5:39), then they have no other choice than to come to faith in Jesus and be part of his flock so as to receive "abundant life" (v. 10b).

The reader already knows about the intimate relationship between the Father and the Son (v. 15a) as well as Jesus' description of his commission to lead all his sheep in a united flock as the will of the Father (δεῖ in v. 16b). The conclusion which can be drawn from these statements is that Jesus' actions in his ongoing ministry are in perfect unity with and in obedience to the Father's will (see 5:19c, 30). This idea leads directly into the christological assertions in v. 17. The Father's love for the Son is linked with the Son's laying down of his life: διὰ τοῦτο μὲ ὁ πατὴρ ἀγαπᾷ ὁτι ἐγὼ τίθημι τὴν φυλήν μου (v. 17a). The expression διὰ τοῦτο is here to be linked to what follows it, and the ὁτι is to be understood here as giving "the reason for which what precedes is known to be so, or is said."\(^\text{219}\) Thus, v. 17a may be rendered as follows: "For this reason the Father loves me namely, that I lay down my life." How is this assertion to be understood? Is the Father's love being made dependent on Jesus' willingness to lay down his life? The reader already knows that the Father loves the Son and has given all things into his hands (3:35). Thus, there is no question of his love for Jesus being made conditional upon Jesus' sacrificial death. The Father loves the Son (5:20a), and the Son responds to and manifests the Father's love in his perfect obedience to his will (4:34; 5:30). This means that Jesus' sacrificial death on behalf of his sheep constitutes an act of love and of unqualified obedience to the will of the Father. What is being emphasized in v. 17a then is that in Jesus' sacrifice, "the Father's love for him is truly present, and that this sacrifice is therefore a revelation of the Father's love."\(^\text{220}\)

\(^{219}\) Zerwick, Biblical Greek, 143, § 420. On διὰ τοῦτο as referring to what follows, see Bernard, The Gospel according to St John, 2: 364; Lagrange, Evangile, 283.

V. 17b states another object in relation to Jesus' laying down of his life: Ἰνα πάλιν λάβω αὐτήν. What is the force of the Ἰνα in the present context? The context of the ongoing juridical controversy between Jesus and "the Jews" would suggest that the Ἰνα should be given its full telic force and rendered as "in order to." Jesus lays down his life in order to take it up again. The idea here is not that Jesus lays down his life with the calculated purpose of taking it up again. 221 What the Johannine Jesus is stressing for the benefit of his opponents is that his death will of necessity be followed by his resurrection. In order words, far from being an afterthought, the resurrection and death of Jesus constitute a single event. Jesus' death has the resurrection in view since it is through the resurrection that the life-giving Spirit is poured out (see 7:37-39) so that those who believe in him may receive abundant life (10:10b). 222 Within the context of the ongoing juridical controversy, Jesus' insistence that his death will necessarily lead to his resurrection is of a particular significance. Firstly, it gives credence to his assertion that his death will be an act of obedience to the will of the Father and at the same time a manifestation of the Father's love. From their familiarity with the OT, Jesus' opponents would acknowledge the fact that the power to raise the dead is the prerogative of the God of Israel alone (see 1 Sam 2:6; 2 Kgs 5:7; Isa 25:8, etc.). This means that Jesus' assertion about taking up his life again after his death is intended to convince his opponents of the truthfulness of his christological claims. It stresses for the benefit of "the Jews" that, as the Son of the Father, Jesus possesses the divine life-giving power in himself in the same way as the God of Israel. (see 5:26). Secondly, it strengthens

221 This is the idea that Lagrange, Evangile, 238, thinks the Ἰνα conveys if it is understood here as expressing purpose.

222 On the Ἰνα in v. 17a as expressing purpose, see Bernard, The Gospel according to St John, 2: 364; Brown, John, 1: 399; Morris, John, 513 and n. 46; Carson, John, 388. It must however be said that, in view of the weakening of the Ἰνα in Hellenistic Greek which resulted in the variety of its usage in the NT (see above, 198, n. 142), it is equally possible to understand the Ἰνα in v. 17a as expressing consequence. The resurrection would then be the inevitable consequence of Jesus' salvific death. See Lagrange, Evangile, 283; Barrett, John, 377; Moloney, Signs and shadows, 138, n. 80.
further Jesus' claim that his voluntary self-sacrifice will give life to his sheep since it is through the resurrection that abundant life is made available to those who believe in him. Thus, v. 17b constitutes an integral part of Jesus' ongoing effort to persuade "the Jews" about the truthfulness of his christological claims. If his death will result in his resurrection, then it is evident that the divine life-giving power is present in his person, and also that his christological claims are true.

The Johannine Jesus has made it clear to "the Jews" that, at an unspecified time in the narrative future, he will lay down his life for those who believe in him, and that his death will lead inevitably to his resurrection. In case they were imagining that his death will result from their juridical action against him in which they are threatening him with death, Jesus tells them emphatically that οὐδείς αἰρεται αὐτὴν ἀπ' ἕμου, ἀλλ' ἐγώ τίθημι αὐτὴν ἀπ' ἐμαυτοῦ (v. 18a). No one (οὐδείς) is capable of taking his life away. However, Jesus himself (ἐγώ) lays it down. The personal pronoun ἐγώ is here placed in antithesis to οὐδείς to bring into sharp focus the difference between what Jesus and his opponents can or cannot do. Jesus states further that he lays down his life ἀπ' ἐμαυτοῦ. The reader recalls that this same expression had been used by Jesus to stress the fact that, far from acting independently of the Father, all his actions are in perfect unity with the will of the Father (see 5:19b, 30). The expression ἀπ' ἐμαυτοῦ can thus not be taken in the sense that Jesus would do something independently of the Father. It is used here rather to underscore the voluntary nature of Jesus' sacrificial death as opposed to a death which is

223 Some early manuscripts including P45, B have the aorist ἀρπαζεῖ instead of the present αἰρεται which is supported by P66 B א D L W Δ Θ Ψ f f1 f13. Even though the aorist has some good and early support and appears to be the more difficult reading, it should be considered as secondary. Not only is it limited to a single textual type (the Egyptian), but it also appears to be the work of copyists who imagined that the discourse was looking back on the death of Jesus and interpreting it. However, in the perspective of the Gospel narrative, the death of Jesus still lies in the future, a fact which makes the present αἰρεται preferable. See Metzger, A Textual Commentary, 196-197; Hoskyns, The Fourth Gospel, 380. See however, Lagrange, Evangile, 283; Brown, John, 1: 387; van den Bussche, Jean. Evangile Spirituel, 334.
inflicted by others. "His death is not merely a fate which overtakes him, but it is a free act."  

It is in this sense that Jesus tells his opponents: ἐξουσίαν ἔχω θείναι αὐτήν, καὶ ἐξουσίαν ἔχω πάλιν λαβεῖν αὐτήν (v. 18b). The term ἐξουσία may well indicate the power that Jesus disposes to offer freely his life and to take it up again. However, the present juridical context suggests to the reader that ἐξουσία should be understood more in terms of "right," or "authority." Jesus' opponents are threatening him with death in their present juridical action against him (see 5:16-18). This means that they consider themselves to have the authority to put him to death. Jesus would thus be making it clear to them that, as the one who has received all authority (ἐξουσία) from the Father (see 3:35), he and he alone possesses the authority to lay down (θείναι) his life and to take it up (λαβεῖν) again. His death and resurrection are part of the works which the Father has given to Jesus to bring to "perfect completion" (see 5:36b), and are therefore in accord with his will.

The use of the two aorist infinitives (θείναι and λαβεῖν) here suggests to the reader the unrepentitive nature of Jesus' death and resurrection; both actions will be posited once and for all. The idea that the death and resurrection of Jesus are in accord with the Father's will, and therefore part of the mandate given to Jesus (3:35) is further strengthened by Jesus' last words to "the Jews" in the present juridical controversy: ταύτην τὴν ἐντολὴν ἐλαβον παρὰ τοῦ πατρὸς μου (v. 18c). This is the first time that the reader encounters the term

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225 See for instance, Lagrange, Evangile, 283; Brown, John, 1: 387.

226 On ἐξουσία as "authority" in the present context, see for instance, Bernard, The Gospel according to St John, 2: 365; Nida-Neuman, Handbook, 333. Many scholars have observed that, unlike elsewhere in the NT where the resurrection of Jesus is spoken of as an act of the Father, the Fourth Gospel presents Jesus' resurrection as an action of Jesus himself. However, the contradiction is only apparent. In the Fourth Gospel, Jesus acts in perfect unity with, and in obedience to the Father (5:19b, 30) from whom he has received all authority (3:35). This means that both the death and the resurrection are actions that Jesus accomplish in "absolute dependence upon the authority of the Father." Hoskyns, The Fourth Gospel, 380. See also Beasley-Murray, John, 171-172.
ἐντολὴ in the Gospel narrative. However, he/she already knows that the Father's relationship with the Son is based solely on love (3:35; 5:19b). The ἐντολὴ which Jesus has received from the Father therefore has to do with the expression of the Father's love for Jesus. It consists of the command which, in virtue of the ἐντολὴ with which he is invested (v. 18b), authorizes Jesus to give his life freely and to take it up again.227 Jesus' death and resurrection will be accomplished in obedience to the Father's will expressed in his loving command.

The significance of Jesus' ending of the christological application of the juridical parable to the ongoing juridical controversy on the central idea of the Father's will to which he acts in perfect obedience is not lost on the reader. Jesus had insisted on this same fundamental idea throughout his "defence" discourse earlier in the controversy (see 5:17, 19, 30, etc.). The reader knows that Jesus' insistence on his perfect obedience to the Father's will is intended to show "the Jews" that, far from being a violation of the Law, his Sabbath activities (5:1-9a; 9:1-7) underscore his unique relationship with the Father, and therefore the truthfulness of his christological claims. Similarly, the Johannine Jesus' assertions about his status as the sole mediator of the abundant life that God gives (10:10b), and also as the unique Shepherd who, in virtue of the authority with which he is invested, has received the command to offer his life and to take it up again for the salvation of those who believe in him, are destined to convince his opponents and to bring them to accept his christological claims. The reader accepts Jesus' christological claims and believes in him. He/she is also aware that the aim of Jesus in the ongoing juridical controversy is to bring "the unbelieving Jews" to faith in him ἵνα ζωὴν ἔχωσιν καὶ περισσότερον ἔχωσιν (10:10b). As Jesus brings his discourse to an end, the question that comes to the fore is whether or not "the Jews" will finally allow

227 See G. Schrenk, "ἐντολὴ," *TDNT* 2 (1964) 545-556. See especially 553.
themselves to be convinced by Jesus' assertions about his Sabbath activities and the related christological claims.

f). Conclusion of the Sabbath juridical controversy (10:19-21)\textsuperscript{228}

As the Johannine Jesus brings to an end his discourse which was meant to convince his opponents, the narrator intrudes a comment into the narrative to inform the reader that σχίσμα πάλιν ἐγένετο ἐν τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις διὰ λόγους τούτους (v. 19). The reader has no doubt that the 'Ἰουδαίοι here refers to "the Jews" who are Jesus' opponents in the ongoing juridical controversy, and to whom his words had been addressed.\textsuperscript{229} The use of πάλιν in relation to σχίσμα recalls to the mind of the reader an earlier division among Jesus' opponents following his healing of the man born blind (9:16). Both Jesus' Sabbath activity and christological claims continue to be a source of division among his opponents. The expression διὰ λόγους τούτους may be understood as a reference to the juridical parable and its christological application to the ongoing juridical controversy (10:1-18). However, the reader knows that 9:1-10:18 constitutes the continuation and development of the Sabbath juridical controversy which began in 5:1-47,\textsuperscript{230} and therefore envisages the possibility that διὰ λόγους τούτους refers also to Jesus' main defence speech in 5:19-47.

\textsuperscript{228} Some scholars have advocated the relocation of 10:19-21 in a bid to improve the logical sequence of the Gospel narrative. See for instance, Bernard, The Gospel according to St John, 1: XXIV-XXV; Bultmann, The Gospel of John, 312-314. For a critique of this position, see among others, Brown, John, 1:389-390; Lindars, The Gospel of John, 49. It may be added here that, from the perspective in which Jn 5 and 9:1-10:18 have been interpreted in the present study, i.e. as a juridical controversy, vv. 19-21 constitute an integral part of 9:1-10:21 and their position can hardly be considered as an accident. They provide the reaction of Jesus' opponents to his defence discourses, which in turn leads to the conclusion of the Sabbath juridical controversy.

\textsuperscript{229} Pace Schnackenburg, The Gospel according to John, 2: 303, and Beasley-Murray, John, 172, who are of the opinion that "the Jews" here refers to the people at large. As I have repeatedly argued in the course of this study, "the Jews" refers to a specific character within the narrative framework of the Gospel which is distinct from "the people." See above, 88, n. 67.

\textsuperscript{230} See above, 150, and n. 250.
The third person plural verb ἔχειν which opens v. 20 alerts the reader to the fact that, for the first time in the ongoing juridical controversy, "the Jews" are about to react to Jesus' words which not only sought to justify his Sabbath activities, but also to convince them of the truthfulness of his christological claims. The reader who is familiar with the structural elements of the controversy as a juridical procedure now knows that, with "the Jews" reacting to Jesus' words of defence, the Sabbath juridical controversy is about to reach its conclusion.\(^{231}\) The reaction of "the Jews" to Jesus' defence discourses comes by way of two diametrically opposed positions. On the one hand, many of "the Jews" (πολλοί ἐξ αὐτῶν) flatly reject Jesus' words: δαμιώνλον ἔχει καὶ μαίνεται. τί αὐτοῦ ἀκούετε (v. 20). The καὶ here is consecutive and should be rendered as "and so." This means that "the Jews" are effectively making only one charge against Jesus namely, that of demon-possession (see also 8:48, 52). What they call his insanity (μαίνεται) is considered by them to be the result of demon possession.\(^{232}\) The assertion in v. 20 represents an important moment in the unfolding Sabbath juridical controversy. It constitutes the decision of the majority of Jesus' opponents after listening to his arguments which sought to convince them about his christological claims. Thus, far from being simply a harsh comment about what they perceive as Jesus' insanity, v. 20 provides the response of "the Jews" to Jesus' arguments in defence of his claims and therefore signals to the reader the approaching end of the Sabbath juridical controversy.\(^{233}\) The majority of Jesus' opponents are dismissive of his words (τί

\(^{231}\) On the different forms of conclusion to a juridical controversy, see above, 22-24.

\(^{232}\) See for instance, Barrett, John, 377.

\(^{233}\) In relation to v. 20, some scholars simply point to the fact that demon-possession and madness are one and the same thing, and fail to observe the importance of the assertion as a conclusion to the Sabbath juridical controversy. See for instance, Carson, John, 390; Barrett, John, 377. In addition to the fact that v. 20 represents the decision of the majority in response to Jesus' defence discourses, it also helps to maintain the plot line of the narrative in the sense that it points to the possibility of the renewal of the conflict in the narrative future.
which they liken to those of a raving madman. In so doing, they dispense themselves with the hard evidence of Jesus’ words which were intended not only to resolve the conflict but also to bring them to faith in him, and appear set to pursue their accusations against him.

On the other hand, there are some (ἄλλοι) who appear to be disposed to give some credence to Jesus’ words and deeds. Having listened to Jesus’ words, "these Jews" do not think that ταύτα τὰ ῥήματα οὐκ ἔστιν δαιμονιζομένου (v. 21a). Jesus’ words do make sense to them and they are prepared to leave open the possibility that his claims are truthful. Moreover, they point to the event that led to the resumption of the juridical controversy - the healing of the man born blind - as further proof that Jesus is not acting under the influence of a demon: μὴ δαιμόνιον δύναται τυφλῶν ὀφθαλμοὺς ἀνοίξαι (v. 21b). The negative μὴ which opens the question indicates to the reader that the expected answer is "No." The force of this μὴ of "cautious assertion" may be conveyed by freely rendering the question as follows: "You certainly do not think that a demon can open the eyes of the blind, do you?"234 The similarity between the position of the minority in v. 21b and the "dissenting" group among Jesus’ opponents in 9:16b is not lost on the reader. Both consider Jesus’ healing of the man born blind as pointing to the possibility of his being ἄνθρωπος παρὰ θεοῦ.

Concluding Remarks.

With "the Jews" finally reacting to Jesus’ discourses in defence of his Sabbath activities and related christological claims, the reader perceives that the Sabbath juridical controversy has effectively come to an end. It began with "the Jews" accusing Jesus of Sabbath violation and false christological claims (5:16-18). Jesus responded to these accusations with a juridically decisive declaration

234 On the use of μὴ in cautious assertions, see above, 182, n. 100.
which was intended to convince his accusers and to bring them to faith in him (5:19-47). Firstly, Jesus justified his Sabbath activities on the basis of the perfect *functional unity* between the Father and himself which enables him to exercise uninterruptedly the divine functions of life-giving and judgment (5:19-30). Secondly, the Johannine Jesus adduced three reliable witnesses in a bid to show his opponents that they were deliberately refusing to acknowledge the truth, and also that he himself was speaking the truth and not out of self-interest (5:31-40). Thirdly, Jesus turned his defence into accusation against his accusers with the purpose of indicating to them why they were in the wrong in accusing him and therefore needed to acknowledge the truth (5:41-47). At the end of Jesus' discourse, no reaction from "the Jews" was reported, as the chapter was brought to an abrupt end. However, since the issues raised in the controversy were left unresolved and there was no indication of the withdrawal of the initial accusations against Jesus, the controversy was destined to continue in the narrative future.

In the meantime, the conflict motif and the resultant christological motif which emerged clearly for the first time in 5:1-47 continued and developed in chapters 6-8. In a first instance, the conflict motive was only foreshadowed in chapter 6. In 6:41-42, "the Jews" murmured against Jesus over his claim to be the bread that has come down from heaven. Again, their reaction to Jesus' assertion that he will give them his flesh to eat (6:51) led to a dispute in their own ranks (6:52). However, in chapters 7 and 8, the conflict motif was fully resumed and given a clear thematic development. Jesus' teaching in the Temple in the middle of the feast of Tabernacles and the ensuing christological discussion (7:14-29) led to a series of unsuccessful attempts to arrest him (7:30, 32). In chapter 8, the conflict continued and the level of hostility towards Jesus escalated in the debate between Jesus and "the Jews" (8:31-59). Thus, within the overall narrative structure of the Gospel, chapter 6, and especially chapters 7
and 8 carried forward the conflict motive and the related christological debate between Jesus and "the Jews." In other words, they served to maintain the "conflict" plot line of the narrative, and also in a way, to point to the possible resumption of the still unresolved Sabbath juridical controversy between Jesus and "the Jews."

The continuation and development of the Sabbath juridical controversy occurred in 9:1-10:21 where the same accusations of Sabbath violation and false christological claims were made against Jesus (9:16). With the re-statement of the accusations, Jesus' opponents turned to witnesses for evidence which would enable them pursue their juridical controversy against Jesus (9:17-27). Not only did "the Jews" fail to gather the evidence they were hoping for, but their insistence that their principal witness - the man born blind - tell them what they wanted to hear led the man to engage himself in a defence controversy on behalf of Jesus (9:28-34). It was at this juncture that Jesus himself returned onto the narrative scene. The entrance of Jesus into the narrative in the aftermath of the defence controversy was marked by an encounter between himself and the man who had defended him before "the Jews" (9:35-38). With "the Jews" persisting in their refusal to accept the truth about Jesus' activity and person as evidenced by their treatment of the man born blind (9:34), Jesus embarked on another attempt to convince his accusers and bring them to faith in him. By means of a juridical parable and its christological application to the controversy, Jesus explained for the benefit of his accusers his unique role as the mediator of salvation, and as the only true shepherd who is capable of giving them abundant life by his sacrificial death and his resurrection (10:1-18). The Sabbath juridical controversy finally came to an end with the reaction of "the Jews" to Jesus' words in 10:19-21.

