A Broader Friendship: The Johannine Transformation of *Philia* into a 'Fellowship of Truth and Love'

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Abstract

In the ancient world Plato and Aristotle argued that friendships were normally formed on the bases of virtue, utility, or pleasure. In the first century AD Graeco-Roman world, many facets of Graeco-Roman society – political alliances, patron-client arrangements, acts of beneficence for the civic good, and even the operation of households – were still based on these tenets and the friendships thus formed were characterised by practices such as reciprocity, obligation, civic duty, loyalty, gratitude, and frank speaking, though to different degrees dependent upon the different 'relationships' in which people found themselves.

When Jesus called his followers 'friends' and told them that he had revealed everything that he had learned from the Father to them (Jn. 15:14-15), they were forced to reinterpret their current understanding of friendship. Their understanding was shaped by both Graeco-Roman ideas and Hebraic ideas of covenant and community, and this was challenged by what Jesus taught and demonstrated – an acceptance of and love for all people, even one's enemies. As the Johannine author reflects on the traditions of Jesus' sayings and action, he came to understand that the kingdom of God preached by Jesus was a community which needed to reshape its relationships. The tiered friendships of the Graeco-Roman world with their different bases were not appropriate in the community of Christ-followers. This thesis argues that the Johannine author reshaped the Graeco-Roman idea of friendship (φιλία). While still keeping many of the characteristics of Graeco-Roman friendships, a new basis and motive were needed.

What the Johannine author came to understand was that friendship (φιλία) needed to be transformed into fellowship (κοινωνία) and this in turn was to be grounded in 'truth' (ἀλήθεια) and 'love' (ἀγάπη); furthermore, these concepts needed to be understood in the light of the person and work of Jesus who is the embodiment of truth and love. The Johannine author's Gospel and Letters were written to communicate how this transformation was to be effected, how friendship needed to be broadened and reframed.

Statement of Originality

This work has not previously been submitted for a degree or diploma in any university. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the thesis itself.

(Signed)_____ Date: 7th September 2019

Mark Kulikovsky

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Abbreviations Used

The abbreviations used for secondary sources throughout this thesis, and listed below, primarily reflect the conventions recorded in section 8.4 of *The SBL Handbook of Style*. Second Edition. Atlanta, GA: SBL Press, 2014.

AB	Anchor Bible
ABD	*Anchor Bible Dictionary*
ABRL	Anchor Bible Reference Library
ACCS	Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture
AnBib	Analecta Biblica
BECNT	Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament
Bib	*Biblica*
BibInt	Biblical Interpretation Series
BibSem	The Biblical Seminar
BJRL	*Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester*
BNTC	Black's New Testament Commentaries
BSac	*Bibliotheca Sacra*
BST	The Bible Speaks Today
BZ	*Biblische Zeitschrift*
CBQ	*Catholic Biblical Quarterly*
CJ	*Classical Journal*
CP	*Classical Philology*
CTM	*Concordia Theological Monthly*
CurBR	*Currents in Biblical Research*
ECC	Eerdmans Critical Commentary

EE	*Eudemian Ethics*
EvQ	*Evangelical Quarterly*
ExpTim	*Expository Times*
ICC	International Critical Commentary
Int	*Interpretation*
ISBE	*International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*
IVPNTC	IVP New Testament Commentary
JBL	*Journal of Biblical Literature*
JBR	*Journal of Bible and Religion*
JETS	*Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*
JR	*Journal of Religion*
JRS	*Journal of Roman Studies*
JSNT	*Journal for the Study of the New Testament*
JSNTSup	Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series
JTS	*Journal of Theological Studies*
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
LNTS	Library of New Testament Studies
LQ	*Lutheran Quarterly*
MNTC	Moffatt New Testament Commentary
NAC	New American Commentary
NE	*Nicomachean Ethics*
Neot	*Neotestamentica*
NIBCNT	New International Biblical Commentary on the New Testament

NICNT	New International Commentary on the New Testament
NIDNTT	*New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*
NIDOTTE	*New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*
NovT	*Novum Testamentum*
NovTSup	Supplements to Novum Testamentum
NTC	New Testament Commentary
NTL	New Testament Library
OCD	*Oxford Classical Dictionary*
PBSR	Papers of the British School at Rome
P.Harr.	*P.Harr.: The Rendel Harris Papyri of Woodbrooke College, Birmingham*
PNTC	Pillar New Testament Commentary
ResQ	*Restoration Quarterly*
RevExp	*Review and Expositor*
RTR	*Reformed Theological Review*
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SBLSBS	Society of Biblical Literature Sources for Biblical Study
SBLTT	Society of Biblical Literature Texts and Translations
SE	*Studia Evangelica*
SHBC	Smyth & Helwys Bible Commentary
SJT	*Scottish Journal of Theology*
SNTSMS	Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series
SP	Sacra Pagina
TDNT	*Theological Dictionary of the New Testament.*

TDOT	*Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament.*
Them	*Themelios*
TNTC	Tyndale New Testament Commentaries
TS	*Theological Studies*
TWOT	*Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*
VC	*Vigiliae Christianae*
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
ZECNT	Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament
ZIBBC	Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary
ZNW	*Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche*

1. Introduction

The genesis of this thesis was an observation during personal reading of the Johannine Epistles that references to 'truth' and 'love' occurred frequently, and this raised several questions. Why were these themes prominent? Was there a relationship between them, and if so, what was it? Did one give rise to the other, or were both the result of something else? How would concepts like 'truth' and 'love' have been understood in the first century AD world and what is the appropriate cultural context in which to understand them?

1.1. The Research Problem/Hypothesis

The hypothesis offered in this thesis is that the Johannine author transformed the Graeco-Roman[1] concept of *philia* into a 'fellowship' based on truth and love which he had come to understand in a new way. It is argued that when Jesus called his first followers 'friends' (Jn. 15:14-15), they were forced to reinterpret what they knew about friendship (φιλία, *philia*), from their own Hebraic and Graeco-Roman contexts. In particular, it is argued that as the Johannine author reflected on the traditions of Jesus' sayings and action, he came to understand that the kingdom of God preached by Jesus was a community which needed to reshape its relationships. The tiered friendships of the Graeco-Roman world, based on virtue, utility, and pleasure, were not appropriate in the community of Christ-followers. While many of the features of Graeco-Roman friendships were appropriate and should be retained – e.g. reciprocity, obligation, civic duty, loyalty, gratitude, and frank speaking – a new basis and motive were needed. This thesis argues that the Johannine author transformed *philia*, broadening and reframing it, and giving it what he seems to have considered a more appropriate term, that of 'fellowship' (κοινωνία). Furthermore, it was a fellowship which was to be grounded in 'truth' (ἀλήθεια) and 'love' (ἀγάπη) and these concepts needed to be understood in the light of the person and work of Jesus who was the embodiment of truth and love. The Johannine author's Gospel and Letters were written to communicate how this transformation was to be effected, how friendship needed to be broadened and reframed, and exegesis of the Johannine writings ought to be informed by this thesis.

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[1] It should be noted that the term 'Graeco-Roman' is falling out of use in more recent writings. Some scholars argue that the term is misleading when used to describe the world or culture of the period under study because there was not one monolithic cultural entity; see e.g. S. Swain, *Hellenism and Empire: Language, Classicism, and Power in the Greek World AD 50-250* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996). Support for this idea is evident in this thesis in the selection for examination of both Greek and Latin writers who have different perspectives on the matters under discussion, however, the term Graeco-Roman has been retained as a shorthand way of describing the multi-faceted world and culture of that time; it should not be taken to imply there was a single conceptual entity.

1.2. The Scope, Aims, and Significance of the Research

What began, then, as an exploration of the concepts of 'truth' and 'love' in the Johannine Epistles necessarily took on a wider scope as it became clear that the data in the letters, two of which are quite short, was limited. It was therefore important to consider the other Johannine writings in which these ideas appear. Of course, this immediately raised the issue of what is meant by the 'Johannine' literature. Traditionally, the Johannine literature has been identified as the Gospel of John, the three Epistles of John, and the book of Revelation, but in recent times, many questions have been raised about such an identification. A number of scholars have pointed out key differences in the literary styles of the Gospel, the Epistles, and Revelation., and thus questioned if all five writings came from the same hand.[2] In addition, there is debate about whether that hand was the traditional Apostle John, the son of Zebedee, someone writing in his name, or some kind of Johannine school which followed in the tradition of the Apostle John. The debate on authorship of the so-called Johannine literature is legion and far from settled with strong arguments and vocal proponents for the various views.[3] Many scholars, while not agreeing on the identity of the author, nevertheless, accept that at least the Gospel and three Epistles were authored by the same hand or group, with Revelation seen as a much later work, and quite possibly by a different author.[4] Furthermore, whichever view one takes about what 'Johannine' means, there is debate about the order of writing of even those works considered to be Johannine. Some see the Gospel as authored

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[2] See for example, C. H. Dodd, *The Johannine Epistles* (MNTC; London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1946), xlvii-lvi; J. Painter, *1, 2, and 3 John* (SP 18; ed. D. J. Harrington; Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2002), 58-74; C. Haas, M. de Jonge and J. L. Swellengrebel, *A Handbook on the Letters of John* (UBS Handbook Series; New York: United Bible Societies, 1994), 5.

[3] For good discussions on authorship of the Johannine literature and the various views through history see: W. Nicol, "The History of Johannine Research during the Past Century," *Neot* 6: Essays on the Jewish Background of the Fourth Gospel; The Eighth Meeting of Die Nuwe-Testamentiese Werkgemeenskap Van Suid-Afrika (1972): 8-17; R. E. Brown, *The Community of the Beloved Disciple* (London: Cassell, 1979); R. E. Brown, *The Epistles of John: Translated, with Introduction, Notes, and Commentary* (AB 30; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982), 14-35; B. Olsson, "The History of the Johannine Movement," in *Aspects on the Johannine Literature: Papers Presented at a Conference of Scandinavian New Testament Exegetes at Uppsala, June 16-19, 1986* (eds. L. Hartman, et al.; vol. 18 of *Coniectanea Biblica: NT Series*; Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1987); M. Hengel, *The Johannine Question* (trans. J. Bowden: London: SCM; Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1989); D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John* (Leicester/Grand Rapids, MI: InterVarsity Press/Eerdmans, 1991), 68-81; C. E. Hill, *The Johannine Corpus in the Early Church* (Oxford; London; New York: Oxford University Press, 2004); A. J. Köstenberger, *A Theology of John's Gospel and Letters: The Word, the Christ, the Son of God* (Biblical Theology of the New Testament; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009), Sections 2.1.3.1 and 2.2.1; U. C. Von Wahlde, *The Gospel and Letters of John* (ECC; 3 vols.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 3:Appendices 7-9; C. S. Keener, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary* (2vols.; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012), Ch. 3.

[4] For the purposes of this thesis, Revelation is not being considered as Johannine, though some references are made to it at times, since throughout history, many scholars have considered it Johannine. The thesis argument is not dependent upon any data from Revelation.

first and the Epistles written to correct misunderstandings; some would say that the Gospel underwent changes in the light of issues evident in the Johannine Epistles (e.g. a misunderstanding about the person and nature of Jesus) and that what we have today is a later 'edition' of the Gospel; and some would argue that the Epistles predate the Gospel. It is not the purpose of this thesis to engage with the debate about authorship, nor the sequence of writing, but to take as 'received' and 'canonical' the Gospel and Epistles of John. Consequently, no claim is made about the identity of the author and they will therefore simply be referred to as 'the Johannine author' throughout this thesis. The focus of the thesis is upon the Epistles of John with reference to the Gospel of John and other New Testament (NT) writings where necessary.

In light then of the stated hypothesis and the defined scope, the aim of the thesis is to identify what the Johannine Gospel and Epistles say about 'truth' and 'love', the intended audience, and the circumstances of the original recipients, and to give a plausible explanation of why the author says what he does. Of necessity, this will be an interpretation of the data, but the task of the researcher/interpreter is to create meaning from the observable data giving due deference to the context of the text (as much as it can be determined) and not taking the meaning beyond what the text can reasonably bear. In order to give the present-day interpreter a broader understanding of the context of the text, it is useful and in fact necessary, to look at the broader context of the text under examination. Comparative studies with other writings in the same period on the same or similar topics will enable the modern interpreter to develop a broader understanding of the context of the text and of the way the writers of that day thought and argued.

As already noted, an important aspect of understanding the concepts of 'truth' and 'love' in the Johannine Epistles is to consider the appropriate cultural context of the recipients. These seem to be churches (or at least communities of Christ-followers) and/or individuals who may have been responsible for overseeing such communities. As many of the early Christians were Jewish, and Christianity has its roots in Judaism, it would make sense to suppose a Jewish background for the author and his readers. But they were also people who lived in a world which was saturated with the Graeco-Roman culture and so it is highly likely that their worldview was shaped by that culture and its thinking, as well as, or perhaps instead of, the Jewish culture and Hebraistic thought. It has long been noted by scholars that there appears to be a lack of references to the Jewish Scriptures[5] in the Johannine Epistles. The lack of reference to the Old Testament (OT) is all the more unusual since the author begins his First Epistle by referring to "that which was from the beginning" which can hardly fail to evoke thoughts of the beginnings of God's dealings with

[5] The Jewish or Hebrew Scriptures (a.k.a. the Hebrew Bible) are often called 'The Old Testament' by Christians which is also the terminology adopted in this thesis. This is not intended in any way to minimise the importance or value of this body of Scripture.

people as documented in the OT. What then, is the background to the thought world of the Johannine author if it is not the OT worldview?

The view that the Johannine Epistles contain little, if any reference to the OT is widely held by scholars from different theological persuasions and critical perspectives and has long been commented upon. In 1837, Friedrich Lücke noted "the absence of references, or rather the unfrequent and only allusive references to the Old Testament";[6] in 1879, Erich Haupt said "it is a fact that the apostle in this Epistle generally refers very little to the Old Testament, so that the Epistle in this respect is in a certain contrast with the Gospel and the Apocalypse, which are pervaded with formal allusions to the ancient Scriptures.";[7] in 1883, Brooke Westcott said of 1 John, "it does not contain one quotation or verbal reminiscence from the Old Testament";[8] in 1896 Alfred Plummer said "The fact of its containing no quotations from the O.T. and not many allusions to it… would lead us to suppose that the writer had converts from heathenism specially in his mind";[9] in 1946, Charles Dodd said, "the Epistle is unique among New Testament writings (if we except its two short companions) in having no quotation from the Old Testament, only one explicit reference to the Old Testament (3:12), and few if any direct echoes of Old Testament language";[10] and in 1978, Howard Marshall also noted: "Direct allusions to the Old Testament are few, being confined to references to the devil and to Cain (1 Jn. 3:8, 12); there are no citations from the Old Testament."[11]

But some of the commentators who have noted the apparent lack of OT references still think that the Epistles of John do have a strong background in Hebraistic thought. Westcott for example, immediately

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6 F. Lücke, *A Commentary on the Epistles of St. John* (The Biblical Cabinet; trans. T. G. Repp; Edinburgh: Thomas Clark, 1837), 35.

7 E. Haupt, *The First Epistle of St. John: A Contribution to Biblical Theology* (Clark's Foreign Theological Library; trans. W. B. Pope; Edinburgh; London; New York: T&T Clark, 1879), 51.

8 B. F. Westcott, *The Epistles of St. John: the Greek Text with Notes and Essays* (4th ed.; Classic Commentaries on the Greek New Testament; New York; London: Macmillan, 1902), xi. Such a claim seems to go too far when the First Epistle of John commences with the term ἀπ᾽ ἀρχῆς, which is reminiscent of the Ἐν ἀρχῇ in Jn. 1:1, which is in turn reminiscent of בְּרֵאשִׁית in Gen. 1:1.

9 A. Plummer, *The Epistles of S. John, with Notes, Introduction and Appendices* (The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges; ed. J. J. S. Perowne; Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1896), 32. In his 1916 Cambridge Greek Testament, Plummer is even more forceful: "Unlike the Gospel, the Epistle contains no quotations from the O.T." See A. Plummer, *The Epistles of S. John* (Cambridge Greek Testament for Schools and Colleges; ed. J. J. S. Perowne; Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1916), lvii.

10 Dodd, *The Johannine Epistles*, li. Georg Strecker also thinks that 3:12 contains the only reference to the OT in 1 John. He says, "This is the only possible allusion to the OT in 1 John; however, one should not assume that the author made direct use of the OT." See G. Strecker, *The Johannine Letters* (Hermeneia – A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible; ed. H. W. Attridge; trans. L. M. Maloney; Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1996), 108.

11 I. H. Marshall, *The Epistles of John* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), 49f.

preceding the quote given above said, "generally it will be felt that the writing is thoroughly Hebraistic in tone".[12] Writing just a few years later in 1909, Robert Law, in his seminal work on 1 John, *The Tests of Life* said: "It is not suggested that there is in the Epistle a conscious imitation of Hebraic forms; but it is evident, I think, that no one could have written as our author does whose whole style of thought and expression had not been unconsciously formed upon Old Testament models".[13] Others also comment on the apparent background in Judaism or Hebraistic thought;[14] John Robinson, for example, thinks that despite there being "not a single Old Testament quotation in the Johannine Epistles", the Johannine author nevertheless alludes to an Old Testament character, and "is counting on familiarity with Jewish categories", leading him to conclude that the Epistles of John have a greater 'Jewish ring' than the Johannine Gospel.[15] Likewise, Marshall follows his comment about there being no OT citations with the words, "the theological and ethical atmosphere of the Epistles is thoroughly Jewish, and reflects the Jewish background which is common to the New Testament writings",[16] and Raymond Brown, when arguing for the distinctiveness of the Epistles of John from the Gospel of John, notes that "[t]here are no quotations from the OT in I John while there are many in GJohn… this fact should not be used to construct the thesis that I John is more Hellenistic than GJohn (Dodd, Wilder) if that means less influenced by Jewish thought".[17] In her 1993 article on Scripture and tradition in the Johannine Epistles, Judith Lieu suggests that 1 John is "is not just 'Jewish' but reflects a tradition of Biblical interpretation and application";[18] she then explores several passages and their Jewish and OT background before concluding that "Scripture, or

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[12] Westcott, *Epistles of St. John*, xi.

[13] R. Law, *The Tests of Life: A Study of the First Epistle of St. John* (Edinburgh; London; New York: T&T Clark, 1909), 4.

[14] For a good summary of the links between John's Epistles and the OT and a survey of various scholars who have argued for a Jewish and OT background to the Johannine Epistles, see J. M. Lieu, "What Was from the Beginning: Scripture and Tradition in the Johannine Epistles," *NTS* 39, no. 03 (1993).

[15] J. A. T. Robinson, "The Destination and Purpose of the Johannine Epistles," *NTS* 7, no. 1 (1960): 59f., 65.

[16] Marshall, *The Epistles of John*, 50. This despite his earlier observation that while the study of the Old Testament forms the 'sub-structure' of New Testament theology in the early church, this may not actually be the case in 1-3 John (p. 49). While not specifically discussing the issue of OT references in the Johannine Epistles, Edward Malatesta also argues strongly that John's "interiority expressions," or language that deals with "abiding" or being "in" Christ or God, are best explained with reference to Hebrew precursors and spends thirty-five pages analyzing the MT and LXX "background of the Johannine interiority expressions" in 1 John. See E. Malatesta, *Interiority and Covenant: A Study of εἶναι ἐν and μένειν ἐν in the First Letter of Saint John* (AnBib 69; Rome: Biblical Institute, 1978), 7-9, 42.

[17] Brown, *Epistles of John*, 28. Brown goes on to argue that specific reference to the OT story of Cain, the OT covenant theme, the modelling of 'truth' on apocalypticism and Jewish intertestamental thought, and close affinity between ideas in I John and the Dead Sea Scrolls, all point to a background of Jewish thought. He also notes that the lack of any evidence in I John of the debate with the Jews of the synagogue which dominates GJohn, may explain the lack of direct references to the OT.

[18] Lieu, "Scripture and Tradition": 461.

rather a tradition of interpreting Scripture, is part of the thought world which constructs the letter."[19] Robert Yarbrough, similarly, in his 2008 commentary sees several key ideas as rooted in OT theology.[20]

The reason for this absence of OT citations in the Johannine Epistles has been explained in various ways. Some commentators suggest that the Johannine author's concern was that his recipients were misinterpreting the Fourth Gospel; he was not actually concerned with their understanding of the OT. Don Carson for example thinks that the Epistles are "sparked off by growing disputes, grounded in incipient Gnosticism, concerning the correct interpretation of the F[ourth] G[ospel]."[21] In contrast, D. Edmond Hiebert thinks that the OT and its history along with the Jew-Gentile controversies in the early life of the church, have all "been superseded in the consciousness of one universal Christian brotherhood".[22] Other commentators also think that the OT does not have much influence at all on the thoughts expressed in the Johannine Epistles, for a variety of reasons.[23]

There is also debate about whether the Johannine Epistles cite the Gospel of John. There are, in fact, no explicit citations of the Gospel in the Epistles but Plummer has argued with respect to the largest epistle (1 John) that "[r]eferences to the Gospel are scattered thickly over the whole Epistle."[24] Yarbrough also sees the Gospel of John (in conjunction with the OT) as the background to the Johannine Epistles.[25] This apparent omission of both OT references and explicit Fourth Gospel quotations in 1 John has led Lieu to

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[19] Lieu, "Scripture and Tradition": 475.

[20] R. W. Yarbrough, *1–3 John* (BECNT; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 11, 39, 47, 49f., 57, 98, 132, 135f., 143, 147f., 210, 215, 272, 308. Yarbrough identifies some of the key ideas of primitive Christian belief as being based on OT writings – e.g. eternal life, God's existence and creative and redemptive activity, God as light, the commandment to love, flesh and body are more closely aligned with an OT and Jewish frame of reference than Hellenism, and holiness of life. Furthermore, the prominent prophetic admonitions reflect OT convictions.

[21] D. A. Carson, "John and the Johannine Epistles," in *It Is Written: Scripture Citing Scripture: Essays in Honor of Barnabas Lindars, SSF* (eds. D. A. Carson, et al.; Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 256f. See also Robinson, "The Destination and Purpose of the Johannine Epistles": 65.

[22] D. E. Hiebert, *The Epistles of John: An Expositional Commentary* (Greenville, SC: Bob Jones University Press, 1991), 26.

[23] See for example, Strecker, *Johannine Letters*, 18, 48, 68, 108, 178, 192, 210, 228. While not explicitly stating that the OT has little bearing or influence on the Johannine Epistles, more recent commentaries like those of Thompson (IVPNTC, 1992), Kruse (PNTC, 2000), Akin (NAC, 2001), Lieu (NTL, 2012) all make little reference to the OT as the source of ideas in the Epistles. Ben Witherington suggests that the absence of OT quotations simply has to do with the type of literature rather than the audience. See B. Witherington III, *A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on Titus, 1-2 Timothy and 1-3 John* (Letters and Homilies for Hellenized Christians Volume I: Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic; Nottingham: Apollos, 2006), 402.

[24] Plummer, *The Epistles of S. John (CBSC)*, 35.

[25] Yarbrough, *1–3 John*, 46-47. This point was made even more forcefully in person by Yarbrough at his July 2018 *Preaching John's Letters* class at The Bible College of South Australia.

note "the ironical situation where the OT is supposedly not quoted because it is not under dispute, while the Gospel is not quoted because it is!"[26]

All of this leads us to wonder then, what might be the appropriate background for the Johannine Epistles. There would seem to be a fairly strong divide in scholarship between one group (probably the dominant group) who think that the OT has little, if any place, in helping us to understand the Johannine Epistles (though they may well concede that various things the Johannine author speaks of have parallels in the OT or Jewish literature), and another group which thinks that the OT is not only a promising source of the author's ideas and thinking but very likely a direct source, with the Johannine author fleshing out OT precursors, albeit via allusions rather than direct quotations.[27] Yarbrough, for example, suggests that inattention to OT passages and theology or the minimisation of OT associations rob the Johannine Epistles of their depth and a basis for their ethical imperatives.

One scholar who has sought to bridge such a divide is Ruth Edwards, who suggested in her 2001 commentary that along with an examination of the Johannine Epistles in the light of John's Gospel and other NT writings, "it will be helpful to refer to the Johannines' wider background in the Hebrew Bible and contemporary Jewish and Graeco-Roman writings."[28] This thesis strongly affirms Edwards' point and suggests that the Graeco-Roman background of the Johannine Epistles has not been thoroughly explored. Just as several commentators have posited the importance of the OT for understanding the Johannine Epistles,[29] an equally important case can be made for not ignoring the contemporary Jewish and Graeco-

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[26] Lieu, "Scripture and Tradition": 460. In support of her point, Lieu says, "R. E. Brown… suggests that because the Gospel is under dispute the author of 1 John avoids quoting it, appealing instead to the traditions to which all parties involved look back", but this would appear to be Lieu's interpretation of Brown. What Brown actually says is, "while I think that the epistolary author knew a written form of GJohn, albeit perhaps not the finally redacted form, the most that can be *shown* is dependence on the kind of tradition found in GJohn—a tradition that antedated the written Gospel." See Brown, *Epistles of John*, 100f.

[27] I am indebted to Yarbrough's July 2018 class for drawing my attention to this divide.

[28] R. B. Edwards, *The Johannine Epistles* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2001), 20. In her later discussion of the background of 1 John (pages 42-44), Edwards summarises the various proposals that have been posited – Dodd's suggestion of Johannine ideas such as 'light', 'divine seed' and 'anointing' coming from Gnosticism, which appears to be supported to some degree by Philo, the *Hermetic Corpus*, and the Nag Hammadi texts; the earlier Hebrew Bible as a source of the idea of 'light'; the Jewish Dead Sea Scrolls of Qumran as a source of the Johannine Epistles dualistic ideas of 'good and evil', 'light and dark', 'truth and falsehood' as well as the ideas of unity/community/fellowship; other extrabiblical Jewish literature such as *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* as a source of the ethical earnestness reminiscent of 1 John and the references to the Spirit of Truth and Spirit of Error; and the early Christian tradition evident in the Synoptics and Gospel of John, echoes of which appear in 1 John.

[29] Yarbrough, for example, suggested in the aforementioned class on preaching the Johannine Epistles, that inattention to OT passages and theology or the minimisation of OT associations rob the Johannine Epistles of their depth and a basis for their ethical imperatives. In this, the Johannine author follows other NT writers like

Roman writings. It is thus the intent of this thesis to re-examine the Johannine Epistles in light of the relationships between senders and receivers of letters in the first century, and their understandings of 'love', and 'truth', as all three of these were shaped by both Hebraic and Graeco-Roman backgrounds.[30] My reading of the Johannine Epistles in a Graeco-Roman context will explain how the Johannine author developed the notion of 'fellowship' for the emerging Christian community, which was a transformation of 'friendship' and was based on revised notions of 'truth' and 'love'.

Much has been written about 'love' throughout the history of the world from many different perspectives, and the Christian tradition is no exception. However, given the roots of Christianity in Judaism and its emergence in the Graeco-Roman world of the first century AD, when we come to examine the meaning of 'love' in the Johannine literature it is both important and necessary to examine the meaning of love in those domains which have potentially influenced Christianity and its usage of the 'love' language. Thus, we need to examine the language and usage of 'love' language in the ancient world, in the OT and Judaism, in the NT world, and, of course, in the NT itself.

The concept of 'truth' has not seen the same degree of attention or focused study as 'love', but this does not mean that it is any less important. In fact, one could argue that it is more important because it deals with reality, about what is. But the problem is that most modern discussions of 'truth' by Johannine scholars is somewhat anachronistic. In general, most people today would say that truth is concerned with what we know and believe to be real, factual, dependable, and right, but therein lies the problem. 'Truth' has largely become a subjective concept shaped by one's own thinking or culture. René Descartes, the so-called father of modern philosophy, is the one who has been largely responsible for 'truth' losing its

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Paul who first establish a doctrinal/theological foundation and then from this, issue practical and ethical imperatives.

[30] The focus is on these three topics because the Johannine Epistles are ostensibly 'letters' between a sender and his recipients, and because 'truth' and 'love' seems to be prominent themes in all three letters. The benefits to exegesis of such an approach for these three topics will highlight the value of doing the same thing for other topics and issues in the Johannine Epistles. What has not been considered in this thesis is the relative positioning of the sender and the recipients in terms of how the society of that day was structured. Friesen and Longenecker have argued for a seven-tier model of society in which the top three levels represent the elite of society and the bottom three levels those who exist at or near (and often below) the subsistence level. See S. J. Friesen, "Poverty in Pauline Studies: Beyond the So-called New Consensus," *JSNT* 26, no. 3 (2004); B. W. Longenecker, "Exposing the Economic Middle: A Revised Economy Scale for the Study of Early Urban Christianity," *JSNT* 31, no. 3 (2009); see also Longenecker's later work, *Remember the Poor: Paul, Poverty, and the Greco-Roman World* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), esp. Ch. 3 and Appendix 1. It is not the purpose of this thesis to discuss the levels into which the Johannine author and his recipients might fit, though there may be some merit in considering not only the relative position of the author and his recipients, but also the relative position of the author and the influences upon him and whether he would have had access to the writings of the elites if he was of a lower status.

connection with reality when in his seminal works *Discourse on the Method* and *Meditations on First Philosophy* he challenged the Scholastic-Aristotelian principles of forms as the basis of explaining reality and knowledge coming through the senses, and instead argued that the only thing that a person could know to be absolutely true was that they existed because they were a thinking being.[31] For Descartes, there was a great difference between the object and its idea,[32] and this led him to decide that truth could not be derived from objective reality.[33] Thus for Descartes and those who followed in his footsteps, 'truth' became a subjective thing, even a personally preferred version of the facts. This became the forerunner of the postmodern view that there is no such thing as absolute truth which is related to an objective reality which can be known. Several well-known Johannine scholars have commented upon this trend. Andreas Köstenberger, for example, says:

> Truth is not what it used to be. In days past, telling the truth meant to represent the facts accurately. It was presupposed that truth corresponded to a reality to be known, and that not telling the truth was morally wrong. To tell a lie, then, was a misrepresentation of a given matter.[34]

And Carson, in his book, *The Gagging of God*, details the challenges of pluralism which has relegated truth to a subjective entity. He summarises the beliefs about truth of many in higher educational institutions:

> Truth, whatever it is, does not reside in an object or idea or statement or affirmation about reality, historical or otherwise, that can be known by finite human beings; rather, it consists of fallible, faulty opinions held by finite knowers who themselves look at things that certain way only because they belong to a certain section of society.[35]

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[31] In *Discourse on the Method*.4 and *Meditation* II, Descartes advances the argument for what has become his most well-known edict, *cogito, ergo sum*, "I think, therefore I am".

[32] Meditation III.

[33] Despite this conclusion, Descartes also recognised that the very fact that he could conceive of an "eternal, infinite, [immutable], omniscient, omnipotent, and Creator of all things which are outside of Himself," who is also supremely good means that he must exist (*Discourse on the Method* 4; *Meditations* II, IV and V) and further that "the certainty and truth of all knowledge depends alone on the knowledge of the true God."

[34] A. J. Köstenberger, "Introduction," in *Whatever Happened to Truth* (ed. A. J. Köstenberger; Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2005), 9.

[35] D. A. Carson, *The Gagging of God: Christianity Confronts Pluralism* (Fifteenth ed.; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011), 35. Therese Okure, writing about how to find truth in Scripture, argues that "cultures influence our reading and shape our understanding of the Bible". See T. Okure, "What is Truth?," *Anglican Theological Review* 93, no. 3 (2011): 405f. She goes on to say:

> Our culture is one aspect we must look at when we talk about finding truth in Scripture. Truth here does not mean what is true as opposed to false. It means that which *is*; what is real. The reality is

Thus, the popular belief that 'truth' has become a casualty of pluralism and postmodern thought and the relativism associated with that mode of thinking,[36] which results in a view that it is quite legitimate to have 'your truth' and 'my truth' with the two 'truths' being different, is seen to have a much earlier foundation.[37] In fact, a study of the meaning of truth in the ancient world and in the biblical world reveals that the problem has been around for a long time. There has always been a variety of views of what 'truth' is and what the vocabulary of 'truth' is seeking to convey, as will be seen below. What this thesis does, is go back to the etymology and usage of the 'truth' vocabulary in the ancient world in order to retrieve the ancient concept of 'truth' and explores how this was then practised in the Graeco-Roman world of the first century AD, and thus how it was understood and used by the Johannine author of that time.

1.3. Methodology

The methodology employed in this thesis is primarily a philological study of key words in the Johannine Epistles compared with the same *topoi* in other literature (both biblical and non-biblical), followed by an intertextual exegesis of the Johannine Epistles in dialogue with the Johannine Gospel and other non-biblical texts.[38] The philological studies commence with an examination of the meaning and usage of the words 'truth' and 'love' in the ancient world, the Hebraic world of the OT, and the Graeco-Roman world of the first century AD. This is followed by comparative studies which explore the topics of friendship and frank-speaking in both the Johannine literature and various Graeco-Roman writers (including treatises and letters). Finally, insights gained from the first two steps are applied to a close intertextual reading of the Johannine Epistles in order to identify implications for exegeting these NT letters.

The genesis for this thesis was the observation of the frequency of words like 'truth' and 'love' in the Johannine Epistles, so it was natural to start with a philological study and examine the etymology and usage of these words. While there has been some concern about pursuing the etymology of words and

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that I see through my cultural eyes, I hear through my cultural ears and understand through my cultural mind. My culture upholds particular values and gives meaning to particular symbols.

[36] For a good discussion of the rise and challenge of pluralism and postmodernism and the consequent belief that there is no such thing as objective truth, see Carson, *The Gagging of God*, Chapters 1-3.

[37] Carson's comment that "Many generations have recognized how difficult it is for finite and sinful mortals to come to close agreement as to the objective truth of this or that subject, but this is the first generation to believe that there is no objective truth out there, or that if there is, there is no access to it" may be true, but the seeds of a denial of objective truth were sown a long time before the present generation. Carson, *The Gagging of God*, 54.