As the Sabbath juridical controversy comes to an end, it is clear to the reader that only a minority of Jesus' opponents have shown any signs of
openness to the inherent possibilities of his words and deeds. The majority have rejected his words as insane, and appear set to pursue their accusations against him. This means that Jesus and his accusers have failed to resolve their conflict between them by the bilateral procedure of juridical controversy. The question of whether or not Jesus' Sabbath activities constitute a violation of the Law and that of the truthfulness of Jesus' christological claims still remain to be resolved. Since the juridical controversy has failed to yield the desired results of a mutually acceptable solution, the only option now is to appeal to an impartial tribunal where the case will be heard and a legally binding verdict handed down. Once this step is taken, the juridical nature of the conflict automatically changes. In other words, it ceases to be a bilateral juridical controversy and becomes trilateral, i.e., a forensic trial before a judge. Thus, the Sabbath juridical controversy may have come to an end, but the reader knows that the conflict between Jesus and "the Jews" is destined to continue in the narrative future under a different juridical form.235

The contentious issues between Jesus and "the Jews" will resurface during the trial before Pilate (18:28-19:16). That we have here a trial is clear from the fact that we have accusers ("the Jews"), an accused (Jesus) and a judge (Pilate). The process is trilateral. Jesus is accused as an evil doer (κακὸς ποιῶν. See 18:30). The emphasis here is on Jesus' actions. While Jesus' Sabbath activities are not explicitly mentioned, it is clear from the Gospel narrative that

235 Apart from 10:24-39 where the question of Jesus' identity is raised in a discussion between Jesus and "the Jews," the only other occasion on which the contentious issues between Jesus and "the Jews" are raised is during his trial before Pilate (18:28-19:16). Many scholars have rightly observed that, unlike the synoptic account of the Passion, the Johannine account contains no formal trial of Jesus before the Jewish authorities, and have proposed several solutions. See among many, Brown, John, 2: 832-836; Boismard-Lamouille, L'Evangile de Jean, 413-416; Lindars, The Gospel of John, 544-545. (Against Bultmann, The Gospel of John, 641, who maintains that "as in the Synoptics Jesus is brought before the High Priest and tried by him"). In the perspective of the present study, the lack of a "Jewish trial" in the Johannine narrative makes perfect sense. The issues Jesus is accused of in the Passion narrative, namely, that he is an evil doer (18:30) and especially that he has made himself the Son of God (19:7), had already been the subject of a juridical controversy between Jesus and "the Jews," and they had failed to reach a mutually acceptable solution. It was therefore normal that the case be presented to an impartial tribunal (in this case Pilate's tribunal) where the case will be heard in a trial and a legally binding verdict imposed.
the only actions of Jesus which "the Jews" strongly disapproved of and considered worthy of death were his Sabbath activities which had triggered off the juridical controversy between Jesus and themselves (see 5:16-18). Again, Jesus' Sabbath activities had led to the all important issue of his identity which had remained at the heart of the Sabbath juridical controversy (see 5:18; 19-30; 9:16, 30-33; 10:7-18). Since this issue of Jesus' divine origin is never resolved in the juridical controversy, it comes as no surprise that the "Son of God" question should re-emerge as the crucial issue in the trial before Pilate (υἱὸν θεοῦ ἐαυτὸν ἐποίησεν. See 19:7). It was the refusal of "the Jews" to acknowledge Jesus' claim to be the Son of God, and therefore to have a unique relationship with the God of Israel, which explains why the juridical controversy could not be resolved. The accusation of "the Jews" before Pilate that Jesus had made himself the Son of God (19:7) shows that they were still rejecting Jesus' claim to divine sonship, which in turn indicates that, as far as "the Jews" are concerned, the "Son of God" issue will remain unresolved even in the passion narrative.

The analysis of the two Johannine Sabbath conflict narratives has established that in 5 and 9:1-10:21, the narrator uses the controversy as a juridical procedure to communicate his message to the reader. Since the message of the Sabbath conflict narratives is entirely christological, it may be argued that the narrator's intention in using the controversy as a juridical procedure is to construct a narrative christology. This means that the narrator employs this distinctive narrative genre for the specific purpose of constructing a narrative which is entirely centred on Jesus, and in which he/she seeks to bring the reader to perceive and accept the identity and significance of Jesus. How does the


237 Stibbe, John as storyteller, 22, makes a similar claim in respect of the whole of the Fourth Gospel.
narrator use this distinctive narrative genre of juridical controversy for a christological purpose in 5 and 9:1-10:2? It is on this question that the attention of the study focuses in the next chapter.
Chapter Five

Juridical Controversy as Means of Christological Persuasion

The exegetical reading of the Johannine Sabbath conflicts has confirmed the basic thesis of the present study that Jn 5 and 9:1-10:21 correspond in their form and content to the controversy as a juridical procedure. The present chapter seeks to demonstrate the fact that the narrator uses this distinctive narrative genre for the purpose of presenting the christology of the two narratives to the reader; in other words, that Jn 5 and 9:1-10:21 constitute a narrative christology.\(^1\) As indicated earlier, the primary objective of the controversy as a juridical procedure is for each disputant to try and convince the other party of the truthfulness of their position or claims and to seek a solution which is mutually acceptable in order to effect reconciliation and restore peace.\(^2\) The controversy as a juridical procedure is thus marked by a strong rhetoric of persuasion which is always aimed at one's opponent. It is this strong rhetoric of persuasion that the narrator seeks to make use of for the

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\(^1\) While the interpretation of Jn 5 and 9:1-10:21 as a two-party juridical controversy is specific to the present study, my understanding of these chapters as a narrative christology relies in part on the works of Tannehill and Stibbe. See above, 238, n. 236.

\(^2\) See above, 20, \textit{et passim}. 
purposes of persuading the reader about the christological message of Jn 5 and 9:1-10:21. The narrator seeks to communicate his/her understanding of Jesus to the reader and to guide the reader's response to the christological claims of the two narratives. The juridical controversy is thus used as a narrative strategy with the specific rhetorical purpose of persuading the reader about the identity and significance of Jesus. This purpose of "christological persuasion" best explains the function of Jn 5 and 9:1-10:21 as a two-party juridical controversy within the overall Gospel narrative.  

The reader comes to the Sabbath conflicts armed with the knowledge obtained from the first four chapters of the Gospel narrative about who Jesus is and the purpose of his mission in the world. Already in the Prologue, the reader learns about the divine nature of the Logos (1:1) which is later on identified with Jesus (1:14). Jesus comes into the world "as the true light that enlightens every man" (1:9). As the only Son from the Father, Jesus who is the Word made flesh brings into the world God's new gift which is the "truth," and which replaces the former gift of the Law given through Moses (1:17). Jesus alone has ever seen God, and he alone has made God known in a unique way in human history (1:18).  

In sum, Jesus' mission in coming into the world is to be the light which reveals God to the world, and to empower those who believe in him to become children of God (see 1:12). The content of the Prologue reveals a specific strategy on the part of the narrator namely, to provide the reader right from the outset with the information which constitutes the key for the correct understanding of the narrative which is about to unfold. "Thus oriented and informed, the reader is expected to follow the development and unravelling of the plot in anticipation of further clarification."  

3 The expression "christological persuasion" is of Stibbe, John as Storyteller, 22.

4 See Moloney, Belief in the Word, 46-51.

As the reader begins to discover gradually the life story of Jesus in the unfolding narrative, Jesus himself throws more light on the specific task for which he came into the world. He describes his coming into the world as an act of God's love, and his specific task as the offering of the possibility of eternal life to all who come to faith in him (3:16). In this regard, the Johannine Jesus insists on the fact that his task is "not to condemn (καταδίκη) the world, but that the world might be saved (σωθήναι) through him" (3:17). It is in the light of this knowledge about Jesus' dominant task that the reader is henceforth invited to seek to understand the unfolding narrative. Hence, the reader will have to follow the narrative sequence to see how Jesus goes about fulfilling this task in his ongoing ministry. Jesus' words and deeds will have to be interpreted in the light of his fundamental task of offering salvation to all through faith in him, since they constitute the means by which he reveals God and leads people to faith in him and to the salvation he brings.

In the light of the reader's knowledge obtained from Jn 1-4, on arrival at the first Sabbath conflict, he/she understands Jesus' healing of the sick man at the Bethesda pool (5:1-9a) as part of his task of revealing God in human history and offering the possibility of salvation to all who come to faith in him. However, the disclosure by the narrator that the healing takes place on a Sabbath (v. 9b) forces a review of the reader's understanding of Jesus' action. The Law prohibits work on the Sabbath (Exod 20:8-11; Deut 5:12-15) as well as the carrying of objects (Exod 20:8-11; Neh 13:15-19; Jer 17:19-27. See also m. Shabbat 7:2). How then is Jesus' Sabbath healing as well as his command to the healed man to pick up his pallet and walk to be evaluated? Do they constitute a violation of the Sabbath as "the Jews" are alleging, or on the contrary, do they reveal something about the person of Jesus and his relationship with the Sabbath God of Israel whom, as the reader already knows, Jesus has the task of

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6 The term "task" is used here with a meaning similar to the term "commission" used by Tannehill in his article on Narrative Christology. See Tannehill, "The Gospel of Mark," 60-61.
revealing in human history? These are the questions that come to the fore, and
must be answered for the reader as "the Jews" signal the beginning of the
juridical controversy between themselves and Jesus by stating the accusations
and the intended sanction against Jesus (5:16, 18). Thus, the Sabbath provides
the essential literary and theological background to the juridical controversy
between Jesus and "the Jews." As the juridical controversy gets under way, the
narrator leads the reader through the unfolding narrative itself to perceive the
ture identity of Jesus and his significance for the reader's life. The aim is to bring
the reader to accept the christological credo of the narrative so as to make a
faith commitment in Jesus. Unlike "the Jews" who are Jesus' accusers, the reader
has already been informed that Jesus is of divine origin (1:1), and that he is the
Word made flesh (1:14) and the bringer of God's new gift of the fullness of
"truth" which replaces the former gift of the Law (1:17). This superior
knowledge places the reader in a privileged position and it serves as a backdrop
for the narrator's effort to persuade the reader to accept the christology of the
Sabbath conflicts by means of the juridical controversy.

**Christological Persuasion in 5:19-47**

As the accused in the juridical controversy, Jesus responds (vv. 19-47) to
the accusations of Sabbath violation and false christological claims being
levelled against him (vv. 16, 18). Jesus' cryptic statement at the outset of his
defence discourse (v. 17) makes it clear to the reader that he considers his
Sabbath healing as justified. This means that his juridically decisive declaration
in vv. 19-47 not only seeks to justify his action, but also to convince his
accusers of the truthfulness of his christological claims implied both in his action and the statement in v. 17. Jesus' discourse is thus marked by a clear rhetoric of persuasion. He seeks to persuade his accusers about his true identity and mission in a bid to lead them to faith in him. The defence discourse to "the Jews," needless to say, is addressed to the reader in the text whom the narrator is seeking to persuade about the identity and significance of Jesus.

One major implication of the above assertion is that the unfolding of Jesus' defence discourse within the narrative framework of the juridical controversy constitutes at the same time an unfolding of the christological credo of the Gospel for the benefit of the reader. The discourse (vv. 19-47) enables the narrator to shape as well as deepen the christological understanding of the reader, in the sense that the reader's knowledge about the identity and significance of Jesus progresses at the same time as Jesus' discourse unfolds. In this way, the use of the juridical controversy becomes a narrative strategy by which the narrator seeks to realize his/her purpose of gradually persuading and leading the reader to accept the christological claims of the narrative.

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7 See above, 31.

8 The term "reader" here continues to refer to the "implied reader" (see above, 10, and n. 20). Thus, this reader responds to the text in terms of its temporal flow, and always performs the responses the text calls for.

9 Pace Harvey, Jesus on Trial, 13, who maintains that what the evangelist is doing here is to present the arguments of the accusers and counter-arguments of the accused to the reader, "so that he could make up his own mind who was in the right." (see also 6). The understanding of the Sabbath conflict narratives as a juridical controversy has shown that what the narrator seeks to do through the defence discourse of Jesus is to persuade the reader to accept the christological claims that are made in the discourse. Stübbe, John as storyteller, 12, rightly observes that the "New Testament is a rhetorical phenomenon carefully engineered to reinforce a particular theological understanding of Jesus in the mind of its readers."
This first section of Jesus' discourse justifies his Sabbath healing on the basis of his unique relationship with the Father. The point of departure is a fact which is known and accepted by Jesus' accusers namely, that God works on the Sabbath without breaking his own Sabbath law since his activities as life-giver and judge can not be interrupted (v. 17a). On the basis of this known fact, Jesus states the new element namely, that he has the same prerogative to work uninterruptedly on the Sabbath (v. 17b). This unique prerogative flows from the functional unity which exists between the Father and the Son. The functional unity is so great that it enables the Son to do exactly as the Father does. This new information which the reader has just received throws light on what the reader has already been told regarding Jesus' role in creation (1:3). Not only was everything that exists created through Jesus, but he also continues to play a vital role in God's ongoing creative act in human history. Jesus' actions are therefore an integral part of the actions of the Father himself, and can only be correctly understood within the framework of his functional unity with the Father. Within this framework of functional unity, the Father shows the Son everything that he himself does so that the Son can do likewise (v. 20a). The reader here recalls to mind Jesus' earlier assertion in 3:35 that the Father has given all things into his hand, and therefore understands v. 20a as a recurrent theme which is intended to create a narrative echo effect. This technique enables the reader to connect these recurrent themes into a unified whole.

The revelation about Jesus' present role in God's ongoing creative act is followed by yet another new revelation. At some unspecified time, the Father will show Jesus "greater works than these" (v. 20b). In a reference to the

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10 On "functional unity" as implying also "unity of being," see above, 105, n. 119.

11 See Stibbe, John as storyteller, 29.
Sabbath healing and the reaction it has provoked from "the Jews," Jesus affirms that these "greater works" will cause an even bigger shock because of its unheard-of-character. Jesus' *a maiori* argument has a clear rhetorical intent. It challenges the reader to accept Jesus' present revelatory words and deeds, and also it arouses a sense of curiosity for what is to come and therefore lays the grounds for the reader's acceptance of it.

Jesus next begins to explain what these "greater works" are in the rest of this section of his defence speech (vv. 21-30). They relate to the two activities of life-giving and judgment. He makes it clear that not only has he the authority to give life to those he wants (v. 21), but also that the Father has entrusted all judgment to him (v. 22). As the one who reveals God in human history (1:17-18), Jesus has the authority to exercise these functions which are the sole prerogative of God. The logical conclusion then is that the Son deserves the same honour as the Father. Whoever therefore refuses honour to the Son refuses it also to God (v. 23). Jesus here seeks to correct the mistaken view of "the Jews" that they can honour the Father while at the same time showing dishonour to him as the unique Son of the Father. He is thus seeking to persuade them to accept his christological claims and come to faith in him. This attempt by Jesus at correcting a mistaken view about his person by indicating the correct one opens the possibility for the narrator to shape the christological perception of the reader. In this sense, Jesus' remark in vv. 21-23 is intended by the narrator to influence the reader and to bring him/her to accept the christological truth that the Son is deserving of the same honour as the Father. The Johannine Jesus is made to act as "influencer" in as much as his words are meant to shape the understanding of the reader on the key christological issues of his true identity and his relationship with the Father.\(^\text{12}\)

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\(^{12}\) My description of Jesus as "influencer" relies on a similar description by Tannehill. See "The Gospel of Mark," 63-66. He notes that "in the controversies in [Mk] 2:1-3:6 Jesus again acts as influencer, for these stories emphasize Jesus' forceful words. The influence centers on key points in understanding Jesus' own role. ... Jesus' influence is meant to reach the readers" (66).
Jesus' discourse returns to the themes of life-giving and judgment and reveals the identity of those to whom the Son gives life. They are all those who hear Jesus' word and believe in the One who sent him (v. 24a). The relationship of equivalence that Jesus establishes between the acceptance of his word and "believing the Father" seeks to persuade "the Jews" about the need to accept his christological claims if their own claim to believe God and to seek eternal life is to be genuine. It is therefore an appeal to "the Jews" to come to faith in him since the one who accepts Jesus' word escapes judgment and passes from death to life (v. 24b). The reader already knows that there is a close link between faith in Jesus and the reception of eternal life (see 3:15-16), and also that faith in Jesus is the only adequate response to his words and deeds. And so for instance, at Cana, the disciples are said to have believed in Jesus after witnessing the sign he had accomplished (2:11). After hearing the words of Jesus, many of the Samaritans come to faith in Jesus (4:41-42). Similarly, the official at Capernaum believes Jesus' word (4:50). The reader is therefore aware of the absolute necessity of a faith commitment to Jesus. However, this appeal to "the Jews" in 5:24 reveals something new to the reader who now learns that "coming to faith in Jesus" and "believing the Father" is one and the same thing, and also that it is through the acceptance in faith of Jesus' words that one can have eternal life. In this sense, Jesus' statement in 5:24 constitutes an invitation to the reader who thereby is being urged to listen in faith to Jesus' words and to follow the path of faith. Thus, Jesus' words of persuasion and invitation to "the Jews" continue to shape the christological understanding of the reader and to guide the reader towards a faith commitment in Jesus.

As the defence discourse of Jesus continues to unfold, those who are yet to believe in Jesus are described as "spiritually dead" but they are assured that they could have life if they would listen in faith to Jesus.\footnote{On the interpretation of \textit{οἱ νεκροὶ} as those who are spiritually dead, see above, 116, and n. 153.} The time to make this
faith commitment to Jesus and have life is indicated as "now," (v. 25), i.e., in the present. This assertion seeks to move Jesus' accusers from the state of being spiritually dead to that of being spiritually alive through faith in him. It therefore has a clear rhetorical intent as far as the reader is concerned. It alerts him/her of the consequences of unbelief and the inherent possibilities of a faith commitment to Jesus. In so doing, the assertion seeks to influence positively the reader's decision in relation to the unfolding christological claims of Jesus.

The basis of Jesus' authority to give life now is indicated in v. 26. "The Jews" are reminded of what they know and accept, namely, that "the Father has life in himself." In other words, the Father is the source of creative life-giving power. On the basis of this known and accepted fact, Jesus reveals to his opponents that the Father has granted him once and for all to have life in himself. Jesus possesses in himself the divine life-giving power which enables him to give life to those who accept his word. In addition to the life-giving power, the Father has also granted Jesus the authority to bring about judgment (v. 27). Through his words and deeds, Jesus confronts people in his ongoing ministry with the decision to believe in him and have life, or to refuse to believe and condemn oneself. Thus, with regard to the two divine Sabbath activities of life-giving and judgment, Jesus points out to "the Jews" that the Father has granted him the authority to exercise them in his ongoing ministry. "The Jews" have the choice between faith and life on the one hand, and unbelief and self-condemnation on the other hand. Thus, once again, Jesus seeks to convince "the Jews" and bring them to faith in him.

The influence that Jesus seeks to exert on "the Jews" in the narrative is meant to reach the reader. The basis of Jesus' judging activity has already been indicated as the authority which the Father has given him (v. 22). Now the reader learns that the grounds for Jesus' authority to give life is the creative life-giving power which the Father has granted him to have in himself. This means
that Jesus' life-giving and judging activities have their source in the Father and are carried out in dependence on him. These crucial themes of "life-giving" and "judgment" were stated paradigmatically in 3:11-21 and re-stated in 3:31-36. In both instances, the reader was informed that faith in Jesus leads to eternal life while unbelief results in self-condemnation. The implication was that Jesus possesses the power to give life and exercises judgment. Thus, the development of these two themes here not only deepens the reader's understanding of Jesus' life-giving and judgment activities within the framework of his relationship with the Father, but it is also intended to lead the reader to faith in Jesus in order to participate in the life which he brings.

In reference to his revelation to "the Jews" that he is in the process of carrying out the dual activity of life-giving and judgment which the Father has entrusted to him, Jesus tells them not to be surprised by his assertions (v. 28a). The reason is that he will exercise the full corresponding functions in an even greater context namely, the end of time (v. 28b). Thus, "the Jews" should not consider his claim to exercise the dual activity of life-giving and judgment in his ongoing ministry as impossible, since he will be exercising the same functions in an even more remarkable way at the end of time. Within the narrative framework of the ongoing controversy, this argument a maiori serves as a warrant to "the Jews" for the credibility of Jesus' christological claims (vv. 17, 19-27). By means of this rhetorical device, the narrator continues his purpose of persuading the reader to accept Jesus' christological claims as unfolded so far in the ongoing defence discourse. If Jesus is destined to exercise the functions of life-giving and judgment in the future resurrection, then his claim to be doing so now in his ongoing ministry is worthy of an assent of faith on the part of the reader.

Placed within the context of the celebration of a Jewish feast on a Sabbath day (see 5:1, 9b), the Johannine Jesus' arguments in vv. 17, 19-30 seek
to transform «the Jews'» traditional understanding of the Sabbath and its God. Not only is the Sabbath a day of rest in honour of God's creative (Exod 20:8-11) and liberating (Deut 5:12-15) activities, but it is also and more especially a day on which God's uninterrupted Sabbath activities are revealed in the life-giving and judging activities of his unique Son Jesus. It is Jesus' unique relationship with the Sabbath God which enables him to exercise God's Sabbath activities, and he does so in total dependence on God. As the one entrusted with the two divine Sabbath activities, Jesus not only transforms the traditional Sabbath theology, but he also reveals himself as the bringer of the eternal life to which the Sabbath pointed (see 5:21, 24).\footnote{Jn 5 marks the beginning of a sequence of Jewish feasts (Unnamed feast / Sabbath, Passover, Tabernacles, and Dedication) which moves through 5:1-10:42. On each occasion, Jesus does or says something which "to some extent replaces a significant aspect of the feast." Brown, \textit{Introduction}, 344. See also 345-349.}

As the first part of Jesus' defence comes to an end, it is clear that, in using the juridical controversy as a narrative genre in the Sabbath conflict of 5:1-47, the purpose of the narrator is one of christological persuasion. As the Johannine Jesus seeks to correct the mistaken views of "the Jews," and to reveal to them his true identity and functions within the framework of his relation with the Father, the narrator gradually corrects and shapes the reader's understanding of the person of Jesus and of his salvific significance. Hence, the arguments and assertions of Jesus which are addressed to "the Jews" in the narrative are aimed at the reader whom the narrator is seeking to persuade and to lead to a faith commitment in Jesus.

b) Jn 5:31-40

Jesus' discourse justifying his Sabbath activity has so far spelt out the nature of his relation with the Father which is the basis of his authority to
exercise the dual function of giving life and judging. The second part of the discourse (vv. 31-40) focuses on the issue of witnesses. Jesus adduces a series of witnesses whose reliability "the Jews" themselves recognize. In doing so, the Johannine Jesus is not so much seeking to offer proofs in support of his christological claims as to show "the Jews" that the testimonies of these witnesses should have enabled them to perceive the truthfulness of his claims.\footnote{See above, 126.}

In other words, Jesus seeks to indicate to his opponents that they are deliberately refusing to acknowledge the truth about his person and his work, and to persuade them to do so. The invocation of reliable witnesses constitutes an integral part of the narrator's strategy of christological persuasion of the reader through the unfolding juridical controversy. It is intended to strengthen the reader's emerging understanding of the person and significance of Jesus and to guide him/her towards full acceptance of the christological credo of the narrative. Since the invocation of witnesses in a juridical controversy serves the purpose of rhetorical persuasion, it is always essential that the reliability of the witness be "obvious" and acceptable to the other party.\footnote{See above, 128.} It is for this reason that Jesus turns to witnesses that "the Jews" have seen and heard: John (vv. 33-35), the works of Jesus as testimony of the Father (vv. 36-38), and the Scriptures (39-40).

Jesus first of all invokes the testimony of John. The reason given is that "the Jews" have already acknowledged his reliability as a witness. Their sending of a delegation to him (1:19-27) was an indication that they assigned some weight and authority to his activity and testimony (v. 33a). John had indicated in his testimony that Jesus was the bringer of God's eschatological revelation (v. 33b). On the basis of this testimony, "the Jews" should have been able to perceive the truthfulness of Jesus' words and deeds, given the fact that it is
through his words and deeds that Jesus makes God's eschatological revelation present in human history. The assertion in v. 33 seeks to indicate to the reader the reason why the truthfulness of Jesus' christological claims should be evident to him/her. If John whom the narrator had earlier on described as "a man sent from God" (1:6) has borne a reliable witness to Jesus, then the reader has every reason to believe that his testimony was true, and therefore to accept Jesus' claims. However, Jesus' remark to "the Jews" that he does not rely on human testimony is a timely reminder to the reader that, in recalling the testimony of John, Jesus is not seeking to establish his christological claims on human testimony. The testimony of John is invoked because his divinely inspired mission was intended to lead people to faith in Jesus (see 1:7b) which implies acceptance of Jesus' words and deeds. Thus, in mentioning John's testimony here, the narrator is seeking to persuade the reader to accept the christological claims of the narrative.

The second witness which Jesus adduces is the works which he accomplishes in unity with the Father. These works which have been entrusted to Jesus by the Father are the very works that Jesus is in the process of accomplishing in his ongoing ministry (v. 36). Since they are the works of the Father himself, they constitute the testimony of the Father in Jesus' favour (v. 37). If the Father has already borne witness to Jesus through the works, then it is obvious that Jesus is indeed God's authentic envoy and his christological claims are worthy of credence. In relation to the reader, this reference to the testimony of the Father through the works of Jesus not only seeks to help him/her perceive Jesus' Sabbath activity as the work of the Father himself, but also to accept Jesus' claim of perfect unity of function with the Father. The claim of the Johannine Jesus that "the Jews" have failed to recognize the Father's testimony in his works because they have neither heard the "voice" of the

17 On this interpretation of vv. 36-37, see above, 134-138.
Father nor seen his "form" also seeks to shape the reader in his christological
understanding of Jesus. The reader is already aware of the fact that Jesus is the
only one who has descended from heaven and possesses a direct experience of
God (see 3:13, 31, 32). This means that it is through the mediating agency of
Jesus that the Father's "voice" can be heard. Again, as the only Son of the
Father (1:14), Jesus is the only one who makes God whom no one else has ever
seen, present in human history (1:18). He is therefore the "εἰδος" of God. Thus,
God is heard in Jesus' words, and seen in Jesus' person and deeds.\textsuperscript{18} The
rhetorical intent of this assertion is quite obvious. Negatively, it warns the
reader against the pitfall which has so far prevented "the Jews" from seeing in
Jesus' works the testimony of the Father and from coming to faith in him.
Positively, it encourages the reader to see in Jesus' words and deeds the
presence of God in human history and to give credence to Jesus' christological
claims. Once again it is clear that, as the juridical controversy between Jesus and
"the Jews" unfolds, the reader is gradually being led to accept the christological
credo of the narrative through the art of narration itself.

The third witness which Jesus invokes is the Scriptures. As with the other
two witnesses, the absolute reliability of the testimony of the Scriptures is
acknowledged by "the Jews." While Jesus approves of his opponents' diligent
study of the Scriptures, he points out to them that their inability to come to faith
in him is an indication that their investigation into the Scriptures is wrongly
done. This is because the Scriptures do not contain life in themselves, but rather
they bear testimony to Jesus (v. 39) who is both life-giver and judge (see vv.
21-30). The search for eternal life by "the Jews" can only be fruitful if they are
willing to go beyond the testimony of the Scriptures to the object of the
testimony, namely Jesus. Their refusal to accept Jesus' Sabbath activity and the
related christological claims which has resulted in the present juridical

\textsuperscript{18} See above, 138-140.
controversy shows that they do not want to come to Jesus in order to receive life (v. 40). The only way they can hope to obtain the eternal life they are searching for is to accept his claims and come to faith in him. The rhetorical intent of vv. 39-40 is aimed at the reader. Verse 39 seeks to convince the reader that the Scriptures can only be properly understood when seen as a testimony to Jesus. Jesus who is God's ultimate self-revelation in human history is therefore to be seen as the hermeneutical key for the correct understanding of God's earlier self-revelation consigned in the Scriptures. Hence, what the reader is being told is that there is an essential continuity between Jesus and the Scriptures. Verse 40, which reminds the reader of the fact that it is only by coming to Jesus that one can receive eternal life, seeks to influence him/her to choose the path of faith in Jesus.

In sum, as Jesus seeks to show "the Jews" in the narrative, by means of the invocation of reliable witnesses, why the truthfulness of his christological claims should be evident to them, his arguments are aimed at the reader whom the narrator is seeking to persuade about the identity and significance of Jesus. As Jesus' invocation of witnesses unfolds in the juridical controversy, the reader's perception of the truthfulness of Jesus' claims increases. The reader is gradually led to acknowledge the fact that John (vv. 33-34), the Father in Jesus' works (vv. 36-37), and the Scriptures (vv. 39-40) have all borne witness to Jesus. The acknowledgment of this fact not only makes the truthfulness of Jesus christological claims evident to the reader, but it also leads him/her along the path of a faith commitment in Jesus.

c) \textit{Jn 5:41-47}

This last part of the defence discourse of Jesus is essentially a series of accusations against "the Jews." As a defence strategy in a juridical controversy, the act of accusing one's accusers has a dual function.\textsuperscript{20} On the one hand, it seeks to show the accusers why they are in the wrong and to put them on the defensive. On the other hand, it makes possible an explicit comparison between the behaviours of the two disputants in order to establish who is in the right and who is in the wrong so as to hasten the resolution of the conflict. The accusations are therefore an integral part of Jesus' attempt to persuade "the Jews" about his person and significance. In relation to the reader, the series of accusations which Jesus makes against his accusers seeks to explain why "the Jews" have so far been unable to accept Jesus' christological claims and the evidence he has presented in support of them. The purpose is to induce the reader to reject the negative attitudes and the mistaken views of "the Jews" as reflected in the accusations and to move towards acceptance of Jesus' claims.

The first accusation which is in the form of an explicit comparison between Jesus and "the Jews" relates to their respective attitude towards God. Whereas Jesus loves the Father and does his will by accomplishing the works he has entrusted to him (see v. 36b), "the Jews" on their part do not have the love of God in themselves (v. 42). Their actions are not motivated by a desire to love God and are therefore ill-intentioned.\textsuperscript{21} Their lack of love for God is what is preventing them from accepting Jesus' words and deeds which not only reflect his love for God, but also manifest the Father's love for the Son (see v. 20a). Thus, Jesus would be pointing out to his opponents the need to cultivate a genuine love for God which would enable them to perceive the truthfulness of

\textsuperscript{20} See above, 23, and n. 38. See also 143.

\textsuperscript{21} See above, 144-145, and n. 234.
his christological claims. These words of Jesus are intended for the reader. They seek to move the reader towards a greater love of God, and therefore towards an openness to God's self-revelation which Jesus' words and deeds make present in human history.

The second accusation deals with the unwillingness of "the Jews" to accept Jesus who comes in the name of his Father (v. 43). While they are refusing to accept Jesus who speaks and acts with the authority of the Father, they are prepared to accept any other person who makes claims for himself and seeks the praise of men. The denunciation of this negative attitude of "the Jews" not only seeks to influence the reader, but it also constitutes a challenge to him/her and an urgent invitation to opt consciously for Jesus who is the authentic envoy of the Father by accepting his words and deeds.

The third accusation which Jesus makes against "the Jews" as part of his ongoing defence discourse has to do with the fundamental reason for their refusal to come to faith in him. They are motivated by pride and self-interest. This is evident in their craving for mutual human praise and esteem instead of seeking the glory that comes from the only God (v. 44). Jesus is here seeking to correct the mistaken view of "the Jews" that they can claim to be people of faith when their only interest is in self-esteem and human praise. In contrast to "the Jews" who are only interested in the mutual praise and recognition which they accord to each other, Jesus seeks to manifest the Father's glory in his words and deeds. This manifestation of God's glory entails the recognition on the part of humanity of the unity of action between the Father and Jesus. This is precisely what the narrator seeks to influence the reader to do by having Jesus criticize the self-interest of "the Jews." In other words, the reader is being urged not only to shun the pride and self-interest of "the Jews," but also to accept Jesus' actions and words as a manifestation of the glory of the unique God.²²

²² The crucial treatment of this tendency of "the Jews" to seek human praise is found in 12:43.
As Jesus continues his accusations against "the Jews" which are intended to make them aware of the reasons why they are resisting the truth about his christological claims so as to hasten the resolution of the conflict, an explicit reference is made to Moses (vv. 45-47). Jesus tells his accusers that Moses will accuse them before the Father for refusing to come to faith in him. The reason for Moses' action is that, since his writings point to Jesus as the ultimate self-revelation of God, the refusal of "the Jews" to believe in Jesus is an indication that they have never really believed in Moses' own writings. Thus, Jesus seeks to correct the mistaken view of "the Jews" that faith in him amounts to disloyalty to Moses. There is a continuity between the writings of Moses and Jesus' words, and faith in one necessarily leads to faith in the other. If "the Jews" are consistent with themselves and with their claim to believe the writings of Moses, they cannot but acknowledge Jesus' christological claims.

The arguments of the Johannine Jesus which seek to lead "the Jews" in the narrative to faith in him are intended to influence as well as shape the reader's christological understanding of Jesus and lead him/her to a faith commitment in him. The insistence on the fact that the writings of Moses, as the revelation of God's redemptive purpose for his people, find their fulfilment in Jesus, spells out for the reader the nature of the relationship between Jesus and the Law. Already in the Prologue, the narrator had indicated to the reader that the gift of the Law which was God's gift to Israel through Moses has been replaced by the fullness of the gift of the truth, which has now been given through Jesus Christ (1:16-17). Even though the reader was not told in what sense the new gift brought by Jesus replaces the former gift, the assertion in 1:16-17 made it clear that the new gift reveals the fullness of the truth. The assertion in 5:46 clarifies for the reader's benefit that the new gift replaces the former gift of the Law in the sense that the Law points to Jesus in whom it finds

23 On this, see Moloney, Belief in the Word, 47-48.
its ultimate fulfilment. Thus, the mention of Moses in vv. 45-47 not only creates a narrative echo effect with earlier passages such as 1:16-17, but it also seeks to persuade the reader by lending credence to Jesus' christological claims and thereby moving the reader in the direction of a faith commitment in Jesus.

In conclusion, it may be said that Jesus' discourse in defence of his Sabbath activity and related christological claims in 5:19-47 enables the narrator to expound the christological credo of this narrative and to persuade the reader to embrace it. As the discourse moves from the explanation of Jesus' christological claims to the invocation of reliable witnesses, and finally to the transformation of defence into accusations, the narrator moves the reader along and gradually shapes the reader's perception of who Jesus is as well as his significance for the reader's life. While vv. 19-30 explains to the reader the christological claims of Jesus, vv. 31-40 show the reader why the claims of Jesus are true and therefore need to be accepted in faith. As for vv. 41-47, they correct, for the benefit of the reader, the mistaken views that could prevent one from a correct understanding of Jesus, and from a faith commitment in him. This movement from "statement of facts," to the "invocation of witnesses," and finally to "defence by accusation" is typical of a defence discourse in a juridical controversy.24 It sharpens the persuasive character of the discourse and enhances the possibility of convincing the other party of the truthfulness of one's claims. Thus, as the narrator leads the reader through Jesus' discourse, the strong rhetoric of persuasion which characterizes the juridical controversy is placed at the service of the christological credo which the narrator wants to communicate to the reader.

24 See above, 21-25. See for instance, the defence discourse of Jacob in Gen 31:31-32, 36-42.
Christological Persuasion in 9:16-10:21

Even though the Sabbath juridical controversy came to an abrupt end in 5:47, the narrator had continued to focus the reader's attention on the christological debate which emerged for the first time in 5:1-47. Thus, in chapters 6 to 8, the reader had been informed of the various attempts by Jesus to shed light on his true identity in order to lead "the Jews" to faith in him. In 6:35-51, Jesus had told "the Jews" that he was the living bread that has come down from heaven (v. 51). Unlike the bread which their fathers ate in the wilderness and died, whoever ate of this bread would live for ever (vv. 49-51). This explicit comparison between the living bread that is Jesus and the manna given in the desert was intended to convince "the Jews" of the truthfulness of Jesus' christological claims. Thus, from the point of view of the rhetorical strategy of the unfolding Gospel narrative, the Johannine Jesus had continued his effort at convincing "the Jews" in order to lead them to faith in him (see 6:40).

The same may also be said of chapters 7 and 8 where, on the occasion of the feast of Tabernacles, Jesus had addressed "the Jews" and also engaged in debates with them over his christological claims (see 7:14-24, 28-29, 37-38; 8:12-29, 31-59). Within this context of Tabernacles, Jesus had used some of the symbols associated with the feast to reveal his identity and mission in an attempt to lead his audience to faith in him. Water drawn from the pool of Siloam played an important role in the libation ceremonies of the Tabernacles. In reference to this role of water, Jesus had declared himself to be the source and the giver of living water (7:37-39). Again, during the feast light was also used in a ritual which sought to express the rejoicing aspect of the celebration. In

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25 See above, 60-62.

26 On the use of the symbols of "water "and "light" during the Tabernacles, see Rylaarsdam, "Booths," 456.
reference to this use of light, Jesus had revealed himself to "the Jews" as the light of the world, and promised "the light of life" to anyone who followed him (8:12). Thus, the reader arrives at the second Sabbath conflict aware of the fact that the rhetoric of persuasion which had characterized the first Sabbath conflict in 5:1-47 had continued in chapters 6 to 8. However, the reader is equally aware that "the Jews" had continued their opposition to Jesus' self-revelation, and that this had led to the escalation of their hostility to Jesus (see 8:59). The ongoing christological conflict and the increasing hostility towards Jesus point forward to the possible resumption of the Sabbath juridical controversy (5:1-47), given that the christological issues raised on that occasion and continued in 6-8 still remain unresolved.

Jesus' second Sabbath healing and its aftermath (9:1-15) provide the occasion for the resumption of the Sabbath juridical controversy between himself and "the Jews." On the basis of the statement of the healed man as to how he came to be healed by Jesus (v. 15b), some of the Pharisees immediately accuse Jesus of Sabbath violation and conclude that his christological claims are false (v. 16). The re-statement of these two accusations in the present context signals the resumption of the juridical controversy already under way since 5:1-47 between Jesus and his opponents.27 The failure of "the Jews" to react to Jesus' defence discourse in 5:17, 19-47 had brought the Sabbath juridical process to an abrupt end. Jesus' second Sabbath healing and the subsequent re-statement of the same two accusations against him (see 5:16, 18; 9:16) enable the Sabbath juridical controversy to resume.

In terms of the unfolding Gospel narrative, the resumption of the Sabbath juridical controversy enables the narrator to continue the Sabbath juridical process which began in 5:1-47 and bring it eventually to a close. In so doing, the narrator continues with the ongoing attempt to persuade the reader to

27 It may be recalled here that in a juridical controversy, it is the accusation which signals the beginning of the controversy. See above, 21.
embrace the christological credo of the Gospel. In this latter perspective, the narrator adopts a new narrative strategy. In 5:19-47, the narrator's action of persuading the reader about the person and significance of Jesus was carried out by means of the defence discourse of Jesus which, at the narrative level, is addressed to "the Jews." In other words, the christological persuasion of the reader takes place through the facts and arguments of Jesus' discourse to "the Jews." However, as the resumption of the controversy gets under way in 9:16ff, Jesus is absent from the narrative and the christological persuasion of the reader takes place through the unfolding of the dramatic action itself as well as the testimony of other characters in the narrative (vv. 17-34). Instead of the "telling" mode of 5:17, 19-47 where the narrator makes Jesus address directly "the Jews" and through them the reader about his christological claims, in 9:17-34, the narrator employs the "showing" mode of narration by which the reader is invited to perceive the christological point of view of the narrative through what the other characters are saying about Jesus by means of the dramatic action.  

The use of the "showing" mode of narration in 9:17-34 opens up for the narrator a wide range of possibilities in his ongoing effort of the christological persuasion of the reader. For instance, it enables the narrator to show the reader characters in the narrative who accept the christological credo which he/she has been seeking all along to communicate to the reader. As a narrative strategy, the presentation of such characters to the reader is intended to convince him/her of the truthfulness of the narrator's claims. The reader is thus encouraged to identify with such characters, and like them, to accept the christological claims of the narrative. Again, the use of the "showing" mode in 9:17-34 enables the

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narrator to make use of a "defence controversy" as part of his strategy to persuade the reader about the identity and significance of Jesus.  

a) Jn 9:17-27

As the Sabbath juridical controversy resumes, a division emerges among Jesus' accusers as to whether or not they can continue to pursue the dual accusation of Sabbath violation and false christological claims against Jesus (v. 16). Since this division threatens their cause, "the Jews" turn to witnesses in an effort to gather evidence to bolster their case against Jesus. The narrator's signal of the division among Jesus' opponents functions as an implicit invitation to the reader to make a personal decision regarding Jesus' claims in the light of the disclosures relating to Jesus in the narrative. As "the Jews" get ready to call on their witnesses, the reader recalls that Jesus had also called on witnesses in 5:31-40 and had shown through them that his claims should have been evident to them. The question that comes up here then is whether or not "the Jews" will be able to establish their case against Jesus by their turning to witnesses.

The first witness they turn to is the healed man himself. His unequivocal assertion that Jesus is a prophet (v. 17b) is a clear testimony in favour of Jesus. His personal experience of Jesus' healing power leads him to recognize Jesus as a man in whom God's power is at work. Like the position of the "dissident" Pharisees in v. 16b, the healed man's testimony is based on the magnitude of the sign accomplished by Jesus. This positive testimony in favour of Jesus' divine accreditiation by a character in the narrative aims at influencing the reader's own understanding of Jesus. The reader is being invited to perceive Jesus as the one in whom God's creative power is at work.