[38] A similar approach is taken by Martin Culy in his *Echoes of Friendship in the Gospel of John*. Culy speaks of a 'broader notion of intertextuality' which means more than how one text can inform another; instead it brings to a text conceptual material from written texts and other sources such as the culture. This thesis takes the same approach. See M. M. Culy, *Echoes of Friendship in the Gospel of John* (NT Monographs; vol. 30 Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2012), 21f.

assuming that words mean what their component parts mean or what they historically meant,[39] an exploration of the historical usage of the words 'truth' and 'love' in their various contexts – particularly the Hebraic and NT worlds – is warranted, since the Johannine usage was very likely influenced by the usage and meaning of these terms in the context of the writer and his audience. James Barr rightly tells us:

> The etymology of a word is not a statement about its meaning but about its history; it is only as a historical statement that it can be responsibly asserted, and it is quite wrong to suppose that the etymology of a word is necessarily a guide either to its 'proper' meaning in a later period or to its actual meaning in that period.[40]

However, it is still true that the meaning of a word is determined by its usage in a particular context and it is important to try and determine what that meaning was in the first century Graeco-Roman world when the Johannine Epistles were penned. Much has been made of the difference in Hebrew and Greek thought and this has often mistakenly been transferred into thinking that biblical authors have been influenced by one or the other of the Greek philosophical or Hebrew theological mindsets, resulting in faulty exegesis,[41] so it is essential to give priority to how the words were used in their contexts.[42]

The words 'truth' and 'love' occur quite extensively in discussions of friendship in both treatises and letters of the Graeco-Roman writers, so comparing the Johannine literature to these sources is a worthwhile thing to do, and this is the second step in the method employed. Given that some kind of relationship exists between the Johannine author and those to whom he is writing, as it also did between the Graeco-Roman writers and the recipients of their letters and treatises, it is valid to explore the similarities and differences in the two bodies of literature, particularly in the language they used, their styles of writing, and the topics covered. Did the Johannine author model his writings on theirs, or did he choose to do something different? Stanley Stowers notes that research into the New Testament letters has shown that the NT writers modified and adapted the typical Graeco-Roman opening and closing formulas in letters

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[39] For an extensive discussion of basing the meaning of words upon their etymology and the dangers of imposing theological ideas upon the grammar, syntax, and meaning of words in a language, see J. Barr, *The Semantics of Biblical Language* (Oxford; London; New York: Oxford University Press, 1961); M. Silva, *Biblical Words and Their Meaning: An Introduction to Lexical Semantics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1983).

[40] Barr, *The Semantics of Biblical Language*, 109.

[41] See the discussion of the differences in Hebrew and Greek thought in Barr, *The Semantics of Biblical Language*, ch. 2. He notes several contrasts in thought: between "static and dynamic", "abstract and concrete", "the contrast in the conception of man", and "the contrast between the divisive, distinction-forming, analytic type of Greek thought and the totality type of Hebrew thought".

[42] Culy took a similar approach of examining the literature of three different traditions (Greco-Roman, Jewish, and Christian) in his study of the concept of friendship in John's Gospel. See Culy, *Echoes*, 36-38.

for their own purposes. These modifications – which included things like elaborations of the names of the sender and recipients, turning the greeting into a wish for God's blessing or incorporating theological statements in the greetings, and modifying the salutations to indicate the purpose of the letter – "set the earliest Christian letters apart as the products of a unique religious community".[43] Stowers says, "By this sort of modification, writers not only express Christian beliefs but also establish or confirm a particular religious relationship with their audience."[44] In a helpful analysis of Graeco-Roman letters, Stowers identifies 'Letters of Friendship' as one of the main letter types.[45] These, he argues, were letters usually written between equals, designed to maintain friendships and share things in common, including affection and companionship. They were also used by superiors wanting to ensure compliance by an inferior. An example of this type is a letter from a philosopher to his students, which was designed to maintain the friendship between the philosopher and his students. One of the key features of friendship was the ability to speak truthfully and directly (unlike flatterers), so the letters would often contain admonition and rebuke as well as encouragement and praise. Stowers has noted that the social relationships between a letter writer and his recipients often determined the style, structure, and *topoi* of the letters – letters from a socially superior person would take the form of advice, letters between equals would express affection, while letters from a socially inferior person would exhibit praise towards the superior.[46]

Most of the NT letters appear to be letters from a 'superior' to 'inferiors' (at least in the sense of a teacher-student or patron-client relationship) but the nature of Christianity as a leveller of people works against such designations, and consequently, the style of NT letters is difficult to categorise. The Apostle Paul frequently used hortatory letters to build character, but more so of communities than individuals, referring to his recipients with various familial and household terms and expressing affection for them. [47]

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[43] S. K. Stowers, *Letter Writing in Greco-Roman Antiquity* (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster, 1986), 21.

[44] Stowers, *Letter Writing*, 21.

[45] See chapters 6-12 of Stowers book. He identifies six basic epistolary types: (1) Letters of Friendship (which were about maintaining friendships); (2) Family Letters (letters for maintaining the affection and social relationships of a household); (3) Letters of Praise and Blame (which sustained and maintained the social constructions of the ancient world by locating each person and thing in their proper place by bestowing honour or shame); (4) Letters of Exhortation and Advice (subdivided into: paraenetic [exhortation and dissuasion], advice [on specific, occasional matters], protreptic [calls to a new and different way of life], admonition [a gentle type of blame to instil in the recipient what should and should not be done], rebuke [a harsher form of blame utilising shame to effect the cessation of misbehaviour], reproach [the harshest form of blame usually directed at a person's character], consolation [words of comfort in various life situations causing grief); (5) Letters of Mediation; and (6) Accusing, Apologetic, and Accounting Letters. See also chapter 8 in E. R. Richards, *Paul and First-Century Letter Writing: Secretaries, Composition and Collection* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004).

[46] Stowers, *Letter Writing*, 56.

[47] Stowers, *Letter Writing*, 42, 96f. As Stowers notes: "In New Testament exhortation, the individual is not an object of guidance and character-building apart from the community" in which they operate.

Introduction

Despite the views of some scholars,[48] Paul did not see himself as superior, but considered himself on the same level as his recipients, and attributed the achievement of community life and Christian character to God's power and activity, on occasion praising them for their progress. The same is also true of the Johannine author who similarly addresses his recipients in familial terms ('beloved', 'my children', 'fathers', 'brothers'), refers to the community they both belong to on the basis of their shared beliefs and experience of God's grace in their lives, praises those who are progressing well, calls out those who are failing to do so, continually exhorts, gives advice, and calls them to live in the way of truth and love, and expresses his affection for them and desire to be with them. It is thus evident that the NT letters reflect a mixture of the various epistolary types: the reminder of a common shared past experience and the desire to be present with the recipient rather than separated, are reminiscent of the commonplace features of the friendly letters; the forms of address and expressions of affection reflect the 'family' or 'household' letter style; and of course there are numerous examples of praise, and blame, and exhortation (including *protrepticus* – exhortation to a particular way of life), and advice, and even some aspects of mediation, recommendation, and intercession.[49] Without doubt, the NT letters are a mixture of the various Graeco-Roman letter styles, and are not representative of one type. They could well be considered a whole new genre of their own.[50]

The third component of the methodology employed in this thesis is a close intertextual reading of the Johannine Epistles in light of the insights gained from the first two steps to see what implications this might have for exegeting these letters. By understanding the key components of friendships and how they

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[48] Some scholars do think that Paul saw himself as superior to the recipients of his letters. Cf. E. Castelli, *Imitating Paul: A Discourse of Power* (Literary Currents in Biblical Interpretation; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1991). Using a philosophical lens provided by the work of Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida, Castelli argues that Paul's call for others to imitate him (*mimesis*), was a rhetorical gesture in a strategy of power that prioritised Paul's gospel and authority over all other gospels and authorities in the early Christian movement.

[49] The writing of letters of recommendation and intercession (letters in which one friend writes to another on behalf of a 'client') became more prominent in fourth and fifth century Christianity but are nevertheless evident in the NT in both the letters of Paul and the Johannine author.

[50] Note, however, some scholars suggest that not all the NT letters closely follow the form of the Graeco-Roman letters. Luca Marulli for example notes that Third John is missing a word of greeting which Marulli says is more akin to Aramaic letters and it distances itself from the common pattern of NT letters which usually combine words such as 'peace', 'grace' and/or 'mercy' in their opening words. He concludes that "the Elder freely composed his letter without necessarily fitting a specific mold, but drawing from his Jewish and Graeco-Roman background." See L. Marulli, "A Letter of Recommendation? A Closer Look at Third John's 'Rhetorical' Argumentation," *Bib* 90, no. 2 (2009): 209. In a recent (2019) unpublished paper available on academia.edu, Justin Paley argues for a Jewish background to the Third Epistle. See J. Paley. "The Jewish Background of 3 John and "the Gentiles": Interpreting the Epistle on its Own Terms." Accessed 17th August 2019. Online: https://www.academia.edu/38892344/The_Jewish_Background_of_3_John_and_the_Gentiles_Interpreting_the_Epistle_On_its_Own_Terms.

worked in the first-century AD Graeco-Roman world, and keeping this in mind as one reads the Johannine Epistles, one is more likely to read the epistles through the eyes of the first readers, and in the context that they received them. The Johannine communities which received these letters were more likely to have been influenced by their Hebraic and Graeco-Roman backgrounds than by the various writings of the New Testament, though they may well have seen the Gospel of John if that had been written earlier (see the previous section).[51]

[51] For an excellent, up-to-date, and extensive treatment of how important linguistics, semantics, and context are for understanding biblical words and concepts, and the impact they have on exegesis, see chapter 1 of Elizabeth Mburu's doctoral thesis, "The *Rule of the Community* as a Valid Linguistic Resource for Understanding Truth Terminology in the Gospel of John: A Semantic Analysis" (PhD Thesis, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2008).

2. Friendship in the First Century AD Graeco-Roman World

Since this thesis is arguing that the Johannine author is reframing the Graeco-Roman idea of φιλία ('friendship'), it is necessary to begin with an examination of this social phenomenon in the period in which the Johannine author wrote (i.e. the end of the first century AD). To do this the language of friendship, how the idea is grounded in the classical philosophy of the ancient world, and some of its key aspects, are all examined.[52]

2.1. The Language of 'Friendship'

The Greek word used to express the idea of 'friendship' is usually the word φιλία but this word can also be translated as 'love',[53] and 'affectionate regard', 'friendliness', 'amiability' or 'fondness'.[54] It is thus necessary to look at a range of words which occur within the same semantic domain as φιλία in order to fully explore what the Graeco-Roman world meant by 'friendship'.[55] Studies on the language related to these ideas of friendship, love, and affection have shown that there are four main Greek words (along with their cognates), used to express these ideas. The four word groups are:

- ἀγάπη ('love') / ἀγαπᾶν ('to love') / ἀγαπητός ('beloved').
- φίλος ('friend') / φιλεῖν ('to love') / φιλία ('friendship') / φιλιάζειν ('to be a friend').
- ἔρως ('passionate and sensual desire') / ἐρᾶν ('to love').[56]

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[52] For a similar investigation, but not consulted in the writing of this chapter, see Culy, *Echoes*, 38-62.

[53] W. F. Arndt, et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (3rd ed.; Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), s.v. φιλία.

[54] H. G. Liddell and R. Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon; with a Supplement* (New 9th; Rev and Augmented ed.; ed. S. H. S. Jones; Oxford: Clarendon, 1983), s.v. φιλία.

[55] For a list of words which fall into the semantic domain of love, affection and compassion, see J. P. Louw and E. A. Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains* (Cape Town: Bible Society of South Africa, 1988), 292-295. In reality, it is better to speak about a 'conceptual field' as Culy does; he argues that while key terms typically associated with the notion of friendship, e.g. φίλος, rarely appear in John's Gospel, the language of friendship is consistently used throughout the Gospel. It is thus necessary to construct a conceptual field of 'friendship' from the various words, phrases, clauses, and even larger units that deal with the notion of friendship. See Culy, *Echoes*, 2,34-36.

[56] This is the kind of love between a man and a woman which embraces longing, craving and desire. Neither ἔρως nor ἐρᾶν occur in any form in the NT.

- στοργή ('familial love', 'love of country/a ruler', etc.) / στέργειν ('to love', 'to feel affection').[57]

To understand how the ideas of 'friendship' and 'love' intersected in the ancient world[58] it is necessary to explore the writings of such philosophers as Plato (424-348 BC), Aristotle (384-322 BC), Epicurus (341-270 BC), and Philodemus (110-40/35 BC). These writers wrote mostly about *love* in terms of *friendship* and used the φίλος/φιλεῖν/φιλία words.

The forms φιλεῖν and φιλία signify for the most part an affection for people or things, most notably the love of the gods for people, or friends for friends. Thus, it is a love which is generally exercised towards human beings;[59] furthermore it entails obligation.[60] According to Gustav Stählin, the likely basic sense of the verbal stem φιλέω is 'proper to', 'belonging to' thus giving rise to the meaning 'to regard and treat somebody as one of one's own people' and consequently, it denotes the natural attraction towards those who belong (e.g. love between close relatives, the relationship between masters and servants, the love of people for their country or city). However, over time, the object of φιλεῖν shifted from 'that which belongs' to 'that which is chosen' and so it came to be used of the love of the gods for men and of the love of friends, expressing an element of preference or favour, as well as to communicate the idea of 'to like' or 'to value'. Finally, the verb φιλέω and its cognates were also used to express sensual love especially in more palpable contexts such as caressing, fondling, and especially kissing.[61]

Of course, φίλος is not the only word for 'friend' in the earliest Greek texts and David Konstan notes that in the *Iliad* several other words in the same semantic domain are found, often associated with φίλος.[62] These include:

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[57] This verb is also used of the love of a tutelary god for the people, and even of dogs for their master, but is less commonly used for the love of husband and wife. See W. Günther, H.-G. Link and C. Brown, "Love," *NIDNTT* 2:539. On the issue of distinguishing between the translations of these semantically related words, John Cooper suggests rendering φιλεῖν by 'like', στέργειν by 'love', and ἐρᾶν by 'be in love', using 'sexual attachment' for ἔρως, and reserving both 'love' (noun) and 'friendship' for φιλία. See J. M. Cooper, "Aristotle on the Forms of Friendship," *The Review of Metaphysics* 30, no. 4 (1977): 621 n.625.

[58] By 'ancient world' the Graeco-Roman (spelled *Greco*-Roman in non-British/Commonwealth countries) world in the centuries before the change in eras linked to the coming of Jesus Christ is in focus. See also footnote 1.

[59] G. Quell and E. Stauffer, "ἀγαπάω, ἀγάπη, ἀγαπητός," *TDNT* 1:36; Günther, Link and Brown, *NIDNTT* 2:538, 547.

[60] Günther, Link and Brown, *NIDNTT* 2:549.

[61] G. Stählin, "φιλέω, καταφιλέω, φίλημα, φίλος, φίλη, φιλία," *TDNT* 9:115-118. See footnotes 14-39 in Stählin's article for examples from the classical literature. See also Günther, Link and Brown, *NIDNTT* 2:547. Interestingly, in modern Greek, φιλῶ means only 'to kiss'.

[62] See D. Konstan, *Friendship in the Classical World* (Key Themes in Ancient History; eds. P. A. Cartledge, et al.; Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 28-40. Konstan also notes that in the Homeric epics,

- ἑταῖρος – this is frequently translated 'comrade' or 'friend' but it could also refer to a small ethnically related group around a leader; a larger body tantamount to an entire ethnic group; a group of leaders from independent social entities; and finally, a leader and their entire following. This term is often modified with φίλος (the adjectival form) or πιστός such that the essential elements of friendship seems to be established as mutual affection or 'dearness' and loyalty or trust.

- ξένος – which usually means 'stranger' or 'foreigner' could also mean 'a foreign friend' and there are several examples in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* of ξένοι who become φίλοι, and there are also examples where ξένος is modified by φίλος to indicate someone who is unknown but to whom hospitality is shown such that the person is designated as a 'guest-friend' or 'dear stranger'.

- θεράπων – usually rendered 'squire' or 'henchman' could also designate a relationship of friendship between unequals. In some ways this designates the relationship between Achilles and Patroclus with the latter often doing the former's bidding and serving him when the need arose[63] though Homer more specifically uses the term 'dear comrade' (φίλος ἑταῖρος) to describe the relationship of Patroclus to Achilles (and vice-versa).[64]

- ἔρως – usually used to refer to 'passionate desire' or 'erotic/sexual love'. Ethelbert Stauffer in *TDNT* describes it as "passionate love which desires the other for itself",[65] and says that what is sought in ἔρως is intoxication or ecstasy. There has been debate about whether the relationship between Achilles and Patroclus was more than just friendship and whether it included erotic love. However, a relationship of erotic love was seen in classical Greek thought as very different to friendship – friendship involved a relationship between equals, the roles were symmetrical, all parties were designated as a φίλος; but in ἔρως, the roles of the parties was complementary, the dominant or active partner is the lover (ἐραστής), while the subordinate or passive partner is the beloved (ἐρώμενος, ἐρωμένη). Thus, the two kinds of relationships were generally seen as incompatible.

φίλος is used primarily as an adjective, and he gives a brief account of the debate about whether the adjectival form means 'dear' or 'one's own'. The Greek words discussed in the following points are those identified by Konstan.

63 For example, Patroclus is to offer good counsel to Achilles (*Iliad* 11.785-788); and prepares for and serves Achilles' guests (*Iliad* 9.202-204, 620-622).

64 For examples of this term applying in both directions see J. T. Fitzgerald, "Friendship in the Greek World Prior to Aristotle," in *Greco-Roman Perspectives on Friendship* (ed. J. T. Fitzgerald; vol. 34 of *SBL – Resources for Biblical Study,* ed. D. E. Aune; Missoula, MT; Chico, CA; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997), 19. Fitzgerald goes on to say that the fact that Homer describes the relationship in different ways suggests that either no specific vocabulary of friendship existed at this time or that it was still in the process of being created.

65 Quell and Stauffer, *TDNT* 1:35.

The difference between ἔρως and φιλία is worth considering a little further because it seems that the term ἔρως was undergoing some changes in the views of the philosophers. Plato, in the fourth century BC, had attempted to lift ἔρως above the sensual meaning – to him ἔρως is an ecstasy which transports man beyond rationality (cf. *Phaedrus* 237ff., 242ff.) and results in creative inspiration (*Symp*. 200, 206C-E), though it is to a beautiful or worthy person or thing that *eros* is drawn – "Love [ἔρως] is a love [ἔρως] directed to what is fair… The lovable [ἐραστόν], indeed, is the truly beautiful, tender, perfect, and heaven-blest" (*Symp*. 204B-C).[66] Anders Nygren, in his *magnum opus*, *Agape and Eros*, summarises Plato's conception of love (eros) under three headings: (1) "Eros is the 'love of desire', or acquisitive love" – a striving for what one does not have and for which one feels a need; (2) "Eros is man's way to the Divine" – love is always the desire of the lower for the higher and *"Eros is the way by which man mounts up to the Divine, not the way by which the Divine stoops down to man."*; (3) "Eros is egocentric love" – it is the desire to acquire things for oneself, for one's benefit, for one's immortality. [67] In Plato's student Aristotle, ἔρως is a cosmic function, the power of attraction in which deity exercises its influence on the world not through any movement or activity of its own, but through the world longing for the divine.[68] However, even in these forms, the original idea of intoxication or ecstasy remains for ἔρως is "the natural impulse to the transcending of one's own life".[69] But later writers like Theophrastus, the successor of Aristotle, attempted to give prominence to the biological and physiological aspects of ἔρως,[70] and by the turn of the eras, ἔρως was viewed as something of a disease in need of treatment. Representative of the concept of ἔρως as physiological-phenomenological are the words of philosophers Stobaios and Libanios: [71]

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[66] Translation ex Plato, *Lysis / Symposium / Gorgias* (LCL 166; ed. J. Henderson; trans. W. R. M. Lamb; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1925).

[67] A. Nygren, *Agape and Eros* (trans. P. S. Watson; London: SPCK, 1953), 175-181. [Italics Original] In *Symp*. 211 Plato says "Such is the right approach or induction to love-matters. Beginning from obvious beauties he must for the sake of that highest beauty be ever climbing aloft, as on the rungs of a ladder, from one to two, and from two to all beautiful bodies; from personal beauty he proceeds to beautiful observances, from observance to beautiful learning, and from learning at last to that particular study which is concerned with the beautiful itself and that alone; so that in the end he comes to know the very essence of beauty." For Plato, Eros is the means by which humankind can transcend this world and approach the divine.

[68] Aristotle's argument is that Deity is absolutely transcendent and above being moved but is in fact moved by the desire it awakens in its creation – κινεῖ δὲ ὡς ἐρώμενον ("it moves by being loved") (*Metaphysics* XII.1072b3).

[69] Quell and Stauffer, *TDNT* 1:36.

[70] F. E. Brenk, "Most Beautiful and Divine: Graeco-Romans (especially Plutarch), and Paul, on Love and Marriage," in *Greco-Roman Culture and the New Testament: Studies Commemorating the Centennial of the Pontifical Biblical Institute* (eds. D. E. Aune, et al.; Leiden: Brill, 2012), 91.

[71] Cited in this order (despite Libanios [4th century AD], being earlier than Stobaios [5th century AD]) in Brenk, "Most Beautiful and Divine," 92. Brenk cites these from W. W. Fortenbaugh, et al., *Theophrastus of Eresus: Sources for his Life, Writings, Thought, and Influence* (ed. W. W. Fortenbaugh; 2 vols.; Leiden: Brill, 1992), 381-383. fr. 557 and 382-383. fr. 558.

> Love is an excess of a certain irrational desire, whose coming is swift and parting slow.
> (Stobaios)

> …the soul which is not preoccupied with external matters is held in thrall by erotic passions (ἐροτικοῖς [sic] πάθεσι), and *eros* especially afflicts those who are not engaged in other activities. (Libanios)[72]

In his essay "Most Beautiful and Divine", Frederick Brenk looks at three of Plutarch's late first century AD works as a framework for understanding the Graeco-Roman background of Paul's attitude towards love and marriage (*On Love*; *Advice to a Bride and Groom;* and *Dialogue on Love*). He says that the three works are radically different and offer important insights into the changes occurring in the philosophical literature about love around Paul's lifetime, in particular regarding the role of women and a religious and eschatological dimension to love and marriage.[73] Plutarch's *Advice to a Bride and Groom* is actually quite nuanced, with several allusions to the sacred character of marriage, and *The Dialogue on Love* which emphasises the relationship of ἔρως to the gods seems to focus on the supernatural character of ἔρως and reverse the traditional roles of bride and groom.[74] What this shows is that by Plutarch's time, four hundred years after Plato, the philosophical status quo on 'love' as established by Plato's works *Phaidros* and *Symposion*, in which ἔρως ('erotic desire' or 'love') was treated in a very positive way, was being challenged.[75]

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[72] Philodemus also discusses the pains that erotic love can cause – cited in Brenk, "Most Beautiful and Divine," 93.

> … similarly let us take a clear rational look at the evil involved. We can follow the same procedure we used in evaluating the effects of erotic desire. In that case we enumerated all the pain involved for the persons afflicted by it and the major inconveniences caused, including at times certain particularly painful evils. (*P. Herc.* 182. Col VII, lines 16-25)

[73] Brenk, "Most Beautiful and Divine," 88. Even though Brenk's essay title specifies the Graeco-Roman background of Paul's attitude (because he intends to contrast Plutarch and Paul) it is in fact the same Graeco-Roman background for all the NT writers. See also Sarah Pomeroy's reflections on Plutarch's *Advice*, where she also highlights the changing nature of the marriage relationship, its sacred character, and the increasingly public role of women in the first century AD. S. B. Pomeroy, "Reflections on Plutarch, Advice *to the Bride and Groom: Something Old, Something New, Something Borrowed*," in *Plutarch's Advice to the Bride and Groom and A Consolation to His Wife* (ed. S. B. Pomeroy; Oxford; London; New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 33-42.

[74] It is also the case that while Plutarch describes marriage as "a coming together in a partnership for life" [τοὺς ἐπὶ βίου κοινωνίᾳ συνιόντας] (*Advice* 138C), and while he uses the language of partnership extensively (κοινωνία, κοινωνέω, κοινός), such partnerships for Plutarch are always asymmetrical with the husband taking the lead and keeping control. See the excellent discussion in L. Foxhall, "Foreign Powers: *Plutarch and Discourses of Domination in Roman Greece*," in *Plutarch's Advice to the Bride and Groom and A Consolation to His Wife* (ed. S. B. Pomeroy; Oxford; London; New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 145-147.

[75] Brenk, "Most Beautiful and Divine," 89.

On the other hand, φιλία was seen in a very positive light and considered to be a higher plane of love than ἔρως. It has to do with love between friends and was a favourite topic of the Greek philosophers and epigrammists.[76] It was a love which basically consisted of mutual respect, trust, care, and goodwill between virtuous men and it was this mutuality that gave the relationship a distinctive and valued filial aspect amongst the Greeks.[77] Diogenes Laertius, the 3rd century AD biographer of the Greek philosophers, is representative of the prevailing views on φιλία:

> 27. Of all the means which are procured by wisdom to ensure happiness throughout the whole of life, by far the most important is the acquisition of friends [ἡ τῆς φιλίας κτῆσις]. 28. The same conviction which inspires confidence that nothing we have to fear is eternal or even of long duration, also enables us to see that even in our limited conditions of life nothing enhances our security so much as friendship [φιλίας].
>
> (Diogenes Laertius 10.148)[78]

Interestingly, there is no certain instance of the noun ἀγάπη prior to its occurrence in the LXX, where it occurs some twenty times, though the verbal form ἀγαπᾶν is attested in classical Greek from Homer on down.[79] The basic idea of the verbal form is much weaker than ἐρᾶν and φιλεῖν, having the sense of 'to be satisfied with', 'to receive', 'to greet', 'to honour', or more inwardly, 'to seek after' or 'desire someone or something'. The verb is often used to denote regard or friendship between equals and sometimes it can carry an element of sympathy. However, it can also mean 'to prefer' or 'to esteem one person more highly than another', especially when used in relation to the gods. Thus, it is a love which makes distinctions or choices, at the discretion or whim of the lover and is often used to describe the love of a higher for a lower. According to Stauffer, the specific nature of ἀγαπᾶν thus becomes apparent in contrast to ἐρᾶν – while ἔρως is a general love determined by a more or less indefinite impulsion towards its object, which seeks self-satisfaction wherever it can, ἀγαπᾶν is rather a love determined by the initiator who makes distinctions and chooses. The latter is more often used to express love for God and also for the

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[76] See the discussion on 'friendship' and 'love' in the ancient world in section 2.1.

[77] V. P. Furnish, *The LOVE Command in the New Testament* (London: SCM, 1972), 223.

[78] The words of the two quotations are generally attributed to Epicurus from his *Kyriai Doxai* (*Principal Doctrines*), 27 and 28.

[79] Furnish, *The LOVE Command*, 220. For a brief but worthwhile discussion of instances of ἀγάπη once thought to have been found in ancient literature, but subsequently doubted for various reasons (e.g. variant word segmentations, later dating of works containing the word) see Quell and Stauffer, *TDNT* 1:37-38. Note also *BDAG* which says that "this term has left little trace in polytheistic Greek literature", and "its paucity in general Greek literature may be due to a presumed colloquial flavor of the noun", whereas "no such stigma attached to the use of the verb ἀγαπαω"; see Arndt, et al., *BDAG*, s.v. ἀγάπη.

love of a higher towards a lower whom he wishes to elevate in some way.[80] Nevertheless, the ἀγαπ-words were somewhat vague and ambiguous and often just used as a variation for ἐρᾶν or φιλεῖν for the purposes of emphasis or stylistic variation. They were not the subject of great debate or discussion as were the words φιλεῖν/φιλία and ἐρᾶν/ἔρως.

2.2. Friendship's Grounding in the Ancient World

The concept of friendship (φιλία) appears in the literature of the classical world from the Homeric epics circa 8th century BC to the Christian empire of the 4th and 5th centuries AD.[81] As might be expected, over such a period and such a diverse area as the Mediterranean world the idea of friendship varied across cultures and time, but the primary or original idea was 'love' or 'friendship' within the context of familial relationships.[82] However, the word has the same broad and varied range of meaning as φίλος and the core of the relationship, according to David Konstan, may be characterised as "a mutually intimate, loyal, and loving bond between two or a few persons that is understood not to derive primarily from membership in a group normally marked by native solidarity, such as family, tribe, or other such ties."[83] As such, friendship is a relationship which is achieved, sometimes purposefully and sometimes accidentally, rather than ascribed through some prior relationship such as kinship or ethnicity. This view challenges the long-held view that 'friendship' in the ancient world was all about an entirely objective bond of reciprocal obligation or a series of complex obligations, duties, and claims.[84] Konstan argues in *Friendship in the Classical World* that even back in classical times friendship had an element of affection and generosity and was not simply about duty and obligation. While a relationship of obligation and calculated cooperation makes sense in a world where there were not the economic or legal practices in place to support the acquisition of vital resources, Konstan believes that friendship still had "a relative autonomy comparable to the status it presumably enjoys in modern life"[85] and that Athenian society allowed for the expression of altruism and sympathy under the name of friendship in contrast to other

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[80] Quell and Stauffer, *TDNT* 1:36.

[81] The nominal φιλία does not actually occur in the Homeric epics. Rather, one finds the word φίλος, the later Greek word for 'friend'. See Fitzgerald, "Friendship Prior to Aristotle," 15-27.

[82] Stählin, *TDNT* 9:149.

[83] Konstan, *Friendship*, 1. See also D. Lee, "Friendship, Love and Abiding in the Gospel of John," in *Transcending Boundaries: Contemporary Readings of the New Testament* (eds. R. M. Chennattu, et al.; Rome: LAS, 2005), 58. Lee says: "The term 'friendship' (φιλία, *amicitia*) was used of different kinds of relationship: allies, lovers, followers of political leaders, members of philosophical groups, and the relationship between patrons and clients."

[84] See for example M. F. Heath, *The Poetics of Greek Tragedy* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1987), 73f.; S. Goldhill, *Reading Greek Tragedy* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 82.

[85] Konstan, *Friendship*, 5.

forms of relationship such as kinship, civic identity or commercial activity.[86] Furthermore, friendship was seen as vitally important to the Greeks and Romans. They were sociable people and the lack of friends and deprivation of friendship was viewed as a form of extreme suffering.[87]

Konstan also points out that there does not appear to be a specific vocabulary of friendship in the earliest Greek texts (i.e. Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*) and that the term φίλος in these works functions chiefly as an adjective meaning 'dear' or 'loving',[88] and thus has a quite general application, including family, countrymen, country itself, and even precious parts of the body. Only in the later classical period of the fifth and fourth centuries BC did it come to signify more or less what 'friend' does in English today.[89] Thus friendship in the earliest works was only loosely defined and φίλος could refer to any person to whom special affection was shown – whether that person be kin or fellow warrior or one to whom one owed allegiance.[90] However, by the time of the classical period, φίλος was often preceded by the article and was understood in a much more restricted way, referring to intimate associations most often with those who were unrelated by blood or marriage – it was a term used to distinguish between immediate kin (and potential heirs) and those with whom one had close personal bonds outside the family.[91]

In the writings of several ancient authors, φίλος seems to be distinguished from other relations – e.g. φίλοι is seen as a different group to οἰκείων (relations), ἀστόν (fellow citizen), ξένον (foreigner) in Plato's *Meno* (91c1-3), and φίλος is distinguished from συγγενής (relative) and δημότης (fellow-villager) in Lysias' *Against Andocides* (6.23; 6:53); and in Isocrates' *Antidosis* (15.99), when discussing good relations towards different parties, φίλοι (friends) are distinguished from ἴδιος οἶκος (lit. one's own household) and πόλις (the state). The way in which φίλοι is actually placed between πόλις and ἴδιος οἶκος in the Greek text and

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86 Konstan, *Friendship*, 6.

87 Konstan, *Friendship*, 16.

88 Fitzgerald, however, says: "Most believe that Homer uses φίλος in two main ways. The first use is as a reflexive possessive pronoun (or possessive adjective) in the sense of 'one's own' (= ἴδιος or ἑός). The second use is as an emotive adjective, usually in the passive sense of 'dear, beloved,' but occasionally in the active sense of 'loving, friendly.'" See Fitzgerald, "Friendship Prior to Aristotle," 15.

89 Konstan, *Friendship*, 28-31. See also D. Konstan, "Friendship, Frankness and Flattery," in *Friendship, Flattery, and Frankness of Speech: Studies on Friendship in the New Testament World* (ed. J. T. Fitzgerald; Leiden: Brill, 1996), 7.

90 See for example Stählin, *TDNT* 9:146f. Stählin says that the noun φίλος 'friend', in its various nuances according to the relation, can mean: 'personal friend', 'the loved one' (in a homoerotic sense), 'the lover', 'the favourite', or 'the ally'. In the plural it can also mean: 'the followers' of a political leader, 'friends/clients' who cluster around a prominent and wealthy man. These latter meanings have moved away from the equal relations in personal friendships to unequal relations which embraces parasites, advisers, legal assistants, and political supporters. Stählin provides examples from classical literature of each meaning.

91 Konstan, "Friendship, Frankness & Flattery," 8.

the different terms for the various kinds of relationships seems to indicate that 'friends' occupy an intermediate place between country and kin. This is somewhat different to our modern understanding of 'friend' which for us may include kin and countrymen, but in the ancient world, friends seem to be a different category of relationship.[92]

However, it would be a mistake to think that the ancients were so hard and fast with their definitions and usage. Aristotle, for example, seems to indicate that 'friendship' did in fact exist between people who were quite closely related. He deals with the subject of φιλία quite extensively in his *Nicomachean Ethics* and *Eudemian Ethics*[93] where he conceives of friendship in three main ways (*NE* VIII.2.1155b; VIII.3.1156a-b; see also *EE* VII.2.1236a) – a friendship based on virtue, which he considers the highest form of friendship; a friendship based on utility and usefulness which was the most common form of friendship; and a friendship based on pleasure.[94] However, as Konstan points out, "Aristotle is not, in the first instance, interested so much in 'friendship' itself as in the nature of affectionate ties or relations in general."[95] His understanding of φιλία is probably better understood as 'love', 'affection', or 'a loving relationship' rather than 'friendship' for he sees φιλία as existing in all kinds of relationships – between φίλοι, between a mother and child, among fellow-citizens, and between ἑταῖροι. In Aristotle's view, these are all different manifestations of φιλία in which the elements of friendship (affection, altruism, reciprocity, mutual recognition) would vary in presence and intensity according to the relationship being examined.[96] Konstan believes that Aristotle is often misunderstood because it seems that he widens the

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92 See Konstan, *Friendship*, 53-56.

93 The subject is also discussed to a lesser extent in *Magna Moralia* and *Ars Rhetorica*.

94 For excellent discussions of the three forms of friendship see the chapter "The Three Kinds of Friendship" in L. S. Pangle, *Aristotle and the Philosophy of Friendship* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 37-56; Cooper, "Aristotle on the Forms of Friendship".

95 Konstan, *Friendship*, 67. Konstan's whole discussion on Aristotle's view of *philia* and its manifestations (pages 67-78) is well worth reading.

96 For Aristotle's answer to the question 'What is friendship?' see *NE* VIII.2.1155b-1156a in which the characteristics of friendship are enumerated as reciprocal affection, wishing the party well for their own sake, and a recognition on both sides of the mutual feelings. For some contrasting discussions on what Aristotle means by this see W. W. Fortenbaugh, "Aristotle's Analysis of Friendship: Function and Analogy, Resemblance, and Focal Meaning," *Phronesis* 20, no. 1 (1975): 57-64; and A. D. M. Walker, "Aristotle's Account of Friendship in the 'Nicomachean Ethics'," *Phronesis* 24, no. 2 (1979); see also "Aristotle and Montaigne on Friendship as the Greatest Good" in Pangle, *Aristotle and the Philosophy of Friendship*, 57-64. Perhaps Aristotle's simplest definitions of 'love' and 'friend' are found in *Ars Rhetorica*; see Aristotle, *XXII: The Art of Rhetoric* (LCL 193; ed. J. Henderson; trans. J. H. Freese; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1926), 192-193. In this work, Aristotle says:

> Let loving [τὸ φιλεῖν], then, be wishing for anyone the things which we believe to be good, for his sake but not for our own, and procuring them for him as far as lies in our power. A friend [φίλος] is one who loves and is loved in return, and those who think their relationship is of this character consider themselves friends. This being granted, it necessarily follows that he is a friend

concept of φιλία to such an extent that it no longer means 'friendship' (its usual translation) but an entirely different concept. However, understanding φιλία as 'affection' does not exclude 'friendship' – the affection between φίλοι or friends is one type of φιλία of which there are a variety of forms.[97]

In books 8 and 9 of his *Nicomachean Ethics* Aristotle speaks of participation in another's grief or pain, along with the sharing of joy or pleasure as a criterion of profound love, but he seems to see love as something that occurs between those who are close in terms of kinship or friendship. 'Pity' is the emotion that is shown to more distant parties when one feels some kind of compassion for the misfortune of others. As Konstan describes it in another of his books, *Pity Transformed*, "pity begins where love leaves off".[98] The key issue here seems to be that love is an emotion reserved for those who are near and dear and is not something to be shown towards more distant acquaintances, and certainly not one's enemies.