29 On the "defence controversy," see above, 26-27, and n. 46.
"The Jews" turn next to the parents of the healed man for their testimony (v. 19). Their aim is to put the reality of the healing in doubt and thereby discredit any idea of divine accreditation of Jesus. The confirmation by the parents of the identity of their son and the fact that he was born blind (vv. 20-21) not only put the reality of the healing beyond doubt, but also support the argument that Jesus is indeed from God. Thus, the testimony of the parents deals a severe blow to the position of "the Jews," and at the same time reaffirms for the reader the truthfulness of the healed man's testimony. The effect of this convergence of testimonies is that, on the one hand, it creates a distance between the reader and those "Jews" who are opposing Jesus, and on the other hand, it reaffirms for the reader's belief the christological claims of Jesus. The narrator's intrusion in vv. 22-23 explains for the reader why the parents refused to testify with regard to the identity of their son's healer. This intrusion which alludes to a decision taken at some unspecified point in the narrative past would indicate that the narrator presupposes on the part of the reader some knowledge of the history of the Johannine Christians. The point of the intrusion is to highlight the threat of exclusion from the Synagogue which the parents face should they testify about the identity of Jesus. It is on account of this threat of exclusion that they are presently afraid to identify their son's healer. The reader would thus understand vv. 22-23 as a reference to a threat of exclusion from the Synagogue (ἀποσυνάγωγος) which hangs over the Johannine Christians as a result of the ongoing situation of conflict and hostility between them and those on the other side of the christological debate.30

30 See K. Wengst, Bedrängte Gemeinde und verherrlichter Christus. Der historische Ort des Johannesevangeliums als Schlüssel zu seiner Interpretation, BThSt 5. (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1981) 48-52. He observes, among other things, that in 9:22, 12:42, and 16:2 where the term ἀποσυνάγωγος occurs, "der Ausschluß aus der Synagoge war ein die Gemeinde des Johannesevangeliums gegenwärtig bedrängendes Problem" (52). The immediate context of both 9:22 and 12:42 shows that the exclusion from the Synagogue functions as a threat rather than an accomplished fact. It is the threat of exclusion from the Synagogue which deters the parents (9:22) and many among the authorities (12:42) from declaring publicly (ὑμνημόνευ) that Jesus is the Christ. Additionally, the fact that the exclusion is spoken of in 16:2 as a future event would suggest that at the time of composition of the Gospel, this event was yet to take place, and therefore the Johannine Christians were still in some
Additionally, vv. 22-23 functions as a narrative device which enables the narrator to set up the parents as a foil for the action of the healed man in the subsequent verses (vv. 24-34). In this last sense, the intrusion would be part of the narrator's ongoing effort at the christological persuasion of the reader.

The healed man is summoned again to give testimony before "the Jews" (v. 24a). However, this time they want him to testify to the truth under oath. The truth, for them, is that Jesus is a law-breaker and therefore a sinner, and they want the healed man to testify to this in deference to their authority (v. 24b). The healed man is unflinching in his position that Jesus is indeed a man from God. Not only does he refuse to subscribe to the position of "the Jews" (v. 25a), but he also challenges them to come to terms with the healing accomplished by Jesus and to draw the inevitable conclusion regarding Jesus' identity (v. 25b). The only response of "the Jews" to the healed man's challenge is to inquire for the third time how he had received his sight (v. 26), a fact which underscores their frustration and insincerity. The challenge of the healed man to "the Jews," as well as their unwillingness to face up to it, serve a double purpose as far as the christological persuasion of the reader is concerned. It focuses the reader's attention on the healing accomplished by Jesus, while at the same time encouraging the reader to draw the unavoidable conclusion which "the Jews" form of contact with the larger Jewish community. However, the use of ἄνωθεν γένος here need not be linked to the so-called bircat ha-minim as several scholars have done (Pace, among others, Martyn, History and theology, 24-62; Wengst, Bedrännt Gemeinde, 52-61). For an analysis of the historical and theological difficulties associated with this linkage, see for instance, Schnelle, Antidotic Christology, 27-31. The term ἄνωθεν γένος would allude to a threat of exclusion which hangs over the Johannine Christians as a result of the situation of opposition and hostility between themselves and those opposing their christological claims. In this perspective, the use of the juridical controversy for a christological purpose would indicate that, despite the threat of exclusion, the Johannine Christians were still trying to convince their opponents about the truthfulness of their claims, and were therefore in some form of contact with them. One can therefore not argue that the definitive separation between the Johannine Christians and the Synagogue had already taken place, and that the use of ἄνωθεν γένος in 9:22; 12:42; and 16:2 was "a retrospective glance" at that event, as suggested by Schnelle, Antidotic Christology, 30-31. See also Labahn, Jesus als Lebensspender, 344; M. Lang, Johannes und die Synoptiker. Eine redaktionsgeschichtliche Analyse von Joh 18-20 vor dem markäischen und lukanischen Hintergrund, FRLANT 182. (Göttingen: Vandenhoek & Ruprecht, 1999) 254. Both Labahn and Lang make explicit reference to the position of Schnelle.

31 See above, 177, n. 83.
in the narrative are refusing to acknowledge namely, that Jesus is indeed from God. Again, the tentative suggestion of the healed man to "the Jews" regarding their eventual desire to become Jesus' disciples (v. 27b) is intended for the reader. The narrator, who by means of the juridical controversy seeks to persuade the reader about Jesus' identity and significance, uses the tentative suggestion of the healed man to indicate to the reader that faith commitment in Jesus implies discipleship.

In sum, the attempt to gather evidence against Jesus by those among "the Jews" who are opposed to him ends in failure. The testimonies of those called upon have all been in favour of Jesus. By means of this fruitless attempt on the part of these "Jews," the narrator achieves a double purpose in his effort to lead the reader to accept the christological credo of the narrative. Firstly, the narrator succeeds in distancing the reader from the negative views and attitudes of these "Jews" regarding Jesus. Secondly, the reader gets to hear the views of characters other than "the Jews" about Jesus, and since these views concord with each other in their support of Jesus' christological claims, they serve to orientate the reader towards a faith commitment in Jesus.

b) **Jn 9:28-38**

The healed man's tentative suggestion to "the Jews" leads to a change of attitude on the part of "the Jews" towards him. They now perceive him as a disciple of Jesus, and distinguish themselves from him by claiming to be the disciples of Moses (v. 28). In so doing, they also set Jesus and Moses in opposition. The mention of Moses here recalls to the mind of the reader Jesus' earlier assertion that the writings of Moses bear witness to him (5:46-47). Since the Mosaic writings bear witness to Jesus, there is no way the two can be
opposed to each other. Thus, by means of this narrative echo effect, the narrator enables the reader to reject the position of "the Jews." If they were genuine disciples of Moses, they would come to faith in Jesus, because the Mosaic writings when properly understood, lead to faith in him (5:39-40). Similarly, the claim by "the Jews" that Moses' words are of divine origin on the one hand, and their self-confessed ignorance about Jesus' origin on the other hand (v. 29) reveal to the reader the failure of "the Jews" to understand the writings of Moses since they bear witness to Jesus (5:39b). Once again, by means of the narrative echo effect, the narrator enables the reader to understand in a positive light the assertion in v. 29b which was intended by "the Jews" as an expression of contempt. The correct understanding of the divinely inspired writings of Moses leads necessarily to the perception and acceptance of Jesus' divine origin.

The repeated questioning of the healed man by "the Jews," coupled with their persistent refusal to accept his testimony lead him to engage himself in a defence controversy on behalf of Jesus (vv. 30-33). The point of departure of the healed man's defence controversy is a principle which both "the Jews" and he himself acknowledge as true. It concerns the way God relates to human beings. While God does not listen to sinners, i.e., those who disregard his will as expressed in the Law, He does listen to anyone who worships him and does his will (v. 31). God has listened to Jesus and bestowed his divine power on him as evidenced by the healing he has accomplished. The unavoidable conclusion then is that Jesus is a devout person who does God's will. He can therefore not be a sinner, i.e., a breaker of the Law. This is the healed man's response to the accusation that Jesus has violated the Sabbath Law, and is therefore a sinner. On the issue of Jesus' origin, the healed man bases his argument on the uniqueness of the healing accomplished by Jesus (v. 32). The unheard-of-miracle accomplished by Jesus, namely, the giving of sight to one born blind,
constitutes a continuation of God's creative work, and therefore shows that Jesus is indeed from God.

The arguments of the healed man expose the baselessness of the accusations of "the Jews" against Jesus. In relation to the reader, his defence controversy underscores a basic truth that the narrator seeks to communicate to the reader regarding Jesus' identity and significance. Jesus has a unique relationship with God whose creative power is mediated through his words and actions. The reader can only embrace this truth, all the more so because it is in perfect accord with Jesus' own arguments in defence of his Sabbath activities and the related christological claims (5:17, 19-30). "The Jews" make no attempt to address the substance of the healed man's argument, but instead seek to silence him by casting him out (v. 34). 32 The reader who is already aware of the hostility between the Johannine Christians and their opponents (see 9:22-23) understands «the Jews'» treatment of the man they perceive as Jesus' disciple (9:28) as a further sign of the tense relationship between the two groups. This desperate action on the part of "the Jews" not only strengthens the reader's belief in the truthfulness of the healed man's arguments, but it also encourages him/her to embrace the christological credo which the narrator is seeking to communicate to him/her. Thus, by means of the defence controversy, the narrator enables the reader to encounter a character in the narrative whose views support the claims of Jesus, and therefore run counter to those of his opponents. The reader has followed the progress of the healed man in his understanding of Jesus. He had begun by referring to Jesus simply as "the man called Jesus" (v. 11). He then went on to acknowledge him as a "prophet" (v. 17). And now in his defence controversy, he describes Jesus as a man "from God" on the basis of the unheard-of-nature of the miracle he has accomplished. This continual growth in the healed man's understanding of Jesus serves as an

32 On the interpretation of εξάλλελην ἐξω in 9:34, see above, 190-191, and n. 121.
effective narrative strategy for the christological persuasion of the reader. The reader is being encouraged to identify with this character and, like him, to continue to make progress in the understanding of Jesus. This sense of identification between the reader and the healed man disposes the reader to follow the healed man in his future progress on his faith journey. Thus, the dynamism in the relationship between this character and the reader serves the narrator's purpose of leading the reader to accept the christological point of view of the narrative.

The second encounter between Jesus and the healed man takes place at the initiative of Jesus in the aftermath of the man's defence controversy (9:35-38). Jesus hears about the man's plight, seeks him out, and engages him in a dialogue. The man has already borne testimony to Jesus as "prophet" (v. 17b) and has also defended him as a man "from God" (v. 33). Jesus now seeks to lead him to full faith by asking him if he believes in the Son of Man (v. 35b). The reader is aware that, as the unique Son, the Father has granted Jesus to have life in himself and to execute judgment as the Son of Man (see 5:26-27). Thus, the reader understands that the healed man is being asked to make a commitment of faith in Jesus who as the Son of Man, i.e. God's ultimate self-revelation in human history, exercises the dual divine function of life-giving and judgment. The healed man's eagerness to know the identity of the son of Man and to come to faith in him is rewarded with a revelatory statement from Jesus. The Son of Man is the person he is looking at, and who is in the process of speaking with him (v. 37). The present revelatory context indicates that Jesus' direct self-revelation is addressed to the reader whom the narrator seeks to persuade about Jesus' identity. The reader is being given here the ultimate answer to the question of Jesus' identity. Jesus is the divine agent of God's revelation in the world, i.e., he is the one in whom God can be seen and heard in human history. This is the

33 On the "Son of Man" as a christological title, see above, 119-120, and n. 160.
christological credo that the reader, like the healed man, is being called upon to embrace. It follows then that the healed man's instantaneous confession of faith ("Lord, I believe" [v. 38a]) has to be understood as a model of the type of faith commitment towards which the narrator has been leading the reader all along.34

By showing the reader a concrete example of a faith commitment based on the claims of Jesus which "the Jews," on their part, are refusing to acknowledge, the narrator seeks to persuade the reader to adopt a similar attitude of faith. In the same way, the healed man's climactic gesture of worshipping Jesus (v. 38b) is aimed at influencing the reader's understanding of, and attitude towards Jesus.35 What the narrator seeks to communicate to the reader by means of this climactic gesture is that, as the one in whom God is seen and heard in human history, Jesus is himself an object of worship in much the same way as the Father. This constitutes the pinnacle of what the narrator has been seeking to achieve all along namely, to lead the reader to embrace the christological claims of Jesus by a faith commitment which expresses itself in an act of worship. In this regard, the reader recalls Jesus' earlier claim that, since the Father has granted the Son the authority to give life and to judge (5:21-22), the Son is deserving of honour in the same way as the Father (see 5:23). The reader now understands that this honour which all are called to give to the Son (5:23aα) expresses itself in the act of worship as demonstrated by the healed man. Thus, the narrator uses the encounter between Jesus and the healed man in the aftermath of the latter's defence controversy to advance the reader's perception of who Jesus is and his significance for the reader's life, as well as the reader's understanding of what constitutes a correct faith response to Jesus. It is clear then that the narrative art of the juridical controversy is here being used as a medium of christological persuasion.

34 The term "reader" continues to refer to the "implied reader."

35 On προσκυνεῖν as "to worship," see above, 194-195, and n. 134.
c) Jn 9:39-10:18

The resumption of face to face contact between Jesus and his opponents in the ongoing juridical controversy (vv. 39-40) enables him to continue with his efforts to convince them about the truthfulness of his christological claims. On this occasion, Jesus' defence discourse takes the form of a juridical parable and its christological application to the controversy.\(^{36}\) The juridical parable centres around the means by which two individuals described as "thief - robber" and "shepherd" gain access into a sheepfold and the different reactions of the sheep to their shepherd and the stranger they perceive as an enemy (10:1-5). The unwillingness of "the Jews" to respond to the legal challenge involved in Jesus' use of the juridical parable leads Jesus to apply immediately the juridical parable to the ongoing controversy in an attempt to persuade them to accept his christological claims. The application centres around the two central images of the juridical parable namely, the "door" and the "shepherd," but it also includes other motifs and ideas which are not specifically mentioned in the juridical parable.\(^{37}\) The main focus of the application is the person of Jesus. In other words, it seeks to reveal something about Jesus himself in terms of what he uniquely does, in a bid to convince his opponents of the truthfulness of his christological claims.

In the first place, Jesus' identifies himself as "the door of the sheep," i.e. the unique access to eternal life (v. 7). Since "the Jews" who are his opponents long for eternal life but look for it the wrong way (see 5:39-40), Jesus would here be reminding them that it is only a response of faith in him which opens the way to eternal life. Thus, Jesus' identification of himself as the door of the sheep constitutes a reminder to his opponents of his unique role as the giver of life as

\(^{36}\) On the nature and function of the "juridical parable," see above, 201-203, and nn. 152, 155.

\(^{37}\) On the introduction of new motifs and ideas into the application of a juridical controversy, see above, 203, and n. 155.
well as an urgent appeal to them to come to faith in him by accepting his claims (see 5:24). In this regard, not only does he spell out for "the Jews" what his function as "the door" entails, but he also indicates to them what the benefits are for those who acknowledge his role as the unique mediator of salvation. (v. 9). As the door of the sheep, Jesus' role consists of giving people access to eternal life (v. 9bα). Those who come to faith in him will receive eternal life in the sense that they will enjoy the absolute freedom of movement and security which Jesus provides as well as find in Jesus the life-sustaining force which God himself provides (v. 9bβ).

Jesus' insistence on his role as the unique mediator of salvation, and on the benefits of a faith commitment in him seeks to persuade "the Jews" in the narrative about the truthfulness of his christological claims by enabling them to perceive his true identity as well as his significance for their lives. The rhetorical intent of Jesus' assertion is directed at the reader whom the narrator is gradually seeking to lead to an acceptance of the christological credo of the narrative. Not only does the reader learn about Jesus' identity as the unique mediator of salvation, but he/she also receives the assurance of salvation which flows from a faith commitment to Jesus. Thus, the assertion in v. 9 seeks to influence the reader and to bring him/her to perceive Jesus' true identity as well as his significance for the reader's life. The goal is to persuade the reader to embrace the christological claims of Jesus by coming to faith in him. Even the polemical remark in v. 8 about "the thieves and robbers" serves a rhetorical purpose.38 While the "thieves and robbers" refer to "the Jews," as far as the rhetorical strategy of the narrative goes, they also function as a foil for Jesus and therefore help to focus the reader's attention on the christological claims of v. 9 which are intended to win the reader's assent of faith. The unfolding of the juridical

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38 On the "thieves and robbers" as referring to "the Jews," see above, 212-213. On the use of polemical and accusatory language as part of the legal (and narrative) convention of a juridical controversy, see above, 22-23, and n. 38.
controversy between Jesus and "the Jews" thus continues to provide the framework for the christological persuasion of the reader. Similarly, the Johannine Jesus' assertion that he came in order that all those who come to faith in him as the unique mediator of salvation may have abundant life (v. 10b) constitute an invitation and a challenge to "the Jews" who claim to be seeking eternal life (see 5:39a). If their claim is genuine, they cannot but come to faith in Jesus who is the giver of life. This assertion that Jesus came to give abundant life to those who accept him in faith is an invitation and a challenge to the reader; an invitation to come to faith in Jesus and a challenge to acknowledge his christological claims.

In the second place, Jesus identifies himself as the shepherd of the sheep. He is the Good Shepherd (v. 11a), i.e. the shepherd par excellence who fulfils his role in a unique and incomparable way which makes him the unique shepherd.39 The unique and incomparable way in which Jesus exercises his shepherding role consists in the fact that he "lays down his life for the sheep" (v. 11b). Since this self-sacrifice of Jesus gives life to the sheep and therefore possesses a unique soteriological significance, it distinguishes him as the one and only true Shepherd.40 Within the context of the juridical controversy, Jesus' revelation of his death as a deliberate and distinctive act which gives life to his sheep constitutes a warrant for the credibility of his christological claims. It serves the same purpose in relation to the ongoing christological persuasion of the reader. Jesus' death and its inherent soteriological effect are being offered to the reader as a guarantee of the truthfulness of Jesus' claims of a unique

39 In the perspective of the reader, Jesus' description of himself as the "Good Shepherd" does not necessarily imply that there are other shepherds, even bad ones. The juridical parable makes it clear that only the person who enters by the door can be called "shepherd" (vv. 1-2). The thief and the robber (v.1) can therefore not be called "shepherds," not even "bad shepherds." Similarly, v. 12a states clearly that the hireling is not a shepherd. Thus, as far as the reader is concerned, the thief and robber, as well as the hireling serve as a foil for Jesus, and therefore highlight for the reader Jesus' uniqueness as the only shepherd as well as his distinctive activity on behalf of his sheep. See also above, 220, n. 205.

40 See above, 220.
relationship with God and as life-giver. The reader is thus being helped to perceive Jesus' true identity as well as his significance for the reader's life in order that he/she may make a faith commitment to Jesus.

In contrast to the distinctive life-giving activity of Jesus, the Good Shepherd, the activity of the hireling who is not a shepherd (v. 12ας) leads to destruction and loss of life because it is motivated solely by self-interest. He does not have the interest of the sheep at heart, and therefore abandons them at the approach of danger (v. 12βς). The earlier developments of the ongoing juridical controversy point to the fact that the hireling is to be linked with "the Jews." They have shown that their actions are motivated by self-interest and personal gain (5:44), and are therefore always to the detriment of the sheep (9:24-34). The establishment of this sharp contrast between Jesus and "the Jews" has a clear rhetorical intent. Its function is to enable the reader to make an explicit comparison between Jesus and his opponents in order to throw light on the truthfulness of Jesus' claims and to lead the reader to a faith commitment in Jesus.

As the christological application of the "shepherd" image to the juridical controversy continues, Jesus offers two further reasons to "the Jews" as to why they should acknowledge him as the only true shepherd (vv. 14-15). The first reason is the relationship of mutual knowledge and reciprocal love which exist between Jesus, the Good Shepherd and his sheep, i.e. those who come to faith in him (v. 14). This relationship is itself based on the relationship between the Father and Jesus which constitutes Jesus as the only true shepherd capable of giving abundant life to those who come to him in faith (v. 15α). The second reason is Jesus' voluntary self-sacrifice which is presented as the sign par excellence and the direct consequence of his knowledge of, and his love for those who come to him in faith. These two reasons which are offered to "the Jews" are addressed to the reader whom the narrator seeks to convince and lead
to faith in Jesus. In other words, the reciprocal loving knowledge between Jesus and believers which is itself grounded on his unique relationship with the Father, as well as his self-sacrifice on their behalf, are presented to the reader as an indication of the genuineness of Jesus' claims. The reasons which, within the narrative framework, are offered to "the Jews" to explain, to justify, and to convince them of the genuineness of Jesus' claims within the framework of the juridical controversy, are addressed to the reader in an attempt to explain, to justify, and to persuade him/her to embrace the christological credo of the narrative. In this sense, the juridical controversy becomes the means for the ongoing narrative christology which is aimed at christological persuasion of the reader.

The christological application of the good shepherd continues with an assertion of the Johannine Jesus concerning his other sheep who are not of his present fold whom he must lead and who will recognize and obey his voice (v. 16abα). This reference to all those who are yet to come to faith in Jesus as well as the insistence that it is part of God's plan that Jesus brings them into the fold are intended to convince "the Jews" of the fact that Jesus' claims are genuine and also that his present effort to persuade them in order to bring them into the fold is in accord with God's foreordained plan. God wants all the sheep to be united in one flock under the authority of Jesus who is the only true Shepherd (v. 16bβ). The reader is thus being invited to be part of the unique flock of Jesus by accepting his christological claims and coming to faith in him.

In v. 17, Jesus reveals to "the Jews" two other important aspects of his voluntary death by which he gives abundant life to those who come to faith in him. On the one hand, his death is an act of love and of unqualified obedience to the Father's will as well as a manifestation of the Father's love for him (v. 17a). On the other hand, his death will of necessity be followed by his resurrection (v. 17b). Jesus' insistence that his death will necessarily lead to his resurrection is of
particular importance for his effort to convince "the Jews" of the truthfulness of his christological claims. From their study of the scriptures, "the Jews" are aware of the fact that the power to raise the dead is the prerogative of the God of Israel alone (see 1 Sam 2:6; 2 Kgs 5:7, etc.). This means that if Jesus has the power to take up his life again after his death, then it is evident that he possesses the divine life-giving power in himself (see 5:26), and therefore that his claim of a unique relationship with God is true. In relation to the christological persuasion of the reader, Jesus' claim to possess the divine life-giving power in himself reaffirms for the reader's belief Jesus' claim of a unique relationship with God (see 5:17, 19-30). It also serves as a warrant to the reader for the credibility of Jesus' promise to give abundant life to those who come to faith in him (10:10b). Since Jesus is himself the source of the divine life-giving power in the same way as the Father, the reader can only accept his christological claims as true and come to faith in him.

One important consequence of Jesus' assertion that his death is a voluntary act which expresses his perfect obedience to the Father's will as well as manifests the Father's love for him is that it excludes any idea of a death inflicted by others. It is in this light that Jesus tells "the Jews" that no one is capable of taking his life away from him (v. 18a). He alone possesses the authority to lay down his life and to take it up again (v. 18b). His death and resurrection are part of the works entrusted to him by the Father and are therefore in accord with his will. He has indeed received a specific command from the Father which, in virtue of the authority with which he is invested, enables him to give his life freely and to take it up again (v. 18c). By ending the christological application of the juridical parable on this note of perfect obedience to the will of the Father, Jesus in a subtle way reminds "the Jews" of his earlier discourse (5:17, 19-30) in which this same fundamental idea had figured prominently (see vv. 17, 19, 30, etc.). As far as the christological
persuasion of the reader is concerned, this insistence on the Father's will in 5:17, 19-30 and in 10:18 creates a narrative echo effect which enables the reader to connect these recurrent themes into a unified whole. Jesus' actions, including his Sabbath activities, are accomplished in obedience to, and in dependence on the Father. This means that these actions as well as the related christological claims can only be correctly understood within the framework of Jesus' unique relationship with the Father. This is the basic truth that the reader is invited to embrace as the Sabbath juridical controversy draws to a close.

Concluding Remarks

The above analysis has shown that the specific purpose of the use of the juridical controversy as a narrative genre in Jn 5 and 9:1-10:21 is the christological persuasion of the reader. The juridical controversy provides the framework as well as the narrative devices for the narrator's purpose of seeking to persuade the reader about Jesus' identity as well as his significance for the reader's life. As the controversy unfolds, the christological credo of the narrative also unfolds and the reader is gradually led, through the art of narration itself, to perceive and embrace the narrator's christological point of view. In choosing to communicate the christology of the narratives in Jn 5 and 9:1-10:21 by means of a juridical controversy, the narrator effectively places the characteristic rhetoric of persuasion inherent in this distinctive narrative genre at the service of his christological persuasion of the reader. The use of the rhetorical techniques associated with the juridical controversy such as "the statement of

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facts," "the invocation of witnesses," "the transformation of defence into
decusation," "the defence controversy," "the juridical parable," etc., all
contribute to increase the persuasiveness of the narrator's presentation to the
reader of his/her understanding of the identity and significance of Jesus.

The christology which the narrator presents to the reader by means of
the Sabbath juridical controversy may be summed up as follows:

As the Son of the Father, Jesus has a unique relationship with the God of
Israel which is founded on the love of the Father for the Son on the one hand,
and the loving obedience of the Son to the will of the Father on the other hand.
As a result of this unique relationship, Jesus enjoys a perfect functional unity
with the Father in the sense that his activity "is both coincident with and co-
extensive with all that the Father does."42 He is therefore deserving of the same
honour as the Father. Furthermore, Jesus' unique relationship with the Father
enables him to participate in the creative life-giving power of God. He therefore
has the authority to exercise the dual function of life-giving and judging which
is the sole prerogative of the God of Israel. Jesus does not exercise these
functions over against God but rather in total dependence on the will of the
Father. Jesus exercises now the dual divine function of life-giving and judging
in that he gives eternal life here and now to those who accept his word and
come to faith in him, while those who refuse to acknowledge his word are
judged in the sense that they place themselves outside of the salvation he
brings and therefore bring judgment upon themselves. In addition to his present
life-giving and judging activities, Jesus will also exercise the full corresponding
functions at the end of time because the Father has granted him to have life in
himself and has also entrusted all judgment to him because he is the Son of
Man.

42 Carson, John, 251.
Jesus is the Son of Man not only because he exercises judgment as people accept or refuse the revelation he brings, but also because he is the one in whom God can be seen and heard in human history. He is the divine agent of God's self-revelation in human history. In his words and actions, one can hear and see God. As the divine agent who makes God present in human history, Jesus is himself an object of faith and worship in much the same way as the Father.

One other important aspect of the christology of the Sabbath juridical controversy is the presentation of Jesus as the sole mediator of the salvation that comes from God. It is only through him that one can have access to eternal life. Those who accept to come to faith in Jesus receive from him absolute freedom of movement and security as well as divine life-sustaining force. The life which Jesus gives is described as "abundant" in the sense that it flows from the divine reality itself and is therefore measureless and unlimited.

Jesus is not only the unique access to eternal life, but he is also the unique Shepherd capable of leading those who come to faith in him to salvation. He fulfils his unique and incomparable shepherding role by laying down his life for those who come to faith in him. His death which is a unique soteriological event distinguishes him as the only true shepherd. As the unique shepherd, Jesus also establishes a relationship of mutual knowledge and reciprocal love with those who come to faith in him. This relationship is itself based on the relationship between the Father and Jesus. However, the nature of Jesus' task which is part of God's divine purpose requires that he, as the unique shepherd, bring all into one flock under his care. Jesus' laying down of his life will of necessity be followed by his resurrection. In other words, his death and resurrection constitute a single soteriological event. It is through Jesus' death and resurrection, described as his glorification (7:39),\(^43\) that the life-giving Spirit

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\(^{43}\) See above, 228.
is poured out so that those who believe in him may receive abundant life. As the unique Son of the Father to whom all authority has been given, Jesus alone possesses the authority to lay down his life and to take it up again. His death and resurrection are part of the works entrusted to him by the Father and are therefore accomplished in obedience to the Father's will.

The present study of the Sabbath conflicts in Jn 5 and 9:1-10:21 has so far established two important facts. The first is that they correspond in a general way in their form and content to the controversy as a juridical procedure in the Old Testament. Thus, what we have in Jn 5 and 9:1-10:21 is a two-party juridical dispute between Jesus and "the Jews" on the issue of Jesus' Sabbath activity and related christological claims. The second point is that the narrator uses the juridical controversy as a narrative genre for the purpose of his christological persuasion of the reader. The juridical controversy serves as a narrative framework through which the narrator presents to the reader his/her understanding of who Jesus is and what is his significance for those who come to faith in him. The purpose of the narrator is to convince the reader and to lead him/her to accept the christological credo of the narrative and so come to faith in Jesus. The question that one may now pose is: why did the author of the Fourth Gospel choose to express the christological credo of these two narratives by means of a juridical controversy? Would the use of this distinctive narrative genre have had any specific social function within the historical situation of the Christian community which is behind the Gospel narrative?⁴⁴ This question is examined in the next chapter.

Chapter Six

Johannine Christians and the Juridical Controversy Christology

The narrative-critical analysis of Jn 5 and 9:1-10:21 has confirmed that the Sabbath conflicts correspond in their form and content to the controversy as a juridical procedure. The analysis has also established that within the narrative framework of the Sabbath conflicts, the literary and rhetorical techniques of the juridical controversy are used for the purposes of the christological persuasion of the reader. The use of the juridical controversy pattern for a rhetorical purpose in the Fourth Gospel has its literary and historical antecedent in the Old Testament where it is found in both narrative texts and prophetic utterances. ¹ The prophets in particular make use of the juridical controversy pattern to present their message of conversion to Israel. The aim is to persuade Israel to recognize her infidelities and to pursue peace and reconciliation with God by accepting to live by the stipulations of the covenant.² This use of the controversy pattern in the religious sphere, and especially in the disputes between Yahweh and his people would explain the Fourth Gospel's use of it to present the christological claims of the Johannine Jesus in his conflict with "the Jews." Like its historical and literary antecedent in

¹ See above, 19-27, for a detailed presentation of the OT juridical controversy pattern.
² See for instance Isa 1:2-3, 10-20; Jer 2:2-37; Hos 2:4-25, 4:1-3; Mic 6:1-8 etc.
the Old Testament, the use of the controversy pattern here is aimed at convincing Jesus' opponents. The purpose is to persuade them about Jesus' identity and his soteriological significance.

However, it is essential for a more complete understanding of the Sabbath conflicts in Jn 5 and 9:1-10:21, to attempt to establish a plausible social function for the use of the controversy pattern for a christological purpose within the historical context of the Johannine Christians. The question here is: what was the historical situation which necessitated the use of the controversy pattern and what was its specific social function in this historical setting? The importance of this transition from the analysis of the literary form of the text to its social function is to be seen in the fact that the question of "the Gospel's narrative form cannot... be separated from its social function."³ In the words of Sternberg, biblical narrative is always "a functional structure, a means to a communicative end, a transaction between the narrator and the audience on whom he wishes to produce a certain effect by way of certain strategies."⁴ Thus, the analysis of the use of a specific narrative form should of necessity be followed by the question of the why of its use as well as its intended social function. In the present chapter, the study examines the why of the use of the juridical controversy in Jn 5 and 9:1-10:21 as well as its plausible social function within the Johannine Sitz im Leben.⁵ It seeks to answer the question: did the

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³ Stubble, John as Storyteller, 167.

⁴ Sternberg, Poetics of Biblical Narrative, 1.

⁵ This method of literary analysis which is then followed by an inference of the social function of the text within the context which produced it was pioneered by W. A. Meeks in his ground-breaking article "The Man from Heaven and Johannine Sectarianism." In The Interpretation of John, 2nd ed. ed. J. Ashton, 169-205. (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1997). First published in JBL, 91 (1972) 44-72. It is followed, among others, by Stubble, John as Storyteller. See especially 50-56, 61-66; B. J. Malina, and R. L. Rohrbaugh, Social-Science Commentary, 3-4. While these authors apply sociological theories to their description of the social function of the Gospel, no such attempt will be made here, since this would require another thesis. I shall simply attempt to infer the possible social function of the use of the juridical controversy within the historical situation of the community behind the Fourth Gospel. See also J. Louw, "A Semiotic Approach to Discourse Analysis with Reference to Translation Theory," Bijb 36 (1985) 101-107. See especially 102-104.
use of the juridical controversy fulfil any specific function within the historical environment of the Christian community which is behind the Gospel? It will be argued in this regard that the Sabbath juridical controversy functioned, among other things, as an appeal to non-Christians within the framework of first-century Judaism. The use of the juridical controversy pattern in Jn 5 and 9:1-10:21 would therefore be an integral part of the overall narrative strategy of the Gospel to persuade its intended audience about the true identity of Jesus as well as his significance for their lives and to lead them to faith in him. It will also be argued that the use of the juridical controversy pattern in the Sabbath conflicts (5 and 9:1-10:21) would point to the first-century non-Christian Jews with whom the Johannine Christians were in conflict as being part of the intended audience of the two narratives. The issue here is not whether or not first-century non-Christian Jews actually read the two narratives and were persuaded by the christological arguments of the Sabbath juridical controversy. Rather, the point of the argument is that, as people familiar with the juridical controversy pattern and its use in the religious sphere as exemplified in the Old Testament, they would have been capable of perceiving Jn 5 and 9:1-10:21 as a juridical controversy. Additionally, as people who were yet to believe in Jesus, they would also have felt themselves to be specifically addressed by the text and would have understood it as an appeal which is intended to persuade them about the identity and significance of Jesus within the historical context of first-century Judaism.

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6 My contention that first-century non-Christian Jews would have been part of the intended audience of the Johannine Sabbath conflicts is based on two factors. Firstly, the use of the OT juridical controversy pattern as a narrative strategy here would suggest that the two narratives are directed at people who would be capable of recognizing the literary form and content of this two-party juridical procedure. Secondly, as a narrative strategy, the juridical controversy is always intended to convince the opposing party of a specific point of view. This means that the christological arguments of 5 and 9:1-10:21 would be intended to convince people who are either opposing them, or at least are yet to embrace them. These two factors would point to the first-century non-Christian Jews. However, this does not imply that the narrator would not have had in view the Johannine Christians themselves who historically were the "first readers/hearers" of the two narratives. See also below, 308, n. 75.
Historical Setting for the Juridical Controversy Christology

There is now a wide consensus among contemporary Johannine scholars that the Fourth Gospel should be interpreted basically against the backdrop of first-century Judaism which constitutes its historical setting. 7 Within this broad historical setting, the Fourth Gospel is placed in the context of the Christian-Jewish debates and controversies of the post-70 C.E. period. 8 The basic thesis of the present study that the Sabbath conflicts in Jn 5 and 9:1-10:21 constitute a juridical controversy further strengthens the arguments in favour of such a setting for the Fourth Gospel. The juridical controversy always presupposes a situation of a two-party dispute. 9 Given the fact that the essence of the juridical controversy is to convince one's opponent and ultimately to effect reconciliation, it would be plausible to contend that the Sabbath conflicts reflect the situation at the beginnings of Christian-Jewish controversy of the post-70 C.E. period. This period is characterized by the search by both Judaism and Jewish Christianity for a new course and identity as a result of the destruction of the Temple and the cessation of its cult. In this situation of crisis and

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9 On this point, see above, 19-24.
confusion, the Sabbath conflicts would reflect the state of tension which existed between the Johannine Christians and the other groups within Judaism. More significantly, the use of the juridical controversy pattern in the Sabbath conflict narratives would indicate that, at the time of composition of the Gospel, the Johannine Christians were still seeking to influence Judaism from within by their attempt to persuade the other Jewish groups about the identity of Jesus and his significance for their lives. The use of the juridical controversy as a narrative strategy would thus indicate that the relationship between the Johannine Christians and their opponents had not yet broken down irreparably and that the community was still striving to win them over and bring them to faith in Jesus.\textsuperscript{10} The controversy pattern would have been used as a narrative strategy to facilitate "the presentation of [the christological point of view of the Johannine Christians] ... with such forcefulness as to persuade [the intended readers and] the listeners" within the framework of post-70 Judaism.\textsuperscript{11} What then was the situation of Judaism after the 70 C.E. catastrophe?


a) **Post-70 Judaism**

Most scholars have generally agreed on the fact that pre-70 Judaism constituted a diverse religious phenomenon and exhibited a wide range of variety.\(^{12}\) This consensus is based on the testimony of the Synoptic Gospels, and more especially on the work of Josephus (see *Ant* 18:11-23; *War* 2:119-166). However, some scholars had assumed, until recently, that a dominant and legitimate form of Judaism quickly emerged in the post-70 period under the Rabbinic leadership at Jamnia.\(^{13}\) The emergence of this "normative Judaism" would have quickly eliminated the diversity which characterized the pre-70 period. This would have been made possible because the Jewish people had perceived how much its internal divisions "had contributed to its downfall... [and] concentrated on achieving internal unity under its single-minded rabbinic leadership."\(^{14}\) Today, this position is largely abandoned as scholars have become more and more aware of the complexity of the situation immediately following the destruction of the Temple.\(^{15}\) It is now widely recognized that the diversity which had characterized the pre-70 Judaism continued long after the war, and it was only after the Bar Kokhba revolt in 132-135 "that «rabbinic orthodoxy» became established as the dominant and authentic voice of

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\(^{14}\) Baron, *Social and Religious History*, 2: 129. See also K. Wengst, *Bedrängte Gemeinde*, 42.

Judaism.\textsuperscript{16} Thus, even though Pharisaic/Rabbinic Judaism was the sole significant force to emerge eventually from the disaster of 70 C.E., its influence from 70 to 135 was "almost certainly ... negligible, because the very fact of the war of 132-5 suggests that others, not Pharisees, held dominance in the life of the Jewish people."\textsuperscript{17} At this early stage of post-70 Judaism, the Rabbis represented only one type of Judaism and their attempt at reshaping the Jewish religion at Jamnia should be considered as one of the many responses by the different groups within post-70 Judaism to the situation created by the destruction of the Temple and the cessation of Jewish sacrificial worship.\textsuperscript{18} Neusner has termed the decades which followed the destruction of the Temple and the attempts at the reconstruction of Jewish life as "formative Judaism,"\textsuperscript{19} a complex period of a search for a new identity and its consolidation.

There is no denying the fact that the destruction of the Temple created a religious as well as social crisis for the various Palestinian Jewish groups for which the Temple cult had provided a decisive cohesive force.\textsuperscript{20} In the words of Neusner, the Temple's destruction "meant not merely a significant alteration in the cultic or ritual life of the Jewish people, but also a profound and far-reaching crisis in their inner and spiritual existence."\textsuperscript{21} This would explain the urgent


\textsuperscript{20} See Overman-Green, "Judaism," 1041; Martyn, History and Theology. 52.

\textsuperscript{21} J. Neusner, "The Formation of Rabbinic Judaism: Methodological Issues and Substantive Theses." In Formative Judaism: Religious, Historical and Literary Studies, Third Series: Torah, Pharisees, and
need felt by the different groups within Judaism to find an appropriate response not only to account for the disaster, but also to reshape the Jewish religion by adapting it to the changed reality of the post-70 period. It would appear that the emerging Jewish Christian communities would have been part of this ongoing search for an adequate solution to this national crisis. They would have been "part of a much larger debate within the broad spectrum of Judaism, a debate with many parties, concerning the right way to read Torah, the text that shaped the people," and also concerning the very survival of the Jewish religion and nation.

There is sufficient evidence in the Fourth Gospel to suggest that the Johannine Christians were also preoccupied with most of the urgent issues facing post-70 Judaism namely, the reshaping of religious life in the absence of the Temple, the possibility of rebuilding and restoring the Temple to its former role as the centre of divine cult, the role of the Mosaic Law, the expectant Messiah, leadership role in the Jewish nation etc. They would therefore have been part of the ongoing intra-Jewish dialogue in search for a way forward for the nation, and would have proposed their own solution, in line with their religious values and ideals, as the most appropriate response to the present calamity (see for instance, 1:41; 2:19-21; 5:24, 39-40; 10:9-10, etc.). The interpersonal dimension of the Johannine language "indicates that John and his group seek the implementation of new values ... in place of old ones." Among

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Rabbi, 99-144, BJSI 46. (Chico: Scholars Press, 1983) 122. See also Schürer, History of Jewish People, div. 1, 2: 268.