However, a consistent feature of friendship is the expectation of mutual assistance from φίλοι and that the ideal of friendship served as a touchstone for fidelity.[99] It was a sign of friendship to come to the other's assistance when needed, which means that friendship was not simply dependent upon sentiment and intentions but on deeds; the surest evidence of devotion is what one does for a friend. And, according to Konstan, the motivation for such assistance is not a sense of debt or obligation of reciprocity (contra the popular and prevailing view) but an altruistic desire to be of benefit to the other.[100]

Thus, it seems that in the ancient world 'friendship' is a subset of φιλία or affectionate attachment and is defined by good-will rather than by pre-existing ties of blood or ethnicity. This good-will is manifested in beneficial actions and failure to help could be seen as a sign of animosity. Such a view of friendship means that kin could be considered friends or enemies dependent upon their willingness to give aid when needed and likewise others who offer help when needed may be described as friends. It would seem that right from the beginning (i.e. Socrates and Plato) the Greek idea of 'love' was essentially a love that cared for the other.[101]

> who shares our joy in good fortune and our sorrow in affliction, for our own sake and not for any other reason. (*Ars Rhetorica*, II.4.1381a)

97 Konstan, *Friendship*, 68. Lee suggests that "[p]ersonal friendship in the ancient world was to be built on integrity, equality, maturity, intimacy, love and affection, honesty, constancy, reciprocity and self-sacrifice." See Lee, "Friendship, Love & Abiding," 58.

98 D. Konstan, *Pity Transformed* (London: Duckworth, 2001), 59.

99 Konstan, *Friendship*, 59.

100 Konstan, *Friendship*, 82.

101 C. J. De Vogel, "Greek Cosmic Love and the Christian Love of God. Boethius, Dionysus the Areopagite and the Author of the Fourth Gospel," *VC* 35, no. 1 (1981): 62.

Friendship in the First Century AD Graeco-Roman World

One other aspect of friendship found in Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, is a discussion of the φιλία or affectionate relationship between two 'unequal' parties (*NE* VIII.7-8.1158b-1159b). In such relationships the affectionate feeling must be proportional to the parties so that the superior partner is loved more than he loves.[102] Thus the father is loved more than the son, the husband is loved more than the wife, the king is loved more than the subjects. The existence of φιλία between unequals depends on the distance between the parties and the greater the distance the less likely it is that φιλία can be maintained. Indeed, when it comes to the gods, Aristotle argues (*NE* VIII.7.1158b-1159a) that they are so far superior to human beings that friendship with them cannot exist. Thus, it seems that in the ancient Graeco-Roman world, φιλία or 'affection' was considered to be largely the domain of equal parties with the φιλία between unequals being different and in proportion to the position of each party, and φιλία ultimately ceasing or being impossible between parties who are very remote from one another in their standing. The saying "friendship is equality"[103] is oft repeated in Aristotle's works[104] and seems to reflect the common understanding of equality in friendships. However, one passage that possibly creates some difficulty for this is Aristotle's discussion in book 9 regarding the unusual situation that a benefactor loves (φιλεῖν) the one benefitted more than the other way around (*NE* IX.7.1167b-1168a). This is probably because benefactors love and prize (φιλοῦσι καὶ ἀγαπῶσι, "feel affection for and value") those they benefit because they see them as an extension of themselves, and thus to love the benefitted is to love their own being.[105]

The Stoics who wrote between the late second century BC and the second century AD, had little interest in friendship, according to Konstan, and only sages were capable of being friends, but this was a friendship based on moral virtue and impassiveness and not personal affections. True friendship was seen as a function of wisdom; all other relationships were based upon loyalty. However, Konstan suggests that Epictetus, one of the key Stoic philosophers, may reflect a severe strain of Stoic thought in respect to friendship, virtually evacuating the concept of its ordinary content.[106]

The Epicureans, who were writing in the first three centuries AD, saw pleasure as the highest good, but also cultivated friendships within their communities. The reason for this seems to be related to the benefit or utility (χρεία) that they could provide, benefits such as protection and security, material helps, and a

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[102] *Nicomachean Ethics*, 8.7.2. See the discussion in Pangle, *Aristotle and the Philosophy of Friendship*, 57f.

[103] "Amity is parity" in some translations.

[104] E.g. *Nicomachean Ethics* 8.5; 8:7; 8.8; *Eudemian Ethics* 7.4; 7.10.

[105] See the discussions in B. B. Warfield, "The Terminology of Love in the New Testament," *The Princeton Theological Review* 16, no. 1 (1918): 7; and Pangle, *Aristotle and the Philosophy of Friendship*, 62-64.

[106] Konstan, *Friendship*, 113f.

confidence re future help, which in turn resulted in pleasure.[107] In Epicurean thinking, φιλία arises in order that such benefits might be obtained, though it was still thought that φιλία had an intrinsic excellence (ἀρετή) and was thus valuable *per se*.[108] The primary purpose of φιλία, however, was to obtain benefits, though Epicurus rails both against constant recourse to seeking help from others and not utilising it.[109] Emotion was initially not considered to be a part of such friendships because passion, interpreted as an intense desire for sex accompanied by intense longing, would result in anxiety and the reduction of pleasure. However, affection in Epicurean friendships was something that did develop later because they saw the value of mutual need and support among human beings.[110] Original Epicurean thinking was that primitive human beings did not need one another because the ideal life was a life of pleasure and fear of the gods, death, and other men were what would lead to anxiety and reduced pleasure. Epicurus taught that fear of the gods and of death could be removed by right doctrine, but fear of men was harder to remove and the best way to achieve this was to shun the public life and try to live isolated and self-sufficient lives; but over time the Epicureans developed a social awareness and thus affection was part of this 'weakening' of the human race.[111] In his survey of the usage of φιλία, Konstan notes that later Epicureans entertained a variety of views on love and friendship. He cites three opinions recorded by Cicero (*De Finibus* I.66-70): "that feelings for friends derive from and become bound up with the pleasure they afford; that with familiarity love flourishes so that friends are cherished for their own sakes independently of advantage; and that friendship involves a contract or pledge (*foedus*) among the wise to love each other as themselves."[112]

Neopythagoreanism which originated in the first century BC and flourished in the first and second centuries AD, also deals with the *topos* of friendship. Pythagoras (ca. 570-490BC), upon whose thoughts and ideas Neopythagoreanism was based, was the first to write about and establish a philosophical community based on φιλία. Indeed, Pythagoras was the first to record ideas of friendship that were picked up and developed by later writers – expressions like κοινὰ τὰ τῶν φίλων ("Friends have everything in

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[107] J. M. Rist, "Epicurus on Friendship," *CP* 75, no. 2 (1980): 122, 124f.

[108] Epicurus. "Vatican Sayings." Accessed 11th November 2018. Online: http://epicurus.net/en/vatican.html, Section 23.

[109] Epicurus, "Vatican Sayings," Section 39.

[110] Konstan, *Friendship*, 110. For a detailed discussion of the place of emotions in Epicurean philosophy, see D. Armstrong, "'Be Angry and Sin Not': Philodemus Versus the Stoics on Natural Bites and Natural Emotions," in *Passions and Moral Progress in Greco-Roman Thought* (ed. J. T. Fitzgerald; London; New York: Routledge, 2008).

[111] Rist, "Epicurus on Friendship": 121.

[112] Konstan, *Friendship*, 112. John Rist, however, argues that Cicero misreads Epicurus when he suggests that we love friends for their own sake when hope of pleasure is laid aside, but Rist says that, in fact the Epicureans distinguished tangible and intangible rewards of friendship. See Rist, "Epicurus on Friendship": 123f.

common"), φιλότης ἰσότης ("Friendship is equality"), and φίλος ἐστὶν ἄλλος ἐγώ ("A friend is another I").[113] The philosophical school established by Pythagoras and perpetuated by his followers waned from around the beginning of the fourth century BC, though some scholars believe that adherents continued to exist.[114] Around the first century BC a revival, now known as Neopythagoreanism, began and continued until well into the second century AD. Johan Thom has examined various Neopythagorean sources from this period in which the *topos* of friendship is mentioned; looking at Neopythagorean treatises, Pythagorean letters, various Pythagorean sayings collections, and biographical traditions concerning Pythagoras and the Pythagorean life, he identified several features of the Neopythagorean view of φιλία. He discovered that like Aristotle, the treatises speak of three types of friendship, but they were very different to Aristotle's. While Aristotle speaks of friendships between humans based on virtue, utility, or pleasure, Pythagorean friendship speaks of a friendship with the gods based on knowledge, a friendship between humans based on mutual support, and a friendship with animals based on pleasure – the first of which Aristotle maintained was not possible.[115] Thom also records various principles about friendship evident in the Pythagorean and Neopythagorean writings: Care is needed in the selection of friends and friendship is a deliberate choice; friends share everything (bad as well as good); friends stay friends regardless of circumstances – there is a constancy in friendship; friends yield to a friend's gentle words and useful actions; a friend puts up with a friend's faults and mistakes and does not allow the friendship to turn into enmity; and friendship with God is the ultimate goal of a pious life, which as we noted was not possible according to Aristotle.[116] For Pythagoras and his followers, "friendship was a way of life, while friendship itself was based on professing and practising the same doctrines."[117] In one of the later Neopythagorean writers, Iamblichus reports a speech of Pythagoras in which he gives instructions to young men, instructions which in many ways foreshadow what Jesus would later tell his disciples and they in turn would tell those who would follow them in being disciple of Jesus, including the Johannine author:

> He also directed them to be so disposed in their associations [ὁμιλίαις] with one another, that they never become enemies to their friends, but become, as quickly as

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[113] J. C. Thom, "'Harmonious Equality': The *Topos* of Friendship in Neopythagorean Writings," in *Greco-Roman Perspectives on Friendship* (ed. J. T. Fitzgerald; vol. 34 of *SBL – Resources for Biblical Study,* ed. D. E. Aune; Missoula, MT; Chico, CA; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997), 77. Interestingly, Aristotle expresses the idea in terms of 'another self' (ἄλλος αὐτός – NE IX.4.1166a) or 'a second self' (ἕτερος αὐτὸς – *NE* IX.9.1169b,1170b).

[114] For a history of Pythagoreanism see K. von Fritz, "Pythagoras von Samos," *Paulys Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft* 24, no. 1 (1963): 171-209; J. C. Thom, "Pythagoreanism," *ABD* 5.562-563; E. Afonasin, "Iamblichus and the Foundations of Late Platonism," in *The Pythagorean Way of Life in Clement of Alexandria and Iamblichus* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 13-35.

[115] See *NE* VIII.7.1159a5.

[116] Thom, "Friendship Prior to Aristotle," 83-102.

[117] Thom, "Friendship Prior to Aristotle," 93.

> possible, friends to their enemies. Also they should practice, on the one hand, in decency [εὐκοσμίᾳ] toward those older, the good will [εὔνοιαν] due their fathers, and, on the other hand, in benevolence [φιλανθρωπίᾳ] towards others, the fellowship [κοινωνίαν] due their brothers. (Iamblichus, *Vita Pythagorae* 40)[118]

Like the Neopythagoreans, Plutarch who was writing in the first century AD, was also quite positive about the possibility of friendship, especially in a family setting.[119] In his essay, *De Fraterno Amore* ("On Brotherly Love"), Plutarch argues that brotherly love is in accordance with nature and so it should be evident in all types of brotherly relationships – whether one is inferior to or superior to one's brother and whether one's parents are living or deceased. He speaks of the harmony that exists in a family and how the family thrives and flourishes when brothers are in unanimous accord (ch. 2). It brings great delight to the parents and expresses the gratitude of the children. (ch. 4) Further, the distinctiveness of brotherly love is evident when we ascribe the title 'brother' to a good friend (ch. 3). In chapters 8-19, Plutarch describes how brothers are to conduct themselves towards one another and the undergirding basis of this is love for one's brother. Hence, one who loves his brother will bear with his brother's faults (ch. 8), will commend his brother to his parents and be his advocate (ch. 9), will gently reprove him when he errs (ch. 10), will deal fairly and justly with their deceased parents' estate (ch.11), will seek to share what he has with his brother if in some way he is better equipped or endowed with some special ability (ch. 12), will seek to praise his brother in the areas in which he excels (ch. 13), will not envy his brother (ch. 14), will seek for eminence in areas different from his brother (ch. 15), will be an example if he is older than his brother else will follow his older brother's example (ch. 16), and will settle differences and ensure that there is no continuation of the issue and that nothing be allowed to foster an estrangement (chs. 17-19).

Plutarch argues that brotherhood is greater than friendship since the latter is a derivative relationship – a shadow and imitation of familial relationships such as brotherhood (*De Fraterno Amore,* 479D). This suggests that Plutarch saw φιλαδελφία as a much stronger form of friendship (of a greater intensity or different kind) than other forms of friendship which might be described as φιλία or the lesser used word ἀγάπη.[120]

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[118] Cited in Thom, "Friendship Prior to Aristotle," 96. The passage is equated to 178.32-179.4 in H. Thesleff's *The Pythagorean Texts of the Hellenistic Period*. An alternate translation (available in the public domain) can be found in: Iamblichus, *Life of Pythagoras* (trans. T. Taylor; Krotona, CA: Theosophical Publishing House, 1905), 18.

[119] Also, like the Neopythagoreans, Plutarch believed that it was possible to have a friendship with the gods, calling it the first and greatest friendship (θεοὶ φίλοι πρῶτοι καὶ μέγιστοι) (*Advice to the Bride and Groom* 19).

[120] For an excellent analysis of Plutarch's *De Fraterno Amore* see H. D. Betz, "De Fraterno Amore (Moralia 478A-492D)," in *Plutarch's Ethical Writings and Early Christian Literature* (ed. H. D. Betz; vol. 4 of *Studia Ad Corpus*

In conclusion, it can be said that 'friendship' in the ancient world was conceived of as a personal relation between people who were bound to each other not by kinship or ethnicity or official duties but by bonds of mutual loyalty, trust and love.[121]

2.3. Key Aspects of Friendship

Having established that friendship has a long history in the Greek world, we now consider what friendship looked like in the Graeco-Roman world of the first two centuries AD, when Rome was the political power, but Greek culture was still all pervasive. A number of scholars think that friendships at this time were largely political arrangements between parties, often viewed as patron-client relationships formed for the sake of expediency (and thus devoid of emotion), and that they were frequently 'hijacked' by flatterers who sought to tell the other party what they wanted to hear, rather than the truth. Considered here therefore, are three key aspects of friendships at this time – the place that politics played in the formation and maintenance of φιλία, whether φιλία involved emotion, and the importance of παρρησία ('frank speaking' or 'truth-telling') to the philosophers of the day.

2.3.1. The Politics of Friendship

In an article entitled "Politics of Friendship" published in *American Imago* in 1993,[122] the French philosopher Jacques Derrida discusses the differences between friendship in the Graeco-Roman world and the present day. He notes that "[t]he Greco-Roman model of friendship appears to be marked by the value of *reciprocity*, by homological, immanentist, finitist, and politicist concord" but that friendship in the modern world breaks with reciprocity and introduces heterology, transcendence, asymmetry, and infinity into friendship relationships.[123] He then ponders the reasons for this difference and asks "Shall we say that this fracture is Judeo-Christian? Shall we say that it depoliticizes the Greek model or that it

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Hellenisticum Novi Testamenti, eds. H. D. Betz, et al.; Leiden: Brill, 1978). Betz's work is discussed later in section 5.2.2 (*The Language of Love*) in relation to the 'christianising' of the 'love' language.

[121] Konstan, *Friendship*, 121.

[122] J. Derrida, "Politics of Friendship," *American Imago* 50, no. 3 (1993). This is a reprint and update of an earlier essay, J. Derrida, "The Politics of Friendship," *Journal of Philosophy* 85, no. 11 (1988). These articles were the start of what later became Derrida's seminal work, *The Politics of Friendship* (trans. G. Collins; London; New York: Verso, 1997). See pages 290-23 of this later work for where these ideas are reproduced using slightly different wording.

[123] Derrida, "Politics of Friendship": 385. This is basically saying that friendships were no longer seen as well-defined relationships of equals who share the same mind and values for the mutual benefit of both; instead they were seen as unbounded relationships of unequals who held different beliefs and values.

displaces the nature of the political?"[124] It is thus important to seek a good understanding of the 'political' aspect of Graeco-Roman friendships in order to see whether Christianity played any part in redefining friendship.

As we saw in section 2.2 (*Friendship's Grounding in the Ancient World*) Aristotle conceives of a friendship in three main ways – friendships based on virtue, utility, and pleasure. The friendship based on utility is also described by Aristotle as a kind of political relationship because such friendships are like political parties with both being formed for the advantage of the participants (*NE* VIII.9.1160a; cf. *EE* VII.1.1234b; X.14.1242b).[125] While Aristotle followed Plato in agreeing that friendships such as these ideally took place between equals (cf. Plato, *Laws* VI.757), he was a realist and acknowledged that most friendships are actually between unequals with the basis of such friendships being a political agreement in which each party gained something from the other in proportion to their worth and according to an agreement between them – i.e. such friendships were based on utility (*NE* IX.1.1163b-1164a).[126] Despite defining true friendship in *De Amicitia* as founded on virtue (*Amic*. I.5-II.9), Cicero, likewise saw a relationship between friendship and politics, going so far as to say that a friendship may end if the two parties no longer held the same political views (*Amic*. X.33; XXI.77); and Plutarch, in his essay on conversing with men in power, begins by saying that the one who cultivates a friendship with a person in power does something which proves fruitful both personally and for the wider public – because it shows that he loves what is noble, that he is public-spirited, and that he is a friend of all humanity, and that he is not out for selfish ambition or concerned about hushed whispers (*Moralia* X.1.776B). Indeed, Plutarch goes on to advocate for making friends with those in power as a means for achieving the greatest good for the largest part of humanity, and for having the greatest possible influence; the philosopher who is interested in public life will go to famous men and leaders with open arms – this is friendship in the service of politics (*Moralia* X.1.778B-C, 779A-B).

The Latin equivalent of φιλία is generally thought to be *amicitia*, though in a more sweeping sense it is *amor*.[127] *Amicitia* is a word which has a breadth of meaning and Peter Brunt has shown that "it covers

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[124] Derrida, "Politics of Friendship": 385f.

[125] Aristotle also saw unanimity as a kind of political friendship because in such cases the concern is for things that are to our own interest and which have an influence on our life (*NE* IX.6.1167b; *EE* VII.8.1241a).

[126] For a fuller discussion of the issue of friendship in politics see Pangle, *Aristotle and the Philosophy of Friendship*, 79-85, 99-104.

[127] Konstan, *Friendship*, 122. Koenraad Verboven points out that *amicitia* actually derives from *amor*. See K. Verboven, "Friendship among the Romans," in *The Oxford Handbook of Social Relations in the Roman World* (ed. M. Peachin; Oxford; London; New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 405. For a detailed discussion of how equivalent *philia* and *amicitia* really are, and the relationship between *amicitia* and *amor*, see C. A. Williams, *Reading Roman Friendship* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 26-35,116-173.

every degree of genuinely or overtly amicable relation"[128] but at its heart it refers to the specific relation between friends (*amici*). Likewise, Craig Williams argues that "*amicitia* played a fundamental role in Roman culture, pervading social relations and shaping ethical ideals seemingly even more than did *philia* in the Greek world."[129] Verboven has shown that two veins of thought regarding the nature of friendship (*amicitia*) emerge from the ancient sources; there is: (1) true *amicitia* derived from the longing of all human beings for comradeship with virtue at its heart; and (2) friendship sought on the basis of the usefulness that might arise from such a connection (rather than because of sentimental thoughts about affinity or the moral estimation of the friend).[130] The idea of friendship involving comradeship and relationships of usefulness have led to some thinking that friendship is basically political. Despite the fact that one cannot strip *amicitia* of any personal intimacy and assume that it was only used for party relationships, the political view of friendship has become widely held, though in fact the relationship between friendship and politics is seen to flow both ways, for some have argued that politics is in practice, based on friendships. Stanley Stowers, for example, in his book, *Letter Writing in Greco-Roman Antiquity*, argues that "Politics…was based on the institutions of friendship and family".[131] He adduces evidence for friendship being the basis of politics by mining the so-called 'friendly letters' (i.e. letters between the upper strata of society which were normally used to express, maintain, and share the affections of friendship) and noting examples of the political themes contained therein.[132] He finds that the distinction between private and public in the modern world, whereby politics is public, and friendship (*amicitia*) and family are private, did not hold in Graeco-Roman society, where the two were much more closely intertwined. Consequently, because of the blurring of the private-public boundary, Stowers argues that 'friendly letters' actually became common forums for political discussions.[133] He also notes that

> *Amicitia* was also firmly anchored in the Roman family and alliances of families. It was often an alliance of utility between social equals and was sometimes equated with

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[128] P. A. Brunt, "Amicitia in the Late Roman Republic," *Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society* 2 (1965): 20. The whole article is well worth reading.

[129] Williams, *Roman Friendship*, 2. Williams says he wrote his book to address the imbalance of studies on *philia* over *amicitia*.

[130] Verboven, "Friendship," 405f. He goes on (407-411) to describe the five key ethics that underpinned Roman friendship and reflected what the Romans thought they were displaying when forming friendships: (1) *benevolentia* (goodwill); (2) *gratia* (goodwill, kindness); (3) *fides* (trust or good faith); (4) *amor* (affection, love); and (5) *existimatio* (reputation). It is therefore evident that *amicitia* expresses a broad range of ideas involving both obligation and affection and it is reductionistic to focus on any one aspect. For another excellent discussion of Roman friendship and a similar warning see Williams, *Roman Friendship*, 44-54.

[131] Stowers, *Letter Writing*, 19, 28, 30.

[132] See especially chapters 2, 3, and 7.

[133] Stowers, *Letter Writing*, 30.

> "political party" (*factio*). Traditionally, then, it was the chief horizontal relationship between influential people in contrast to the vertical, hierarchical client-patron relationship.[134]

Despite the view that *amicitia* was primarily a term used to describe relationships between equals, it was still also used to describe patron-client relationships, though some argue that it is not right to call such relationships, friendship.[135] The culture of authority and deference in the Roman world was somewhat different to that of classical Athens and historians have sometimes concluded that friendships between superior and inferiors under the Roman empire were euphemisms for relations of dependency that are better called patronage.[136] However, as Konstan has pointed out, *amicitia* should not be reduced solely to practical *quid-pro-quo* exchanges of service,[137] and Koenraad Verboven argues that while friendship and patronage were not mutually exclusive, the language of friendship was preferable because patronage carried an implicit inequality (inferiority and dependency) between the participants.[138] Indeed, clients who had aristocratic pretensions and who entered into patron-client relationships for the purposes of social advancement, were sometimes called friends (*amici*) rather than clients, because they disliked the term 'client' (see Cicero, *On Duties* 2.69).[139] Richard Saller acknowledges that the term *amicus* was used at times to describe the relationship between a junior aristocratic associate (or even one lower down the social scale) and his *patronus* who was a more senior aristocrat, but he argues, "more important than the language is what the patterns of behaviour and social conventions reveal about the Roman understanding of these relationships."[140] He goes on to describe how the status-conscious Romans subdivided their 'friends' into various categories: *superiores*, *pares*, *inferiores*, and *clientes*, and says that "[e]ach category called for an appropriate mode of behaviour" citing Pliny *Letters* 7.3.2 and 2.6.2, in which Pliny speaks of

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[134] Stowers, *Letter Writing*, 30.

[135] Craig Williams makes an important point about language here when he says: "It is one thing for us today, on the other side of a gulf in time and culture, to argue that a relationship which calls itself *amicitia* is not really friendship, but quite another to claim that it is not really *amicitia.*" Williams, *Roman Friendship*, 47.

[136] Konstan, *Friendship*, 136. See also R. P. Saller, "Patronage and Friendship in Early Imperial Rome: Drawing the Distinction," in *Patronage in Ancient Society* (ed. A. Wallace-Hadrill; London; New York: Routledge, 1989), 49-62. In this article Saller defends his previous 1982 work on patronage in which he defined three features of the patronal relationship: (1) there must be the reciprocal exchange of goods and services; (2) it must be a personal relationship of some duration; (3) the relationship must be asymmetrical, in the sense that the two parties are of unequal status and offer different kinds of goods and services in the exchange – this is what sets patronage off from friendship between equals.

[137] Konstan, *Friendship*, 137.

[138] Verboven, "Friendship," 413.

[139] Cicero says that, "it is bitter as death to them to have accepted a patron or to be called clients".

[140] Saller, "Patronage and Friendship," 57.

'graded' friends and treating them differently, and Seneca *Epistles* 94.14 in which he describes how different advice is given to friends who are equals and those who are of lower rank. This is despite the fact that Seneca also argues that the expression of friendship, even in patron-client relationships, was not to be determined by the circumstances of the recipient, nor engineered for one's own benefit, nor governed by the expediency of the situation. In book VI of his treatise *On Benefits*, after describing true friends as those who have quick and ready access to a person, who don't have to wait in line to give a greeting, who can speak with frankness, and who have been admitted to the heart and enshrined in affection, Seneca discusses proper and improper ways to treat a friend. He argues that it not right to pray that a friend might have a dire need so that one can rescue him, and he discusses the right motivation for returning gratitude (*On Benefits,* VI, 35).[141] It would seem that not all who could be termed *amici* were considered equal and different friends were treated differently.[142]

Miriam Griffin in her discussion of Seneca's *De Beneficiis* (*On Benefits*), argues similarly that the exchange of gifts and favours was regarded as crucial to the working of ancient society in both Greece and Rome, with such exchanges being the "chief bond of human society" and ingratitude being "a uniquely disruptive force".[143] She argues that these exchanges, whether described in terms of reciprocity (the favoured Greek term) or patronage (the preferred Roman term), were more than simply the result of patron-client relationships. In agreement with Seneca she thinks that "*amicitia* is more often viewed as the result than as the cause of an exchange of benefits [*Ben.* 2.18.5]".[144] For her, acts of beneficence do not create friendships, though they could do so;[145] they are primarily the obligations inherent in friendships. Furthermore, in such friendships "sentiment and the sharing of interests and activities were as inherent in Roman friendship as the exchange of favours."[146] Griffin also notes how the author of *Laus Pisonis* (likely written in Seneca's lifetime) treated equally all those who came into his ambit, showing the same level of

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[141] Seneca, *Moral Essays III: On Benefits* (LCL 310; ed. J. Henderson; trans. J. Basore; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1935), 437.

[142] When discussing poets and *amicitia* in early imperial Rome, Peter White notes the various adjectives that are linked with *amicus* to differentiate friends, adjectives like *minores, pauperes, tenuiores, humiles*, *mediocris, modicus*; even rich friends were distinguished using adjectives like *dives, locuples, potens,* and *magnus*; he also notes the various 'kindred terms with significant currency at the end of the first century' that could be used almost interchangeably with *amicitia/amicus – sodalis, diligere/dilectus, contubernium/contubernalis, caritas/carus, familiaritas/familiaris*, along with the affectionate possessives *meus* and *noster*. See P. White, "*Amicitia* and the Profession of Poetry in Early Imperial Rome," *JRS* 68 (1978): 80f.

[143] M. Griffin, "*De Beneficiis* and Roman Society," *JRS* 93 (2003): 92.

[144] Griffin, "*De Beneficiis* and Roman Society": 97.

[145] Seneca regarded a benefit given to a stranger as more valuable than the same benefit given to a friend, for it creates a friend out of the stranger (*On Benefits* 3.12.1).

[146] Griffin, "*De Beneficiis* and Roman Society": 99.

friendship to both the highest and the lowest, considering the lowly farmer equal with his other friends, and basing his treatment of people on their character and not their fortune or birth. By treating them all equally, "he teaches them *obsequium* and acquires affection by showing affection".[147]

It is evident from what has just been said that affection seems to be an intrinsic part of friendships and we thus have cause to investigate further the role of affection and emotion in friendship (see the next section), particularly since there is some debate about whether there was any affection evident in an unequal patron-client relationship or whether it was purely a 'business' arrangement. While our focus, at present, is on the politics of friendship, it is impossible to divorce the affection involved in friendships from the political aspects of friendship. In her book, *The Therapy of Desire*, Martha Nussbaum considers the relationship of love and friendship to familial and political motivation. The philosophers, she says, saw philosophy as performing social and political actions for the benefit of society, though they more often seemed to teach people how to put up with the problems of society rather than fix them.[148] Nevertheless, the philosophers saw in their own teacher-pupil friendship relationships, an ideal of community; in their view social institutions needed reforming since they were impeding human flourishing. Plato, for example, envisaged a world in which friends shared everything (*Laws* V.739c; cf. *Rep.* IV.424a; V.449c) and thus saw the city as a community of citizens in which all things were in common (indeed, he saw such a city as preferable to the household, which he thought should be abolished). He went so far as to suggest that marriage should be restructured such that spouses and children were held in common (*Rep.* IV.423e-424a; V.449a-466d). The idea was that by doing so family sympathies would be extended from the nuclear family to the state, and that private interests would be minimised in favour of the common good, thus strengthening the state. Aristotle, however, was critical of this idea; he criticised Plato's proposal because in practice men form particularly close attachments to their spouse and children and such attachments involve ethical attention and care to particular individuals, above and beyond the concern for the common: "There are two motives that most cause men to care for things and be fond of them, the sense of ownership and the sense of preciousness; and neither motive can be present with the citizens of a state so constituted." (*Pol*. II.1.1262b). This means that spouses and children could not simply be treated as common objects of the ethical obligations of the community. In fact, Aristotle thought that such a

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[147] See Griffin, "*De Beneficiis* and Roman Society": 111.

[148] M. C. Nussbaum, *The Therapy of Desire: Theory and Practice in Hellenistic Ethics* (Martin Classical Lectures, *New Series* 2; Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994), 10f. Nussbaum goes on to note that Epicureans urge "a complete withdrawal from the life of the city", Skeptics urge "an uncritical obedience to forces of existing convention", and Stoics, despite being committed "to the intrinsic value of justice" seem to focus more on other things such as an internal freedom and how to live wisely, being largely indifferent to the existing class structures and economic relations; they didn't actually do much about changing the injustices that they said they were opposed to.

community would inevitably dilute responsibility and love (*Pol.* II.1.1261b, 1262b). The bottom line is that familial and political motivations are distinguished by the level of affection present in the relationships.

Contra Plato, Aristotle actually thought that the household was the protype of the state and that the city emerged out of the households which are its building blocks.[149] Indeed, as Anthony Price points out, Aristotle saw patterns in the household which anticipated the various kinds of political constitutions – "the association of father and son is like a monarchy, that of master and slave like a tyranny, that of man and wife like an aristocracy, and that of brothers like a timocracy ([*NE*] VIII.10.1160b22–1161a6)."[150] Price further suggests:

> A city serves three ends which correspond to the three kinds of friendship: living (a goal of utility), living together (a source of pleasure), and living well (the goal of goodness). Its initial purposes are living (*Pol* 1.2.1252b29-30), and living together (*EE* 7.10.1242a8-9, *Pol* 3.6.1278b20-1); yet, once established, it aims less at living and living together than at living well (*Pol* 1.2.1252b30, 3.9.1280a31-2, 1281a2-4).[151]

There is no doubt that the ancient philosophers saw a strong relationship between friendship and politics, but not all scholars see friendship as political. Peter Brunt challenges the conception that *amicitia* in the Graeco-Roman world denoted political association in contrast to Cicero's ideal of *amicitia* as founded on virtue and the pleasure derived from the relationship.[152] Brunt argues against those before him who saw *amicitia* as a substitute for 'party' (Taylor, 1949) or 'a weapon of politics' in which political factions were welded together by mutual interest and services (*officia*), a bond which was called either *factio* or *amicitia* ('party') (Syme, 1939). Instead Brunt argued that *amicitia* can certainly denote affection, and though it entails *officia* it is more than a relationship requiring the interchange of services, which were not necessarily political. Rather, Brunt has argued convincingly from the writings of Cicero that "the range of *amicitia* is vast. From the constant intimacy and goodwill of virtuous or at least like-minded men to the courtesy that etiquette normally enjoined on gentlemen, it covers every degree of genuinely or overtly amicable relation."[153]

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[149] A. W. Price, *Love and Friendship in Plato and Aristotle* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1989), 193.

[150] Price, *Love and Friendship in Plato and Aristotle*, 193.

[151] Price, *Love and Friendship in Plato and Aristotle*, 194.

[152] P. A. Brunt, *The Fall of the Roman Republic and Related Essays* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1988), 351-361.

[153] Brunt, *The Fall of the Roman Republic and Related Essays*, 381. See also his extensive discussion in Brunt, "Amicitia in the Late Roman Republic": 1-20. Verboven provides a helpful summary of modern views of Roman friendship showing that scholars like Brunt and Konstan have argued for affection and emotion as a basis of Roman friendship rather than instrumentality (i.e. mutual interest and obligations often involving gift exchanges). See Verboven, "Friendship," 406f.

It is also important to acknowledge Peter White's finding about friendship being 'formally undefined', in his book *Promised Verse: Poets in the Society of Augustan Rome*. While it might appear from the title that the book is only about poets, it is in fact all about friendship between intellectuals and writers and their patrons, a friendship Aristotle would say was based on utility. Indeed, writers of literature in the first century world frequently made use of such relationships, because they needed patron support to live while writing and to then get their works heard and eventually published. White finds that such relationships were conceived of as simple friendships and that "no matter what the balance of wealth and status between two parties, the nature of their commitment to each other was formally undefined."[154] While other relationships such as parent, spouse, master, soldier, or makers of contracts, involved some form of legal consequence, friendship did not carry any legal consequence; a friendship could be formed and ended with no enduring obligation and while it lasted it exhibited a variety of exchanges (e.g. services, benefits, regard) but the friendship "could not even be translated into a definite set of rights and duties which were morally if not legally prescribed."[155] The key point here is that there was a great deal of fluidity in friendships and they did not have any formal, legal, or even moral prescriptions which governed them.