23 See also below, 297-298.

24 Malina-Rohrbaugh, Social Science Commentary, 6.
the many responses of the various Jewish groups to the destruction of the Temple and the cessation of its cult, the following may be mentioned. 25

i. Apocalypticism

The Apocalypse of 4 Ezra (see especially 3-14) is usually considered as representative of the apocalyptic response to the destruction of the Temple. 26 The author, named Ezra, wrestles with the question of why God has delivered his people into the hands of their enemies and allowed such a disaster to befall them. While he acknowledges that the destruction of the Temple is a chastisement which God has inflicted on his people because of their sins, he also agonizes over the fact that the deeds of Israel's conquerors are no better than her own and yet God has preserved them and given them victory (see 3:28-36). However, the author is told that God's ways are inscrutable (4:10-11); and he is also told of the imminent arrival of a new age when light will be shed on all his perplexities (4:26ff). It is also revealed to him that, while those who have received the Law and sinned will perish, the Law itself "does not perish but remains in its glory" (9:36-37). In the end, Ezra receives a commission to "reprove your people, comfort the lowly among them, and instruct those that are wise" (14:13). If the people learn to do what is right in the sight of God by obeying the Law, then the day of redemption will soon dawn for them (14:14-15). It is for this reason that Ezra re-issues the Law to the people "that men may


be able to find the path, and that those who wish to live in the last days may live" (14:22). It can therefore be said that the purpose of the apocalyptic visions of 4 Ezra is firstly to explain the catastrophe of 70 C.E. as the fruit of sin, and secondly to seek to comfort the people in their distress, and to encourage them to strive to overcome their evil inclination (7:92) and live by the Law (see 9:26-37). It is only by living according to the Law that they will be saved in the coming new age (9:7-8). In this sense then, 4 Ezra is seeking to demonstrate the relevance of the Law to the time and circumstances of the Jewish people in the aftermath of the 70 C.E. calamity. In his view, the Law still remains "a genuine means of salvation despite the difficulties inherent in its fulfillment."28

Similar ideas to those found in 4 Ezra are also encountered in another apocalyptic writing namely, 2 Baruch. Here too, the destruction of Jerusalem is explained on the basis of the sin of the people (1:4). In the view of the author, after the destruction of the Temple, all that Israel has left is "the Mighty One and his Law" (85:3). The Law is described as the lamp which Moses "lighted ... to the generations of Israel" (17:4). The people are therefore exhorted to prepare their hearts by faithful adherence of the Torah (32:1-2). It is this adherence to the Torah that will bring about the consolation of Zion (44:3-7). Those who live according to the Law will be gathered together (78:7), will participate in the resurrection of the dead, and will enjoy life in a new existence (30:1-2).29

It is clear from what has been said so far that while it seeks to console the people in the midst of their trauma caused by the destruction of Jerusalem and its Temple, the apocalyptic response stresses the importance of the Law as a means to life in the present and in the coming new age. It seeks to persuade its

27 See Schürer, History of Jewish People, div. 1, 2: 278.


29 See A. F. Klijn, "2 (Syriac Apocalypse of) Baruch." In OTP, 1: 618; Nickelsburg, Jewish Literature, 283-284.
readers about the relevance of the Law to their present time and circumstance.\textsuperscript{30} The renaissance of such biblical figures as Baruch and Ezra in these apocalyptic writings would point to the growing importance of the role of the Law in the post-70 period.\textsuperscript{31}

ii. Popular Messianism

The basic response of popular messianism to the destruction of the Temple consisted in envisaging a future restoration of the Temple in which the people themselves would play an active role.\textsuperscript{32} The messianic hope appears to have drawn new zeal and strength from the shock caused by the destruction of the Temple. The effect of this renewed messianic hope was that the strong commitment to freedom from foreign domination and the commitment to execute God's vengeance, which had characterized the zealotic and other revolutionary movements during the war, continued in the post-70 period. In the view of Motyer, for instance, the appeal of 2 Baruch to the people not to look for the decline of their enemies (see 2 Bar 52:6-7) may be interpreted "as evidence for the continuing life of the Zealot movement after 70 A.D."\textsuperscript{33}

One particular Jewish writing which appears to reflect the militarism which characterized the response of popular messianism to the disaster of 70 C.E. is the Apocalypse of Abraham.\textsuperscript{34} While the author places the responsibility


\textsuperscript{31} See Overman-Green, "Judaism," 1041.

\textsuperscript{32} See Motyer, \textit{Your Father the Devil?}, 98-102

\textsuperscript{33} Motyer, \textit{Your Father the Devil?}, 98.

\textsuperscript{34} In the view of R. Rubinkiewicz, this work was composed sometime after 70 C.E. and before the middle of the second century. See "Apocalypse of Abraham." In \textit{OTP}, 1: 683.
for the destruction of the Temple on the people for provoking God by their sins (27:7), he maintains that a time of justice will come for the people (27:10-12). In those days, God will punish the nations who have acted wickedly through the instrumentality of the people of Israel (29:14-15; 30:2-8). In addition, God will send "my chosen one ... [who] will summon my people humiliated by the heathen" (31:1). The author also makes it clear that the people themselves will participate actively in the punitive action which God, through his chosen one, will accomplish against their oppressors. "They will rejoice forever in me, and they will destroy those who have destroyed them ... and they will spit in their faces" (29:19). Thus, the Apocalypse of Abraham would be an example of a response to the destruction of the Second Temple which would have encouraged its audience to take action.35

It may therefore be said that the political aspirations which had characterized some of the pre-70 groups, as well as the desire to execute God's vengeance on Israel's oppressors were well alive in the post-70 period. The more these people longed for their political freedom which they believed would be achieved with the coming of the Messiah, the bolder their resolve became to rid themselves of all foreign domination. Thus, for many, "the hope for the overthrow of Rome ... to be followed by the restoration of Jerusalem, the Temple, and Davidic messianic rule remained very much alive."36 It may well be that this blending of religious and political ideals contributed in no small measure to the Bar Kokhba revolt in 132-135 C.E. when the messianic fervour would have led the people to start looking for a figure to lead Israel to victory over her oppressors.37


37 Motyer, Your Father the Devil?, 101.
iii. Early Rabbinic Judaism

Early Rabbinic Judaism appears to have emerged as a response to the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple and the cessation of its cult in the post-70 period.\(^{38}\) Thus, even though it makes use of the Old Testament as well as elements from the pre-70 pharisaic and scribal traditions, "its own distinctive interests [seem to have been] shaped in the crucible of the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple."\(^{39}\) It has its origins in a gathering at Jamnia of the remnants of various groups in the Judaism of the pre-70 period. Their principal goal was to seek to create a new religious and social synthesis out of the religious heritage of Israel which would be capable of maintaining a viable religious-cultural existence for the people in the aftermath of the disaster of 70 C.E. One particular aspect of this Rabbinic synthesis, which a century or so later would emerge as what we now call "Rabbinic Judaism," was a renewed emphasis on the study and the interpretation of the Mosaic Law. Like the author of 2 Baruch (see 2 Bar 85:3), the Rabbis believed that with the destruction of the Temple, the Law should be at the heart of the life of the people. Thus, they claimed that in the absence of the sacrificial cult of the Temple, it was equally possible to serve God through the study of the Torah, and also that "when the whole Jewish people will fully carry out the teachings of the Torah, then the Temple itself will be rebuilt."\(^{40}\) Since in their view, the destruction of the Temple was due to the failure of the people to keep the Torah, the Rabbis placed a renewed emphasis on personal obedience to the Law (see m. Sotah 9:15).

One other important element of the emerging Rabbinic synthesis which the Rabbis derived from pre-70 Pharisaism is the conviction that, with the

\(^{38}\) The emergence of Rabbinic Judaism has been object of extensive study. See among many, Overman-Green, "Judaism," 1037-1054, and the bibliography cited there; Neusner, "Formation," 116-144.

\(^{39}\) Neusner, "Formation," 99.

\(^{40}\) Neusner, "Formation," 122.
destruction of the Temple, "the community of Israel now stands in place of the Temple." The people as a nation were now to realize the condition of the sanctification of the Temple in their collective as well as individual lives. The Rabbis were therefore convinced of the need to extend the kind of behaviour prescribed for the priests in the Temple to the entire people in their social life. Their intention was to enable Jews outside the now destroyed Temple to participate in its cult so as to share in its sanctity. This ideal may underlie the Rabbinic idea that "the old sin-offerings still may be carried out, through deeds of loving kindness." An aspect of the work of the Rabbis at Jamnia which has been the object of considerable study is the so-called birkat ha-minim. On the basis of the use of the term ἀνασύναγωγός in the Fourth Gospel (see 9:22; 12:42; 16:2), J. L. Martyn, and many after him, have suggested that the birkat ha-minim had been introduced by the Rabbis at Jamnia into the Shemoneh Esre as a means for detecting Jewish Christians in the Synagogue, and also "in order formally and irrevocably to separate such Jews from the synagogue." However, this position has been seriously called into question. The result is that today, there is a general consensus that available evidence does not support the view that the emerging Rabbinic Judaism spearheaded an anti-Christian action in the post-70 period, or that the birkat ha-minim was particularly aimed at Christians.

41 Neusner, "Formation," 123.

42 This position is evident in the Mishnah (see for instance, m. Berakoth 1:1; 3:4-6; m. Tohoroth 1:7; 2:1-8) which, in the words of Overman-Green, "Judaism," 1041, "represents a strategy and a means for the adaptation and continuity of the levitical religion the Temple had represented and promulgated." See also Neusner, "Formation," 123.

43 Neusner, "Formation," 122. See also idem, "Judaism in a Time of Crisis," 324-325.

44 Martyn, History and Theology, 62. See also above, 284, n. 10, and the literature cited there.

45 See Kimelman, "Birkat Ha-Minim," 244; Katz, "Separation," 63-76; W. Meeks, "Breaking Away: Three New Testament Pictures of Christianity's Separation from the Jewish Communities." In "To See Ourselves as Others See Us": Christians, Jews, «Others» in Late Antiquity, eds. J. Neusner, and E. S. Frerichs, 93-115. (Chico: Scholars Press, 1985) 102-103. Meeks is of the opinion that "it is time to recognize that the birkat ha-minim has been a red herring in Johannine research" (102); Motyer, Your
Additionally, it has been convincingly argued that the separation between Judaism and Christianity took place in a long and painful process which very often depended on local situations. What then is the term ἀποστάσις in 9:22; 12:42; and 16:2 about? It would be alluding to a threat of exclusion from the local Synagogue which hung over the Johannine Christians at the time of the Gospel's composition. This would be a direct result of the ongoing situation of opposition and hostility between the Johannine Christians and their opponents. In both 9:22 and 12:42, the expulsion is threatened, while in 16:2, it is spoken of as a future event and linked to the theme of the persecution of Christians. The intended reader of the Fourth Gospel would thus have understood this threatened/prophesied exclusion as an event which was yet to take place. There is therefore no need to postulate that "the really historical separation between Judaism and Christianity had already taken place, ... [and that] the threat of expulsion ... reported in John 9:22; 12:42; and 16:2... is a retrospective glance."

That the Johannine Christians should use the juridical controversy to express the fundamental tenets of their christological faith would suggest that they were actively seeking to persuade their Jewish opponents about the identity and the significance of Jesus. This would in turn mean that, at the time of the Gospel's composition, they were still in some form of contact with those opposing them and even threatening them with exclusion from the Synagogue.

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46 See Hengel, Johanne Question, 114-115; Kimelman, "Birkat Ha-minim," 244; Dunn, The Partings of the Ways, 238-243


48 See above, 263, n. 30.
In sum, the following may be said in broad terms about Judaism in the post-70 period.

Firstly, the diversity which had characterized the pre-70 Judaism continued long after the destruction of the Temple. It cannot therefore be said that the immediate aftermath of the Temple's disappearance was dominated by the activities of the sages at Jamnia who had quickly succeeded in creating a new and universally effective social and religious synthesis to replace the old one left in tatters by the destruction of the Temple.

Secondly, this diversity is reflected in the responses that the various groups sought to put forward in the aftermath of the Temple's destruction. While it is true that all the groups seem to have turned to Scripture and considered "the ideal of detailed, individual obedience to Torah as the heart of the response to the calamity," their different understanding of this basic component of their religious and cultural life as well as the nature of the solutions envisaged led to different responses to the calamity. Thus, while some interpreted the catastrophe as an immediate prelude to the end which would soon arrive if Israel would observe faithfully the Torah, others were urging the righteous to stay put while God's inscrutable plan ran its course. Others still were nourishing the hope for the overthrow of Rome, the restoration of the Temple, and a Davidic messianic rule. On their part, the Rabbis at Jamnia were striving to create a new social and religious synthesis on the basis of the Law and the Pharisaic and Scribal traditions.

Thirdly, the fact that the language of a number of the extant writings from the post-70 period is hortatory in purpose is also of a particular significance. This is the case, for instance, with the apocalyptic writings of this

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49 Motyer, *Your Father the Devil?*, 92. See also Overman-Green, "Judaism," 1041.

50 See Fraade, "Palestinian Judaism," 1060.
period. The apocalyptic writers envisage the present as a time of decision for the reader whom they all seek to influence to adopt a specific attitude or course of action in the light of the present catastrophe. By means of the vision, dialogues, and especially exhortations, they signal "those actions and commitments required of the reader which will enable that reader to be assured of a place in the glorious future." Thus, the exhortations in particular seek to influence the present action of the reader by indicating to him/her what the writers consider to be the right course of action required by the new situation created by the destruction of the Temple. The post-70 period with its confusion and trauma can therefore be described as a time of exhortation and persuasion as the various groups seek to claim and redefine the Jewish religious heritage (see 4 Ezra 9:7-13, 26-37; 2 Bar 32:1-2; 78:7 etc.).

Fourthly, in the immediate aftermath of the catastrophe when religious and social chaos and disorientation reigned, each of the groups within Judaism strove to make its voice heard as they all sought to bring some order into the situation and indicate a way forward for the Jewish nation. Each group sought to put forward solutions for the present calamity in line with their own religious values and ideals. It is therefore likely that the advocates of the different responses to the catastrophe would have clashed with each other and therefore controversies and debates would have been inevitable. In this climate, the Christian community behind the Fourth Gospel would have been one of the many voices seeking to make themselves heard in the post-70 period. The Johanneine Christians would have sought to influence the future direction of post-War Judaism which was in the process of development by seeking to lead

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51 See for instance J. J. Collins, "Jewish Apocalypses," Semeia 14 (1979) 21-59, who observes among other things, that "all the apocalypses are hortatory in purpose, whether this purpose is expressed explicitly or not" (26).


53 Motyer, Your Father the Devil?, 212, makes a similar suggestion following his analysis of Jn 8:31-59.
people to faith in Jesus as the Messiah and the unique Son of God. While it is impossible to determine exactly how widespread the Johannine "voice" was among the many "voices" of the period, their use of the juridical controversy as a narrative strategy would suggest that they were seeking to persuade the non-Christian Jews with whom they were in contact about their christological faith. Thus, the Sabbath conflict narratives with their "juridical controversy christology" would have emerged from this context of different voices competing to make themselves heard; a situation which would have resulted inevitably in debates and controversies.

b) Johannine Christians in Post-70 period

The Johannine Christians therefore were one of the many voices seeking to make themselves heard in the aftermath of the post-70 catastrophe. Like the other groups, they sought to put forward what they considered as the appropriate course of action required by the new situation in the decades after 70 C.E. This means that they would also have weighed in with their message of hope and salvation for Israel in this traumatic and painful period.54 Their message was basically christological, i.e. Jesus as the one through whom people are saved in the present and in the envisioned future redemption. To those who

54 One implication of this assertion is that, at the time of composition of the Gospel, the Johannine Christians, though a distinct entity, would still have been part of the broad spectrum of first century Judaism. As the use of the juridical controversy as a narrative strategy shows, they would still be in some form of contact with the other groups within Judaism, and would still be seeking to influence from within the Jewish religion of the post-70 period. Thus, the understanding which the present study presents of the Johannine situation differs from the one proposed by those scholars who have described the Johannine community as "sectarian" or "separatist," i.e. a community that sees itself as unique and alien from the world. See for instance, Meeks, "Man from Heaven," 169-205. See especially, 193; N. R. Petersen, The Gospel of John and the Sociology of Light: Language and Characterization in the Fourth Gospel. (Valley Forge: Trinity Press International, 1993) 80-89. He characterizes the Johannine Christians as "a relatively powerless minority that has been forced to the fringes or interstices of the dominant society" (81); W. Rebell, Gemeinde als Gegenwelt: zur soziologischen und didaktischen Funktion des Johannesevangeliums, BET 20. (Frankfurt am Main: Verlag Peter Lang, 1987) 112-123. See especially 120-121.
were prepared to take action against the Romans in order to ensure the rebuilding of the Temple, the Fourth Gospel offers Jesus who, after his resurrection, is the new Temple (2:19-21). On the issue of the expected Messiah (see Apoc. Abr. 30:1), the Johannine Christians tell their contemporaries traumatised by the 70 C.E. experience that the Messiah has already come in the person of Jesus (1:41).

Furthermore, in a situation where there is a renewed emphasis on the Mosaic Law which is being proposed as source of life (see 2 Bar 38:2; 48:24; 85:3 etc.), the Johannine Christians seek to convince their interlocutors that the role of the Law is to lead people to faith in Jesus. In other words, far from being life-giver in itself, the Law bears witness to Jesus who as the unique Son of the Father is the giver of eternal life (5:24, 39-40). As the unique Son of the Father, Jesus exercises the two divine Sabbath activities of life-giving and judgment. He also reveals through his Sabbath healings the deeper meaning of the Sabbath as a reminder of the uninterrupted creative activity of God in his person in the world. Again, in the context of the turmoil and confusion which characterized the decades of the post-70 period, with the various groups competing with each other to assume leadership role, the Johannine Christians present Jesus as the unique Shepherd who offers abundant life to all who come to faith in him (10:9-10). In this regard, the intended reader of the Sabbath conflicts would have been expected to understand Jesus' polemic against "the Jews" whom he describes as "thieves and robbers" (10:8) as a reference to the claims of leadership role by the various Jewish groups of the period. In sum, it may be said that the Johannine Christians would have sought to convince their contemporaries that not only do the great symbols and institutions of Judaism (Temple, Mosaic Law etc.) find their fulfilment in Jesus, but also that it is only in him that one can receive life both in the present and in the future.\footnote{Also crucial to the argument here is Jn 1:16-17. The Law which is God's former gift given through Moses finds its ultimate fulfilment in the gift of the "truth" given through Jesus. See R. B. Edwards,
This message of the Johannine Christians about the identity of Jesus and his relevance to the new situation, and more especially their reinterpretation of the Mosaic Law in the light of their christology, in all probability brought them into conflict with some of the other "voices" in this intra-Jewish dialogue and debate in the post-70 period. Is it possible to determine which "voice" among the many of the post-70 period was in dialogue with the Johannine Christians? Any attempt to answer this question will have to take into consideration the all important fact that both "voices" in the Johannine juridical debate recognize the literary form and the content of the two-party juridical procedure which is used in the Sabbath conflict narratives. Given the fact that the use of the juridical controversy is closely, though not exclusively, associated with biblical prophecy,\textsuperscript{56} it is possible that the other "voice" in dialogue with the Johannine Christians would represent the various apocalyptic groups of the post-70 period whose origins and ideas can be traced back to the biblical prophetic tradition. Additionally, the fact that the Fourth Gospel shows some affinities with the apocalyptic tradition would suggest that it was probably with the exponents of this tradition that the Johannine Christians were in dialogue.\textsuperscript{57} It must however be said that the other "voice" in dialogue with the Johannine Christians could as well be identified with any of the other Jewish groups of the period namely, the popular messianic movement, early Rabbinic Judaism etc. It is more than probable that they would all be familiar with the controversy as a juridical procedure, and its use as a narrative strategy in the Old Testament.

Whatever the exact identity of the dialogue-partner of the Johannine

\textsuperscript{56} See above, 280, and n. 2.

\textsuperscript{57} On the resemblances (and also differences) between the Fourth Gospel and the apocalyptic tradition, see Ashton, \textit{Understanding}, 383-406. Among the resemblances, Ashton mentions for instance the idea of the two ages of revelation, the correspondence "insiders/outsiders," the correspondence "above/below" etc. See also F. M. Braun, "L'arrière-fond du quatrième évangile." In \textit{L'Évangile de Jean. Études et Problèmes}, Recherches Bibliques III. 179-196. (Bruges: Desclée de Brouwer, 1958). See especially 183-190.
Christians, the group(s) would have opposed their christological response as the proper course of action required by the new situation, and would have accused them of blasphemy and false christological claims. The Sabbath juridical controversy in Jn 5 and 9:1-10:21 would have emerged in this context of conflict between the Johannine Christians and those who were opposing their christological response to the catastrophe. The Johannine Christians resorted to the juridical controversy as a narrative strategy to try and convince those on the other side of the christological debate of the truthfulness of their claims about the identity of Jesus as well as his significance for their lives. Thus, while it may be impossible to determine the extent and the impact of the experience of the Johannine Christians, their use of the juridical controversy to express their christology in 5 and 9:1-10:21 would point to their effort to lead their contemporaries to faith in Jesus as the most appropriate response to the new situation of the post-70 period.

However, it is not being suggested here that the Sabbath conflict narratives are simply a reflection of the Johannine Christians' effort to convince their opponents of the truthfulness of their claims about Jesus within the context of the post-70 period. There is no denying the fact that the tradition reflected in the Sabbath conflict narratives go back to the historical ministry of Jesus himself. That Jesus was involved in disputes over the rules of the scribes for the observance of the Sabbath is, in the words of Brown, "one of the most certain of all the historical facts about his ministry."58 What the Fourth Gospel does is to take this tradition and give it the narrative shape of a juridical controversy in order to utilize the latter's strong rhetoric of persuasion to convince the opponents of the Johannine Christians of their christological claims.

Nature of the conflict.

Since the work of J. L. Martyn, it has often been maintained that the conflict between Jesus and "the Jews" in the Fourth Gospel reflects a situation which had already gone beyond its crisis point and had effectively led to the irretrievable separation between the Johannine Christians and the synagogue. In this regard, a link is often made between the birkat-ha-minim and the Johannine situation. However, given the fact that it was only after the 132-135 C.E. revolt that Rabbinic Judaism began to exercise a dominant role in Jewish society, it would seem improbable that the Rabbis would have succeeded in bringing about a formal and irretrievable separation between Christianity and Judaism in the decades immediately following 70 C.E. Thus, the nature of the conflict between the Johannine Christians and their opponents would not have been one of total deadlock with no hope of reconciliation.