It is evident then, that the relationship between politics and friendship in the Graeco-Roman world is a debated issue. Friendships existed been between equals or unequals and may have included reciprocal actions (e.g. of services, obligations, loyalty) but the interchange of such services was not necessarily for political purposes. Of course, some friendships were political, and politics was seen as often based on friendships. No doubt, some friendships were formed and/or maintained for political purposes, but other friendships did not seem to have any political basis or motivation. It is also evident that in at least some friendships there was a degree of affection, which may have been a distinguishing feature between the more or less political friendships, so let us now consider this second key aspect of friendships in the Graeco-Roman world.

2.3.2. The Place of Emotions in Friendship

The emotions in the ancient world continue to be an area of interest and study and much work has been done on trying to understand how they relate to the modern understanding of emotions.[156] The particular

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[154] P. White, *Promised Verse: Poets in the Society of Augustan Rome* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), 27.

[155] White, *Promised Verse*, 28.

[156] David Konstan, for example, argues that human emotions are not universal constants but culturally conditioned responses. See D. Konstan, *The Emotions of the Ancient Greeks: Studies in Aristotle and Classical Literature* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006). See also: R. P. Saller, *Personal Patronage under the Early Empire* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982); D. L. Cairns, *Aidôs: The Psychology and Ethics of*

concern in this section is whether φιλία/*amicitia* involved any emotion. Since the publication of Richard Saller's 1982 work *Personal Patronage under the Early Roman Empire* and the discussion therein regarding the meanings of *amicitia* and *clientela*, there has been some debate as to whether *amicitia* contains any affection or expression of emotion. Saller, like William Alexander,[157] sees *amicitia* as essentially a patronage arrangement devoid of affection, though undoubtedly important in holding society together. But not all agree. In his review of Saller's book, John D'Arms notes that "the nonmaterial, less tangible aspects of patronage – and especially the feelings experienced by the participants in what must often have been extremely uncomfortable relationships – fall largely outside the scope of this book; they must await a different study."[158] In addition, D'Arms notes that "Roman friendship-language sometimes, and even often, indicates patronage relationships, but not invariably" and he thinks Saller has not sufficiently allowed for this latter possibility. David Konstan assesses friendship in the Roman world similarly:

> Friendship among the Romans was a voluntary bond of mutual devotion… The stratification of Roman society threatened at times to render hollow the intimacy and affection associated with friendship as the term was used for relations marked by hierarchical display and dependency, but the strong sense of *amicitia* remained available as a means of unmasking such appropriations.[159]

Konstan argues that despite the stratification of Roman society and the increased hierarchy of vertical relations amongst the nobility necessitating adaptation of the ideas of friendship, "the core sense of a

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Honour and Shame in Ancient Greek Literature (Oxford: Clarendon, 1993); R. Sorabji, *Emotion and Peace of Mind: From Stoic Agitation to Christian Temptation* (Oxford; London; New York: Oxford University Press, 2000); M. C. Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought: The Intelligence of Emotions* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001); W. W. Fortenbaugh, *Aristotle on Emotion* (2nd (1st, 1975) ed.; London: Duckworth, 2002); *Envy, Spite, and Jealousy: The Rivalrous Emotions in Ancient Greece*, (Edinburgh Leventis Studies; eds. D. Konstan, et al.; vol. 2, 2003); S. Knuuttila, *Emotions in Ancient and Medieval Philosophy* (Oxford: Clarendon, 2004); R. A. Kaster, *Emotion, Restraint, and Community in Ancient Rome* (Oxford; London; New York: Oxford University Press, 2005); *Unveiling Emotions: Sources and Methods for the Study of Emotions in the Greek World*, (ed. A. Chaniotis; Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 2012); *Emotion and Persuasion in Classical Antiquity*, (eds. E. Sanders, et al.; Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 2013); E. Sanders, *Envy and Jealousy in Classical Athens: A Socio-Psychological Approach* (Oxford; London; New York: Oxford University Press, 2014); *Unveiling Emotions II: Emotions in Greece and Rome: Texts, Images, Material Culture*, (eds. A. Chaniotis, et al.; Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 2014); R. R. Caston and R. A. Kaster, *Hope, Joy, and Affection in the Classical World* (Oxford; London; New York: Oxford University Press, 2016); *Emotions in the Classical World: Methods, Approaches, and Directions*, (eds. D. Cairns, et al.; Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 2016).

[157] Sénèque and W. H. Alexander, *Lucius Annaeus Seneca De Beneficiis Libri VII* (University of California Publications in Classical Philology 14; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1950), 3.

[158] J. H. D'Arms, "Review of R. P. Saller's *Personal Patronage under the Early Empire*," *CP* 81, no. 1 (1986): 96.

[159] Konstan, *Friendship*, 147.

private bond based on mutual affection, esteem, and liberality – within the capabilities of the respective parties – abided".[160]

In his most recently published work on affection in ancient Greece and Rome, *In the Orbit of Love*, Konstan notes that there has been much debate both in antiquity and the present about whether concepts such as friendship, loyalty, gratitude, grief, and social solidarity are emotions or not. Konstan sees these five ideas as part of the orbit of *philia* (love) and argues that there is evidence in the classical literature to support the view that all of them involved some degree of affection and emotion, though he acknowledges that they "seem, like certain other sentiments, to lie at the margins of emotions proper. They involve affect, to all appearances, but do not share all the properties that are said (by the ancients, at least) to be constitutive of emotions proper."[161] About the concept of friendship, Konstan says:

> Friendship too has an ambiguous status: if it means no more than liking someone, it seems too weak to count as an emotion; if it refers to the bond or commitment that unites two people, then it seems too objective, too much like a formal relationship, to count as a sentiment, and indeed some scholars have sought to reduce Greek *philia* and Roman *amicitia* to a semi-contractual kind of reciprocal obligation.[162]

Nevertheless, Konstan believes that "the emotion of love is implicated, in one way or another, in all the above concepts as they were understood in classical Greece".[163] However, Konstan also notes in his earlier work, that we need to be careful in assuming, as past scholars have done, "that the Greek terms designating the several emotions correspond more or less unproblematically to our own categories" and "we cannot take it for granted that the Greek words [for the emotions] map neatly onto our own emotional vocabulary".[164] We must therefore take particular note of the context of the use of such vocabulary in both Greek and our own language.

Anthony Price offers a similar warning when discussing love and friendship in Plato and Aristotle; he says:

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[160] Konstan, *Friendship*, 148. Craig Williams also argues that *amicitia* covered both emotionally significant relationships based on affection and other useful connections (political or otherwise) with no necessary emotional content. See Williams, *Roman Friendship*, 17,22-23,44-54.

[161] D. Konstan, *In the Orbit of Love: Affection in Ancient Greece and Rome* (Oxford; London; New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), 19.

[162] Konstan, *In the Orbit of Love*, 19.

[163] Konstan, *In the Orbit of Love*, 20.

[164] Konstan, *The Emotions*, x. Konstan notes here the 1988 work of Catherine Lutz who explored the issue of sentiments in Micronesia and noted their challenge to western theory. For a good summary of the historical debate on whether emotions are universal and invariant or culturally and societally conditioned, see Konstan's first chapter "*Pathos* and Passion".

> It is initially important to note, not to settle the question but to place it correctly, that we must not be surprised to be presented with cases of *philiā* that we would never dignify with the title of 'friendship'. Greek *philiā* extends more widely than our friendship in two directions: it includes 'the very strongest affective relationships that human beings form', such as family relations and even love-affairs; but it also includes 'casual but agreeable acquaintance'. 'Utility-friendship' is to us a paradox; 'utility-*philiā'* will be one of Aristotle's categories. *Philiā* is a relation of mutual benefit and trust which generates special obligations and sometimes affection; but its goals may be restricted, and its motivations not distinctive.[165]

Konstan notes that Aristotle's primary discussion of the emotions occurs in his treatise on rhetoric rather than his in his book on psychology (*On the Soul*) which "tells us something about the difference between the modern English and ancient Greek ideas of emotion: given that judgment and belief are central to the dynamics of the emotions as Aristotle conceives them, it is natural that an understanding of the *pathē* should form part of the art of persuasion."[166] Aristotle's definition of emotions can be found in *Rhetoric* II.1 – "The emotions are all those affections which cause men to change their opinion in regard to their judgements, and are accompanied by pleasure and pain; such are anger, pity, fear, and all similar emotions and their contraries."[167] It may well be that Aristotle's view here is tailored to his context – he is writing about the art of persuasion – so this definition does not really reflect Aristotle's actual view on emotions, though as Konstan notes, Aristotle may well subsume emotions under rhetoric "because their effect on judgment was for him a primary feature of emotions in the daily negotiation of social roles."[168]

Konstan notes that the difference between Aristotle's list of emotions and modern lists probably occurs not simply because of Aristotle's philosophical commitment or his focus on rhetoric but because in Aristotle's view *pathē* arise "primarily in and from social interactions".[169] Consequently, he believes that some sentiments that typically count as emotions in English (e.g. sadness, loneliness, grief) fall outside the category of *pathē* in classical Greek and thus receive no treatment in Aristotle's list of *pathē* in *Rhetoric*.

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[165] Price, *Love and Friendship in Plato and Aristotle*, 11.

[166] Konstan, *The Emotions*, 27.

[167] Translation from Aristotle, *Rhetoric*.

[168] Konstan, *The Emotions*, 34.

[169] Konstan, *The Emotions*, 39.

While it is important to heed the warnings and cautions of both Konstan and Price, a careful examination of Graeco-Roman sources both in the ancient world and in the first couple of centuries AD, does substantiate Konstan's claims that emotion, and particularly affection or love, were a part of friendship in the Graeco-Roman world. The following analysis of a sample of works, which are not just treatises on φιλία but include accounts of φιλία in practice, shows that one cannot divorce emotion from friendship relationships, even if some of those relationships were patron-client relationships. We will therefore examine further Aristotle's views on friendship and emotions and those of other writers who have followed in his steps or contributed to the available information on this topic through their descriptions of friendship in action, but let us first consider the contexts in which emotions occur as a means of establishing what will be looked for when examining the Graeco-Roman, and later the New Testament, literature.

2.3.2.1. The Context of Emotions

Emotions can obviously be expressed in a variety of settings, and in any one setting a variety of emotions may arise. In this thesis, the concern is with a friendship/φιλία/*amicitia* setting, and in such a setting one might expect both positive emotions (e.g. love or affection, loyalty, gratitude) and negative emotions (e.g. grief when separated, jealousy when there are competing friendships). One might also expect these emotions to be expressed to different degrees in different relationships. If we considered just the emotion of love/affection, we would expect to see affection expressed to different degrees in close or intimate relationships between family members (husband and wife, parents and children), within household settings (e.g. between masters and servants/slaves), and between friends. Of course, not all family, household, or friendship relationships will be close or intimate and it would not be surprising to find a level of interaction which never moves beyond the civil, cordial, or mutually beneficial. But even such relationships have the potential to develop into something more, for a level of affection to grow and develop, for emotion to become a part of what may once have been a relationship based on pragmatics, commerce, or convenience.

In our day, we discover how affection or emotion is displayed in family, household, or friend relationships, by looking at how people address and greet each other (and how they respond to such addresses and greetings), how they describe the other person and/or their relationship (either to each other or a third party), how one might commend another for their activity, behaviour, or speech, or how they might correct the other when concerned for their situation. When it comes to trying to understand whether emotions were a part of relationships in the Graeco-Roman era, and in particular whether φιλία was a part of such relationships, we need to look at how the literature records interactions between parties in the relationship. Since much of the philosophical undergirding of the Graeco-Roman world is based on

the writing of Aristotle (fourth century BC) it is appropriate that we look at what he has to say about φιλία and any emotions that accompany it, as well as the writings of Cicero (first century BC) who introduced many Romans to the concepts of Greek philosophy. In order to give us a base line against which to compare the Johannine writings of the late first century AD, we will also look at several writings from that period – *Laus Pisonis*,[170] Epictetus' *Discourses*,[171] Plutarch's *Moralia*,[172] and Pliny's *Letters* – these all record something of friendships and the words and actions involved in them, thus enabling us to ascertain, at least so some degree, their concomitant emotions or affections.

2.3.2.2. Aristotle's and Cicero's Views on Φιλία and Emotions

Aristotle

It is apparent from Aristotle's discussion of friendship in his *Nicomachean Ethics* that he sees certain kinds of friendship as involving emotion or affection. In this work, Aristotle talks about the importance of friendship for life; without friendship, life is not worth living even if one has all the good they need (*NE* VIII.1.1155a). People at different stages of life or in different economic situations need friendship as a means of giving meaning to life and meeting their emotional needs. As we saw in section 2.2 (*Friendship's Grounding in the Ancient World*) Aristotle identified three forms of friendship based on the object of love – friendships which are good, useful, or pleasurable. However, what is useful or pleasurable is actually what a person perceives as useful or pleasurable to themselves and so such friendships are easily dissolvable if one believes that a 'friend' no longer provides utility or pleasure. Older people and those in the prime of life most often seek friendships of utility since that is their primary need, while younger people who are more driven by emotions (of both the amorous and pleasurable kind) tend to seek friendships of pleasure (*NE* VIII.3.1156a). Nevertheless, of these two forms of friendship, Aristotle considered friendships based on pleasure to be the closest to real friendship:

> Of these two inferior kinds of friendship, the one that more closely resembles true friendship is that based on pleasure, in which the same benefit is conferred by both

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[170] The author is unknown – suggestions have included Ovid, Saleius Bassus, and Statius but recent studies have shown these writers to be unlikely on the basis of the dating of *Laus Pisonis* and when these men lived; Lucan and Calpurnius Siculus are now considered leading contenders. See the 'Introduction to Laus Pisonis' in Volume I of the Loeb Classical Library's *Minor Latin Poets*, 289 315.

[171] In particular, *Of Friendship*.

[172] In particular we will look at Plutarch's *How to Tell a Flatterer from a Friend* (ΠΩΣ ΑΝ ΤΙΣ ΔΙΑΚΡΙΝΕΙΕ ΤΟΝ ΚΟΛΑΚΑ ΤΟΥ ΦΙΛΟΥ, but often known by its Latin name *Quomodo adulator ab amico internoscatur*), *That a Philosopher Ought to Converse Especially with Men in Power* (ΠΕΡΙ ΤΟΥ ΟΤΙ ΜΑΛΙΣΤΑ ΤΟΙΣ ΗΓΕΜΟΣΙ ΔΕΙ ΤΟΝ ΦΙΛΟΣΟΦΟΝ ΔΙΑΛΕΓΕΣΘΑΙ / *Maxime Cum Principibus Philosopho Esse Disserendum*), and *On Having Many Friends* (ΠΕΡΙ ΠΟΛΥΦΙΛΙΑΣ / *De Amicorum Multitudine*).

> parties, and they enjoy each other's company, or have common tastes; as is the case with the friendships of young people. For in these there is more generosity of feeling...
>
> (*NE* VIII.6.1158a)

Of course, in both cases, when the utility or pleasure is perceived to be no longer available, the friendship is dissolved. Thus, for Aristotle, friendships based on utility or pleasure are subject to emotional feelings, and in this sense can only be described as friendship in a 'truncated sense'.[173]

The third and better or more perfect friendship is based on 'the good' – a friendship between men who are good and alike in virtue and who wish each other good. Aristotle sees this as an elite kind of relationship and says: "it is between good men that affection [τὸ φιλεῖν] and friendship [ἡ φιλία] exist in their fullest and best form" (*NE* VIII.3.1156b). Such a friendship involves pleasure and utility as well, but because the friendship is based on the intrinsic goodness of each party, the friendship lasts and is not subject to the emotions like those based simply on pleasure or utility (*NE* VIII.3.1156b). Aristotle goes on to say that it is only between 'good men' that trust, as well as all the other things demanded in true friendship, exists because such men have "mutual confidence, the incapacity ever to do each other wrong", whereas in friendships based on pleasure or utility there is nothing to prevent these evils from arising (*NE* VIII.4.1157a).

Irrespective of the type of friendship relationship, we can still ask whether any of them involve a level of affection. A. D. M. Walker for example argues that in "the friendships of utility and pleasure the parties do not really feel affection for each other and so these associations are not really friendships."[174] His point is that the affection felt by the recipient of utility or pleasure is not really for the other person as a person but only insofar as the other person is useful or pleasant. Walker's point may well be a way of distinguishing between levels of friendship or even between true friendship and a friendship of benefit, but, in my judgment, it is not an outright rejection of the idea that friendships can have a level of affection. The feeling of affection may well be generated because the recipient of a benefit feels kindly disposed towards the provider for the provision, rather than because of any intrinsic value they see in the provider, but it is still a level of affection.

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[173] Pangle, *Aristotle and the Philosophy of Friendship*, 39. Pangle helpfully asks the question why Aristotle describes associations of pleasure and utility as friendship at all, noting that he seems to waver between calling the participants in such associations 'friends of one another' and 'friends of their own advantage'. Aristotle seems to resolve the matter by saying that friendships of utility and pleasure are really friendships by analogy only (*NE* VIII.4.1157a), but he continues to treat friendships of pleasure and utility as real friendships. See Pangle, *Aristotle and the Philosophy of Friendship*, 45, 48, 50f.

[174] Walker, "Aristotle's Account of Friendship in the 'Nicomachean Ethics'": 187.

Friendship in the First Century AD Graeco-Roman World

The friendship relationship where one might expect the highest levels of emotion is that between a lover and their beloved (e.g. a husband and wife) and so it may well be, but that is no guarantee of a permanent or lasting relationship. Aristotle argues that most often, such relationships are based on utility or pleasure and are thus subject to changes in emotion. Usually, the lover takes pleasure in seeing the beloved and the beloved in receiving the attention of the lover, but when the bloom of youth passes and the one finds no pleasure in the sight of the other, and the other gets no attention from the first, then the friendship may pass too. However, if the lovers love each other's character then the love and friendship may remain constant (*NE* VIII.4.1157a). Aristotle acknowledges that love and friendship are not the same thing but, concerned that some may say that love is a feeling while friendship is a state of character, he provides the link between them; in his view, friendship is equality, and equality requires mutual love, and mutual love requires a choice, and a choice springs from a state of character – thus, although feelings may be present in a friendship, the basis of the friendship is not feelings, but the goodness of each character in the relationship (*NE* VIII.5.1157b). Aristotle's ideal is that friendships should not be formed on any basis that is ruled by the emotions but instead be based on good character and virtue, be tested and proved over time (cf. *EE* VII.2.1237b), and be established for altruistic and unemotional reasons. This is not to say that no emotion will exist in the friendship, but that the friendship should not be ruled by emotion.

While Aristotle sees equality as a significant factor in the formation of friendships, this does not mean that friendships cannot be formed between people who appear to be unequal in some way (e.g. in social standing, in status); he suggests that examples of such friendships are those of a father and a son, an elder and a younger, a husband and his wife, and a ruler and their subjects [*NE* VIII.7.1158b]). In such relationships, Aristotle argues that a form of equality is attained by an exchange of some service or benefit appropriate to the merit of each party – perhaps the giving of honour to the superior by the inferior, and the provision of material support to the inferior by the superior. A certain type of equality is achieved in such relationships since each person 'loves' in proportion to their own merit, and because each party is doing the 'same thing' then there is an equality (*NE* VIII.7.1158b).[175]

[175] While Plato thought that a husband and wife were not equals so they could not be friends, Aristotle had a much more pragmatic view which may even have existed in Plato's time. Xenophon (430-354 BC) in his *Oeconomicus* describes the marriage between Ischomachus and his wife as a 'perfect partnership in mutual service', with each partner being endowed with complementary skills and abilities, but the fact that Ischomachus had to train and domesticate his wife in conversation and household duties seems to indicate that there was still an inequality in the relationship, and it is never described by Xenophon as a friendship, rather a relationship in which each met the needs of and the lack in the other. Thus, both parties 'equally' contribute to the partnership. See Xenophon, "Oeconomicus," in *Xenophon IV* (vol. 168 of *LCL,* ed. J. Henderson; trans. E. C. Marchant; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013), 7.4-10.13.

Towards the end of his treatise, Aristotle considers several questions regarding friendship, one of which is whether friends are needed more in prosperity or adversity. He concludes that they are needed in both and the basis of his argument is that in both circumstance, the emotions generated are assuaged by friendship – in times of misfortune, a friend can be a safeguard against grief through his presence and words, though he may also grieve in sympathy and as such be a source of comfort; in times of prosperity a friend shares our pleasure and brings us pleasure. In either case, a friend helps one deal with their emotions (*NE* VIII.11.1171a-b).

Finally, in his *Eudemian Ethics*, Aristotle also makes a strong case for the need for friendship even for the happy and independent perfect man who appears to have no need of friendship – he doesn't need useful people, nor people to cheer him, nor company – his own is enough for him. But Aristotle says that friendship is critical for emotional well-being because man is a social creature. Life is about feeling and knowing, and social life is a fellowship in feeling and knowing; everyone wishes to live because they wish to know, and they also wish themselves to be the object of knowledge. Spending time with friends provides the needed opportunity to share knowledge and pleasures and this meets an emotional need which even the most independent man has (*EE* VII.12.1244b-1246a).

Thus, Aristotle evidently saw emotions and affection as a central and foundational component of friendships, no matter the basis of that friendship and irrespective of any apparent difference in social standing between the parties.

Cicero

Such a view seems to have influenced those who followed Aristotle, including Roman writers like Cicero. He also thinks that affections and emotion are part and parcel of friendship.[176] When discussing friendship with his sons-in-law he says: "Wherefore it seems to me that friendship springs rather from nature than from need, and from an inclination of the soul joined with a feeling of love rather than from calculation of how much profit the friendship is likely to afford" (*Amic*. VIII.27). This is his conclusion after debating whether the basis of friendship is in fact a mutual interchange or something emanating more directly from nature. He muses:

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[176] See Cicero, "Laelius De Amicitia," in *Cicero XX: De Senectute: De Amicitia: De Divinatione* (vol. 154 of *LCL,* ed. J. Henderson; trans. W. A. Falconer; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1923). For a good discussion of Cicero's *Laelius* see chapter 5, "Cicero's *Laelius*: Political Friendship at its Best" in Pangle, *Aristotle and the Philosophy of Friendship*, 105-122. Williams suggests that Cicero's *De Amicitia* became the most important work for later writers, both Christian and humanist, to read and reflect upon when trying to understand true friendship. See Williams, *Roman Friendship*, 2.

> The oftener, therefore, I reflect on friendship the more it seems to me that consideration should be given to the question, whether the longing for friendship is felt on account of weakness and want, so that by the giving and receiving of favours one may get from another and in turn repay what he is unable to procure of himself; or, although this mutual interchange is really inseparable from friendship, whether there is not another cause, older, more beautiful, and emanating more directly from Nature herself. For it is love (*amor*), from which the word "friendship" (*amicitia*) is derived, that leads to the establishing of goodwill. For while it is true that advantages are frequently obtained even from those who, under a pretence of friendship, are courted and honoured to suit the occasion; yet in friendship there is nothing false, nothing pretended; whatever there is is genuine and comes of its own accord.
>
> (*Amic*. VIII.26)

For Cicero, affection is evident in the parent-child relationship and from the love that springs up when one meets "someone whose habits and character are congenial with our own" (*Amic*. VIII.27). But he also acknowledges that affection can occur even for people one has not met, for he believes that there is nothing more lovable than virtue and when one hears of a virtuous and upright man, they can be moved to express affection for such a person, though they have never met them (*Amic*. VIII.28). In support of his argument he mentions the kindly affection that everyone has for Gaius Fabricius, a successful ambassador, strategist, and consul known for his incorruptibility, and Manius Curius, a three-time consul and hero of the Roman republic, noted for successes in various battles, the construction of major public works, and a frugal and incorruptible lifestyle; by contrast he notes the universal hatred for several other leaders – Tarquin the Proud, Spurius Cassius, Spurius Maelius, and Hannibal. But even an enemy like Pyrrhus could be regarded with affection because of his integrity and uprightness, though greater affection was more likely when a close intimacy or familiarity was possible, and love was strengthened by the receipt of a kindly service or the evidence of another's care (*Amic*. IX.29). The kind of friendship experienced by Laelius and Scipio was not founded on any need one had for the other nor did it spring from any hope of gain, but Laelius admired Scipio's virtue, and Scipio loved the good character of Laelius, and their close association fostered a mutual affection resulting in many and great advantages for both (*Amic*. IX.30). According to Laelius, friendship is desirable not because one hopes to gain something from the relationship but because the entire profit is in the love itself (*Amic*. IX.31).

Indeed, Cicero saw love as springing from nature, not need, because otherwise friendships would only last while there was a need:

> [L]et us for ourselves believe that the sentiments of love and of kindly affection spring from nature, when intimation has been given of moral worth; for when men have conceived a longing for this virtue they bend towards it and move closer to it, so that, by familiar association with him whom they have begun to love, they may enjoy his character, equal him in affection, become readier to deserve than to demand his favours, and vie with him in a rivalry of virtue. Thus, the greatest advantages will be realized from friendship, and its origin, being derived from nature rather than from weakness, will be more dignified and more consonant with truth. For on the assumption that advantage is the cement of friendships, if advantage were removed friendships would fall apart; but since nature is unchangeable, therefore real friendships are eternal. (*Amic*. IX.32)

Cicero did, however, see limits to love in friendships. In sections XI.36-XII.40 Laelius discusses whether someone should do something unlawful for a friend if he is asked to and concludes that dishonourable things should neither be asked for or done (*Amic*. XII.40). Laelius goes on to say:

> Therefore let this be ordained as the first law of friendship: Ask of friends only what is honourable; do for friends only what is honourable and without even waiting to be asked; let zeal be ever present, but hesitation absent; dare to give true advice with all frankness; in friendship let the influence of friends who are wise counsellors be paramount, and let that influence be employed in advising, not only with frankness, but, if the occasion demands, even with sternness, and let the advice be followed when given. (*Amic*. XIII.44)[177]

Concerns were also expressed by Cicero about the teaching of some sages who espoused views on friendship which to his mind sucked the enjoyment and enrichment out of life. Such men argued that too much intimacy in friendships should be avoided because one man could end up being full of anxiety for the many cares of others;[178] they argued it would be best to hold the reins of friendship as loosely as

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[177] It is interesting to note that a little later (§XVII.61), Laelius is recorded as saying "even if by some chance the wishes of a friend are not altogether honourable and require to be forwarded in matters which involve his life or reputation, we should turn aside from the straight path, provided, however, utter disgrace does not follow; for there are limits to the indulgence which can be allowed to friendship." Whilst acknowledging that there are still limits, Laelius is prepared to go against the maxims given here in §XII.40 and §XIII.44. It seems that in certain circumstances (a threat to life or reputation) that the rules can be bent somewhat provided it does not result in disgrace.

[178] I am indebted to one of my supervisors, Associate Professor Paul McKechnie, for alerting me to an example in Herodotus where King Amasis writes to Polycrates to end their friendship over concerns that Polycrates' good

possible so that they could be reined in or slackened off when necessary for nothing should interfere with freedom from care (which is in fact the very definition of a happy life); and some argued that friendships should be sought out for the aid and support that they provide rather than out of goodwill and affection, which Cicero says would mean that friendships would be most eagerly sought, not by those who have a firmness of character and strength of body, but by the helpless (particularly women), the poor, and the unfortunate (*Amic*. XIII.45-46).[179] Cicero was astonished by such views and goes on to argue that life is enriched by friendship and it should not be avoided or removed simply to minimise any worries it may generate. Indeed, he believed that when the soul is deprived of emotion, there is little difference between a man, and animal stock or a stone (*Amic*. XIII.48).

Emotion is thus an intrinsic part of friendship as far as Cicero is concerned. Love naturally wells up when it sees something of virtue in another (*Amic*. XIV.48) and "nothing gives more pleasure than the return of goodwill and the interchange of zealous service" (*Amic*, XIV.49). He believes that those who assume that expediency is the basis of friendship actually deprive friendship of its loveliest link for in his view it is a friend's love that alone gives delight. Thus, for Cicero, advantage attends or follows upon friendship, not the reverse (*Amic*. XIV.51). Cicero has Laelius saying:

> For what person is there, in the name of gods and men! who would wish to be surrounded by unlimited wealth and to abound in every material blessing, on condition that he love no one and that no one love him? Such indeed is the life of tyrants—a life, I mean, in which there can be no faith, no affection, no trust in the continuance of goodwill; where every act arouses suspicion and anxiety and where friendship has no place. (*Amic*. XV.52)

Cicero is also scathing on views which seek to make friendship a reciprocal relationship, a relationship dependent upon one's view of oneself, or a guarded relationship in which one enters a relationship thinking that at some point in the future one's friend might end up being one's foe (*Amic*. XVI.56). Cicero totally disagreed with such views arguing that they are not the mores of friendship because they limit it and deprive it of its vitality and value. Although Cicero did not require reciprocity or equality of status in friendships, he nevertheless paradoxically demanded an equality in the friendship relationship; "it is of

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fortune would incur the wrath of the gods and result in divine punishment. Not wanting to suffer over a friend's misfortune, Amasis decides that the best thing to do was to renounce his friendship; if Polycrates was no longer his friend, then when a great mishap overtook Polycrates, there would be no need to grieve, for no friendship existed. See Herodotus, *Herodotus II* (LCL 118; ed. J. Henderson; trans. A. D. Godley; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1938), 3.40-43.

[179] While such 'unfortunates' might be viewed as 'seeking dependency' rather than friendship, Cicero describes them as the ones having the greatest longing for friendship and thus seeking its shelter.

the utmost importance in friendship that superior and inferior should stand on an equality" (*Amic*. XIX.69). This can be achieved, says Cicero, by the superior (in virtue, intellect, fortune, or position) taking the initiative to elevate the inferior; by imparting his endowments on the inferior whom he loves, by lowering himself, and by lifting up the inferior at least as far as the latter can bear, an equality is attained (*Amic*. XIX.70-XX.73).

While it is not strictly related to emotions, Cicero's recommendation that friendships only be formed when one has reached maturity does indicate that emotional stability is an important part of friendships. At different stages of life, one has different interests and is ruled to a greater or lesser degree by various passions and affections (for people and things). While the 'loves' of youth should not be neglected, in Cicero's view, lasting friendships should be formed when strength and stability have been reached in mind and age; it is only then that they can remain secure (*Amic*. XX.74). This maturity is also needed to carry a person through difficult times in a relationship, for example when duty requires one to be separated from one's friend; it is maturity in mind and age which prevents a person from being consumed by grief when such a separation occurs, for Cicero says that one who hinders the discharge of his duties because he cannot bear the grief of separation is weak, effeminate, and unreasonable (*Amic*. XX.75).

Cicero also demonstrates a concern for emotions which may arise in the breakdown of friendships; he acknowledges that there may be different causes (outbursts of vice, changes in disposition or tastes, differences in political views) but that in all cases, one should seek to gradually relax intimacy rather than have the friendship torn apart and appear to be replaced by an open hostility and enmity. Such breakdowns are not desirable and are best avoided by taking extra care in establishing friendships in the first place – not enlisting love too quickly or fixing it on unworthy men (*Amic*. XXI.76-78). The concern for breakdowns in friendship causes Cicero to reflect once again on the basis for friendship (*Amic*. XXI.79-XXII.85) – one ought to be a good man oneself and then seek another like oneself, for everyone loves themselves and a real friend is in a sense another self.[180] Sadly, people so often look for what they can gain out of the friendship and so miss the spontaneity of friendship which is desirable in and for itself. Furthermore, in order to be happy in a friendship one must give attention to virtue – for virtue is a pre-requisite for friendship and requires friendship in order to attain its highest aims; without virtue one cannot attain friendship nor any other desirable thing.[181] Care is therefore needed in the selection of

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[180] Here, Cicero is reflecting Aristotle's view that a friend is actually 'another self', for a good man relates to a friend as to himself. See *Nicomachean Ethics* VIII.4.1166a; VIII.9.1169b, 1170b.

[181] In his wrapping up of the treatise, Cicero has Laelius repeat this idea:

> Virtue, I say, both creates the bond of friendship and preserves it. For in Virtue is complete harmony, in her is permanence, in her is fidelity; and when she has raised her head and shown her own light

friends; there ought to be an appraisal process before someone is accepted as a friend and one begins to develop feelings of love and affection for them; the process ought not to be reversed such that affection is bestowed upon a person and only then are they appraised for their suitability as a friend. The latter process will result in the breakdown of friendship when some offence arises.

Cicero concludes his treatise by reiterating the value of friendship. It is, he says, the one thing in human experience about whose value all men agree. Some disdain virtue, some riches, some political honours, some various other things deemed worthy of admiration, but all men value friendship and believe that without it, life is no life at all (*Amic*. XXIII.86). Indeed, Cicero notes that "nature, loving nothing solitary, always strives for some sort of support, and man's best support is a very dear friend" (*Amic*. XXIII.88). It is a basic necessity of human existence that emotional support is required for fullness of life and friendship provides such support. Such support, however, may mean being prepared to speak honestly and frankly to a friend when an offence is committed. Cicero notes:

> But there is one cause of offence which must be encountered in order that both the usefulness and loyalty of friendship may be preserved; for friends frequently must be not only advised, but also rebuked, and both advice and rebuke should be kindly received when given in a spirit of goodwill. (*Amic*. XXIV.88).

Plain speaking is not always received well, and truth may be troublesome if it results in a hatred that poisons the friendship, but it is less troublesome than complaisance or flattery which only ever results in the ultimate ruin of the friend (*Amic*. XXIV.89). Cicero is once again very strong in his condemnation of those who do not abide by the mores of friendship – i.e. speaking the truth freely (but without harshness), and receiving the truth patiently (but without resentment); he views fawning, cajolery, or flattery as a vice peculiar to fickle and false-hearted men focused more on self-pleasure than truth, and hypocrisy as incredibly wicked since it pollutes the truth, prevents the discernment of truth, and destroys sincerity (*Amic*. XXV.91-92).

Aristotle's and Cicero's philosophical musings on the basis and necessity of friendships have no doubt influenced later writer's understanding on how friendships were to operate, and we now examine how φιλία was practised according to other Graeco-Roman writers. Here we consider how each writer viewed

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> and has seen and recognized the same light in another, she moves towards it and in turn receives its beams; as a result, love or friendship leaps into flame; for both words are derived from a word meaning "to love." [*i.e. amor,* 'love'; *amicitia,* 'friendship'.] But love is nothing other than the great esteem and affection felt for him who inspires that sentiment, and it is not sought because of material need or for the sake of material gain. Nevertheless, even this blossoms forth from friendship, although *you* did not make it your aim. (*Amic*. XXVII.100)

the basis of friendships and then how each writer uses language which suggests an emotional or affective content in the relationships they describe, using the suggested categories of addresses and greetings, descriptions, commendations, and corrections.[182]

2.3.2.3. Other Graeco-Roman Writers' Views on Φιλία and the Emotions

When we consider some of the Graeco-Roman writers writing contemporaneously with the Johannine author in the first century AD, we find that they reflect and build upon the ideas of friendship established by their predecessors. However, we must keep in mind Stowers' reminder that in Roman times, the concept of friendship had moved from the Greek ideal of sentiment and male affection to relationships within the Roman family (which was much wider than our modern understanding of family), and alliances between families, which were often alliances of utility between social equals.[183] In fact friendship (*amicitia*) was used more often to describe these horizontal relationships than the more vertical patron-client relationships, also described by many as 'friendships'.[184] Furthermore, the anchoring of *amicitia* in the Roman family meant that what was previously unthinkable to a classical Greek – that one could have a friendship with one's wife – was now possible, and even advocated.[185]

The writings considered here are all concerned with friendship, and while not written to specifically discuss the emotions they can be mined to identify various manifestations of the emotions. Consequently, they provide a useful baseline for comparison regarding the understanding and expectations of friendships and the place emotion has in them in the first century AD.

Laus Pisonis[186]

Laus Pisonis (commonly translated as 'In Praise of Piso') is a poem by an unknown young poet who craves literary fame and thus cultivates a friendship with Calpurnius Piso, whom he eulogises in the poem. The eulogy highlights Piso not only as a man eloquent in the law courts but one who displays in his home life

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[182] See section 2.3.2.1 (*The Context of Emotions*).

[183] Stowers, *Letter Writing*, 29f. Stowers goes on to describe the Roman family as consisting of the *paterfamilias* (the highest-ranking male), his wife and children, the patriarch's married sons with their wives and children, the slaves, hired servants, live-in guests, and associated freedmen and freedwomen.

[184] As noted in section 2.3.1 (*The Politics of Friendship*).

[185] Stowers, *Letter Writing*, 30. Note however, the discussion in footnote 175, which records Xenophon's description of the marriage of Ischomachus and his wife as a 'perfect partnership', not a 'friendship'.

[186] All references here are to the page numbers of "*Laus Pisonis*," in *Minor Latin Poets I* (vol. 284 of *LCL,* ed. J. Henderson; trans. J. W. Duff, et al.; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1935). I am indebted to my principal supervisor, Professor Laurence Welborn for drawing this work to my attention.

the most noble qualities – he has "a countenance full of serene dignity" and "joyous seriousness", and exhibits "true loyalty, frankness full of modesty, and nature unstained by malicious envy" (*Laus*, 303). Moreover, he is a generous and benevolent patron who treats his clients as equals and develops friendships with them (*Laus*, 303) – something of which the author of the poem wishes to avail himself. He describes Piso as unlike normal patrons who for economic and status reasons sought clients over whom they could exercise control; rather Piso was prepared to accept clients on the basis of pure affection; he bestows largess on them as true friends in order to guide them as equals and in turn be guided by them (*Laus*, 305). The poet describes Piso's patron-client relationships in the following manner: "A uniform tenor of friendship encompasses highest and lowest. Rare the house that does not scorn a needy friend; rare the house that does not trample contemptuously on a humble dependant." (*Laus*, 305). Indeed, Piso reckons himself as one among friendly peers, and in his training of his clients he is gentle, free from casting aspersions, and humble, teaching obedience but as one courting love by loving (*Laus*, 305). No wonder then that the young poet who penned this eulogy declares his loyalty and true affection for Piso and requests that it be accepted. He does not ostensibly seek money or possessions but wants to be a part of Piso's household in order to practise the delivery of praise (which is his passion) and gain note as a poet and bard (*Laus*, 313). Whilst this is apparently a relationship between unequals, Piso's actions towards, and treatment of, his clients as 'equals', has resulted in a genuine friendship between them in which both benefit and in which there is the expression of genuine affection and emotion in both directions.

Epictetus[187]

In his discussion of friendship, Epictetus notes that people love what they are interested in – things that are good in their eyes or that align with their moral purpose, and that interest takes precedence over everything else, even friendships. This is very evident when testing circumstances come because they show where a person's real interests lie; if a friendship or expression of love does not align with one's interests then they will be discarded (*Epictetus* II.22.9-14). Epictetus gives a graphic illustration of a set of scales upon which one places their 'interests' as well as 'righteousness, what is honourable, country, parents or friends'; if these things are on the same side then all is well but if one's interests are on the opposing scale to one or all of the other possible claimants of one's attention then one's interest will always outweigh the others (*Epictetus* II.22.18-21). He gives several illustrations which demonstrate this principle – a parent's love for their child and preparedness to suffer in their place can be tested when property or glory comes between a father and a son; when it comes down to risking one's life, one finds

[187] All references here are to Epictetus, "Discourses: Of Friendship," in *Epictetus I* (ed. J. Henderson; vol. 131 of *LCL*; trans. W. A. Oldfather; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1925).

that the desire to live is as strong in the father as in the son. When the throne comes between two brothers (like Polyneices and Eteocles) self-interest outweighs their previous love for each other and even their agreement to alternately share the throne. Love for the same pretty girl will drive a wedge between an older man and a younger man. As Epictetus says: "It is a general rule – be not deceived – that every living thing is to nothing so devoted as to its own interest" (*Epictetus* II.22.15). Anything or anyone who stands in the way of this (even if they are one's closest family or a loved one) will be hated, accused, and cursed (*Epictetus* II.22.15f.) – strong emotions indeed! The key point for our purposes is that the formation and maintenance of friendships is very much dependent upon the emotions that drive one's judgements and decisions. Friendship (and in fact any relationship) will only be possible and successful if one's interests are focused on 'moral purpose'. Epictetus says:

> If, therefore, I am where my moral purpose is, then, and then only, will I be the friend and son and the father that I should be. For then this will be my interest—to keep my good faith, my self-respect, my forbearance, my abstinence, and my co-operation, and to maintain my relations with other men. (*Epictetus* II.22.20f.)[188]

Thus, in Epictetus' view a person can only be a friend to another if his interest in the other is because of some good he sees in the other or because his interest in the other aligns with his own moral purpose; if it doesn't, then interest will outweigh good and moral purpose every time and the friendship will be doomed to failure. As far as Epictetus is concerned, it is moral purpose which keeps a person from being driven by their own interest and emotions; if one is driven by their moral purpose instead then they will be the friend, father, or son they ought to be, and will have the other party's interests at heart, not their own.

Plutarch[189]

We saw above in section 2.3.1 (*The Politics of Friendship*) that Plutarch saw value in creating friendships with people who were in a position to do the greatest good for the greatest number (cf. *Moralia* X.1.778B-C; 779A-B). While the majority of Plutarch's essay on conversing with men in power deals with the politics

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[188] A little later (line 30) Epictetus says: "For where else is friendship to be found than where there is fidelity, respect, a devotion to things honourable and to naught beside?"

[189] All references to Plutarch's works are from the following sources: Plutarch, "How to Tell a Flatterer from a Friend," in *Moralia I* (vol. 197 of *LCL,* ed. J. Henderson; trans. F. C. Babbitt; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1927); Plutarch, "On Having Many Friends," in *Moralia II* (vol. 222 of *LCL,* ed. J. Henderson; trans. F. C. Babbitt; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1928); Plutarch, "That a Philosopher Ought to Converse Especially with Men in Power," in *Moralia X* (vol. 321 of *LCL,* ed. J. Henderson; trans. H. N. Fowler; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1936).

of friendship it also shows that friendships can be formed for more than pragmatic, economic, or selfish reasons; altruism, the unselfish concern for the welfare of others, is also a motivator of friendship, and if a friendship can be formed with a person who has the capacity and means to help many others, then this enables great good to be done. While altruism does not require a level of affection towards the intermediary who can help others, or even to those ultimately helped, it does show a degree of compassion and concern for others in a disadvantaged situation, and it can generate emotion within a person which then drives them to seek ways of assisting the disadvantaged. Plutarch may well be reflecting here the *alimenta* schemes instituted by Marcus Nerva and continued by his successor Marcus Trajan, whereby low interest loans were made to landowners and the subsequent returns used to maintain the sons and daughters of poor and orphaned children until they reached adulthood.[190]

But Plutarch also counsels against acquiring many friends in his essay *On Having Many Friends*. He likens the craving for many friends to the craving of a licentious woman and argues that if one keeps developing frequent intimacies with many new and different persons, they will end up not spending time with earlier associates who will feel neglected and drift away (*Moralia* II.2.93D). While there may well be joy in gathering lots of friends – like the joy experienced by a child gathering up flowers in a meadow (*Moralia* II.2.93D)[191] – and love and enjoyment are certainly a vital part of friendship (*Moralia* II.5.94F), the problem

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[190] See for example, J. P. V. D. Balsdon and A. Spawforth, "Alimenta," in *OCD*(Oxford; London; New York: Oxford University Press, 2015); D. Fernández, "Alimenta schemes," in *The Encyclopedia of Ancient History* (New York: Wiley & Sons, 2013); A. Spawforth, "Euergetism," in *OCD*(Oxford; London; New York: Oxford University Press, 2016); B. Campbell, "Nerva, Marcus Cocceius, Roman emperor, 96–98 CE," in *OCD*(Oxford; London; New York: Oxford University Press, 2016); B. Campbell, "Trajan, Roman emperor, 98–117 CE," in *OCD*(Oxford; London; New York: Oxford University Press, 2016). In his article, Fernández notes that there are debates over the purpose of the *alimenta* schemes: some argue their purpose was to provide affordable loans to encourage agriculture; others believe they were an attempt to reverse the demographic decline on the peninsula by providing financial aid to families who were having difficulties supporting their newborn children; still others think they were a component of the wider Roman munificence to its citizens, especially the poor but free. See also R. P. Duncan-Jones, "The Purpose and Organisation of the Alimenta," *PBSR* XXXII (1964); J. R. Patterson, "Crisis: What Crisis? Rural Change and Urban Development in Imperial Apennine Italy," *PBSR* 55 (1987); G. Woolf, "Food, Poverty and Patronage: The Significance of the Epigraphy of the Roman Alimentary Schemes in Early Imperial Italy," *PBSR* 58 (1990). Richard Duncan-Jones and John Patterson argue that the purpose of the *alimenta* was to improve the birth-rate in Italy. By way of contrast, Greg Woolf suggests that the *alimenta* schemes were more concerned with distribution of food to the privileged and perhaps a random selection of citizens (rather than the poor), ideas about patronage, and ideas about the emperor's role. Woolf also notes that the *alimenta* was exceptional before the Christianisation of the Empire, which suggests that Christianity was the ideological basis for helping those in need. Irrespective of the purpose of the *alimenta* schemes, they were widespread in the Roman Empire at this time and thus Plutarch may well be reflecting them in his writings.

[191] Though Plutarch notes that the child's yearning is not sated. It seems that the joyful emotion of gathering can be quickly replaced by dissatisfaction and insatiability.

with pursuing many beginnings of friendship and intimacy (φιλίας καὶ συνηθείας)[192] at the same time, is that in the constant chasing of new friendships one misses out on those already within one's grasp; it also means that friendships never move beyond the beginning stages, and no friendships with deeper and closer ties are formed. There is a cost to creating friendships and as a result one cannot have many friends – the basis of friendship "is goodwill and graciousness combined with virtue" and Plutarch says the latter is a rare commodity, so it is impossible to have strong mutual friendships with many persons. Furthermore, when affection is apportioned out amongst many, it becomes enfeebled; like a river dividing into many streams, it loses its power and potency (*Moralia* II.2.93F).

Plutarch identifies several other issues with having too many friends – firstly, one must spend time with friends (*Moralia* II.3.94A) and enjoy being with them, so having many friends would make it difficult to do this; he says:

> … true friendship seeks after three things above all else: virtue as a good thing, intimacy as a pleasant thing, and usefulness as a necessary thing, for a man ought to use judgement before accepting a friend, and to enjoy being with him and to use him when in need of him, and all these things stand in the way of one's having many friends; but most in the way is the first (which is the most important) — the approval through judgement. (*Moralia* II.3.94B)

Plutarch's concern is that it takes time to form a judgement on people and time is short when one has so many friends. What complicates things is that a person's ability to form valid judgements can be affected by the potential friend's reasons for seeking a friendship. If the potential friend is a flatterer then he makes appeals to a man's passion for himself; and in another of his treatises (*How to Tell a Flatterer from a Friend*) Plutarch mentions Plato's point that while it may be pardonable for a man to have an extraordinary passion for himself, that passion renders him incapable of making a right judgement about himself. Plutarch then goes on to describe how a person's affections usually blind their faculty of judgement and discernment unless they have learned to raise such affections from the sordid level of things and focus them instead on things which are truly noble and excellent in themselves (*Moralia* I.1.48F).[193] Thus, judgements take time and are affected by flattery.

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[192] συνηθείας can be translated as 'friendship', 'fellowship', or 'intimacy' and describes a relationship in which the participants are compatible because of shared interests. See Arndt, et al., *BDAG*, s.v. συνήθεια.1.

[193] For a good discussion on Plutarch's views on moral progress in his work *Progress in Virtue*, see R. A. Wright, "Plutarch on Moral Progress," in *Passions and Moral Progress in Greco-Roman Thought* (ed. J. T. Fitzgerald; London; New York: Routledge, 2008).

A second issue with having too many friends is that there can be great pain and vexation in trying to divest oneself of an unwanted 'friend' (*Moralia* II.3.94E) – just as food that turns out to be harmful or upsetting to one's stomach cannot be retained, and cannot be ejected in the same form as it was originally consumed, being vomited up as a disgusting and repulsive mess, so "an unprincipled friend either causes pain and intense discomfort by his continued association, or else with accompanying enmity and hostility is forcibly ejected like bile" (*Moralia* II.3.94E).

A third issue is that there can be problems of jealousy amongst friends when one has many of them. After saying, "Now it is a fact that the enjoyment of friendship lies in its intimacy, and the pleasantest part of it is found in association and daily companionship" (*Moralia* II.5.94F), Plutarch recounts the words of Menelaus to Odysseus when he says that nothing can come between their love and enjoyment. He then goes on to argue that if one has many friends and all of them seek support for a pursuit at the same time it is impossible to satisfy them, and the refusal will cause pain and vexation, for "fond affection does not brook neglect" (*Moralia* II.6.95D). While true friends accept excuses of forgetfulness or ignorance, excuses which indicate you preferred to spend time with another friend rather than with them, simply arouse jealousy (*Moralia* II.6.95E).

Thus, one must maintain only a few friends and there must be some equality between you and them so that there is the same love and participation on both sides of the relationship, as well as a degree of consonance and harmony which makes the friendships seem almost like "one soul apportioned among two or more bodies" (*Moralia* II.8.96D-F). Such a limitation on the number of friendships that one should develop must necessarily also apply to friendships established for altruistic reasons – i.e. friendships which are formed as a means of accessing the resources of another to help the less fortunate – for such friendships are also subject to the same needs for good judgements and equality in love, participation, consonance and harmony. Plutarch thus advises creating a limited number of friendships for pragmatic, logistical, and emotional reasons. Friendships require investments of time and energy and emotion, and if these are not evident in a friendship, they put the relationship in jeopardy.

Pliny[194]

Like Aristotle, Pliny sees a true friend as a 'second self' (cf. Pliny's letter to Domitius Apollinaris in which he calls Sextus Erucius his 'second-self' (II.IX.1), and his letter to Priscus [VI.VII] in which he describes an injury done to his friend Atilius Crescens as done to himself) and just as one loves oneself, so one also

[194] The references in this section are to Pliny, *Letters (Books I-VII) and Panegyricus Vol. I* (LCL 55; ed. J. Henderson; trans. B. Radice; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1969); and Pliny, *Letters (Books VIII-X) and Panegyricus Vol. II*.

loves a friend and would do anything for them. It is not surprising then, that Pliny thinks that friendships display high levels of affection and emotion, though his letters also show that there was also a great sense of obligation expected of friends. Friendship thus demonstrates both the responsibility of duty as well as the emotion of affection.

Letters showing general affection and emotion

Pliny's letters show that his various friendships include emotion. In a letter to Attius Clemens, he speaks of his admiration and affection for the philosopher Euphrates but is not envious of others enjoying his company and being the beneficiary of Euphrates' wisdom when he himself is unable to; indeed, he takes pleasure in his other friends enjoying what he cannot (I.X.3, 12). When he writes to Fabius Justus, he complains that he had not heard from him for a long time and that this was a cause for great anxiousness – at the least he could have written and said that all was well (I.XI.1-2). The friendship was obviously not devoid of emotion.

Letters showing affection re the loss of a friend

In his letter to Calestrius Tiro seeking words of comfort, Pliny expresses deep grief at the loss of his friend Corellius Rufus who committed suicide and indicates that he has already lamented with another friend, Calvisius, about how much Rufus' death had affected him and how he was concerned that he would now miss the opportunity to be mentored by him (I.XII.13). This shows that grief over the loss of a friend is as much about how it affects the remaining person, as it expresses love and concern for the departed, and it shows a strong level of emotion and connection between the two parties, which results in the outpouring of emotion when the friendship is broken. In another letter which also addresses the loss of a much beloved friend (the letter to Voconius Rufus on the death of Verginius Rufus) Pliny similarly indicates that he will feel the loss of both a patriot and a friend keenly and then rehearses the many ways in which Rufus showed him affection and support because he considered Pliny to be the son he never had (II.I.8-9). In Pliny's mind, Rufus' death only ended his mortality and not his life – his fame would live on in perpetuity. In yet another 'death' letter, this time re the son of Spurinna and Cottia, Pliny tells the parents that he is considering writing a second eulogy because he felt that his first effort did not do justice to how he felt about the young man who was so dear and sacred to him, and that the composition of a second essay would ensure his ongoing fame (III.X.1-4). Thus, the loss of a 'friend' was an opportunity to express not only the emotion of grief but also the various emotions associated with affection.

Letters showing affection for those of lower status

The last example also highlights that emotions of affection could even be expressed for those of lower status. The difference in status between Pliny and the son is no barrier to his expression of affection and love and indeed Pliny has no problem in expressing his love and affection for those who would generally be considered 'lower' than himself – his clients, his servants, even his wife. In a letter to Paulinus (V.XIX), he waxes eloquent about his freedman Zosimus who had fallen ill and for whom he was prepared to go to extraordinary lengths to ensure his recovery. He says of Zosimus:

> I have moreover long felt for him an affection which has increased with the dangers he has come through; for it seems a law of nature for nothing to excite and intensify love so much as the fear of losing its object, and this has happened to me more than once in his case. (V.XIX.5-6)

Pliny thus expresses his affection for a much-loved servant and requests that his friend Paulinus and his household supply everything necessary to aid Zosimus' recovery. He is obviously not above calling in favours from friends to come to the aid of the object of his affection.[195] While Aristotle seems to consider the relationship between a husband and wife a friendship between unequals, Pliny is not averse to putting in writing his affection for his wife, Calpurnia. In one letter (VI.IV) he says, "Indeed, I should worry when you are away even if you were well, for there are always anxious moments without news of anyone one loves dearly, and, as things are, I have the thought of your health as well as your absence to alarm me with fluctuating doubts and fears" and in another (VI.VII) he speaks of how her letters to him provide comfort as often as he reviews them but at the same time they also stir in him a keener longing for her.[196] It is thus evident from these examples that Pliny saw affection as part of friendships and relationships.

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[195] See also the letter to Sabinianus (II.XXIV) in which Pliny thanks Sabinianus for acceding to his request to receive again in to his favour a freedman who had previously been the subject of Sabinianus' affection. We are not told why the freedman had been out of favour, but it would seem that he had committed some fault which had removed him from the affection of Sabinianus. But now, Sabinianus has acceded to Pliny's request, either out of respect for or because of the authority of Pliny, and so Pliny finds it useful to thank Sabinianus and urge him to forgive future faults of his people.

[196] Pliny may be reflecting here the different practices of Roman culture compared with Greek culture. The Roman Cornelius Nepos, in the preface of his work on great generals, notes the differences between the two cultures with respect to wives and women:

> … many actions are seemly according to our code which the Greeks look upon as shameful. For instance, what Roman would blush to take his wife to a dinner-party? What matron does not frequent the front rooms of her dwelling and show herself in public? But it is very different in Greece; for there a woman is not admitted to a dinner-party, unless relatives only are present, and she keeps to the more retired part of the house called "the women's apartment," to which no man has access who is not near of kin. (Nepos, *Praefatio*, 6-7)

See C. Nepos, "On Great Generals," in *Cornelius Nepos* (vol. 467 of *LCL,* ed. J. Henderson; trans. J. C. Rolfe; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984).

Letters showing affection from and for patrons

In his letter to Junius Mauricus (I.XIV), Pliny speaks of his esteem and affection for Junius' brother Arulenus Rusticus who nurtured Pliny in his youth. Despite this being a relationship between unequals and perhaps even a patron-client relationship (with Pliny as the client), there is evident emotion expressed in Pliny's letter. Now however, Pliny is acting in the role of patron for Minicius Acilianus whom he is recommending as a husband for Junius' niece. He is so effusive in his praise of Minicius that he feels it necessary to make comment about his affection for the young man:

> It may seem to you that I have been indulging my affection, and going further than the facts allow, but I assure you on my honour that you will find the reality far better than my description. I do indeed love the young man dearly, as he deserves, but, just because I love him, I would not overload him with praise. (I.XIV.10)

Evidently, Pliny believed that affection did not necessarily influence a person to give a false assessment of another. In his letter to Julius Servianus (VI.XXVI), Pliny congratulates him on finding an excellent son-in-law whom Pliny knows and loves and of whom he says: "Nor am I blinded by affection—I love him as dearly as his merits and regard for me deserve, but I have kept my critical powers: in fact they are sharpened by my love for him" (VI.XXVI.3).

Letters in which help is sought from a friend for another friend

There are other occasions where Pliny seeks help for a friend by appealing to another friend. In his letter to Priscus (II.XIII), Pliny beseeches him to take on Voconius Romanus, a young man whom Pliny loves in a patron-client relationship, but he urges Priscus to do more than bestow his patronage on him; he asks him to let the young man have his affection; for though he were to confer upon him the utmost he had in his power to bestow, he could give him nothing more valuable than his friendship. Pliny therefore supplies a brief sketch of his tastes and character (his whole life, in fact) so that Priscus may see he is worthy of it, even to the closest degree of intimacy (II.XIII.10). In many ways, this example reflects Plutarch's idea of friendship based on altruism – approaching a friend in a position of power and influence to act in the interests of someone he does not know because of the friendship between the requestor and the man in the position of power. The growing interest in *alimenta* schemes at the end of the first century may have contributed to the acceptance and granting of such requests by the wealthy, as a palatable means of expressing their civic duty and earning themselves honour and status.

In his letter to Sosius Senecio (I.XIII), bemoaning the behaviour of attendees at the recitals of various poets, Pliny comments that he was in the habit of attending such recitals, though he acknowledges that

many of the poets were his friends. In the final comment, he indicates that he is going to spend some time in the country and do some writing of his own, but he does not intend to recite his own work because he does not want his fellow poets to think that he only attended their recitals so that they in turn would attend his. He notes that such an expectation would turn the friendship into a reciprocal relationship of obligation, and he did not want that to be the case (I.XIII.6).

Pliny's writings are of particular interest because they show that in letters of the first century it was not unusual to express a degree of emotion. As Stowers has pointed out from the epistolary handbook of Demetrius, several letter types have resulted from recurrent social situations in which people are separated and attempt to converse with each other, either to maintain a friendship (the *philikos* or 'friendly' type of letter) or to advocate for the establishment of a friendship on behalf of a third party (the *systatikos* or 'commending' type of letter).[197] These letters usually describe the benefits of friendship, the recipient's munificence and beneficence, and the affection that the writer has for the recipient. Perhaps more so than in treatises or philosophical discourses on the subject of φιλία, it is evident in letters that emotion (and in particular affection) were an intrinsic part of φιλία, whether these friendships were between equals, or between those in the 'higher' position and those in a 'lower' position. In the examples given above, we see friendship and affection expressed by a patron towards a client, a master towards a slave, a husband towards his wife, and a teacher to his student. Letters between friends expressed a degree of emotion, which at times was quite effusive, and it can be justifiably be concluded that friendships in the first century, even between unequals, demonstrated emotion. But what is also evident from the discussion above is that a characteristic of friendship in the Graeco-Roman world was that friends were not afraid to speak their minds to each other and tell each other the truth, so we need to consider this important aspect of friendship.

2.3.3. Truth (ἀλήθεια) and Frank Speaking (παρρησία)

The obvious place to start when considering the language of 'truth' is the ἀληθ- word group – the substantive ἀλήθεια ('truth', 'truthfulness', 'reality'), the verb ἀληθεύειν ('to tell the truth'), the adjectives ἀληθής ('true', 'truthful', 'honest') and ἀληθινός ('true', 'trustworthy', 'genuine', 'real'), and the adverb ἀληθῶς ('truly').[198] Rudolf Bultmann in his *TDNT* article on the Greek and Hellenistic uses of ἀλήθεια distinguishes between the Greek and Semitic concepts of truth.[199] He notes that the very fact that the

[197] Stowers, *Letter Writing*, 54.

[198] Glosses from Arndt, et al., *BDAG*.

[199] G. Quell, G. Kittel and R. K. Bultmann, "ἀλήθεια, ἀληθής, ἀληθινός, ἀληθεύω," *TDNT*.

Hebrew אֱמֶת is translated in the LXX by different terms (e.g. πίστις, δικαιοσύνη and ἀλήθεια) shows that the Hebrew and Greek concepts differ. Bultmann argues that, etymologically, ἀλήθεια is concerned with 'non-concealment' and thus "indicates a matter or state to the extent that it is seen, indicated or expressed, and that in such seeing, indication or expression it is disclosed, or discloses itself, as it really is… ἀλήθεια, therefore, denotes the 'full or real state of affairs.'"[200] He says that the ἀλήθ- word group was used by both historians and philosophers – the former to denote real events, the latter to indicate real being in the absolute sense, and with its connections to λόγος and ὀρθός and πίστις it acquires the meaning of 'truthfulness'.[201] Furthermore, Bultmann says that in the dualistic thinking of Plato and Hellenism in general, ἀλήθεια takes on more and more the sense of 'true and genuine reality' in contrast to εἴδωλον ('reflection' or 'appearance') and the only thing which is truly ἀληθές is that which always is, i.e. the divine.

While many have followed the traditional view of a difference between Hebrew and Greek concepts of truth, James Barr and Anthony Thiselton believe that such a distinction is misleading and unhelpful.[202] The traditional argument is that in Greek ἀλήθεια denotes real essence (i.e. truth) in contrast to mere appearance whilst in Hebrew the corresponding word denotes stability or faithfulness.[203] Thiselton discounts the distinction on the basis that it is difficult to show what part etymology played in the later meaning of the word – that while ἀλήθεια does mean truth in contrast to mere appearance in Greek philosophy, the majority of Greek writers and readers did not think in these terms, and that while Parmenides and Plato supported the idea of 'truth' as genuine reality (including its timeless and

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[200] Quell, Kittel and Bultmann, *TDNT* 1:238. Bultmann cites a phrase from Xenophon's *Anabasis* which supports the idea that the verbal form ἀληθεύω communicates the idea of reality. Democrates has a reputation for telling things as they really are and not confusing fact and fiction: ἀληθεῦσαι τοιαῦτα, τὰ ὄντα τε ὡς ὄντα καὶ τὰ μὴ ὄντα ὡς οὐκ ὄντα. Ernst Heitsch had already written in 1962 about the pre- and non-philosophical uses of ἀλήθεια meaning 'seeing something in its revealed or unhidden state' – citing numerous examples from non-philosophical sources as well as in Plato's writings. See E. Heitsch, "Die nicht-philosophische ΑΛΗΘΕΙΑ," *Hermes* no. 90 (1962).

[201] It is beyond the scope of this thesis but for works which discuss Greek myth and thought and how they were part of the development of the Greek philosophical world, and eventually the formation of the Greek *polis* where *alētheia* (and *parrēsia*; discussed below) were important, see J. P. Vernant, *Myth and Thought among the Greeks* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1983); M. Detienne, *The Masters of Truth in Archaic Greece* (trans. J. Lloyd; New York: Zone Books, 1999).

[202] Barr, *The Semantics of Biblical Language*, ch. 7; A. C. Thiselton, "Truth," *NIDNTT* 3:874-901.

[203] Barr argues that the usual meaning of ἀλήθεια in Greek writings should not be overridden by theological usage. He refutes the claims of Herbert and Torrance who argue for a Hebrew background to the Greek term and says, "It should be noticed that I am not trying to argue that the Greeks and the Hebrews did not differ in their conceptions of truth, but only (for the present) that neither Greek metaphysics nor Hebrew conceptions of the reality of God are built into the intrinsic semantic function of the word ἀλήθεια." See also section 3.1 (*Truth in the Hebrew Bible and* Judaism) below.

immaterial nature), the Sophists and Aristotle saw truth as having a more positive relation to the world.[204] Thiselton goes on to argue that ἀλήθεια in authors such as Homer, Herodotus, and Thucydides is most frequently used in contrast to the telling of a lie or the withholding of information[205] and the adjectival form often describes the characteristics of a person – i.e. a person who is careful, honest, accurate, or perhaps reliable. In writers like Herodotus and Thucydides ἀλήθεια usually stands in opposition to falsehood.[206]

Parmenides, the pre-Socratic Greek philosopher of the late sixth or early fifth century BC, in his poem *On Nature*, describes two views of reality, one of which is the 'way of truth' where he explains that reality (which he terms 'what is') is one, existence is timeless, and change is impossible. The other view is the 'way of opinion or appearance or seeming' and here Parmenides proceeds to explain how the material world (which he sees as an illusion) originates from the one reality. With these ideas Parmenides essentially provides the conceptual framework and ideas for Plato's later 'theory of forms', but the key point here is that Parmenides uses words like the ἀλήθ- word group (along with frequent use of the participle of εἰμί) to describe that which exists, that which is real, that which *is*. However, as Thiselton notes, it is not clear whether ordinary Greek writers of that period shared Parmenides' view.[207]

Plato also draws a distinction between reality ('truth') and appearance ('falsehood'). In *Republic* II.382a-383b he argues that the gods do not lie or deceive by presenting an appearance which does not accord with reality because they have no need or motive to do so, and he concludes, "the divine and holy is completely without falsehood [ἀψευδὲς]... god is utterly straightforward and true [ἀληθὲς] in word and deed; he does not change himself or deceive others either by means of apparitions, or stories, or a parade of signs, in sleeping or waking."[208] But Plato also uses the ἀλήθ- words in more ordinary ways, for example:

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[204] Thiselton, *NIDNTT* 3:875.

[205] Thiselton cites examples of telling lies from Homer's *Iliad* 24.407; 23.361 and *Odyssey* 11.507; 13.254; for examples related to the character of a person he cites *Iliad* 12.433. For a detailed examination of *vrai* ('true') *et faux* ('false') in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, see J.-P. Levet, *Le Vrai et le Faux dans la Pensée Grecque Archaïque* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1976), 57-106. Levet's work is essentially a semantic, historical, and comparative analysis of all the words in Homeric and post-Homeric Greek which relate to the meanings 'true' or 'false'.

[206] Examples cited include: Herodotus' *The Histories* 1.116; 1:55; Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War* 2.41.2. Barr also gives several examples from Graeco-Roman writings which show that ἀλήθεια was basically used to distinguish between 'true' and 'false'. See Barr, *The Semantics of Biblical Language*, 188.

[207] Thiselton, *NIDNTT* 3:876. For an interesting discussion of the history of the usage of *alētheia* and its development see Detienne, *Masters of Truth*. Detienne argues that one needs to look at the wider literature in which *alētheia* is mentioned, and in particular to examine its usage and the things it is contrasted with, to get a fuller picture of the ancient Greek understanding of truth.

[208] Translation here and following from the Loeb Classical Library.

- As the facts of a matter (*Epistles* VII.330 – "But what were the facts? For the truth [τὸ ἀληθὲς] must be told.");[209]
- As a contrast to myth (*Timaeus* 22c-d – "That story, as it is told, has the fashion of a legend, but the truth [τὸ ἀληθές] of it lies in…");
- Expressing the idea of the reality or genuineness of something (e.g. *Republic* VI.499c – "true [ἀληθινὸς] love of true [ἀληθινῆς] philosophy");
- As a descriptor of one who speaks justly (e.g. *Republic* IX.589c – "Every way you look at it, then, he who commends justice would be telling the truth [ἀληθῆ ἂν λέγοι], he who commends injustice would be lying… the one who commends the just is telling the truth [ἀληθεύει], whereas its detractor disparages what he disparages because he has no sound knowledge.").

In reality, 'truth' for Plato is even more nuanced than this. In an interesting comparative study, Ewa Osek examines the usages of the truth terminology in Plato's *Apology* and John's Gospel.[210] In the *Apology* Osek notes that ἀλήθεια ('truth') occurs 8x, ἀληθής ('true') occurs 24x, ἀληθῶς ('truly') occurs 3x, and ἀληθεύειν ('to tell the truth') occurs 1x, all of which emphasises the significance of the ἀληθ- word group

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[209] It should be noted that despite R. G. Bury's claims in the prefatory note to Epistle VII in *Plato IX* Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press), 463 that Epistle VII "has the best claims to authenticity", its authenticity has been challenged by some scholars on the grounds that it contains a statement about the forms and ideas of artificial things whereas Aristotle attributes to Plato the idea that there are forms and ideas only of natural things, and on the unlikely historical setting of the Epistle. Scholars who have disputed the authenticity of the Epistle include Malcolm Schofield (Malcolm Schofield, "Plato & Practical Politics", in *Greek & Roman Political Thought*, ed. Schofield & C. Rowe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 299–302), Myles Burnyeat ("The Second Prose Tragedy: a Literary Analysis of the pseudo-Platonic *Epistle* VII," unpublished manuscript, cited in Malcolm Schofield, *Plato* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 44n19), George Boas ("Fact and Legend in the Biography of Plato", *The Philosophical Review* 57, no. 5 (1949): 439–457), Terence Irwin ("The Intellectual Background," in *The Cambridge Companion to Plato*, ed. R. Kraut (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 78–79n4), and Julia Annas ("Classical Greek Philosophy," in *The Oxford History of Greece and the Hellenistic World*, ed. Boardman, Griffin and Murray (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 285). Despite such critiques, the Seventh Epistle is being taken here as authentically Platonic. Even if it is not, it still shows ἀλήθεια being used to describe facts or reality in the time of the ancient world, and so still establishes the variety of views on the meaning of 'truth'.

[210] E. Osek, "ΑΛΗΘΕΙΑ, a Keyword in Plato's *Apology* and John's Gospel: A Comparative Study," *Littera Antiqua* 3 (2011). Osek argues that such a comparison of two documents from totally different eras and contexts, and completely different in style is valid because there are similarities between them when one compares the leading keywords, namely the truth terminology. Later on Osek shows that there are also strong parallels between the two documents in the pairs of opposites found in the two documents – truth/falsehood; soul/body; life/death; and love/hatred, which are also found in the Greek Orphic literature and in her view this literature better accounts for possible influences on the Johannine author's thinking than any other previous suggestion – i.e. Hellenistic syncretism, Platonic tradition, the Hermetic literature, Gnostic ideas of truth, the OT, or Qumranic literature. See "ΑΛΗΘΕΙΑ": 52f., 72-75.

in Socrates' defence of himself against charges of corrupting the young and not believing in the gods of the city. Osek further suggests that the meanings of the ἀλήθ- words can be arranged into six categories as follows:[211]

(1) The pragmatic truth ('verity') – this is the most common sense and denotes 'truth' or 'truthful' as that which corresponds to the facts of the matter and is frequently found as the object of the verbs 'to tell' (λέγειν) and 'to hear' (ἀκούειν). This meaning likely relates to the etymology of the word ἀλήθεια, coming from the alpha privative (α) + λήθη = 'non-concealment', 'non-forgetfulness'.[212] Socrates promises to tell the whole truth (*Apol*. 17.b8; 20.d5; 34.b5) and presents himself as a well-informed person from whom the facts are not hidden (*Apol*. 19.a5).