Additionally, the already established thesis of the present study that Jn 5 and 9:1-10:21 correspond to the controversy as a juridical procedure also casts doubt on the suggestion of Schnelle that the historical separation between the Johannine Christians and their opponents had already taken place, and that 9:22 looks backward to this event. Firstly, the nature of the juridical controversy as a two-party dispute in which the disputants seek to convince each other and to resolve their differences on their own would suggest that the Johannine Christians and those opposed to their christological claims were still in contact with each other. Secondly, since the juridical controversy is

59 J. L. Martyn, History and Theology. See especially 90-94.

60 See among many, Brown, Community, 22; Meeks, "Am I a Jew?," 182; Fortna, "Theological Use of Locale," 94; Manns, "Réponse chrétienne," 67. For a critique of this position, see above, 293, and n. 45

61 See above, 285-286, and n. 16.

62 See Schnelle, Antidocetic Christology, 30-31, 120-121; Labahn, Jesus als Lebensspender, 344.
characterized by a strong rhetoric of persuasion which is aimed at one's opponent, its use for a christological purpose in 5 and 9:1-10:21 would suggest that the Johannine Christians were actively seeking to persuade their opponents about the true identity of Jesus as well as his significance for their lives. Thirdly, if as argued above, the Johannine Christians constituted one of the many groups seeking to claim and reshape the Jewish heritage in line with their religious values and ideals in the post-70 period, then it means that the conflict situation reflected in Jn 5 and 9:1-10:21 would be the result of tensions created by the ongoing intra-Jewish debates in the post-70 period. One can then hardly speak of a formal and irretrievable separation. The use of the juridical controversy suggests therefore that at the time of the writing of the Gospel, the Johannine Christians were still within the broad framework of Judaism even though they were in conflict with those who were opposing their christological claims. The juridical controversy christology should thus be viewed as an attempt by the Johannine Christians to persuade those opposing them about the identity of Jesus and his soteriological importance for their lives. In sum, they were seeking to lead them and the other non-Christian Jews to faith in Jesus.

What then would be the precise nature of the conflict between the Johannine Christians and those on the other side of the christological debate? If as proposed above, Jn 5 and 9:1-10:21 reflect the *intra-Jewish debates* of the post-70 C.E. period, then Ashton's suggestion that "what we have here is akin to something like a family row," appears to be the most appropriate

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63 See above, 297-298.


65 *Pace* W. A. Meeks, "Am I a Jew?," 182, who is of the opinion that "at the time of composition of the Gospel the Johannine community is separate from the Jews and no longer expects Jews to convert."

66 Ashton, *Understanding*, 140. See also 137, 151.
description of the nature of the conflict in 5 and 9:1-10:21. It is being suggested here then that what we have in the Sabbath conflict narratives is a kind of heated controversy within a family context in a situation of turmoil and total lack of direction as it would have existed in the decades following the destruction of the Temple and the cessation of its cult. It is a dispute between siblings in a family context.67 This understanding of the conflict in 5 and 9:1-10:21 as a kind of family dispute is supported by the use of the juridical controversy as a narrative strategy here. The juridical controversy has precisely its Sitz im Leben in the context of a two-party dispute within the family setting where the two disputants seek to arrive at a mutually acceptable solution without outside intervention.68 Its use as a narrative strategy in Jn 5 and 9:1-10:21 would then suggest that the Johannine Christians are actively seeking to convince the other participants in this intra-family controversy of the truthfulness of their christological claims and to lead them to faith in Jesus. As pointed out repeatedly in the present study, the primary objective of the juridical controversy is for each disputant to try and convince the other party and to seek a solution which is mutually acceptable in order to effect reconciliation and restore peace. This would imply that, from the perspective of the Johannine Christians, reconciliation and peace with those on the other side of the christological debate would constitute their ultimate goal in Jn 5 and 9:1-10:21, and would still be considered as a real possibility.69

67 Christianity and Judaism in the post-70 C.E. period have often been described as "siblings." See for instance, H. G. Perelmutter, "Christianity and Judaism as Siblings." In Siblings. Rabbinic Judaism and Early Christianity at Their Beginnings. (New York: Paulist Press, 1989) 16-27.

68 See Bovati, Re-establishing Justice, 30-35. See also idem, I Rlb Profeittci. Dispense ad uso degli studenti. (Roma: Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 1996). In relation to the Sitz im Leben of the juridical controversy, Bovati observes, among other things: "il suo ambiente tipico è quella della famiglia; sono frequenti infatti i litigi tra membri della stessa casa ... che trovano una riconciliazione senza l'intervento di un magistrato" (25).

69 For this reason, I cannot but disagree with Ashton when he says that in the family row between the Johannine Christians and their opponents, "any hope of reconciliation has already vanished and the situation is one of total deadlock" (J. Ashton, Understanding, 140). The understanding of Jn 5 and 9:1-10:21 as a juridical controversy as in the present study suggests quite strongly that the purpose of the
In sum, as a kind of family dispute in which the Johannine Christians seek to make their voices heard in the post-70 period, Jn 5 and 9:1-10:21 reflect a situation of active debate and controversy, rather than one of formal and irretrievable separation between the Johannine Christians and their opponents. The use of the juridical controversy as a narrative strategy suggests that in the Sabbath conflict narratives, the Johannine Christians are still seeking to persuade those on the other side of the christological debate about the identity of Jesus and his significance for their life in order to lead them to faith in him. It is also a further proof that the term "the Jews" in the Gospel is not identifiable with "Israel," or the Jewish people with whom historically the Johannine Christians were in contact and would have sought to convince of the truthfulness of their christology and to lead to faith in Jesus.70

Social Function of Juridical Controversy Christology

As mentioned above, the juridical controversy christology would have been an integral part of the response of the Johannine Christians to the calamity of 70 C.E. and to the turmoil which characterized the decades following the event. They would have resorted to the juridical controversy as a narrative

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70 While the use of "the Jews" in the Fourth Gospel may be justified on the grounds that, historically, those who opposed Jesus' teaching as well as those who were opposing the christology of the Johannine Christians would have been Jewish, it is clear that as a character within the narrative, "the Jews" represent Jesus' antagonists, and not the Jewish people. The negative portrayal of "the Jews" as a character within the narrative in terms of their attitude of unbelief and hostility towards Jesus serves the narrative purpose of enabling the narrator to present the christological arguments of the Gospel which are aimed at persuading the historical reader about Jesus and his relevance for the reader's life. And so for instance, in Jn 5 and 9:1-10:21, the accusation of "the Jews" and their threat of death against Jesus in the narrative enables the narrator to present these chapters in the form of a juridical controversy and to seek to persuade, among others, the first-century non-Christian Jew to embrace their christological message. Thus, the term "the Jews" in the narrative cannot be identified with the historical Jewish people with whom the Johannine Christians were in contact.
strategy because of the situation of conflict and dispute created by the different voices within Judaism competing with each other to make themselves heard. The question which may now be posed here is: what precise function would the use of the juridical controversy for a christological purpose have served within this historical circumstance of the Johannine Christians? In any attempt to propose a plausible answer to this question, two important elements already mentioned in the study will need to be taken into consideration namely, the primary objective of the juridical controversy pattern, and the evidence of the apocalyptic writings contemporary with the Fourth Gospel.

a) The Rhetoric of Juridical Controversy Pattern

The analysis of the juridical controversy pattern at the beginning of the study established the fact that its primary objective is for each disputant to try and convince the other party in a bid to arrive at a mutually acceptable solution and effect reconciliation and peace.71 Thus, the two disputants can argue their case over and over again until either a solution is found, or the dispute changes its juridical character. The juridical controversy is therefore marked by a strong rhetoric of persuasion which is always aimed at one's opponent. The literary and rhetorical techniques that are often used in a juridical controversy such as "statement of facts," "invocation of witnesses," "transformation of defence into accusation," "defence controversy," "juridical parable" etc. are all intended to persuade one's opponent and to bring him/her to the acknowledgment of the truth. Its use for a christological purpose in the Sabbath conflict narratives would therefore suggest that the Johannine Christians would have felt the need to persuade their opponents about Jesus and his significance for their lives.

71 See above, 19-20, et passim.
b) Contemporary Apocalyptic writings

The earlier analysis of some of the apocalyptic writings contemporary with the Fourth Gospel such as 4 Ezra and 2 Baruch revealed the fact that they are hortatory in purpose. They seek to recommend to their readers specific values and actions and to lead them to a renewed fidelity to the Law. It is for this reason that the Law is presented as the only genuine assurance of salvation after the destruction of the Temple and the cessation of its cult (4 Ezra 9:36-37; 2 Bar 17:4; 85:3). The authors of these writings thus seek to demonstrate the relevance of the Law to the time and circumstances of the post-70 period. In this sense then, it can be said that these apocalyptic writings had a clear social function namely, to exhort their readers to a renewed fidelity to the Law seen as the only means for the reconstruction of the present of the community after the catastrophe of 70 C.E. The post-70 period is particularly conducive to the rhetoric of exhortation and persuasion. Since the juridical controversy christology belongs to the same historical and social setting as the above-mentioned writings, it seems justified in maintaining that the use by the Johannine Christians of the juridical controversy pattern to express their christology would have had a similar social function of exhortation and persuasion.

In the light of the above, it may be argued that, in using the juridical controversy to express their christology in the Sabbath conflict narratives, the Johannine Christians would have sought to persuade their contemporaries traumatised by the events of 70 C.E. about their understanding of the person of

72 See above, 288-290.


74 On the plausible historical setting for the juridical controversy christology, see above, 283-284, and nn. 7 & 8.
Jesus and his significance for their lives. Their aim would thus have been to demonstrate Jesus' relevance to the time and circumstances of the post-70 period. In this perspective, the juridical controversy christology would have functioned within the Johannine *Sitz im Leben* both as a means of persuasion of and an appeal to the opponents of the Johannine Christians to acknowledge the true identity of Jesus and his significance for their lives in order to come to faith in him and be saved. The intended non-Christian Jewish reader of the late first century would have understood the Sabbath conflict narratives as a juridical controversy and would therefore have perceived the implicit appeal being addressed to the reader to acknowledge Jesus as the unique Son of God through whom divine life is given here and now. In a situation of crisis and profound search for a new self-identity like the one which characterized the decades following 70 C.E., the juridical controversy christology would have functioned, among other things, as an appeal to non-Christian Jews to come to faith in Jesus as the only way forward and the proper course of action required by the new situation. The strong insistence in the Sabbath conflict narratives on the realized aspect of the life that Jesus gives (see especially 5:21-25) would suggest that the Johannine Christians wanted their readers to perceive the immediate relevance of their message about Jesus and the life he gives to the readers' time and circumstances of the post-70 period. In other words, not only is the christological message presented as an appeal to be heard and adhered to now, but also the benefits of a faith commitment are presented as something to be experienced in the here and now of the reader's life (see 5:25).
Concluding Remarks

The Sabbath conflicts with their juridical controversy christology reflect the situation of uneasy relationship and dispute which existed between the Johannine Christians and some of the other groups within Judaism in the post-70 period which was characterized by a search for a new self-definition for Judaism. While all the groups, including the Johannine Christians, shared the Torah as source of divine revelation, they seemed to have read it differently. This would have created a situation of debate and controversy among them. In relation to the conflict between the Johannine Christians and their opponents, the bone of contention would have been the Johannine Christians' faith in Jesus as the one to whom the Law bears witness as the unique Son of God and the bringer of God's eschatological revelation, as well as the giver of life in the present and in the envisioned future redemption. The Sabbath juridical controversy (5 and 9:1-10:21) would thus have been part of the attempt by the Johannine Christians to persuade the non-Christian Jews about Jesus and his soteriological significance. Hence, the juridical controversy christology would have functioned within the Johannine Sitz im Leben, among other things, as a means of persuasion of, and an appeal to, the first-century non-Christian Jews to come to faith in Jesus and be saved.75

75 The above assertion does not imply that the narrator would not have had in view the Johannine Christians themselves. In fact, in the light of Jn 13:1-17:26 and perhaps 20:30-31 and the Johannine Epistles, it must be maintained that the christology of Jn 5 and 9:1-10:21 would primarily be addressed to the Johannine Christians themselves who would have been the "first readers/hearers" of the Gospel narrative, and would have addressed their specific concerns. See below, 321-322.
CONCLUSIONS

As stated in the Introduction, this study has pursued an interlocking three-fold objective:¹

i. An attempt has been made to determine the precise nature of the Johannine juridical metaphor as reflected in the Sabbath conflict narratives in 5 and 9:1-10:21. The conclusion arrived at has been that it corresponds to the controversy as a juridical procedure.

ii. This conclusion has in turn led to the question of the why and how of the use of the juridical controversy as a narrative strategy in the two narratives under study.

iii. Finally, the understanding that the juridical controversy is used in 5 and 9:1-10:21 as a means to persuade the reader about the christology of the text has resulted in the examination of the historical setting which would have necessitated the use of this distinctive genre, as well as the plausible social function its use would have had within the Sitz im Leben of the Johannine Christians.

The findings of the study may be summed up as follows:

¹ See above, 3.
Sabbath Conflicts as Juridical Controversy

The study has highlighted the fact that Jn 5 and 9:1-10:21 constitute a two-party juridical dispute between Jesus and "the Jews," and as such correspond in their form and content to the Old Testament controversy as a juridical procedure. As a bilateral procedure, the juridical controversy can proceed to the resolution of conflict without a third party intervention. Its main objective is to enable each disputant to seek to convince the other party of the truthfulness of their position or claims in order to bring about a peaceful resolution of the conflict and effect reconciliation. The use of the juridical controversy in the religious sphere, especially by the Old Testament prophets, provides the historical and literary antecedent for its use in the Fourth Gospel.

The understanding of the Johannine Sabbath conflicts as a juridical controversy offers a new insight into the role and importance of the Sabbath motif in 5 and 9:1-10:21, and also helps explain why there are two "Sabbaths" in the section 5-10 which deals with christological controversies, as well as a series of Jewish feasts. In relation to 5 and 9:1-10:21, the essential role of the Sabbath motif is to be seen in the fact that it provides the legal framework for the christological conflict between Jesus and "the Jews," and determines its specific nature and development as a Sabbath juridical controversy. It is therefore crucial for a correct understanding of the Johannine Sabbath conflicts. As regards the presence of two "Sabbaths" in the "feasts" section of 5-10, the present study has shown that the function of the first Sabbath conflict (5:1-47) is to set in motion a Sabbath juridical controversy which is developed and brought to its conclusion in the second Sabbath conflict (9:1-10:21). Given that the contentious issues between Jesus and "the Jews" remain unresolved at the end of the Sabbath juridical controversy, the only option left is a recourse to an impartial tribunal where a legally binding verdict will be handed down by a
judge. Thus, the narrative leads inevitably to the forensic trial before Pilate in Jn 18:28-19:16. Seen in this light, it is clear that the Sabbath motif and the juridical controversy it generates in 5 and 9:1-10:21 contribute substantially to the narrative plot and the overall literary construction of the Fourth Gospel.

One major contribution of the present study is that it has shown that understanding the Sabbath conflicts as a juridical controversy makes possible a more coherent interpretation of the two narratives than had been achieved by previous Johannine scholarship. The following elements may be noted:

Firstly, it has been established that the Sabbath conflicts are bilateral in nature. Jesus is the accused and "the Jews" are the accusers. The conflict revolves around the issues of Jesus' Sabbath activity and his claim of a unique relationship with the God of Israel. The two parties involved seek to resolve their conflict between themselves without recourse to a third-party mediation. As the accused, the Johannine Jesus responds to the accusations with juridically decisive declarations which are intended to justify his actions and to convince his accusers of the truthfulness of his claims, and thus bring the conflict to an end. There is therefore no need to assume that one of the two disputants, "the Jews," plays the double role of accuser and judge, or that in the course of the juridical procedure, the tables are turned and Jesus who is the accused becomes the accuser and the judge. The bilateral nature of these conflicts means that we are dealing here with the controversy as a juridical procedure. As a distinct juridical process, the juridical controversy possesses its own specific character and structure, and should be distinguished from the forensic process or trial which is essentially trilateral in nature.

Secondly, the interpretation of the Sabbath conflicts as a juridical controversy has provided a better understanding of the purpose of the invocation of witnesses by the Johannine Jesus in 5:31-40. The invocation of witnesses is not meant primarily to prove, or even to reinforce and corroborate
the self-revelation of Jesus (5:17, 19-30), as if divine revelation is something that
needs be proved or verified. Within the framework of the juridical controversy,
the invocation of a witness is understood as a means of indicating to the
opposing party that it is deliberately refusing to acknowledge the truth. It seeks
to show the opposing party that, on the basis of the testimony of the witness
whose reliability it accepts, the truthfulness of the claims of the party invoking
the witness should have been evident to the opposing group. This has the
rhetorical effect of seeking to persuade the opposing party to accept finally the
truth in order to bring the controversy to a peaceful end. Thus, in calling upon
witnesses, Jesus is not so much seeking to offer proofs in support of his self-
revelation as to show "the Jews" that, on the strength of these reliable
witnesses, they should have perceived the truthfulness of his claims. Jesus bears
wit ness to what he has seen and heard from the Father (3:31-33), and he does
only what he sees the Father doing (5:19). Thus, Jesus' words and deeds
through which he bears witness to himself are absolute, and he does not require
independent witnesses to reinforce and corroborate his own testimony.2 In this
perspective, the Fourth Gospel emphasizes the all important fact that, by virtue
of Jesus' divine origin (and destiny), the self-revelatory μαρτυρία that he bears
to himself is ἀληθής (8:14).

Thirdly, the understanding of the Sabbath conflicts as a bilateral juridical
controversy has a provided a better explanation of the presence of polemical
and accusatory language in the discourses of Jesus in the two narratives. The
use of polemical language is an integral part of the controversy as a juridical
procedure. It is intended "to shift the onus probandi to one's opponents,"3 and
as such forms part of the accused's attempt to convince the other party of the
truthfulness of his claims so as to hasten the resolution of the conflict. Seen in

2 Pace Boice, Witness and Revelation, 75.

3 Trites, New Testament Concept, 82.
this light, it becomes clear that in the Sabbath conflicts, the Johannine Jesus has no hostile or condemnatory intent towards those who are opposing his christological claims. His purpose is reconciliatory in as much as he seeks to convince his accusers of the truthfulness of his claims and to lead them to faith in him and to salvation (5:34b, 40). This is in accord with the use of the juridical controversy in the Old Testament prophetic tradition. The prophets make use of polemical and accusatory language in their attempt to make Israel recognize her infidelities, and to convince her to turn to God by living according to the stipulations of the covenant (see for instance Isa 1:2-4, 10-20; Jer 2:2-37; Hos 2:4-25, etc.). Thus, far from having a hostile intent towards Israel, the prophetic polemic serves to denounce Israel's infidelities and to lead her on the path of conversion and reconciliation with God. Interpreted against this prophetic background, it becomes clear that the occasional polemical language in the Sabbath conflicts is an integral part of the Johannine Jesus' effort to persuade "the Jews" about the truthfulness of his christological claims. It would therefore be inaccurate to conclude that the Sabbath conflicts, or the Fourth Gospel for that matter, exhibit hostile anti-Judaic characteristics.

**Juridical Controversy Used for Christological Persuasion**

The analysis of the use of the juridical controversy within the narrative framework of the Sabbath conflicts has demonstrated that this distinctive narrative strategy is used for the purposes of the christological persuasion of the reader. The juridical controversy, as a narrative genre, is characterized by a strong rhetoric of persuasion which is aimed at one's opponent. All the rhetorical techniques associated with it, such as the statement of facts, the
invocation of witnesses, the transformation of defence into accusation, the
defence controversy, the juridical parable, etc., contribute to sharpen the
persuasiveness of the arguments been presented. In the Sabbath conflicts, the
narrator places all these rhetorical techniques at the service of the christological
credo which he/she is seeking to communicate to the reader. As the juridical
controversy progresses, so also does the christological knowledge of the reader.
The arguments of the defence discourses of Jesus which are addressed to "the
Jews" become at the same time arguments directed at the reader. It is the reader
that the narrator is ultimately seeking to persuade about the true identity and
significance of Jesus. The juridical controversy thus becomes a means of
christological persuasion.

One major implication of this fact that the juridical controversy is used for
the specific purpose of persuading the reader to accept the christology of the
two narratives is that the narrator is not "neutral," and his intention is not to
write a "neutral" narrative. He is not simply engaged in the process of
presenting the arguments of the accusers and the counter-arguments of the
accused to the reader "so that he [the reader] could make up his own mind who
is in the right."\(^4\) The use of the juridical controversy pattern shows that the
narrator has a well defined and already determined christological point of view
which he is seeking to communicate with such forcefulness as to persuade the
reader to embrace it.