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[211] Osek, "ΑΛΗΘΕΙΑ": 55-66. The first three of these overlap with the general uses of the ἀλήθ- words just noted, while the fourth relates to the distinction between reality ('truth') and appearance ('falsehood'), but the final two add a further perspective on Plato's understanding of 'truth'.

[212] Ultimately, the noun λήθη, ης = 'forgetfulness' (which happens to be the name of one of the rivers of Hades) is etymologically related to the verb λανθάνω = 'I escape notice'. Thus, the basic idea of the cognate terms is 'un-escaping notice' Roger Nicole argues that, given this etymology, ἀλήθεια has the basic idea of 'that which receives notice/that which comes to be known', presumably by a correct perception of reality. R. Nicole, "The Biblical Concept of Truth," in *Scripture and Truth* (eds. D. A. Carson, et al.; Leicester; London: Inter-Varsity Press, 1983), 292. The expression of truth in Ancient Greece uses both negative and positive words; see Levet, *Vrai et Faux*, 2.

In 1975 Bruno Snell argued that the key idea behind ἀλήθεια, λήθη, is something found in persons and thus relates more to forgetfulness than hiddenness. He says "ἀληθές ist das im Gedächtnis lückenlos Festgehaltene (das in seiner Fülle hergezählt werden kann)." See B. Snell, "ΑΛΗΘΕΙΑ," in *Festschrift für Ernst Siegmann zum 60. Geburtstag* (eds. J. Latacz, et al.; vol. 1 of *Würzburger Jahrbücher für die Altertumswissenschaft : N. F.*; Würzburg: F. Schöningh, 1975), 14. This more subjective idea was accepted by Thomas Cole who thought it needed some reformulation and so argued that "*alêtheia* is that which is involved in, or results from, a transmission of information that excludes *lêthê*, whether in the form of forgetfulness, failure to notice or ignoring." In other words, Cole thinks that "the forgetting excluded by *alêtheia* involves primarily the process of transmission – not the mental apprehension on which the transmission is based." See T. Cole, "Archaic Truth," *Quaderni Urbinati di Cultura Classica* 13 (1983): 8,12. Cole goes on to reconstruct the history of the semantic development of ἀληθές and ἀλήθεια, which caused him to arrive at this conclusion.

Gregory Nagy also sees a link between the *alēth*- vocabulary and memory, but does so via the term *mûthos*. In his book *Homeric Questions* Nagy highlights the importance of *performance* in analysing the Homeric myths, *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. The connection of *alētheia* with the negative element (*a*-) of forgetting (*lēth*-), and thereby an implicit affirmation of remembering (*mne*-), has strong associations with the Homeric word *mûthos*, which is in turn associated with *narrating from memory* and *recollection*. In time however, words like *alēthēs* and *alētheia* became marked in opposition to *mûthos*, which ended up being marginalised to mean something like 'myth', as we would currently understand the term – i.e. the opposite of 'truth'. Ultimately, Nagy agrees with Vernant and Detienne that *alēthēs* and *alētheia* denote a speech-act endowed with a distinctly authoritative and authorizing force. See G. Nagy, *Homeric Questions* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1996), 122-128.

The adjective ἀληθής appears as a substantive meaning 'veritable words' (*Apol.* 33.b8; 41.a8, c7).

(2) The legal term ('veracity') – the legal setting of Socrates' defence lends itself to a forensic meaning of the ἀλήθ- word group and indeed that is evident. This is a more formal meaning than the previous pragmatic idea and is 'truth' which is subject to prosecutory examination and supported by witness testimonies. Socrates parodies the contemporaneous conventions of forensic oratory by failing to produce credible witnesses preferring only to invoke the god at Delphi (*Apol.* 20.e7) and his own poverty (*Apol.* 31.c2-3) to support his 'true' words (ὡς ἀληθῆ λέγω). In his view he is the only one who speaks the truth and argues that the veracity of his accusers is questionable (*Apol.* 17a; 18.b; 19.d-e).

(3) The use of ἀληθής for 'real', 'genuine', 'essential'[213] – this usage of ἀληθής is used to describe the characteristics of particular people who carry out their duty fairly and truly, hence we read of the 'true sophist' (*Apol.* 27.e5; 34.e5), 'true rhetorician' (*Apol.* 17.b5), and 'true judge' (*Apol.* 41.a2-3 [cf. 40.a2-3 where ὀρθῶς occurs with the same meaning]), where 'true' implies an ideal embodiment of the virtues required from these professionals.

(4) The metaphysical concept ('spirituality', 'eternity', 'divinity') – a particular usage of 'truth' is with reference to divinity, especially when one considers that the *Apology* was most likely written long before Plato's other works where such a philosophical idea is developed.[214] Socrates speaks of the nature of God as 'one who does not lie' (*Apol.* 21.b6; cf. *Republic* II.382; *Cratylus* 421.b which gives a cosmological dimension to 'truth' and 'falsehood' in terms of the 'divine motion of being').[215] In addition Socrates seems to conceive of 'truth' as the god of the netherworld who will administer justice and brand his false accusers deservedly with the stigma of evil and injustice (*Apol*. 39.b4-6).

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[213] Can also be translated as: 'authentic', 'proper', 'pure', 'unadulterated', 'unmixed'. In an effort to conform it to the 'naming' of the other categories it is tempting to re-label this category as 'essential truth' (in the sense of that which defines the essence of an object or person).

[214] Osek identifies: "*Phaedo* 84.a (truth – the divinity); *Phaedrus* 248.b-249.b (truth – the food for the souls); *Philebus* 58.d; 63.b (love of truth; identity of truth and mind); *Symposium* 212.a2-7 (truth – the ideal beauty); *Respublica* 347.d; 372.e (truth – the being); *Leges* 730.c (truth – the supreme good of people and gods)." See Osek, "ΑΛΗΘΕΙΑ": fn. 35.

[215] In *Cratylus* 421.b Socrates is discussing the formation of various words and says of ἀλήθεια: "And ἀλήθεια (truth) is like the others; for the divine motion of the universe is, I think, called by this name, ἀλήθεια, because it is a compressed form of the phrase 'a wandering that is divine'/'divine wandering' (θεία ἄλη)".

(5) The moral meaning ('righteousness') – Osek notes that in the *Apology* ἀληθής and δίκαιος ('just', 'righteous', 'honest') become 'exchangeable'. As well as speaking the truth (noted above) Socrates speaks only 'just things' (*Apol*. 17.c3: δίκαια; also 18.a4-5) and gives a 'just report' (*Apol*. 28.b5: δίκαιον λόγον). There is also an occasion when ἀληθής ('truly') and δικαίως ('justly') is used with the verb εἰσάγειν in the judicial sense 'to sue' (*Apol.* 29.a).

(6) The mystical sense ('doctrine', 'wisdom') – Socrates' narrative about searching for wise men in Athens implies that 'truth' can be sought, verified, gained, or known. The philosopher describes the absence of this body of truth or wisdom either as 'ignorance' (ἀμαθία) or 'knowing nothing' (ἀγνοεῖν). Socrates would probably consider his accusers to be ignorant since ἀμαθία "is no simple lack of knowledge, but ignorance combined with conceit, arrogance, pretending to know, and permanent incapability of knowing something 'true'."[216] He continually says that "they do not care to say any true thing" (*Apol.* 23.d7-9; cf. 29.b1-2; 33.c3), By contrast Socrates considers himself ἀγνοεῖν which means that he recognises his own ignorance (*Apol.* 21.b4; 21.d5-7; 22.d1; 25.e2; 29.b4-6) which is tantamount to saying that he knows that he knows some truth but not all of it (e.g. *Apol.* 41.d1-2); by contrast the accusers don't know that they are ignorant. Wisdom is the domain of the gods and Socrates puts in the mouth of Apollo the truism that the only person who is wise is the one who recognises that "he is in truth of no account in respect to wisdom" (*Apol.* 23.b2-4; cf. 23.a5-7).

Osek believes that the metaphysical meaning of 'truth' (the divine or absolute truth) is the most important theme and guiding motif of the *Apology*, arguing that the divine truth called Socrates to witness to it against opposition. This opposition would result in the divine truth being put on trial by inferior human truth and being witnessed to by Socrates' death. Socrates, however, believes that he actually gains a victory because "a better man cannot be injured by a worse" (*Apol.* 30.c9-d1). In the end, what the *Apology* shows is that Plato conceived of truth as a multi-faceted concept ultimately sourced in divinity but manifested in and through a humanity which struggles to understand it and live according to it.

Like Plato, Aristotle also uses the ἀλήθ- words to distinguish between 'truth' and 'falsehood' where 'truth' is used to refer to propositions which correspond to facts – cf. *De Interpretatione* 4.17a.4: "But while every sentence has meaning... not all can be called propositions. We call propositions those only that have truth [ἐν ᾧ τὸ ἀληθεύειν] or falsity in them. A prayer is, for instance, a sentence but neither has truth [ἀληθὴς] nor has falsity"; similarly 9.19a.33: "and so, as the truth of propositions [οἱ λόγοι ἀληθεῖς] consists in corresponding with facts…"). *De Mundo* which is generally regarded as the work of a pseudo-Aristotle,

[216] Osek, "ΑΛΗΘΕΙΑ": 64.

likewise shows a similar usage of ἀλήθεια when it is used with reference to the role of philosophy in discovering the truth in the universe – see *De Mundo* 4.391a: "Philosophy is a divine and really god-like activity, particularly in those instances when it alone has exalted itself to the contemplation of the universe and sought to discover the truth [τὴν ἀλήθειαν] that is in it.").

As far as the Stoic understanding of ἀλήθεια is concerned Marcus Aurelius tells us that it involved an accurate perception of reality. Writing in his *Meditations* he says:

> For the Nature of the Universe is the Nature of the things that are. And the things that are have an intimate connexion with all the things that have ever been. Moreover this Nature is named Truth [ἀλήθεια], and is the primary cause of all that is true [τῶν ἀληθῶν]. The willing liar then is impious in so far as his deceit is a wrong-doing; and the unwilling liar too, for he is out of tune with the Nature of the Whole, and an element of disorder by being in conflict with the Nature of an orderly Universe; for he is in conflict who allows himself, as far as his conduct goes, to be carried into opposition to what is true [τοῖς ἀληθέσι]. And whereas he had previously been endowed by nature with the means of distinguishing false from true [τὰ ψευδῆ ἀπὸ τῶν ἀληθῶν], by neglecting to use them he has lost the power.
>
> (*Meditations* 9.1.2n) [217]

This Stoic concept of truth as an accurate perception of reality is reinforced by Epictetus in his *Discourses*. On the question of assenting to things he states:

> Because it is the very nature of the understanding to agree to truth [ἀληθής], to be dissatisfied with falsehood [ψευδής], and to suspend its belief in doubtful cases... When any one, then, assents to what is false [ψευδής], be assured that he does not wilfully assent to it as false [ψευδής] – for, as Plato affirms, the soul is unwillingly deprived of truth [ἀλήθεια] – but what is false [ψεῦδος] appears to him to be true [ἀληθής]. (*Discourses* 1.28)[218]

[217] Translation from M. Aurelius, *Marcus Aurelius* (LCL 58; ed. C. R. Haines; trans. C. R. Haines; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1916).

[218] *The Works of Epictetus: His Discourses, in Four Books, the Enchiridion, and Fragments* (ed. T. W. Higginson; Medford, MA: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1890), 1091f. The reference to Plato is not a literal quotation from any specific work, but similar ideas are to be found in Plato's *Laws*, V.731c-d; *Protagoras*, 345d-e; *Sophist*, 227d-228d; and *Timaeus* 86d-e.

Thus, it seems that the Stoic idea of truth parallels that of Plato's basic distinction between reality ('truth') and appearance ('falsehood'), though it is evident from the passages just cited that people did not always find it easy to discern between what was actually true and what appeared to be true. In his essay "Truth in Lying", Glen Bowersock gives two examples of writers during Aurelius' reign (Celsus and Lucian) who reflect the struggle that people had in sorting out truth and fiction in a world which seemed to intermingle and confuse them.[219] Part of the difficulty is that there was truth in fiction – when the writers wrote their fictitious and imaginary stories, they often reflected the world in which they lived and, insofar as they did so, they contained 'truth'.

By way of summary then, the ἀλήθ- words were used in the ancient world to describe: (1) reality (that which 'exists' or 'is', actuality) as opposed to appearance; (2) characteristics of a person or thing (e.g. genuine, in accordance with the facts, just, righteous); and (3) a body of known things (e.g. knowledge, wisdom, doctrine). These terms were applied to divinity, people, and things as a means of distinguishing them from their 'opposites'. Divinity was considered the only thing which was truly ἀληθές because human beings were prone to presenting a façade or appearance; people could either be truthful (being genuine, careful, honest, reliable, speaking only according to the facts, acting justly or righteously) or act in ways contrary to this (telling lies or falsehoods, withholding information, misrepresenting facts as myth or legend); things similarly were either true (i.e. genuine, in accordance with the facts) or false (illusory, lacking substance or support).

But the concept of truth is not limited to the ἀλήθ- words and the other term which was discussed quite widely in the ancient world with respect to the concept of 'truth' is παρρησία. Etymologically it derives

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[219] G. Bowersock, "Truth in Lying," in *Fiction as History: Nero to Julian* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 1. Bowersock reports that Celsus, a venomous pagan apologist, in his *True Discourse,* attacks the veracity of the Gospel accounts of Jesus' life and death claiming that they were a fabrication purporting to be historical truth. On the other hand, Lucian was unconcerned with Christianity but writes his *True Stories* and expressly states that they are fictitious lies, but it soon becomes obvious that they still contain some truth. Bowersock suggests that Celsus and Lucian thus give us two sides of the same coin – the readers of the Gospel narratives are under the impression that they are accurate records of what happened, but after reading Celsus they get the disquieting feeling that some of the Gospel narrative may be mendacious; Lucian makes it clear at the outset that what he writes is all lies, but the reader soon realises that it contains truth. Bowersock, "Truth in Lying," 6f.

For a technical discussion on how the Stoics viewed 'trueness' and 'falseness' and how Stoic truth-talk could be diagrammed using the statements, propositions, syllogisms, and symbols of philosophical logic, see W. Cavini, "Chrysippus on Speaking Truly and the Liar," in *Dialektiker und Stoiker: Zur Logik der Stoa und ihrer Vorläufer* (eds. K. Döring, et al.; Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1993).

from πᾶς ('all'), ῥῆσις ('speech', 'word'), and ἐρῶ ('say', 'speak') and thus has the basic meaning 'freedom to say all'.[220] Hans-Cristoph Hahn tells us:

> Since in practice this freedom of speech encountered opposition from time to time, *parrhēsia* acquired the further meaning of fearlessness, frankness. A negative overtone is also perceptible in some instances where freedom of speech has been misused to the point of bluntness and shamelessness. In an extended sense *parrhēsia* can mean confidence and joyfulness.[221]

First found in the Greek dramatists, Euripides (e.g. *Hippolytus* 421f.; *Phoenician Women* 387ff.; *Ion* 670ff.)[222] and Aristophanes (*Thesmophoriazusae* 540f.),[223] but also in the speeches, orations and histories of writers like Aeschines (e.g. *Against Ctesiphon* 3.6), Demosthenes (*Orations* I.VI.31) and Polybius (*Histories* II.38.6),[224] the word παρρησία was used in a political setting to indicate the democratic right to

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[220] Most lexicons give three meanings of the word παρρησία: 'freedom of speech and action'; 'openness'; and 'boldness of speech'. See for example Liddell and Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*; J. H. Moulton and G. Milligan, *The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament Illustrated from the Papyri and Other Non-Literary Sources* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1957); Arndt, et al., *BDAG*; J. Lust, E. Eynikel and K. Hauspie, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint* (Revised ed.; Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaf, 2003); T. Muraoka, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint* (Leuven: Peeters, 2009).

[221] H.-C. Hahn, "Openness, Frankness, Boldness," *NIDNTT* 2:734f.

[222] *Hippolytus* 421ff.: "but rather that they may live in glorious Athens as free men, free of speech [ἐλεύθεροι παρρησίᾳ] and flourishing".

Phoenician Women 387ff: "JOCASTA: [See, I ask you the first thing I want to know.] What is it like to be deprived of your country? Is it a great calamity? POLYNICES: The greatest: the reality far surpasses the description. JOCASTA: What is its nature? What is hard for exiles? POLYNICES: One thing is most important: no free speech [οὐκ ἔχει παρρησίαν]. JOCASTA: A slave's lot this, not saying what you think."

Ion 670ff.: "If it is right to do so, I pray my mother may be Athenian, so that I may have free speech [παρρησία] as my maternal inheritance! For if a foreigner, even though nominally a citizen, comes into that pure-bred city, his tongue is enslaved and he has no freedom of speech [κοὐκ ἔχει παρρησίαν]."

[223] *Thesmophoriazusae* 540f.: "There is freedom of speech [παρρησίας] here, and all of us who are citizens are entitled to speak."

[224] *Against Ctesiphon* 3.6: "There are, as you know, fellow-citizens, three forms of government in the world: tyranny, oligarchy, and democracy. Tyrannies and oligarchies are administered according to the tempers of their lords, but democratic states according to their own established laws. Let no man among you forget this, but let each bear distinctly in mind that when he enters a court-room to sit as juror in a suit against an illegal motion, on that day he is to cast his vote for or against his own freedom of speech [παρρησίας]."

Orations 6.*Philippic* 2.31: "Why do I mention this now and assert that these men ought to be called upon? I vow that I will boldly tell you the whole truth [τἀληθῆ μετὰ παρρησίας ἐρῶ] and keep nothing back."

Histories II.38.6: "We must rather seek for a cause, for every event whether probable or improbable must have some cause. The cause here, I believe to be more or less the following. One could not find a political system and principle so favorable to equality and freedom of speech [ἰσηγορίας καὶ παρρησίας], in a word so sincerely democratic, as that of the Achaean league."

freedom of speech granted to citizens of a Greek city state.[225] In this usage Heinrich Schlier notes that παρρησία had three nuances: (a) it could emphasise the right to say anything without fear; (b) it could focus on the actuality of things and thus be closely related to the truth; and (c) it could refer to the courage needed when those who had the right and openness to express παρρησία, faced opposition.[226] These nuances highlight the relationship of παρρησία to 'truth' – it is the openness to be frank and candid and speak the truth without fear of retribution.[227] It was seen as the right of free citizens to speak their minds

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[225] See also Philodemus, *On Frank Criticism – Introduction, Translation, and Notes* (SBLTT – Graeco-Roman Series 43/13; ed. J. T. Fitzgerald; trans. D. Konstan, et al.; Missoula, MT; Chico, CA; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1998), 3f.; K. A. Raaflaub, "Des freien Burgers Recht der freien Rede," in *Studien zur antiken Sozialgeschichte* (eds. W. Eck, et al.; Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 1980), 7-57; S. B. Marrow, *Speaking the Word Fearlessly: Boldness in the New Testament* (New York: Paulist, 1982), 20f. Kurt Raaflaub discusses extensively the development of, and interrelationship between, ἰσηγορία (political equality), ἰσονομία (equality), and παρρησία (freedom of speech). As Raaflaub concludes, »Wahrhaftig frei war nur wer auch im politischen Leben über parrhesia verfügte.« ["Only those who had parrhesia in political life were truly free."]. Raaflaub, "freien Burgers Recht," 45. For an extensive discussion in the Greek culture about the development of the concept of freedom of citizens (*eleutheria*) and its associated idea of freedom of speech (*parrhēsia*), which Raaflaub sees as a term coined to better express the association between democracy and freedom than *isēgoria*, see Raaflaub's later work *The Discovery of Freedom in Ancient Greece* (1st English, rev. and updated from the German ed.; trans. R. Franciscono; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004). In a more recent study, George Parsenios also considered the political and philosophical discussions of *parrēsia* and how this sheds interpretive light on the Gospel of John. See G. L. Parsenios, "Confounding Foes and Counselling Friends: *Parrēsia* in the Fourth Gospel and Greco-Roman Philosophy," in *The Prologue of the Gospel of John: Its Literary, Theological, and Philosophical Contexts: Papers Read at the Colloquium Ioanneum* (eds. J. G. van der Watt, et al.; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2016), 251-272. Parsenios notes how Jesus' instances of *parrēsia* are similar to the ways the ancients used it: both in public settings, in which there is conflict, and in intimate settings, among friends. For an explanation of how 'speech' developed in ancient Greece, from the domain of the poet, diviner, and king ('Masters of Truth' whose speech was defined by *alētheia*) to the primary domain of the philosophers, see Detienne, *Masters of Truth*. Without actually mentioning *parrēsia* once, Detienne defines *alētheia* in terms of speech and says it is "a particular type of speech, pronounced under particular circumstances, by a figure invested with particular functions"; Detienne, *Masters of Truth*, 69.

[226] H. Schlier, "παρρησια, παρρησιαζομαι," *TDNT* 5:872f. See also K. Papademetriou, "The Performative Meaning of the Word παρρησία in Ancient Greek and in the Greek Bible," in *Parrhesia: Ancient and Modern Perspectives on Freedom of Speech* (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 17-20.

[227] Michel Foucault in a series of lectures in 1983 compiled into the book *Fearless Speech* by Joseph Pearson describes two types of *parrhesia* – a pejorative sense akin to chattering or speaking whatever comes to mind; and a truth-telling sense in which the *parrhesiastes* speaks not only what he thinks is true but what he knows is true because he possesses certain moral qualities which ensure that he has access to the truth. Foucault goes on to identify the characteristics of *parrhesia* and its speaker, the *parrhesiastes*: (1) *parrhesia* communicates with sincerity the opinion of the speaker; (2) the opinion of the *parrhesiastes* actually coincides with the truth; (3) there must be a risk or danger in telling the truth; (4) it must involve the capability of hurting or angering the interlocutor (i.e. it has the function of criticism); and (5) it must be offered freely and seen as one's duty (i.e. not compelled). See M. Foucault, *Fearless Speech* (ed. J. Pearson; Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2001), 13-20. Foucault summarises:

> *Parrhesia* is a kind of verbal activity where the speaker has a specific relation to truth through frankness, a certain relationship to his own life through danger, a certain type of relation to himself or

under the protection of citizenship. Thus, παρρησία and by association ἀλήθεια, were seen as the domain of the privileged (the free citizens) and were not accessible or practised by the foreigner or the slave.

But Schlier also notes that παρρησία was used in two other spheres as well, the private, and the moral, and in fact became more dominant in these spheres.[228] In the private sphere it was frequently found in connection with the practice of φιλία; because friends know one another (including each other's faults) but love and care for each other they are not afraid to speak the truth to each other, even to censure each other, because they can do so with appropriateness and sensitivity.[229] Παρρησία thus came to have the particular meaning of *candour*.[230] In the moral sphere, Schlier says that παρρησία was adopted by various Hellenistic philosophical schools, especially Cynicism, where it became associated with ἐλευθερία which referred to freedom from moral passions.[231] The philosopher who exhibited παρρησία shamelessly lived a public life, able to speak freely and frankly in the public arena.

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other people through criticism (self-criticism or criticism of other people), and a specific relation to moral law through freedom and duty. More precisely, *parrhesia* is a verbal activity in which a speaker expresses his personal relationship to truth, and risks his life because he recognizes truth-telling as a duty to improve or help other people (as well as himself). In *parrhesia,* the speaker uses his freedom and chooses frankness instead of persuasion, truth instead of falsehood or silence, the risk of death instead of life and security, criticism instead of flattery, and moral duty instead of self-interest and moral apathy.

[228] Schlier, *TDNT* 5:873-875. Arnaldo Momigliano notes that after the Athenian democracy gave way to autocracy at the end of the fourth century, "*parrhēsia* as a private virtue replaced *parrhēsia* as a political right." See A. Momigliano, "Freedom of Speech in Antiquity," *Dictionary of the History of Ideas: Studies of Selected Pivotal Ideas* 260; see also Raaflaub, "freien Burgers Recht," 21f.; Marrow, *Speaking the Word*, 21f.,65-67; Papademetriou, "Performative Meaning of παρρησία," 34. Marrow also notes that the Septuagint adds two new elements to the meaning of *parrhēsia*: "it is gift of God, associated with the divine Wisdom, and manifested in the just man's ready and unhindered access to God which finds expression particularly in prayer." See Marrow, *Speaking the Word*, 24.

[229] Cf. Aristotle *Eth. Nic.* IX.2.1165a: "while to comrades and brothers one should allow freedom of speech [παρρησίαν] and common use of all things". See also Isocrates *Discourses I* 2.3: "furthermore, freedom of speech [ἡ παρρησία] and the privilege which is openly granted to friends to rebuke and to enemies to attack each other's faults."

[230] Schlier cites passages such as: Plato's *Gorgias* 491e; *Charmides* 156a; Xenophon's *Cyropaedia*. V.3.8 – all of which are examples of speaking freely and with candour. A good discussion of the development of παρρησία and its changing meaning and sphere of operation can be found in Foucault, *Fearless Speech*. Foucault examines the rhetorical, political, and philosophical aspects of παρρησία, providing ample examples of each from the extant literature, and tracing the development in παρρησία as society changed. Ultimately, Foucault's concern was not so much with truth *per se* but with the truth-teller: who is able to tell the truth? What are the moral, ethical, and the spiritual conditions which entitle someone to present himself as, and to be considered as, a truth-teller? About what topics is it important to tell the truth? What are the consequences of telling the truth? What is the relation between the activity of truth-telling and the exercise of power? See Foucault, *Fearless Speech*, 169-173.

[231] Gaertner notes that "Cynicism is the only philosophic movement in antiquity to make freedom a central value and freedom of speech in particular." See J. F. Gaertner, "The Discourse of Displacement in Greco-Roman

While many of the philosophical groups were concerned about ἀλήθεια and παρρησία there were many charlatans in each of the schools who had ulterior motives, usually associated with the acquisition of wealth or status, who sought to identify themselves with the various schools. Lucian of Samosata (c.125-180AD) who wrote numerous satires, made fun of the various philosophical schools in some of his works (e.g. *Philosophies for Sale* and *The Banquet or Lapiths*). Perhaps unsurprisingly, these works received criticism so, in his defence, Lucian wrote *The Fisherman or the Dead Come to Life*. This work depicts Lucian in his alias as Frankness (Παρρησιάδης) on trial before the ancient philosophers (Pythagoras, Socrates, Aristippus, Plato, Diogenes, Aristotle, Epicurus, and Chrysippus) who have come to life to condemn him. In the trial before Lady Philosophy and other personified virtues (Virtue, Temperance, Justice, Culture, Truth, Liberty, and Free-Speech) Frankness (Lucian) is vindicated – he successfully demonstrates that his issue was not with the ancient philosophers themselves but with those in the various schools who did not in fact follow the teachings of those they claimed to revere. The tables are turned and Παρρησιάδης goes from being the accused to the accuser in a second trial of the those who claimed to be philosophers and those found to be false are branded as such, so people can tell them from the genuine philosophers.[232]

The views of the ancients on truth-telling are well represented by Philodemus in his essay *On Frank Criticism* written in the first century BC[233] and they were still representative of the thinking in the first two centuries of the Common Era as the *Cynic Epistles,* Plutarch's *Moralia: How to Tell a Flatterer from a Friend*, and the various Stoic sources show. The *Cynic Epistles* are a collection of letters purportedly from

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Antiquity," in *Writing Exile: The Discourse of Displacement in Greco-Roman Antiquity and Beyond* (ed. J. F. Gaertner; vol. 83 of *Mnemosyne: Bibliotheca Classica Batava*; Leiden: Brill, 2007), 84.

[232] See Lucian, "The Dead Come to Life, Or the Fisherman," in *Lucian III* (vol. 130 of *LCL,* ed. J. Henderson; trans. A. M. Harmon; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1921). A telling part of the dialogue is the exchange between Frankness, Philosophy, and Truth (*Fisherman* 45-46):

> Frankness: Well, there you see what they are like. You must consider how all this is to stop going on unobserved, and how those who come into contact with them are to tell which of them are the good and which, on the contrary, the followers of the other life.
>
> Philosophy: Invent a plan, Truth; for it would be in your own interest to do so, in order that Falsehood may not prevail over you, and bad men, under the cloak of Ignorance, escape your eye when they imitate the good.
>
> Truth: If you think best, let us empower Frankness himself to do this, since we have seen that he is honest and in sympathy with us, and that he particularly admires you, Philosophy—to take along Investigation and put himself in the way of all who claim to be philosophers. Then, whenever he finds a truly legitimate son of Philosophy, let him crown the man with a wreath of green olive and invite him to the Prytaneum; and if he meets a scoundrel whose philosophy is but stage-play—there are many of that sort—let him tear his mantle, cut off his beard close to the skin with goat-shears, and stamp or brand a mark on his forehead, between the eyebrows; let the pattern of the brand be a fox or an ape.

For a good analysis of Lucian's *The Fisherman*, see Parsenios, "Confounding Foes and Counselling Friends."

[233] Philodemus lived c.110-40/35 BC.

people like Anacharsis, Crates, Diogenes, Heraclitus, and Socrates and his followers, spanning a period from the sixth or fifth century BC to the fourth century AD, which appear to reflect the ideals and practices of the Cynics and their views on truth, truth-telling, and the reception of truth; Plutarch lived 46-120 AD, a time roughly contemporaneous with the Johannine author; the writings of various Stoic philosophers like Musonius Rufus (first century AD), Epictetus (first-second century AD), and Marcus Aurelius (mid-second century AD), are also roughly contemporaneous with when the Johannine literature was written.[234]

In Philodemus' *On Frank Criticism* παρρησία becomes a primary strategy in moral reform as a counter to κολακεία ('flattery') and Philodemus exhorts his students to live with those who speak freely and avoid those who flatter because correction and instruction best take place when members of the group admonish and censure one another in friendship.[235] This is 'truth-telling' in the context of 'friendship'.

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[234] While there is much debate about the order and dating of the Johannine Epistles it is reasonable to assume that they were written more or less during the last two decades of the first century AD. For a discussion of the much-debated dating of the Cynic Epistles, see A. J. Malherbe, *The Cynic Epistles: A Study Edition* (SBLBS 12; Missoula, MT; Chico, CA; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1977). All references in this thesis to the Cynic Epistles are to the texts and translations in this work. Malherbe helpfully gives an introductory section to each group of letters where matters of provenance and the thrust of the letters are discussed. He assesses the dates for the groupings of letter as: Anacharsis: 1st century BC (possibly as early as the 3rd century BC); Crates: 1st-2nd century AD; Diogenes: some 1st century BC, some 2nd century AD, some 4th century AD; Heraclitus: 6th-5th century BC; Socrates and the Socratics: 2nd century AD or later. See also A. J. Malherbe, *Paul and the Popular Philosophers* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1989), 1-24. In the opening chapter of this work, Malherbe notes that there appeared to be two different types of Cynics: "an austere, rigorous one, and a milder, so-called hedonistic strain". See Malherbe, *Paul and the Popular Philosophers*, 14. The main difference appears to relate to the austerity of their manner of life with the milder Cynics arguing that a less austere lifestyle and a milder *parrēsia* influenced a larger audience by allowing the philosopher to distance themselves from the antisocial Cynics and accommodate themselves to their audience.

[235] Philodemus, *On Frank Criticism*, 3-8. In the introduction section of this work, Fitzgerald *et al*. argue that from the time of Isocrates onwards the meaning of παρρησία changed and it referred more to the frank criticism that was delivered in the process of instruction – the so-called "nurturing or therapeutic use of παρρησία." See also C. E. Glad, "Frank Speech, Flattery, and Friendship in Philodemus," in *Friendship, Flattery, and Frankness of Speech: Studies on Friendship in the New Testament World* (ed. J. T. Fitzgerald; Leiden: Brill, 1996), 21-59; and V. Tsouna, *The Ethics of Philodemus* (Oxford; London; New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 91-118. Tsouna begins her chapter on *Frank Speech* by saying:

> Philodemus' treatise *On Frank Speech,* Περὶ παρρησίας (*De lib. dic.* PHerc 1471) … discusses frank speech, παρρησία (translit. *parrhēsia*), in a narrow technical sense of the term: namely, as a specific educational method that involves candid criticism, is practised live between the members of Epicurean schools, and aims at moral correction and improvement.

On the matter of flattery in Aristotle, Theophrastus, Philodemus, and Cicero, see J. Kemp, "Flattery and Frankness in Horace and Philodemus," *Greece & Rome (Second Series)* 57, no. 01 (2010).

Also concerned about truth-telling were the Cynics. Michel Foucault comments that for the Cynics, "the manner in which a person lived was a touchstone of his relation to truth"[236] and thus the Cynics wanted their lives to be a *blazon* of essential truths and an example to others. This was to be achieved, according to Foucault, through critical preaching (speaking out against all social institutions), scandalous behaviour (calling into question collective habits, opinions, standards of decency, and institutional rules), and provocative dialogue (seeking to challenge the interlocutor's pride even at the expense of one's own life). Such techniques were seen as 'truth-telling' when no-one else would.[237]

Plutarch also expresses concerns about the failure to speak with παρρησία. In his essay *Quomodo adulator ab amico internoscatur* ("How to Tell a Flatterer from a Friend"), Plutarch highlights the danger that flattery poses to friendship since self-love renders a person incapable of making a right judgement about themselves and causes them to heed the words of a flatterer. Plutarch argues that the soul contains one part that loves what is noble (φιλόκαλον) and another that loves what is false (φιλοψευδές); the genuine φίλος always takes the side of the former, which is rational and true, while the flatterer (κόλαξ) lines up with the emotional and irrational component.[238] It is in this essay that we see some relationship between 'love' and 'truth' or 'friendship' and 'frankness of speech' because the flatterer is 'loose' with both the truth and friendship. In fact, a flatterer is the enemy of truth (ch. 1) and counterfeits friendship (ch. 3). They appear to be sincere but are in fact not true friends (chs. 1-7). By contrast, the true friend displays candour.

As noted above, the ability to speak frankly and openly was seen as a valued privilege of society's free citizens and was not a benefit enjoyed by all. The Stoic writer, Musonius Rufus writing in the first century AD quotes Euripides' statement that the greatest loss of a person in exile is "no longer having freedom of speech" and then goes on to describe the importance of παρρησία:

> You are right, Euripides, when you say that it is the condition of a slave not to say what one thinks when one ought to speak, for it is not always, nor everywhere, nor before

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[236] Foucault, *Fearless Speech*, 117.

[237] Foucault, *Fearless Speech*, 119-133. Foucault goes on to discuss how *parrhēsia* functions in personal relationships using examples from Plutarch's *How to Tell a Flatterer from a Friend* and Galen's *The Diagnosis and Cure of the Soul's Passions*. He notes that both writers advocate the need for a *parrhesisates* or truth-teller in a person's life to rid themselves of *philautia* (self-love) since everyone is their own flatterer. Such a *parrhesisates* must possess a conformity between speech and behaviour as well as a stability and steadiness of character and thought. The difference between Plutarch and Galen is that the former argues that the *parrhesiastes* must be a friend whereas Galen argues that it should be "someone whom you do not know in order for him to be completely neutral. A good truth-teller who gives you honest counsel about yourself does not hate you, but he does not love you either." See Foucault, *Fearless Speech*, 133-142.

[238] *Moralia* I.20.61D-E.

> everyone that we should say what we think. But that one point, it seems to me, is not well-taken, that exiles do not have freedom of speech (παρρησία), if to you freedom of speech means not suppressing whatever one chances to think. For it is not as exiles that people fear to say what they think, but as people afraid lest from speaking pain or death or punishment or some other thing shall befall them. Fear is the cause of this, not exile.[239]

Although the view that exile means loss of free speech has been disputed,[240] the debate shows that παρρησία continued to be valued as a privilege in the NT world. However, it was also conditioned by circumstances, for there were times when speakers feared to voice their thoughts. The implication is that their thoughts were truthful for they would hardly have feared to speak words of flattery.

Further examination of Philodemus, the Cynic Epistles, some Stoic works, and Plutarch's *How to Tell a Flatterer from a Friend* should enable us to see whether there was much change in views about truth and its reception over the first couple of centuries of the common era, the period when the Johannine author also wrote, and also what truth-telling looked like. This should give us a basis against which to compare the Johannine writings.

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[239] C. E. Lutz, "Musonius Rufus. 'The Roman Socrates'," in *Yale Classical Studies* (ed. A. R. Bellinger; vol. 10 of; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1947), 73-75. Cited in W. Klassen, "ΠΑΡΡΗΣΙΑ in the Johannine Corpus," in *Friendship, Flattery, and Frankness of Speech: Studies on Friendship in the New Testament World* (ed. J. T. Fitzgerald; Leiden: Brill, 1996), 229. Gaetner notes that exiles under the Roman Empire could not always speak openly because those exiled to another part of the empire found themselves still under the rule of the authorities that had banished them and if they wanted any hope of a return they needed to be circumspect in their speech. He also notes that Musonius and his pupil Dio Chrysostom were both influenced by the Cynic tradition and consequently they link exile with the concepts of *eleutheria* and *parrhesia*. See Gaertner, "Discourse of Displacement," 16-17.

[240] In a treatise on exile, Teles (who wrote in the third century BC) argued that exile was not always as fearsome or terrible as it was often portrayed and the common view that exiles have no political power and no freedom of speech was in fact not always true; he lists a number of examples where people in exile found favour with foreign rulers and were entrusted by them with high offices (e.g. a certain Lycinus from Italy, a Spartan Hippomedon, and the Athenians Chremonides and Glaucon). Cited in H.-G. Nesselrath, "Later Greek Voices on the Predicament of Exile: From Teles to Plutarch and Favorinus," in *Writing Exile: The Discourse of Displacement in Greco-Roman Antiquity and Beyond* (ed. J. F. Gaertner; vol. 83 of *Mnemosyne: Bibliotheca Classica Batava*; Leiden: Brill, 2007), 89. Similarly, Plutarch in his essay *De Exilio* (16.605F-607A) refutes Euripides' view that the inability to speak one's mind is the condition of a slave, arguing that there are other reasons why a sensible man might remain silent and not speak his mind; he also refutes the view that banishment deprives one of free speech. See Nesselrath, "Later Greek Voices," 97.

2.3.3.1. The Context of Truth-Telling

All the writers examined present truth-telling as something to be done in the context of friendship or relationship, whether that be one-on-one or in a community setting. As we saw in the last section παρρησία was initially the domain of the citizens of a Greek city state who were granted the democratic right to freedom of speech, but it was also used in the private and the moral spheres as well.[241] It was seen as the opposite pole of the vice of κολακεία ('flattery') and was thus considered a useful tool to help produce moral reform.[242] The school environment was thus an appropriate context for παρρησία because of the φιλία which existed there, and as we noted in the last section, Philodemus made use of this environment of friendship and candour to instruct his students (cf. *On Frank Criticism* Fr. 84 [= 88 N]; Col. Vb; XIXb; Tab. V).[243] Furthermore, friends don't try to be someone they are not and don't change to suit others, and so are consistent in life and word. They are natural with each other bringing both pleasure and rebuke, and that dual role is a sign of a true friend. Plutarch says:

> I have no use for a friend that shifts about just as I do and nods assent just as I do (for my shadow better performs that function), but I want one that tells the truth as I do, and decides for himself as I do. (*Moralia* I.8.53B)
>
> We must regard that which gives delight and joy as true to friendship, if at times it is able also to hurt our feelings and to resist our desires; but we must be suspicious of an association that is confined to pleasures, one whose complaisance is unmixed and without a sting. (*Moralia* I.11.55D-E)[244]

Plutarch highlights the ability of friends to speak openly and honestly with one another but also warns that that there can be those who appear to be friends but who are in fact flatterers seeking their own

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[241] See footnotes 225-230.

[242] See footnote 235.

[243] *On Frank Criticism* Fr. 84 [= 88 N]: "... and here, in the presence of many friends, he will practice a [very tentative] frankness".

On Frank Criticism Col Vb: "an attentive {teacher} will employ a more abundant {frankness}); and after [more] time, when they have gained knowledge of more matters than those who have not gained it, they will employ more lavish <frankness than [these latter] in these matters>".

On Frank Criticism Col. XIXb: "<[for they think that it is the part of a friend to apply frank criticism and to]> admonish others".

On Frank Criticism Tab. V: "... [he] wishes [to admonish on] account of [friendship]".

[244] See also *Moralia* I.11.55A: "The friend, by doing always what he ought to do, is oftentimes agreeable and oftentimes disagreeable, not from any desire to be disagreeable, and yet not attempting to avoid even this if it be better."

interests (cf. *Moralia* I.2.49E-50B; 5.51C-D). Nevertheless, Philodemus tells us that people learn and benefit most from others who like them, know how to treat them, and love them, rather than from those who dislike them and do not know how to correct them (*On Frank Criticism* Fr. 44).[245] Furthermore, those who speak frankly not only love the ones to whom they speak but know them well and see their faults and are thus able to speak with both love and authority (*On Frank Criticism* Cols. IIIb, IVb), and in a manner appropriate to their current status, being mindful of their upbringing and history (*On Frank Criticism* Cols. Va-Vb). Plutarch similarly notes that friendship is the place where truth-telling really is evident and says that we should expect those who speak to us to be consistent in life and word. Flatterers have no principles in them and lead a life that is not their own, forming and moulding themselves to the various humours and caprices of those they design to flatter; they are inconsistent in character and lack integrity, never being the "one and the same man" (*Moralia* I.7.52A-B; 8.53A-B); rather what is needed is a friend who tells the truth (ἀλλὰ [δέομαι φίλου] συναληθεύοντος; *Moralia* I.8.53B). Plutarch goes on to say:

> The true friend is neither an imitator of everything nor ready to commend everything, but only the best things; 'His nature 'tis to share not hate but love' as Sophocles has it, and most assuredly to share also in right conduct and in love for the good, not in error and evil-doing. (*Moralia* I.9.53C)

It is also evident that frank speaking can take place in the context of a parent-child, teacher-student, or patron-client relationship for in those settings are established relationships of love and respect (cf. *On Frank Criticism* Col. XIb; *Moralia* I.32.71C; 33.72D; 36.73E).[246] Socrates describes the father speaking with paternal prerogative and frank speech (τοῖς λόγοις πατρικὴν ἅμα πολιτικῇ παρρησίᾳ) to his son who has set his heart on his inheritance rather than on friendship, which Socrates considers the rewards of

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[245] *On Frank Criticism* Fr. 44: "... they further inflame {them} whenever they are involved with those same men, who do not like {them} nor know how to correct {them} nor will persuade those who are much better, instead of {being involved} with one who is pure and loves {them} and is better and knows how to treat {them}."

[246] *On Frank Criticism* Col. XIb: "... but of laymen, if they are parents or have some such relationship, everyone who will pay attention."

Moralia I.32.71C: "And least of all is it decent to expose a husband in the hearing of his wife, and a father in the sight of his children, and a lover in the presence of his beloved, or a teacher in the presence of his students: for such persons are driven almost insane with grief and anger at being taken to task before those with whom they feel it is necessary to stand well."

Moralia I.33.72D: "One must, therefore, in frank speaking toward one set of persons be on his guard against commending another set, with the single exception, it is true, of parents."

Moralia I.36.73E: "so a kindly friend, a good father, and a teacher, take pleasure in using commendation rather than blame for the correction of character."

philosophy and a far greater legacy than any inheritance of gold or silver (Socrates 6).[247] He warns of the deceptiveness of flattery and pleasures which derail people from achieving virtue, driving out from them every bit of good or moderation and so frank speaking is necessary if one truly wants to help one's friends (Socrates 6), which Speusippus considers a duty (Socratics 30).[248]

This 'truth-telling' in the context of friendship shows that the Graeco-Roman world saw a helpful relationship between 'truth' and 'love' particularly when instruction or correction was to be given. This perhaps provides some basis for the later Johannine author to use a similar approach in his writings.

2.3.3.2. The Manner of Truth-Telling

In terms of how truth-telling or frank speaking should occur the compared works show a remarkable consistency.

(1) Truth-telling should be undertaken opportunely, timely, repeatedly, and frequently.

Plutarch advises that frank speaking should be timely (e.g. when an important occasion requires it) and take place when an opportunity presents itself (e.g. in response to a question or the relation of a story, or the praise or criticism of another's actions when those actions are evident in the 'target's' own life) or when the matter has already been raised by a third party (cf. *Moralia* I.29.69F-31.70E).[249] Furthermore, frank speaking may need to be done frequently or repeatedly (cf. ὥσπερ εἴρηται [*Moralia* I.11.54D; 37.74D] and εὖ γὰρ εἴρηται [*Moralia* I.22.62E; 26.67C]); Philodemus also notes the need to not give up on recalcitrant students but persevere, telling them over and over again (*On Frank Criticism* Frs. 11, 85; Col. XIVb).[250] Crates advised doing philosophy

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[247] *Soc*rates 6: "I know no appropriate remuneration for philosophy except friendship." See Malherbe, *Cynic Epistles*, 239.

[248] Malherbe, *Cynic Epistles*, 239, 297.

[249] *Moralia* I.29.69F: "In what circumstances, then, should a friend be severe, and when should he be emphatic in using frank speech? It is when occasions demand of him that he check the headlong course of pleasure or of anger or of arrogance, or that he abate avarice or curb inconsiderate heedlessness."

Moralia I.30.70B: "the friend who is concerned for his friends must not let slip the occasions which they themselves often present, but he should turn these to account. For sometimes a question, the telling of a story, blame or commendation of like things in other people, may serve as an opening for frank speech."

[250] *On Frank Criticism* Fr. 11: "he will also set forth the difficulties that accompany and will be attached to those who are such, <saying> again <and again, 'You are doing [wrong],' and>".

On Frank Criticism Fr. 85 (= 89 N): "And it has been said that he will speak frankly again and again about these things to the one [who is ashamed]."

On Frank Criticism Col. XIVb: "… putting forward what has been said previously concerning frankness…".

(which involved delivering instruction and frank speaking as well as generally living well) "more frequently than you breathe" (Crates 6), and Socrates took every opportunity to speak up for truth and justice, even when imprisoned, awaiting execution (Socrates 14).

(2) Truth-telling should be dispassionate and objective, and the truth-teller should be careful how they speak.

According to Philodemus, frank speaking should be dispassionate and objective so that it is clear and not coloured by sentimentality (*On Frank Criticism* Fr. 48) The Cynic writer Diogenes describes himself as "the prophet of indifference" who speaks plainly; this may appear hard to some but his words in fact are confirmed to be the truth by nature herself (Diogenes 21). Nevertheless, frank speaking should not be done in a haughty, contentious, or derogatory manner (*On Frank Criticism* Fr. 37; *Moralia* I.27.67F) but with gentleness and care and in moderation (*On Frank Criticism* Frs. 26, 6; *Moralia* I.25.66D-E), being fully aware of how the speaker themselves are talking and behaving (*Moralia* I.9.53C). It is also best if persuasion is not simply done with words – it needs deeds or actions to reinforce it (*On Frank Criticism* Fr. 16).[251] Such a view is reinforced by several of the Cynic writers: Anacharsis says "a speech is not poor if good intentions stand behind it and good actions follow upon the words" (Anacharsis 1); Diogenes when speaking of the alignment of the spirit with the body says, "it should not promise much and then do what is not sufficient, but should demonstrate that the spoken claims conform to the way of life" (Diogenes 15); and elsewhere he says, "You will know… from his life and words whether he is also a philosopher. For in my opinion, the sage provides his own introduction." (Diogenes 18). Plutarch particularly notes that while it is important to speak the truth, it must be delivered in a way that does not discourage or harm the recipients, nor cause them instead to seek advice from those who will not tell the truth but only what they want to hear:

> Frankness … should be combined with good manners, and there should be reason in it to take away its excess and intensity, which may be compared to that of light, so that any who are exposed to it shall not, for being disturbed and distressed by those who find fault with everything and accuse every one, take refuge in the shadow of the flatterer, and turn away towards what does not cause pain. (*Moralia* I.25.66B)

[251] *On Frank Criticism* Fr. 16: *"through [deeds], and not just [through speaking], because they have [seldom] endured frankness."* The problem with enduring frankness may be because people are not used to experiencing it and thus find it hard to cope with.

Plutarch also argues that frankness of speech should avoid the extremes of flattery with the aim to please the hearer, along with "immoderate liberty of speech" which destroys friendly thoughtfulness for the other; rather, what is needed is decency and moderation (τὸ καλὸν ἐκ τοῦ μετρίου) (*Moralia* I.5.66D-E).

(3) Truth-telling requires an awareness of and identification with the recipients' situation.

Philodemus actually begins his epitome talking about how the teacher is to be perceptive of his audience, and the disposition and behaviour required to be appropriate and effective when delivering frank criticism.[252] He also notes that people receive frank criticism differently and thus need to be dealt with in different and appropriate ways – some will be spoken to harshly and directly with passion and direct confrontation (the strong, those who are progressing) but others must be treated more gently and simply so that they will take heed of what is said (*On Frank Criticism* Frs. 7 and 10). Philodemus understood that frank criticism could be received harshly and result in the recipient being disheartened and so the speaker must speak without anger; however, he believed that progress was all important so the 'harsh speaking' may still be necessary (*On Frank Criticism* Frs. 12, 32-33). The Cynic writers also saw the need for tailored approaches. When dealing with flattery which corrupts a person, harsh words were needed – "you need a whip and an overlord and not someone who will admire and flatter you"; "cutting, cautery, and medication must be employed" (Diogenes 29) – but people can be in different modes of receptivity so one's words (written or spoken) need to be tailored accordingly (Socrates 33). Plutarch similarly says that diplomatic language is always appropriate to use when addressing a person's vices or faults:

> For a higher moral tone, I think, is assumed in saying 'You acted unbecomingly' rather than 'You did wrong,' and 'You were inadvertent' rather than 'You were ignorant,' and 'Don't be contentious with your brother' rather than 'Don't be jealous of your brother,' and 'Keep away from the woman who is trying to ruin you' rather than 'Stop trying to ruin the woman.' Such is the method which frankness seeks to take when it would reclaim a wrongdoer; but to stir a man to action it tries the opposite method. (*Moralia* I.36.73F-74A)

Softer language will assist in reclaiming a wrongdoer, but harsher language may be required to prevent a person from embarking on a wrong course of action, possibly even ascribing their actions to unnatural or unbecoming motives (*Moralia* I.36.74A). Thus, forceful language is

[252] While there is a good deal about the expectations upon a teacher in the early fragments, it is a theme which recurs throughout the epitome (cf. *On Frank Criticism* Frs. 2, 8, 20, 25, 31, 37, 46, 79; Cols. XIIa, XIIb, XXIIh.2-4).

appropriate when a wrong can be yet avoided. However, when diplomatic language is used, it must not be a distortion of the truth or dishonest. In one place Plutarch warns against the flatterers who are not honest with their words and end up describing vices as virtues (*Moralia* I.12.55F-56F).[253] This is a problem because people then become accustomed to treating vices as virtues, and they no longer feel disgust for them but delight in them, thereby taking away all shame for their errors. The implication of this statement is that what is said must reflect what is true and be an accurate reflection of what really is.

Plutarch also notes that communication will be enhanced if the speaker identifies himself with his recipients, if he shows that he himself is potentially prone to the same issues but is working on correcting them (*Moralia* I.33.71F-72E; cf. *On Frank Criticism* Fr. 38, where Philodemus says that speaking frankly needs to be done remembering one's own faults and need to be reproached),[254] though this may not be so necessary if a person is "well on in years or possessed of an acknowledged position in virtue and repute." (*Moralia* I.33.72A). The Cynics too found that the best way to get others on board was to be an example (cf. Crates 20, where Crates write to Metrocles and explains how a public exhortation of himself in the palaestra encouraged the young men to get serious about their own training).

(4) Truth-telling involves both commendation and criticism.

Of course, speaking the truth is not always going to be negative and true friends speak both words of commendation and criticism. Philodemus argues that criticisms should be given first since the goal is correction[255] and this may then be followed by accolades (*On Frank Criticism* Fr. 15), but Plutarch says a person is more likely to take rebuke if they have been previously commended (cf. *Moralia* I.2.50B; 36.73C-E), and Diogenes commends Crates for having risen above possessions

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[253] Plutarch gives examples where "reckless daring came to be regarded as devoted courage, watchful waiting as specious cowardice, moderation as a craven's pretext, a keen understanding for everything as want of energy to undertake anything" and "prodigality being called 'liberality,' cowardice 'self-preservation,' impulsiveness 'quickness,' stinginess 'frugality,' the amorous man 'companionable and amiable,' the irascible and overbearing 'spirited,' the insignificant and meek 'kindly'." See *Moralia* I.12.56C-D.

[254] If *On Frank Criticism* Fr. 76 ("< [if those men] neither [do] all things suitably nor will such things {as they do} meet with [admonition] >... and [they ascribe] to their teachers, to whom {i.e., their teachers} those who are being instructed will set forth their own errors with frankness, and will [propose for consideration] those of [others] as well, < saying, 'Return.' >") has the teachers in view, it presents some intriguing evidence for mutual psychagogy. The teachers hold up before the eyes of the students both their own errors and those of others. The practice is that of visualizing errors, of "putting mistakes in front of the eyes" of those at fault in order to facilitate their improvement (see also *On Frank Criticism* Frs. 26, 42).

[255] It may also be to ensure that pride does not become a problem for the recipients.

before urging him to return for further training (Diogenes 9), while Crates first commends his wife Hipparchia for her support but then censures her for not pursuing philosophy (Crates 32).[256] Citing Plato, Plutarch also warns of disingenuous flatterers, people who seem to be honest but are not (*Moralia* I.4.50F);[257] such people destroy "true friendship with distrust" (τὴν ἀληθινὴν φιλίαν ἀπιστίας)[258] and are not easy to identify because they appear to be true friends.[259] There is thus a need for close examination of those who seek to give advice and counsel, especially if it contains flattering words. While a flatterer will seek to ingratiate himself with his 'target audience', pretending to like what his target likes and agree with his target's views while claiming that these are his own reasoned judgements unaffected by emotion (*Moralia* I.6.51E-52A), the true friend does not do this. Furthermore, the flatterer, when imitating his 'target' always seeks to give the pre-eminence to the target (*Moralia* I.10.54C-D).

(5) Truth-telling should address issues of real importance.

In chapter 17 of his epitome Plutarch notes that flatterers are silent on matters of real import and tend to focus on inconsequential things whereas a true friend will reprove real faults (*Moralia*

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[256] *Moralia* I.2.50B: "For commendation at the right time is no less becoming to friendship than is censure, or we may express it better by saying that complaining and fault-finding generally is unfriendly and unsociable, whereas the kindly feeling that ungrudgingly and readily bestows commendation for noble acts inclines us, at some later time, cheerfully and without distress to bear admonishment and frankness of speech, since we believe, and are content, that the man who is glad to commend blames only when he must."

Moralia I.36.73D: "the first step should be commendation cheerfully bestowed. Then later, just as steel is made compact by cooling, and takes on a temper as the result of having first been relaxed and softened by heat, so when our friends have become mollified and warmed by our commendations we should give them an application of frankness like a tempering bath."

Diogenes 9: "So I commend you for your good sense in this, and am delighted with your surrender of your property, since you became superior to popular opinion faster than I expected. But do return quickly, for you still need training in other matters".

Crates 32: "Because you care for me, I approved of you, but because you are still uneducated and not practicing the philosophy for which I have tutored you, I censure you. Therefore, give up doing this right now, if you really care, and do not pride yourself in this kind of activity, but endeavor to do those things for which you wanted to marry me."

[257] *Moralia* I.4.50F: "For as Plato says, 'it is the height of dishonesty to seem to be honest when one is not,' and so the flattery which we must regard as difficult to deal with is that which is hidden, not that which is openly avowed, that which is serious, not that which is meant as a joke."

[258] The genitive form ἀπιστίας (found in both the Loeb Classical Library and Perseus Greek texts) seems a little odd; the dative form ἀπιστίᾳ would seem to be more appropriate, especially given the translation in the *LCL* edition.

[259] *Moralia* I.4.51A: "Flattery which blends itself with every emotion, every movement, need, and habit, is hard to separate from friendship."

I.17.59B-60B).[260] The true friend is one who is prepared to deal with the difficult and important matters and does not seek to pleasure his audience (*Moralia* I.18.60B-D), nor lambast them by accusing them of the exact opposite of what they are guilty (*Moralia* I.19.60D-61D), nor raise trifling matters (*Moralia* I.35.72F-73C). The need to focus frank speaking on important matters was also noted by Philodemus who argued that people should not be reproached for everything, nor ought one to criticize "continually, nor against everyone, nor every chance error, nor {errors} of those whom one should not {criticize} when they are present, nor with merriment, but rather [to take up the errors] sympathetically [and not to] scorn [or insult]…" (*On Frank Criticism* Fr. 79 (= 81 N)).

Plutarch is particularly concerned that speakers address their concern to the appropriate part of the recipient's soul; he believed that every soul has both a higher and a lower nature; the former values truthfulness, what is honourable, and reason, while the latter responds to irrationality, love of falsehood, and the emotions. As we noted earlier, Plutarch says that a true friend will always seek to address the 'higher' nature while the flatterer will target the 'lower' (*Moralia* I.20.61D). Socrates is emboldened to speak forthrightly and stubbornly because he considers it a great evil to act unjustly. His sense of justice drives his outspokenness, even in the face of threats to his own well-being and life. Matters of justice and truth are important and worth sticking one's neck out for (Socrates 7, 14). In his trial, Socrates refused to use flattery or entreaty (κολακείαν οὔτε δέησιν) but instead spoke truth and justice (τἀληθή καὶ δίκαια) (Socrates 14) and Xenophon reports that it would have been an injustice to both Socrates and the truth if his life and words were not memorialised (Socrates 15).

2.3.3.3. The Participants in Truth-Telling

Philodemus indicates that it is the wise man or philosopher who generally speaks frankly to his friends or students (*On Frank Criticism* Frs. 1, 2, 15) as he is the person who can see their faults (*On Frank Criticism* Col. IIIb) and the Cynics believed that it was only the Cynic wise man or sage who could speak frankly and make demands of people that were usually reserved for the gods to make (cf. Crates 26, 27 & 29; Diogenes 28; Socrates 1).[261] Plutarch, however, sees it as the role of a friend to speak the truth (*Moralia* I.8.53B;

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[260] By way of example Plutarch says that flatterers will focus on the manner and style of speaking rather than the content of what is said; they will speak out about furniture out of place or the poor appearance of a person in dress or hair style but say nothing about more important matters such as the poor treatment of one's parents, children, spouse, friends, or even estate. See *Moralia* I.17.59B-60B.

[261] According to Crates, only the sage had attained freedom and he alone was a friend of the gods; Diogenes said that it is only the wise philosopher who understands nature, reason, and truth and he avoids those who do not

17.59D; 20.61D; 28.68F), while according to the editors of *Philodemus: On Frank Criticism*, the care of souls among the Epicureans was a communal responsibility, not simply the domain of a few people invested with some form of authority. Furthermore, this care for others was not simply the domain of people of equal standing in the society; rather, in contrast to the earlier expressions of frank criticism which were the domain of people of equal standing (i.e. citizens of the democratic state), it permitted the criticism of the superior by the inferior and thus contained a somewhat radical element.[262] The Cynics also did not seem to be too concerned about equality of people – Diogenes happily instructs and chastises Alexander (cf. Diogenes 23, 24, 33 & 40). However, both Philodemus and Plutarch recognise that there are some practitioners who are not suitable for speaking frankly – e.g. those who think themselves faultless (*On Frank Criticism* Col. XVIIa), aspiring teachers desiring reputation (*On Frank Criticism* Col. XVIIIb), those who think they have the superior intelligence to do so (*On Frank Criticism* Col. XIXa), those focused on serving their own interests (*Moralia* I.2.49C-50B; 6.51E; 7.52A-B), and those whose frankness serves no benefit (*Moralia* I.5.51D).

2.3.3.4. The Location of Truth-Telling

Philodemus thought that truth-telling should be done publicly so that nothing was hidden and the best results could be obtained (*On Frank Criticism* Frs. 40-43), though this may reflect the case of frank speaking in the tightly knit community of the 'school' environment rather than in an open public forum. Plutarch, on the other hand, thought that frank speaking should ideally be done in private, in order that the recipient might not be diminished in the eyes of those who he would have think honourably of him (*Moralia* I.31.70D, 32.70F-71F).[263] The Cynics saw value in both public and private frank speaking – cf. Diogenes 3 where Diogenes tells Crates' wife Hipparchia that "letters are worth a great deal and are not inferior to conversation with people actually present"; but in Diogenes 17, Diogenes requests that a matter be dealt with in person rather than via letter.

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understand such things because he cannot have a fruitful conversation with them; Socrates believed that it was the role of every man to provide benefit to others according to his ability and that it was the job of the philosopher to give his instruction, publicly or privately, for the benefit of the society.

[262] Philodemus, *On Frank Criticism*, 23. The editors go on to say: "Just as some members of the entourage of the rich and powerful were expected, on the basis of friendship, to advise and correct the errors of their superiors, so too those of an inferior character and social position within the philosophical community were allowed to admonish others and to correct the errors of their moral superiors. The fragments thus reveal the connection between frank speech and the ideal of friendship as a commitment to reciprocal honesty, and invoke as well the kind of sincerity expected of an inferior in relation to a patron."

[263] Plutarch gives examples of not discrediting a husband before his wife, a father before his children, a lover before his beloved, or a teacher before his students. He says: "for such persons are driven almost insane with grief and anger at being taken to task before those with whom they feel it is necessary to stand well."

2.3.3.5. The Expected Reception of Truth-Telling

Ideally a frank speaker should not have to worry about how his words are being received, especially if they are being delivered to a friend; Philodemus says that the intimacy of friendship is valued more than the security that arises from it, so friends can speak from the heart and not be concerned with how their words will be received (*On Frank Criticism* Fr. 28). Indeed, Philodemus expected that frank speaking would heighten the goodwill of the recipient towards the speaker as they would be thankful for the correction and value the instruction (*On Frank Criticism* Frs. 25, 27). Plutarch similarly says that the true friend always acts and speaks plainly, simply, unaffectedly (in fact, like 'truth' itself) and without any pretensions of friendship while the flatterer goes overboard in trying to appear friendly (*Moralia* I.21.62C-D; See also 22.62E-64B).[264] Furthermore, Plutarch argued that those who have a just opinion of themselves are better able to protect themselves from flatterers who pretend to be truth-speakers; having a correct self-understanding ensures that they reject as untruthful, the flatterer's insinuations (*Moralia* I.25.65F).[265]

However, it is also apparent that truth-speakers did not always get a good reception. Abraham Malherbe notes that the more rigorous and austere Cynics were often accused of misanthropy, because they had a very pessimistic view of humankind, thinking it incapable of being able to understand serious and important matters; the masses were viewed as bereft of reason and self-control, totally deluded, and puffed up with evil (cf. Crates 12, 15; Heraclitus 2, 4, 5, 7, 9; Diogenes 28, 29).[266] Consequently, the Cynics' expectations of a positive reception were quite low, but they seemed to almost wear this as a badge of honour for being different. Philodemus speaks at length of those who resist frank speech (*On Frank Criticism* Fr. 5ff.), who do not accept it (*On Frank Criticism* Frs. 74 & 88 & Col. XXlb), who do not endure it

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[264] *Moralia* I.21.62C: "For the character of a friend, like the 'language of truth,' is, as Euripides puts it, 'simple,' plain, and unaffected, whereas that of the flatterer, in very truth self-sick, hath need of dextrous remedies, and of a good many too, I venture to affirm, and of an uncommon sort. Take the case of one person meeting another: a friend sometimes, without the exchange of a word, but merely by a glance and a smile, gives and receives through the medium of the eyes an intimation of the goodwill and intimacy that is in the heart, and passes on. But the flatterer runs, pursues, extends his greeting at a distance, and if he be seen and spoken to first, he pleads his defence with witnesses and oaths over and over again. It is the same with actions: friends omit many of the trifling formalities, not being at all exacting or officious in this respect, not putting themselves forward for every kind of ministration; whereas the flatterer is in these matters persistent, assiduous, and untiring."

[265] *Moralia* I.25.65F: "Wherefore I now urge, as I did at the beginning of this treatise, that we eradicate from ourselves self-love and conceit. For these, by flattering us beforehand, render us less resistant to flatterers from without, since we are quite ready to receive them. But if, in obedience to the god, we learn that the precept, 'Know thyself,' is invaluable to each of us, and if at the same time we carefully review our own nature and upbringing and education, how in countless ways they fall short of true excellence, and have inseparably connected with them many a sad and heedless fault of word, deed, and feeling, we shall not very readily let the flatterers walk over us."

[266] Malherbe, *Paul and the Popular Philosophers*, 17.

well (*On Frank Criticism* Fr. 67, Col. XXa & Col. XXIIb), or who are annoyed by it and get angry (*On Frank Criticism* Fr. 31, 58, Col. XXIVa & Fr. 70).[267] Plutarch, in the conclusion of his treatise, also notes that anger is a very likely response to frank speaking. He reminds his readers that truth can hurt and so there is a need to be gentle and to not leave the recipient unconsoled or uncomforted. He says:

> Since, then, as has been said, frankness, from its very nature, is oftentimes painful to the person to whom it is applied, there is need to follow the example of the physicians; for they, in a surgical operation, do not leave the part that has been operated upon in its suffering and pain, but treat it with soothing lotions and fomentations; nor do persons that use admonition with skill simply apply its bitterness and sting, and then run away; but by further converse and gentle words they mollify and assuage.
>
> (*Moralia* I.37.74D-E)

Furthermore, as we have seen, receptivity is enhanced and communication more effective when the speaker does not use mockery or abusive language (*Moralia* I.27.67E-F) and sensitivity is shown to the condition of the recipients; if they are enjoying good fortune then they may be in danger of welling up with pride, so need to have the truth about their failings plainly laid out before them, but if they are discouraged and down there is little point in speaking frank truths about their faults to them for they will not hear or accept them; instead they need comfort and encouragement at such a time (*Moralia* I.28.68E-F). The Cynics also recognised the need to understand one's 'target' – "no good ruler ruins his subjects, nor does a good shepherd harm his sheep" (Anacharsis 7). It is evident that anger and hurt can be expected reactions to frank speaking and it is thus necessary for the frank speaker to ensure that they deal gently with the person otherwise they will not likely respond well to future appeals or be easily placated by soothing words.

It was also generally accepted that a person was more likely to be heeded if there was no personal advantage to be gained by the reproof. Plutarch notes that:

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[267] See Philodemus, *On Frank Criticism*, 11. The translators' and editors' note that Philodemus addresses "different types of students, with their several dispositions". They note the various types of students as accepters of frank criticism (both graciously and those who pretend), rejecters, opposers, and aggressive responders; they note the dispositions of students as weak (= obedient), insecure, shunners of philosophy, tender, confused, shy, passionate, sociable, intense, strong (= disobedient), stubborn, recalcitrant, irascible, incurable, difficult to cure, proud, pretentious, and those of lesser intellectual ability, but also as well-disposed to instructors, earnest, thankful, improving, and having received different upbringings.

> [P]eople are wont to think that anger, not goodwill, is the motive of a man who speaks on his own behalf, and that this is not admonition but fault-finding. For frankness is friendly and noble, but fault-finding is selfish and mean. For this reason those who speak frankly are respected and admired, while fault-finders meet with recrimination and contempt. (*Moralia* I.6.66E).

2.3.3.6. The Meaning of Truth

While Philodemus' *On Frank Criticism* has few references to 'truth' the whole treatise is about getting to the 'truth' of a person's thoughts and actions by means of παρρησία.[268] Παρρησία was what one employed when speaking to a person about their behaviour and faults with the intention of instructing them and improving them (*On Frank Criticism* Frs. 40, 43); it was concerned with exposing what was really happening in a person's attitudes and actions when they thought that they had not erred (*On Frank Criticism* Col. XVb); it was the means of pointing out what was apparent to others irrespective of what the object of παρρησία thought about themselves. Thus, for Philodemus, 'truth' is what one exposed when one spoke frankly.

The various Cynic writers express several ideas about truth: Socrates saw truth as that which was according to reality, declaring he would not be obstinate in his insistence if the truth escaped him (Socrates 6), but he also saw 'truth' as a destination towards which one should journey – whilst in prison awaiting his death he exhorts his fellow prisoners with the knowledge that upon their deaths they will arrive at a better country (ὡς πρὸς τὴν ἀλήθειαν) (Socrates 14).

Other Cynics saw truth as the opposite of popular opinion – in a letter to Metrocles, Diogenes says that he is not battling the truth but popular opinion (Diogenes 10). In addition, Diogenes seems to think that truth can only be found in simplicity and the freedom found in putting aside normal earthly pursuits; furthermore, the Cynic philosopher is the only one who can know the difference between truth and falsehood (Diogenes 34, 46). Heraclitus notes that it is the nature of all men to keep themselves from truth and from practising what is just because of their base folly (Heraclitus 2) and consequently they cannot speak truly (cf. Heraclitus 4 – where Heraclitus questions whether one can speak truly [ἀληθεύω] about a god who has been carved out of stone; and Heraclitus 6 – where he argues that doctors don't understand science or nature and therefore cannot correctly diagnose ailments). But the Cynics were also

[268] The text of *On Frank Criticism* is in a poor state and there are no complete examples of the ἀληθ- words. *On Frank Criticism* Fr. 73 contains a reconstructed reference to [ἀλη]θινόc and Col. XVb has a reconstructed reference to [τὴν ἀλήθει-α]ν. There are however numerous references to the 'παρρησία' words.

not above personifying truth, seeing 'truth' almost as a divine being who speaks through an oracle (Sibyl) (Heraclitus 8). Thus, for the Cynics, truth is 'what is so', a destination to be attained, or the personification of deity.