\(^4\) *Pace* Harvey, *Jesus on Trial*, 13. See also, 6. Harvey's view is based on his interpretation of the
Sabbath conflicts as "trial scenes," interpretation which the present study has demonstrated to be
mistaken.
Juridical Controversy Christology in Johannine *Sitz im Leben*

The analysis of the historical setting of the Fourth Gospel has highlighted the fact that the Johannine Sabbath conflicts reflect the situation at the beginnings of Christian-Jewish controversies of the post-70 C.E. period. The situation of conflict and controversy would have arisen essentially from the varied responses to the destruction of the Temple put forward by the different groups within Judaism. The Johannine Christians would have been part of this intra-Jewish debates, and the Sabbath conflicts would reflect this situation. They would have sought to convince their contemporaries that faith in Jesus as the Messiah and the unique Son of God was the proper cause of action required by the new situation. Their message about the identity of Jesus and his relevance to the new situation, and more especially their reinterpretation of the Mosaic Law in the light of their christology would have led others in the ongoing intra-Jewish dialogue to accuse them of blasphemy and false christological claims. It would have been within this social context of conflict and in response to the accusations levelled against them that the Johannine Christians would have resorted to the juridical controversy as a narrative strategy to try and convince those on the other side of the debate of the truthfulness of their claims about the identity of Jesus and his significance for their lives. The use of this distinctive narrative genre which is marked by a strong rhetoric of persuasion would therefore point to the effort of the Johannine Christians to lead their contemporaries to faith in Jesus as the appropriate response to the new situation of the post-70 period.\textsuperscript{5} In this perspective, the juridical controversy christology would have functioned within the Johannine *Sitz im Leben*, among other things, both as a means of

\textsuperscript{5} However, see above, 308, n. 75. It is very plausible to imagine that the use of the bilateral juridical controversy as a narrative strategy would have been intended to strengthen the faith of the Johannine Christians in Jesus and to equip them for the christological debate with their Jewish opponents. See below, 321-322.
persuasion of and an appeal to first-century non-Christian Jews to acknowledge the true identity and significance of Jesus, and to come to faith in him as the only way forward and the proper cause of action required by the new situation of the post-70 period.

**Juridical Controversy Pattern in 5:1-10:42**

There can be no denying the fact that even a cursory examination of 5:1-10:21 shows that, in addition to the Sabbath conflicts, there are several other episodes in this section in which the confrontations between Jesus and "the Jews" exhibit a clear juridical character. The texts that are usually cited by scholars are: 7:14-24; 8:12-20; and 10:22-39. Given that the two Sabbath conflicts have been shown to correspond to the controversy as a juridical procedure, the question arises as to whether or not these other juridical confrontations in 5:1-10:42 correspond to the same juridical controversy pattern. There is therefore the need briefly to examine these texts here.

a) **7:14-24**

Most Johannine scholars consider 7:14-24 to be a well-defined literary unit dealing with a controversy between Jesus and "the Jews." Following Jesus' teaching in the Temple in the middle of the feast (v. 14), "the Jews" question rather scornfully (ἐθαύμαζον) Jesus' authority as a teacher (v. 15). The

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6 See Becker, *Evangelium*, 1: 249. However, he is of the view that these texts correspond to "die literarische Gattung des Rechtsstreits."

7 What follows is not a detailed exegesis of 7:14-24; 8:12-20; and 10:22-39. My main concern is to show the presence or otherwise of the juridical controversy pattern in these texts.


9 The verb θαύμαζον here has the connotation of "to be astonished in a bad or negative sense." See BAGD, 352, s.v. θαύμαζω, 1.
question in v. 15 which implies a denial of the authenticity of Jesus' teaching authority thus constitutes at the same time an accusation of false teaching. In the face of this accusation, Jesus defends the authenticity of his teaching by affirming its divine origin (v. 16). He points out to his accusers that their unwillingness to accept his teaching as being from God is due to the lack of desire on their part to do the will of God (v. 17). In this context of an address to "the Jews," the expression τὸ θέλημα [τοῦ θεοῦ] ποιεῖν would be "equivalent to ποιεῖν τὸν νόμον because the will of God finds its concrete ... expression is the Law." Jesus would thus be telling "the Jews" that if they really understood and observed the Law as they claim to (see 5:39), they would have been able to perceive the truthfulness of his teaching as well as its divine origin. In a further attempt to show "the Jews" that they do not keep the very Mosaic Law upon which they claim to base their authority, Jesus makes reference to their threat of death against him as a result of his Sabbath activity (5:16-18). Their attempt to kill Jesus is an indication that they do not grasp the true meaning and purpose of the Law (v. 19) which, as God's former gift, is now perfected in the fullness of the divine gift of "truth" given through Jesus (1:16-17).

Even though it is the crowd (ὁ ἄχλος) which respond to Jesus' accusation against "the Jews" of seeking to kill him (v. 20), it is clear that Jesus' reply in vv. 21-24 is primarily directed at "the Jews" whom he continues to address. They are the people who have taken offence at Jesus' Sabbath healing and have initiated a juridical controversy against him which is yet to be resolved (5:16-47).

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10 Whitcare, Johannine Polemic, 29, has also observed, on his part, that the charge in 7:15 "seems to represent an accusation of being a false prophet."

11 Pancaro, The Law in the Fourth Gospel, 133. See also Barrett, John, 318-319.

12 On the dramatic effect of this sudden introduction of "the crowd" into the narrative, see Moloney, The Gospel of John, 245.
This brief analysis of 7:14-24 shows that what we have here is a two-party dispute between Jesus and "the Jews." It revolves around issues of law namely, Jesus' right to teach and the authenticity of his teaching. As the accused, Jesus defends the divine origin of his teaching, and stresses the fact that his words and deeds seek only the glory of God (vv. 17-18). The arguments of the Johannine Jesus seek to convince his interlocutors and to bring them to faith in him. All these features would indicate that what we have here is a juridical controversy. That the issue of Jesus' Sabbath healing should reappear here strengthens further the suggestion that we are dealing here with a juridical controversy. As noted above, in a juridical controversy, the same issues can be argued again and again between the two disputants until a solution is found or the conflict changes its juridical character.  

b) 8:12-20

In a way similar to 7:14-24, Jesus' words lead to an accusation against him by his opponents. His claim to be the "light of the world" and the giver of "the light of life" to those who follow him (v. 12) prompts the Pharisees to accuse him of self-testimony which in their view is tantamount to false testimony (v. 13). The Pharisees' assertion that Jesus words constitute "self-witness" places the emerging confrontation within a juridical framework, and therefore it has to be understood against the backdrop of the ongoing juridical controversy between Jesus and "the Jews" (5:16-47. See also 7:14-24). Jesus has already been accused of making false claims with regard to his identity. (5:18). His claim in v. 12 is therefore understood by his opponents as part of Jesus' ongoing effort to convince them about his true identity and his significance for those who believe in him. Jesus responds to this new accusation

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13 See above, 50.
of false witness in relation to his identity in two ways. First, he points to his
divine origin as a sign of the truthfulness of his self-revelatory testimony (v. 14).
Second, he insists on the fact that he is not alone in bearing witness to himself;
the Father who sent him also bears witness to him (v. 18), and argues that this
dual testimony fulfils the requirements of the Law (v. 17).  

Once again, what we have here is a two-party juridical dispute on
questions of law. The Pharisees are the accusers and Jesus is the accused. As the
accused, Jesus seeks to justify himself by attempting to convince his accusers of
the truthfulness of his claim which is at the basis of the accusation. It may
therefore be said that the juridical confrontation in 8:12-20 corresponds to the
juridical controversy pattern.  

c) 10:22-39

"The Jews" gather around Jesus and challenge him to tell them openly if
he is the Christ (v. 24). Jesus' reply which refers to his earlier assertions about
his identity and the refusal of "the Jews" to accept them (v. 25a) ends with a
climactic statement about his unity with the Father (v. 30). This leads "the Jews"
to threaten Jesus with stoning (v. v. 31) and to accuse him of blasphemy (v. 33).
Against this accusation, Jesus defends himself and seeks to convince "the Jews"
about the truthfulness of his claim of a unique relationship with the Father (vv.
34-36). As part of his defence, Jesus appeals to his accusers to acknowledge at

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14 The OT texts which are usually cited in relation to v. 17 are Num 35:30; Deut 17:6; 19:15. However, as J.-P. Charlier has rightly observed, these OT examples are different from the Fourth Gospel's use of the legal principle in v. 17. See Charlier, "L'exégèse johannique," 503-515. In the present context, it is not a question of "witnesses necessary to condemn a man, but ... [rather] witnesses to confirm someone's testimony." Brown, John, 1: 223. There is therefore a broadening of the legal principle here. A similar broadening of the same legal principle is found in the Mishnaic tractate Ketuboth 2:9: "none may be believed when he testifies of himself."

least the works he does in the Father's name (vv. 37-38a). Such an acknowledgement would enable them to understand "that the Father is in me and I am in the Father" (v. 38b).

This brief analysis of 10:22-39 also shows that what we have here corresponds to the controversy as a juridical procedure. The process is bilateral with Jesus as the accused and "the Jews" as the accusers. Jesus' defence not only seeks to convince "the Jews" about his claims, but also functions as an appeal to them to come to faith in him on the basis of the works he does in the Father's name; a fact which indicates that we are dealing here with a juridical controversy.16

In conclusion, it may be affirmed that the long drawn-out juridical confrontations between Jesus and "the Jews" that run through several episodes in the middle section of the Fourth Gospel (5:1-10:42) correspond to the controversy as a juridical procedure. They all deal with issues relating to Jesus' identity and his soteriological significance within the context of the Law. In each instance, Jesus is engaged in a process of rhetorical persuasion in as much as he seeks to convince his accusers to acknowledge his revelatory words and deeds, and to bring them to faith in him and be saved. This interpretation of the Johannine juridical metaphor in 5:1-10:42 as corresponding to the juridical controversy pattern has, undoubtedly, an important implication for the issue of the purpose of the Fourth Gospel.

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16 Pace M. Sabbe, *Studia Neotestamentica: Collected Essays*, BEThL 98. (Leuven: University Press, 1991) 443-464. On the basis of the Synoptic account of the "Jewish" trial of Jesus, he is of the opinion that Jn 10:22-39 constitutes a trial of Jesus by "the Jews," which he thinks "is anticipated in the whole of the Johannine composition of the Gospel" (445). See especially, 443-455. See also Michaels, "Temple Discourse," 210-213. The analysis of the juridical confrontations between Jesus and "the Jews" in 5:1-10:42 has demonstrated that what we have here corresponds to the juridical controversy pattern rather than a trial.
Juridical Controversy Pattern and Purpose of Fourth Gospel

As a writing containing the basic tenets of the christological faith of the Johannine Christians, there is no doubt that the Fourth Gospel was primarily addressed to the Johannine Christians themselves who would certainly have been its first readers/hearers. In this regard, the christological message of the Fourth Gospel would have been intended to strengthen the faith of its Christian addressees in Jesus as the Son of God sent by the Father to reveal him in human history and to bring humanity to salvation. In the words of Hengel, the author of the Gospel "sought to give 'solid food'...to the circle of disciples and Christian communities who were ready to listen to...and to accept his message."\(^{17}\)

As shown throughout the present study, the narrator of the Fourth Gospel uses the bilateral juridical controversy as a narrative strategy in the two Sabbath conflicts (Jn 5 and 9:1-10:21) and in several other episodes in the section 5:1-10:42 to communicate the christological credo of the Gospel to its readers/hearers. The question that arises here then is whether or not the use of this distinctive narrative genre for a christological purpose would have had any specific function for the Johannine Christians themselves who were the first readers/hearers of the Gospel message. The answer to this important question would have to be in the affirmative especially if one takes into consideration the plausibility of the Fourth Gospel being composed somewhere in Asia Minor in the last decades of the first century.\(^{18}\) The relationship between the powerful Jewish communities and their Christian counterparts in Asia Minor around the end of the first century CE and beyond was often characterized by tension and

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\(^{17}\) Hengel, *Johannine Question*, 121. See also the enlarged German version of this book entitled, *Die johanneische Frage: Ein Lösungsversuch*, WUNT 67. (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1993) 301.

conflict.\textsuperscript{19} The Jewish groups appear to have entered into conflict with the Christians because of the latter's enthusiastic missionary activity which they would have regarded as dangerous competition.\textsuperscript{20} The christological controversies of the Fourth Gospel would reflect this situation of conflict and debate which would have existed between the two communities. In such a historical setting, one could argue that, as far as the Johannine Christians themselves were concerned, the use of the bilateral juridical controversy for a christological purpose would have been intended to strengthen their faith in Jesus and to equip them for the ongoing christological debate with their Jewish interlocutors. The narrator/implied author would thus have sought, through the use of the juridical controversy as a narrative strategy, to render the Johannine Christians capable of bearing an even better witness to the identity and mission of Jesus before their Jewish opponents with whom they were in contact.\textsuperscript{21}

However, in the light of the often repeated argument of the present study that the primary objective of the bilateral juridical controversy as a narrative strategy is to convince an opposing party of a specific point of view,\textsuperscript{22} I would claim that, in addition to the Johannine Christians themselves, the narrator/implied author also intended the christological arguments of the Sabbath conflicts (5 and 9:1-10:21) for an audience outside the Johannine circles. This audience would have consisted of people who were either opposing the christological credo of the Johannine Christians or at least were yet to embrace it. In the perspective of the present study, this other targeted audience would have been made up of non-Christian Jews. Firstly, as people who were familiar with the juridical controversy pattern and its use in the religious sphere as


\textsuperscript{21} This last point was kindly suggested to me by Prof. Martin Hegel.

\textsuperscript{22} See above, 20; 43, n. 84 \textit{et passim}. 
exemplified by its use in the OT, the non-Christian Jews in the Johannine Sitz im Leben would have been capable of perceiving Jn 5 and 9:1-10:21 as a juridical controversy. The narrator's choice of this distinctive narrative genre would therefore point to non-Christian Jews, perhaps among other groups, as part of the intended audience. Secondly, the juridical controversy pattern is used by the narrator in several episodes throughout the section 5:1-10:42 which is dominated by christological questions relating to the identity and significance of Jesus. This conscious choice of the narrator to express the christology of the narrative by means of the juridical controversy pattern which is characterized by a strong rhetoric of persuasion would suggest that his/her intention, among other things, was to persuade those on the other side of the christological debate about Jesus and lead them to faith in him. This fact would also point to the non-Christian Jews within the Johannine Sitz im Leben.

In the light of the above, it would not be implausible to suppose that, in addition to addressing the texts under study to the Johannine Christians themselves, the narrator/implied author would also have intended the Sabbath conflicts as well as the other juridical confrontations in 5:1-10:42 as a means to persuade the non-Christian Jews with whom the Christians were in contact about the Johannine christological credo. Thus, what is being claimed in this study is that the use of the juridical controversy pattern in several episodes in

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23 It must be noted here that since the Johannine Sabbath conflicts (5 and 9:1-10:21) refer back to events that took place during the historical ministry of Jesus in Jerusalem two generations earlier, a clear distinction must be made between the character referred to as "the Jews" in the Gospel narrative and the non-Christian Jews (contemporaries of the Johannine Christians) whom historically they would have sought to convince of the truthfulness of their christological claims. It is therefore not implausible to suppose that, while designating the opponents of Jesus within the narrative world of the Gospel as "the Jews," the Johannine Christians would have intended the christological arguments in 5 and 9:1-10:21 also for non-Christian Jews who were opposing their christology or at least were yet to embrace it, or that first century non-Christian Jews would have brought themselves to read and/or be persuaded of the truthfulness of the christological arguments of the Sabbath conflict narratives. The same thing can be said of such prophetic texts as Isa 1:2-20; Jer 2:2-37 etc. While they contain some fierce polemics against their addressees, the use of the juridical controversy pattern in these texts makes it clear that their authors were seeking to convince their readers/hearers of their claims on behalf of the God of Israel. It is also to be supposed that the fierce polemics against Israel and Juda in these prophetic texts would not have prevented successive generations of Israelites from allowing themselves to be convinced of the truthfulness of the prophetic claims. See also above, 304, n. 70.
5:1-10:42 would suggest that at least this section of the Fourth Gospel would have been written with non-Christian Jews also in view as an integral part of the "intended audience" and would have functioned as a means of christological persuasion within the Johannine Sitz im Leben. The issue of the purpose of the whole of the Fourth Gospel as we have it now may well be beyond the scope of this study. However, given the conclusion arrived at with regard to 5:1-10:42, as well as the important role that the Prologue (1:1-18) and the Conclusion (20:30-31) play in the overall narrative strategy of the Fourth Gospel, it would be justified to affirm that the middle section of the Fourth Gospel as it now stands (5:1-10:42) targeted an audience that extended beyond the confines of the Johannine Christians and most plausibly included non-Christian Jews.

Pace scholars who rule out any prospect of the Fourth Gospel targeting also a non-Christian audience, and maintain that the Gospel was written solely for believing Christians. See for instance, Vouga, Cadre historique, 35-36; Brown, Community, 62, 67-69; Ashton, Understanding, 105-111. See especially 111; De Jonge, "Conflict," 353. Other scholars, however, see the whole Gospel as "missionary document." See for instance, K. Bornhauer, Das Johannesevangelium: eine Missionsschrift für Israel. (Gütersloh: Verlag von C. Bertelsmann, 1928). See especially 158-163; W. C. van Unnik, "The Purpose of St. John's Gospel." In Studia Evangelica: Papers Presented to the International Congress on «The Four Gospels in 1957» held at Christ Church, Oxford, 1957, ed. K. Aland et al. (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1959) 382-411; J. Robinson, "The Destination and Purpose of St John's Gospel," NTS 6 (1960) 117-131; Dodd, Interpretation, 8-9; and more recently, D. A. Carson, "The Purpose of the Fourth Gospel: John 20:31 Reconsidered," JBL 106 (1987) 639-651. Needless to say, the thesis defended in the present study differs from the just mentioned position in more than one way. Firstly, its scope is deliberately limited to 5:1-10:42 where the narrator uses the juridical controversy as a narrative strategy in several episodes. Secondly, the argument regarding the non-Christian Jew as part of the targeted audience is based on the conscious choice by the narrator to express his christology by means of the juridical controversy pattern which, as shown throughout the present study, is marked by a strong rhetoric of persuasion and also presupposes a situation of conflict in which one party is seeking to convince the opposing party of a specific point of view - here the christological credo of the Johannine Christians.

As far as the narrative strategy of the Fourth Gospel is concerned, the Prologue (1:1-18) is intended to provide the reader with the key to the correct understanding of the narrative which is about to be unfolded. The reader is told who Jesus is and what he has done, and is thus prepared for the discovery and the acknowledgement of how this divine action took place in human history. See Moloney, The Gospel of John, 34. In this sense, it serves to orientate the reader towards faith in Jesus. With regard to the Conclusion (20:30-31), one major point of interest has always been the textual problem in v. 31. The available textual evidence is evenly balanced between the present subjunctive (πιστεύοντες) and the aorist subjunctive (πιστεύοντες). See Metzger, Textual Commentary, 219-220. In any case, the text-critical evidence by itself may not be determinative given the fact that in the Fourth Gospel, "both the present subjunctive and the aorist subjunctive can occur both in the context of coming to faith and in the context of continuing in faith." See Carson, "Purpose," 640. He gives as examples 1:7; (4:48); 6:29; and 11:15. The view of the present study is that, given the rhetorical character of the Prologue as well as the persuasive nature of the juridical controversy pattern which is used in several important episodes in the middle section of the Gospel (5:1-10:42), there is a strong case for the aorist subjunctive πιστεύοντες which should probably here be understood as an address to non-Christians so that they might come to faith in Jesus as the Messiah who is also the Son of God.
Faced with a situation of conflict and increasing opposition to their christological message, the Johannine Christians resorted to the juridical controversy pattern as a narrative strategy not only as a means to strengthen their own faith, but also in an attempt to persuade their contemporaries about the truthfulness of their christological claims as well as the relevance of Jesus to their situation. The use of the juridical controversy pattern enabled the Johannine Christians to present the Christian faith and tradition in a new and persuasive way which at the same time reflected and spoke to the contemporary situation of the post-70 C.E. period.

Whether or not this use of the rhetorical pattern of bilateral juridical controversy succeeded in drawing non-Christian Jews into the Johannine understanding of Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God (Jn 20:31) is not the issue. Indeed, there is little evidence as the gap between Church and Synagogue widened that they did. This does not detract from the genuine attempt on the part of the Johannine author(s) to use this rhetoric of persuasion to lead at least some of their opponents towards Johannine Christianity. This fact constitutes one of the enduring legacies of the Johannine Christians to all successive generations of Christians. Like them, every generation of Christians is invited to seek new modes of expressing the Christian message which not only remain faithful to the Christian heritage, but also speak to the contemporary situation and enable people to perceive the enduring relevance to their lives of the Christian faith in Jesus as the Messiah-Son of God, and the saviour of the human race. This is, no doubt, one of the crucial tasks that we face as Christians in our Post-modern and increasingly secularized world of today.
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