Plutarch sees 'truth' as having a divine dimension, something which is ordained by the gods and which manifests itself in nature and the behaviour of people – "… Truth is a thing divine, and, as Plato puts it, the origin 'of all good for gods and all good for men'…" (*Moralia* I.1.49A-B). But he acknowledges that people do not always manifest truth and goodness and instead are prone to pretence and presenting themselves in ways that differ from that which is an accurate representation of who they are – "And since the flatterer uses resemblances to deceive and to wrap about him, it is our task to use the differences in order to unwrap him and lay him bare, in the act, as Plato puts it, of 'adorning himself with alien colours and forms for want of any of his own.'" (*Moralia* I.5.51D). Plutarch calls such a person a κόλαξ (flatterer) whereas the one who speaks directly and forthrightly is an ἀληθὴς φίλος (a true friend) and thus for Plutarch, 'truth' is what a true friend speaks in contrast to the flatterer; 'truth' is 'that which is so' and what a friend is unafraid to deliver.

3. The Hebraic Background of Truth and Love

As noted in the Introduction, many scholars see not only a Graeco-Roman background to the Johannine literature but also a background in Hebraic thought. It is necessary and important to explore how the concepts of truth and love were expressed in Judaism, since Christianity has its roots in Judaism.

3.1. Truth in the Hebrew Bible and Judaism

In the Hebrew Bible (or OT), the Hebrew word most nearly equivalent to ἀλήθεια is אֱמֶת which is etymologically related to the root אמן (to 'believe').[269] While it is often rendered by ἀλήθεια in the LXX (and 'truth' in English translations) it is also translated by πίστις ('faith' or 'faithfulness') and δικαιοσύνη ('righteousness').[270] This has led a number of OT scholars to argue that 'truth' for the Hebrew writers is close to 'faithfulness' in meaning, suggesting ideas of stability, firmness, dependability, or reliability and that 'truth' is thus grounded in the faithfulness of God.[271]

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[269] Douglas Mangum in the Lexham Theological Wordbook lists the meaning of the verb as: אָמַן (ʾāman). vb. **to be true, faithful; to believe, accept as true** [bold font here and below original]. The verb can be used in the Niphal (passive) and Hiphil (causative) stems to convey either the state of being true or the act of believing that something is true. He goes on to list the cognates to this root which all contain some nuance of 'truth' or 'faithfulness':

אָמֵן (ʾāmēn). adv. **verily, truly, amen.** The term is commonly used in statements of affirmation in which the speaker accepts the truth of a statement.

אֱמוּנָה (ʾĕmûnâ). n. fem. **firmness, fidelity, steadiness, truthfulness, faithfulness.** Literal use indicates steadiness or firmness (Exod. 17:12), while abstract use frequently refers to a quality applied to God himself or to those who are in right relationship with God.

אֱמֶת (ʾĕmeṯ). n. fem. **truth, dependability, faithfulness.** Denotes constancy, permanence, stability, and dependability, signifying the condition of being secure, stable, or dependable.

See D. Mangum, "Truth," *Theological Wordbook* s.v. Old Testament.

[270] Quell, Kittel and Bultmann, *TDNT* 1:233. Quell gives the following figures: In the LXX ἀλήθεια is mostly used for אֱמֶת (87 times), ἀληθινός being also used (12 times), and occasionally ἀληθής, ἀληθῶς, and ἀληθεύειν; δικαιοσύνη occurs 6 times; δίκαιος occurs 4 times; πίστις occurs 6 times. Mangum says that the Septuagint uses ἀλήθεια as the common counterpart for אֱמֶת in nearly eight of every 10 occurrences in the Hebrew text. See Mangum, *Theological Wordbook*.

[271] Cf. Thiselton, *NIDNTT* 3:877; J. B. Scott, "אָמַן," *TWOT* 52f.; A. Jepsen, "āman," *TDOT* I:313-316; R. W. L. Moberly, "אָמַן," *NIDOTTE* 1:428f.; Quell, Kittel and Bultmann, *TDNT* 1:232-237. It is widely agreed that *ʾĕmeṯ* which occurs 127 times in the OT, is derived from the root *ʿmn* which has the meaning 'to be firm' and therefore 'solid', 'valid', or 'binding'. However, one should take special note of the warnings of James Barr on reading too much into the etymology of the Hebrew words *ʾaman* and *ʾᵉmunah* and assuming that these are particularly characteristics of God. See Barr, *The Semantics of Biblical Language*, 161-205.

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Gottfried Quell describes אֱמֶת as functioning in two ways in the OT:

(1) As a legal term, where it "basically describes the 'actual truth of a process or cause,' most clearly in legal terminology" but can also refer to "facts which always demand recognition by all men as reality" and can thus be rendered, quite generally as 'truth' or 'veracity'.

(2) As a religious term, where it unambiguously denotes either a religious reality expressing itself in how one lives in response to the knowledge of God, or a trust/confidence in God.[272]

As a consequence of the idea of faithfulness implicit in אֱמֶת, it has been suggested that there is a strong case for a radical and clear-cut contrast between the Hebraic and Greek conceptions of truth but Thiselton warns "that whilst such a contrast has validity in certain respects, it can be misleading and simplistic to build arguments on this foundation, unless certain strong qualifications are first made and observed."[273] The kinds of qualifications envisaged include firstly, that אֱמֶת does not necessarily have the same meaning or perform the same role for all biblical writers; and secondly, the fact that the Septuagint (or LXX) translates אֱמֶת with both ἀλήθεια and πίστις suggests that either faithfulness is a necessary part of the Hebrew concept of 'truth' or that אֱמֶת can actually have multiple meanings, meaning 'truth' in one context and 'faithfulness' in another.[274] Roger Nicole supports the view that אֱמֶת has a twofold meaning in the OT ('faithfulness' and 'conformity to fact') and argues that the two dimensions are complementary rather than exclusive. He notes:

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[272] Quell, Kittel and Bultmann, *TDNT* 1:233-237. Quell adduces examples from all parts of the OT to show both uses. Kittel goes on in the next section of the *TDNT* article to say that אֱמֶת in Rabbinic Judaism follows essentially the same lines as that of the OT – both as a legal concept and a religious concept – with the very essence of God being אֱמֶת.

[273] Thiselton, *NIDNTT* 3:877.

[274] Examples where אֱמֶת most likely means 'faithfulness' include instances where it occurs in parallelism with חֶסֶד (Gen. 24:27; 32:10; Exod. 34:6; Prov. 3:3; 16:6; Isa. 16:5; 38:18; Hos. 4:1; Zech. 8:8); in addition there are other passages which speak of God's faithfulness as both a personal characteristic (Ps. 30:9; 54:5; 71:22; 85:11; 91:4; 146:6; Isa. 38:18, 19; 42:3; 61:8) and as part of his activity (Neh. 9:33; Ps. 69:13; 111:7-8). Thiselton notes that in Gen. 24:49 אֱמֶת could have the meaning loyalty and fidelity (i.e. the idea of faithfulness) or it could have the sense of acting with honesty and integrity (which is more the idea of truth). See Thiselton, *NIDNTT* 3:879. Examples where אֱמֶת most likely means 'truth' include Gen. 42:16; Exod. 18:21; Deut. 13:14; 1 Kgs. 17:24; Prov. 8:7; 12:18; 22:21; 23:23; Ps. 43:3; 45:4; 51:6 (contra NIV2011 which translates אֱמֶת as 'faithfulness' in both 43:3 and 51:6); Isa. 43:9; 59:14f.; Jer. 9:5; Dan. 8:12; 9:13; Zech. 8:16f.

> The root meaning of this group appears to connote 'support' or 'stability,' and it is not difficult to see how both 'faithfulness' and 'truth' would develop as the implications of this rootage. Faithfulness is the quality that provides an appropriate ground for confidence, which gives support to trust on the part of those who depend on the faithful one. Truth is that firm conformity to reality that proves to be wholly reliable, so that those who accept a statement may depend on it that it will not turn out to be false or deceitful.[275]

Despite the varied ways in which אֱמֶת is used in the OT it never has a merely abstract or theoretical idea and it is not located, as it so often is in Plato, in a metaphysical extra-historical realm of divinity. The God of Israel may well be the source of אֱמֶת for the Israelites, but he reveals his truth in both word and deed and expects his people to respond similarly as they inculcate that same characteristic in their daily lives (cf. Josh. 24:14; 1 Kgs. 2:4; Ps. 145:18). The OT frequently speaks of God being faithful to his covenant and so he can be relied upon – אֱמֶת thus refers both to the 'faithfulness' of God and the 'truth' with which he then speaks and acts, for as a faithful and truthful God his word and his deed are one. Thus, in the OT, we see two converging concepts that make up אֱמֶת and neither is reducible to the other and nor do they conflict; as Nicole says, "It is because truth is conformity to fact that confidence may be placed in it or in the one who asserts it, and it is because a person is faithful that he or she will be careful to make statements that are true."[276]

In the post-canonical Jewish writings, ἀλήθεια is mostly used to mean 'truth' in contrast to 'falsehood' (cf. 1 Macc. 7:18; Judith 5:5; 10:13; Tob. 4:6; 7:10; 12:11), and in the Qumran writings, we see something of a polemical emphasis to 'truth' for it seems that the Qumranites saw themselves as the 'true Israel' and their fellow Jews as apostate. Hence, we find that God is the 'God of truth' (1QH[a] 7:38; 4Q416 Frag. 1:14), conversion to truth is required as an entrance into the Qumran community (1QS 6:15), and initiates bind themselves by oath to the precepts of the truth (1QS 1:15-20) – thus 'truth' is a moral behaviour.[277]

As noted earlier, it is also important to consider other terms that communicate the concept of truth and once again we must consider παρρησία. This word and its cognates occur only rarely in the LXX (the noun

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[275] Nicole, "Truth," 288.

[276] Nicole, "Truth," 291.

[277] See Thiselton, *NIDNTT* 3:881f. For translations of the Dead Sea Scrolls documents see G. Vermes, *The Dead Sea Scrolls in English* (4th ed.; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1995); M. O. Wise, M. G. Abegg Jr. and E. M. Cook, *The Dead Sea Scrolls: A New Translation* (San Francisco: HarperOne, 2005).

12x; the verb 5x)[278] as the translation of various Hebrew words – the Hebrew roots יפע (*ypʿ*, 'to shine forth'); ענג (*ʿng*, 'take delight in'), and the adverb קוֹמְמִיּוּת (*qômĕmiyyût*, 'upright').[279] It seems that παρρησία in the LXX was seen as a suitable word to express the manifestation of the essence of a thing. Schlier cites Lev. 26:13 as an example of παρρησία being the mark of the free man as distinct to the slave;[280] and the idea of παρρησία as 'freedom' appears again in Job 27:9f. where it occurs in the context of prayer and Job asks if the godless man can experience παρρησία before God in prayer – it is only the just or righteous person who can stand confidently before God. Willem van Unnik argues that παρρησία does not appear to be a central idea in the religious terminology of the OT, though its presence in other literature of Judaism (e.g. Philo and Josephus) indicates that it was used to imply a certain boldness on the part of the righteous in approaching God.[281] Although the occurrence of παρρησία in Job 27:9f. is about the human being's audience with the divine, this idea of παρρησία parallels the Greek democratic right or privilege to speak and be heard.[282] William Klassen concludes his study of the word παρρησία in the LXX and Pseudepigrapha by saying, "Obviously, a term which had its origin in and therefore still carried connotations of democracy and political participation remains in the social realm when it is used for slaves and women, but it becomes theological when applied to God's activity among the people, including an ultimate encounter with God."[283]

In the later writings of Philo and Josephus, representatives of Hellenistic Jewish literature, the idea of παρρησία as 'frank speaking' or 'candour' is again evident.[284] There are also occurrences of παρρησία in association with φίλοι ('friends'), and εὐγένεια ('the free-born', 'high-born', 'nobility'),[285] which show that

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[278] These counts include the apocryphal books in the LXX; as far as the traditional OT canon is concerned, there are six occurrences of the noun and four of the verb. Note, however, that William Klassen counts 21 references as a result of including apocryphal and pseudepigraphal writings. See Klassen, "ΠΑΡΡΗΣΙΑ," 234-239.

[279] Hahn, *NIDNTT* 2:735.

[280] Most English translations record the purpose of God's emancipating activity being "so that you may walk upright" or "walk erect" but the OT term used here (קוֹמְמִיּוּת) "describes the state of freedom (as opposed to slavery) that the Israelites experienced subsequent to their redemption from Egyptian slavery"; see J. P. J. Olivier, "קוֹמְמִיּוּת," *NIDOTTE* 3:905.

[281] W. C. van Unnik, "The Christian's Freedom of Speech in the New Testament," *BJRL* 44 (1962): 472.

[282] See section 2.3.3 (*Truth (ἀλήθεια) and Frank Speaking (παρρησία)*).

[283] Klassen, "ΠΑΡΡΗΣΙΑ," 239. Van Unnik similarly says, "A common Greek word is taken over without much ado by the Jewish synagogues and applied even to the relation with God." Unnik, "Freedom of Speech": 472.

[284] Schlier cites several examples from each of Philo and Josephus; cf. Philo, *De Sacrificiis Abelis et Caini*. 12, 35, 66; *De Agricultura*, 64; *De Plantatione*, 8; *In Flaccum*, 4, etc.; Josephus, *Antiquitates,* 2.116; 15.37; etc. See Schlier, *TDNT* 5:877f.

[285] Cf. *Epistle of Aristeas* 125 ("this was the frank advice [παρρησίᾳ] given him by his friends [τῶν φίλων] for his benefit" [Translation from J. H. Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha: Expansions of the "Old*

frank speaking was often associated with those in privileged positions, though in *Who is the Heir?* (V-XXIX) Philo includes a lengthy discussion of παρρησία towards God when he discusses the frank speaking of a servant towards his master – such boldness, confidence, and plain talking can only occur when the servant has not wronged the master but has acted in his best interests and is showing his love for the master. This highlights that frank speaking was seen to occur in the context of love and concern for another. A further example of the linkage between speaking truth and concern for others is found in Philo's *On Joseph* (77) where the idea of παρρησία is linked with ἀλήθεια when Philo presents the soliloquy of the statesman who refuses to give into flattery (κολακεία) to tickle the ears of the few, rather than speak frankly and tell the truth to benefit the whole community.[286] Here we see an example where the concept of 'truth' or 'truth-telling' is linked with 'love' or concern for others; it will be argued later that the linking of these two ideas is particularly strong in the Johannine literature but a relationship between the two concepts of 'truth' and 'love' is not unique to that literature. At this stage it is sufficient to show that the term παρρησία was used in Judaism in much the same way as it was in the ancient world and classical philosophy, referring to an openness to be frank and candid and speak the truth without fear of retribution.

3.2. Love in the OT and Judaism

A lexical analysis of the OT Hebrew words for 'love' reveals that the root אהב and its derivatives are the most used words. Like the English word 'love' these words can be used to express both love for a person as well as for things and actions. It is used of the passionate love between a man and a woman (Song of Songs 8:6f.), of the selfless loyalty of friendship (1 Sam. 20), and of resolute adherence to righteousness (Ps. 45:7[8]).[287] In the LXX, אהב is mostly rendered as ἀγαπᾶν[288] which is appropriate, given the nuance of

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Testament" and Legends, Wisdom, and Philosophical Literature, Prayers, Psalms and Odes, Fragments of Lost Judeo-Hellenistic Works (vol. 2; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985).]); Philo, *Legatio ad Gaium* 63 ("speaking with all freedom [παρρησίαν], and looking upon his own surpassing nobility of birth and nearness of connexion by marriage as circumstances which gave him grounds for great familiarity and openness." [Translation from: Philo of Alexandria and C. D. Yonge, *The Works of Philo: Complete and Unabridged* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1995).])

[286] Philo, *On Joseph*, 77: "Shall I, abandoning all idea of what will be of general advantage to the whole state seek to please the ears of this or that man with an ungentleman-like and thoroughly slavish flattery [κολακείᾳ]? I would rather choose to die than to speak merely with the object of gratifying the ear, and to conceal the truth [τὴν ἀλήθειαν], disregarding all thought of what is really advantageous." [Translation by Yonge].

[287] Quell and Stauffer, *TDNT* 1:21, 38.

[288] W. Klassen, "Love: NT and Early Jewish Literature," *ABD* 4:381. Klassen notes:

> Other words more common in non-biblical Greek as signifiers of love are used very little in LXX as equivalents of Hebrew terms to which they could be said to correspond. The Greek verb *eraō*, which

choice that the word seemed to carry in the ancient world, since the love of God for Israel (Deut. 7:13) is not a matter of uncontrolled impulse but of divine will, and the reciprocated love of people for God and for others is a matter of act not some kind of uncontrolled intoxication. The ἀγαπᾶν/ἀγάπη words more appropriately express thoughts of selection, of deliberate action. However, on about a dozen occasions אהב is rendered by one of the φιλεῖν/φιλία words. In actual fact, it is debatable whether there is any discernible distinction between the two Greek verbs in the LXX; cf. Gen. 37:3-4 where the two verbs are used to describe Jacob's love for his sons, and Lam. 1:2 where there is unlikely to be any difference between οἱ ἀγαπῶντες and οἱ φιλοῦντες.[289]

Also used to describe 'love', particularly to denote the love of God for people, is the Hebrew root רחם which generally restricts the concept of 'love' to 'pity for the needy'.[290] There is a handful of other Hebrew words that occur infrequently,[291] but a detailed study of the contexts of the occurrences of the major 'love' words shows that 'love' in the OT is "basically a spontaneous feeling which impels to self-giving or, in relation to things, to the seizure of the object which awakens the feeling, or to the performance of the action in which pleasure is taken."[292] The distinctive characteristic of Israelite אַהֲבָה, however, is its tendency to exclusivism, a love which chooses one above others, a jealous love (cf. Song of Songs 8:6). Jacob's love focuses on Rachel rather than Leah and he loves Joseph above his brothers (Gen. 29; 37:3). God has placed many nations in the world but loves his elect people Israel. In his jealousy he insists on love and loyalty in return. And this same exclusiveness is seen in the commands to love one's neighbour, for it is a love that is expressed within the nation; it is a love which makes distinctions, which chooses, which prefers some and overlooks others. Love of foreigners only occurs when such are incorporated into the Jewish 'house' or nation (cf. Ex. 20:10; 22:10). As such, 'love' in the OT is an intense and powerful feeling and it is thus not surprising to find verses which speak of loving with all one's heart and soul and strength (cf. Deut. 6:5; 13:4).

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can connote sexual love, is avoided altogether in the Pentateuch as a translation of Heb *ʾāhēb* (which can have the same connotations). (The cognate noun *erōs* could also serve as the name of the Greek god of love, whose veneration was widespread and popular.) *Phileō*, a milder term (though capable of indicating amorous interest: Tob 6:17), is restricted in the Pentateuch to Gen 27:9, 14 (both times translating Heb *ʾāhēb*) and Gen 37:4.

[289] Stählin, *TDNT* 9:124.

[290] Quell and Stauffer, *TDNT* 1:22. While translated by ἀγαπᾶν on 5 occasions in the LXX, it is more commonly translated by ἐλεεῖν (26x) or οἰκτείρειν (10x).

[291] For which see Quell and Stauffer, *TDNT* 1:22. These include the roots חפץ and רצה, both of which have the general meaning of 'to delight in, to take pleasure in, to be well disposed towards'.

[292] Quell and Stauffer, *TDNT* 1:22.

The Hebraic Background of Truth and Love

In general, the concept of love in the OT is found in two very different uses – a secular usage,[293] and a religious or theological usage. The former includes the love relationships evidenced between people (e.g. spouses, those of the opposite sex, parents and children, friends, masters and servants) while the latter generally refers to the love relationships between God and people. Frank Fensham prefers to speak of the two basic spheres of meaning for אהב – the divine sphere (God's love for humankind or inanimate things) and the human sphere (love of things; love towards God; love towards one's neighbour).[294]

There also appears to have been little difficulty in the Hebrew mind of using the same words to describe a love relationship where sexual intimacy is involved and a love relationship where there is no sexual love. We must be careful therefore in endowing any inherent erotic or sexual meaning to an understanding of אהב in the OT; it is the element common to both kinds of love that must be focused upon – i.e. it is a feeling that wells up from one's personality and is appropriate to the object of love; for example, Jonathan loves David as he loves himself (1 Sam. 18:1.3) and Saul loves David 'as his own soul' (1 Sam. 16:21).

In the LXX,[295] the four main verbs for 'love' all occur: ἀγαπᾶν occurs about 283 times, φιλεῖν occurs about 33 times, ἐρᾶσθαι only 3 times, and στέργειν just once.[296] In the majority of cases φιλεῖν is used in the sense of 'to kiss' and only 16 or 17 times means 'to love'.[297] Thus, when the LXX wants to express the idea of 'love' around 5% (16/303) of cases use φιλεῖν (the classical word for 'love') and around 93% (283/303) use ἀγαπᾶν. This is a complete reversal of the usage of the two words in the classical literature.[298] But even though ἀγαπᾶν is used to express 'love', the love it expresses is quite varied. Ἀγάπη occurs nineteen times where it most often refers to the conjugal love between man and woman (e.g. II Kings 13:15; Song of Songs 2:4, 5, 7; 3:5, 10; 5:8; 7:7; 8:4, 6, 7). But the noun was beginning to take on a more theological character and was also applied to the relationship between God and his elect people (Wisd. 3:9) and to

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[293] Sometimes described as 'profane'.

[294] F. C. Fensham, "Love in the Writings of Qumrân and John," in *The Eighth Meeting of Die Nuwe-Testamentiese Werkgemeenskap Van Suid-Afrika*(vol. 6: Essays on the Jewish Background of the Fourth Gospel of *Neotestamentica*; University of Pretoria, 1972), 67.

[295] Rahlfs, *Septuaginta: With Morphology*. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1996.

[296] ἐρᾶσθαι occurs in 1 Esd. 4:24; Est. 2:17; Pr. 4:6; στέργειν occurs in Sir. 27:17.

[297] The difference here relates to the textual variation in Tobit 5:17 re whether it contains the words about Tobit kissing his father and mother.

[298] Warfield, "Terminology of Love": 153. Warfield states that around 95% use ἀγαπᾶν but appears not to count the instances of ἐρᾶσθαι and στέργειν which all have the idea of 'to love'.

the relationship of the obedient man to Wisdom (Wisd. 6:18).[299] According to Quell, the "concept of love is the ultimate foundation of the whole covenant theory";[300] he sees that the covenant is itself an expression in juridical terms of the experience of the love of God. Despite occasions where love is linked to 'fear' (e.g. Deut. 10:12),[301] in the OT, love is a contrary feeling to fear which seeks to overcome the distance between humanity and God and causes people to strive after God (cf. Deut. 11:22; Ps. 116:1; Jer. 2:2; see also Isa. 41:8 where Abraham is called אָהֵב יהוה). The frequent linking of the love of Yahweh with a conjoining *waw* to keeping his commandments,[302] to serving him,[303] and to walk in his ways,[304] suggest that these latter descriptions are explicative of what it means to love Yahweh – i.e. to love him is to keep his commandments, to serve him, or to walk in his ways.

On the matter of God's love for human beings, in the OT this is mostly expressed as love towards 'collective objects' rather than to individuals – e.g. to the pure in heart (Prov. 22:11), those who seek after righteousness (Prov. 15:9), and the more common 'love' words for such expressions are not אהב but חפץ ('desire') and רצה ('take pleasure in'), which do not have the same immediacy of feeling as אהב but do convey an element of recognition and acceptance.[305] The primary focus of God's love for human beings is his covenant people (cf. Deut. 7:6ff., 13; Hos. 3:1; 11:1; Jer. 31:3) whom he loves despite their waywardness and whom he continually pursues in redeeming love (cf. Isa. 43:3-4).

In Hellenistic Judaism, the influence of the OT understanding of 'love' is predominant but intermingled with Greek and Near Eastern thought and language. There are references to God's love for his creation, his people, and those who are righteous, obedient, and merciful, and love is supremely a relationship of faithfulness between God and human beings, though God is seen as the source of love, even for the love of humans towards God and towards others.[306] Philo (*On the Migration of Abraham*, 169) says that in ἀγάπη, we turn to true being, overcome all fear, and attain to true life. As in the OT, love of the neighbour

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[299] Furnish, *The LOVE Command*, 220f. See also De Vogel, "Greek Cosmic Love": 61. De Vogel says it "may denote any kind of affectionate relationships, including sex relations, including also the love of God for his chosen people".

[300] Quell and Stauffer, *TDNT* 1:27.

[301] In Deut. 10:12 fear of the Lord is expanded in terms of walking in obedience to Yahweh, loving him, serving him wholeheartedly, and keeping his commandments.

[302] E.g. Ex. 20:6; Deut. 5:10; 7:9; 11:1; 1 Kgs. 3:3; Dan. 9:4; Neh. 1:5.

[303] E.g. Deut. 10:12; 11:13; Is. 56:6.

[304] E.g. Deut. 10:12; 11:22; 19:9; 30:16; Josh. 22:5; 23:11.

[305] Quell and Stauffer, *TDNT* 1:30.

[306] For examples from the literature of Hellenistic Judaism, see Quell and Stauffer, *TDNT* 1:39-40.

in Hellenistic Judaism derives from God and leads to life, but it still focuses first on compatriots, then on proselytes and fellow residents, then in increasingly remote circles on enemies, slaves, animals and plants, until it covers all creation.[307]

In Rabbinic Judaism, the relationship between God and Israel was seen as an expression of love; God loved his people and was faithful to them showing them mercy time and time again. The law was seen as a gift from God which proved his love and this law imposed the obligation of reciprocal love, manifested by obedience and loyalty. Suffering was seen as a particular manifestation of the mutual love of God and his people and those who suffered martyrdom were seen as having fully loved. Love of one's neighbour finds its fulfilment in active and helpful service, but again 'neighbour' was first and foremost one's compatriot or full proselyte, and then secondarily, others as per the idea of concentric circles of love in Hellenistic Judaism. Nevertheless, the rabbis viewed 'love' as the sum of the law (cf. Hillel's Golden Rule, "Do not do to your neighbour what is hateful to you. This is the whole Law; the rest is explanation.") and along with the Law and service to God, works of love were the foundation of the world.[308] For the rabbis, love was the basic principle of all relationships between God, one's self, and one's neighbour – as God acts with love, so must we, and in their view, as we act in love so will God; indeed, mercy between people is no more than emulation of the mercy of God.[309]

The intertestamental writings are part of the background to the NT world and therefore are a possible source for the meaning of 'love' in the NT. We may not know for certain the source or sources which influenced them, though given their content, they are most likely of Jewish origin, so the meaning of 'love' in these writings would reflect Jewish ideas. In the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* there is evidence of the OT concept of love for God and love for one's neighbour (cf. *Test. Iss.* 5:2; *Test. Dan* 5:3).[310] In several of the other *Testaments* a strong appeal is made to fear God and love the neighbour (cf. *Test. Benj.*

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[307] See for example, Philo, *On the Virtues*, 51ff.

[308] See Simon the Righteous in *Pirkē Aboth* 1:2 where he says, "Upon three things the world rests: upon the Torah, upon the Temple service, and upon the doing of acts of kindness." For a translation of *Pirkē Aboth (Pirkei Avot)* see J. I. Gorfinkle and Project Gutenberg. "The Sayings of the Jewish Fathers: Pirke Abot." Accessed 19th August 2019. Online: http://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/8547/pg8547.html.

[309] Quell and Stauffer, *TDNT* 1:43-44.

[310] See also re love for God: *Test. Benj.* 3:1; re love for brother/neighbour: *Test. Reub.* 6:9; *Test. Sim.* 4:7; *Test. Iss.* 7:6; *Test. Zeb.* 8:5; *Test. Gad.* 6:1, 3; 7:7; *Test. Jos.* 17:2. For translations see "The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs," in *Fathers of the Third and Fourth Centuries: The Twelve Patriarchs, Excerpts and Epistles, the Clementina, Apocrypha, Decretals, Memoirs of Edessa and Syriac Documents, Remains of the First Ages.* (eds. A. Roberts, et al.; vol. 8 of *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*; trans. R. Sinker; Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Company, 1886), 1-38.

3:3; *Test. Jos.* 11:1).[311] But 'love' also occurs in these writings with the idea of 'affection for' – e.g. love for someone or something (cf. *Pirkē Aboth* 5:19 re the love of Amnon for Tamar and the love of David and Jonathan; *Pirkē Aboth* 6:1 and *Sirach* 2:15-16 re the love of and keeping of the Torah). There is also evidence in the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* for the love of God towards human beings, both specific individuals and more generally those who keep his commandments (cf. *Test. Levi* 18:13; *Test. Naph.* 8:4, 9; *Test. Jos.* 1:4; 11:2). 'Love' then would appear to operate in the same two spheres as in the OT uses – divine love towards humankind, and human love expressed both as affection and love directed towards God or one's brother/neighbour.

Another potential source for the meaning of 'love' in the NT world is the writings of Qumran from the period 200 BC – 70 AD.[312] As per the OT concept of love, the Qumran writings reflect a love which operates in both the divine and human spheres – the love of God towards human beings and the love of humankind operating in two directions, towards God and towards neighbour, where neighbour was understood to refer to the fellow members of the Qumran group, the children of light.[313] In terms of the divine sphere, the Qumran writings depict the concept of God's love for humanity as not for all of humanity; love seems to be restricted to love for the forefathers and the members of the sect – God loves the good spirit but hates the bad spirit (1QS III 26-IV 1), and the prayer of the pious servant of God was that he that he may "[choose all] that Thou lovest and loathe all that Thou [hatest]" (1QH 14:10–11).[314] In terms of the human sphere, the general principle of love for one's neighbour was borrowed from Leviticus 19:18 but Fensham notes that the word for neighbour (ער) is replaced by brother (אח) in CD VI 20-21 which serves to place the emphasis on love for members of the sect; indeed the sect was noted for its love for its own but hatred of those outside the community.[315] Thus the Qumran community also narrowed down the OT concept of love for one's neighbour to mean only love for one's fellow community member. This love was regarded

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[311] Exhortations to fear the Lord are also found in *Test. Reub.* 4:1; *Test. Levi* 13:1, 7; *Test. Zeb.* 10:5; *Test. Dan* 6:1.

[312] Vermes, *Dead Sea Scrolls*, xxv. Vermes says: "[T]he general scholarly view today places the Qumran scrolls roughly between 200 BCE and 70 CE, with a small portion of the texts possibly stretching back to the third century BCE, and the bulk of the extant material dating to the first century BCE."

[313] Fensham, "Qumrân & John," 67. See also K. Stendahl, "Hate, Non-retaliation, and Love: I QS x, 17-20 and Rom. 12:19-21," *Harvard Theological Review* 55, no. 4 (1962): 344. Stendahl argues that in the ethics of Qumran, love was only directed towards insiders since outsiders were the enemies of God and should be hated as such; indeed God would soon wreak vengeance upon them for their opposition to him and his people. Furthermore, non-retaliation against outsiders was not a type of love but a heaping of further judgement upon them for God's impending wrath – it involved not warning them of impending judgement and allowing them to continue in their sinful ways, thus causing the measure of their sins to increase and their ultimate judgement to be greater. Thus, pursuing "outsiders with good is a special case of 'the eternal hatred,' not of love."

[314] See Klassen, "Love: NT and Early Jewish Literature," 4:381.

[315] Fensham, "Qumrân & John," 69.

as a characteristic feature of their 'brotherhood' and reflective of God's love for them. In relation to love for God, the Qumran community saw this as closely connected to keeping the commandments, so a love for God was translated into an inanimate object of love – a love for the discipline of the law.[316]

Since we have already noted the connection between 'love' and 'friendship' in the ancient literature, it is worth also considering the subject of 'friendship' in the Hebrew Bible. Saul Olyan has noted that this is "a topic that has mainly been ignored by scholars of the Hebrew Bible, possibly on account of its complexity and elusiveness"[317] and so he sets out to address this lacuna in his book *Friendship in the Hebrew Bible*. He discusses friendship and the family, failed friendship, and friendship in narrative, before finally considering friendship in the writing of Ben Sira. As we have already seen in our discussion of 'love', Hebrew words can have a variety of meanings and the same is true for 'friendship'. Olyan notes that whilst the biblical text has no word for 'friendship' there are a number of words for 'friend' (e.g. *rēaʿ*, *ōhēb, ʾallûp*, *ʾîš/ʾĕnôš šālôm*, *měyuddā*, and *yōdēa*), though these can also be translated in a variety of ways; *rēaʿ* for example can also be translated 'neighbour', 'peer' or 'fellow' (whether of the same group or a rival), or simply 'another fellow'.[318] Nevertheless, in a detailed study of the biblical language Olyan shows that the biblical texts evince the existence of gradations of friendship (which he argues are not altogether different from that of Aristotle), with the family relationship being the paradigmatic relationship of friendship after which all other friendship relationships are modelled. He argues that friends and family members share a number of common characteristics and obligations (e.g. a duty to be loving [both emotionally and behaviourally], loyal, supportive, and trustworthy), while also having some separate obligations (e.g. only male kinsman on the father's side could be a kinsman redeemer or Levir, friends were expected to provide support after a death but family members had responsibilities for sorting out the burial, maintaining the family tomb, and enacting ancestral rites).[319] In his subsequent chapters, Olyan deals with the causes of failed friendships, identifying that these could be either the result of choices made by friends (e.g. disloyalty, unfaithfulness, failure to act when an action is expected, deceit, spreading lies, rejoicing over misfortune) or the result of divine intervention (e.g. Yahweh's decision to intervene to bring about suffering).[320] The narratives in the Hebrew Bible which show friendship are then discussed

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[316] Fensham notes that where love of God is connected with keeping the commandments, the Qumran sect members could be described as lovers of discipline, the discipline of the law, and cites in support, 1QH II 13-14 where the supplicant is made a banner to the chosen of righteousness, an interpreter of knowledge, to test the men of truth and to try the lovers of discipline. See Fensham, "Qumrân & John," 70.

[317] S. M. Olyan, *Friendship in the Hebrew Bible* (ABRL; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017), 2. However, see one recent treatment of Jewish views of friendship in Culy, *Echoes*, 62-75. Culy examines canonical and apocryphal texts, Philo, and Josephus.

[318] Olyan, *Friendship*, 6.

[319] Olyan, *Friendship*, 11-37.

[320] Olyan, *Friendship*, 38-60.

(i.e. David and Jonathan, Ruth and Naomi, Job and his three friends, Jephthah's daughter and her companions, and Amnon and Jonadab), and Olyan argues that these "narrative portraits contribute significantly to our understanding of friendship as it is represented in biblical texts".[321]

Olyan's fourth main chapter deals with friendship in Ben Sira where he also draws on the work of Jeremy Corley.[322] Both authors recognise that no book of the Hebrew Bible says a much about friendship as the *Wisdom of Ben Sira*, and both argue that Ben Sira draws on both biblical and Hellenistic traditions. As Corley notes:

> although the sage is steeped in the traditions of Israel and the surrounding nations, he is not a slavish imitator. Rather, he forges a new synthesis, updating the truths of Israel's tradition for his contemporary audience in an increasingly hellenized society. He is not afraid to utilize insights found in foreign literature when these harmonize with Israel's faith.[323]

Olyan argues that while Ben Sira shares ideas about friendship with earlier biblical sources, he also distinctly shows some strong parallels with both Greek texts and Egyptian wisdom sources. Olyan identifies four such ideas: "that friends ought to be tested, that flatterers are not truly friends, that there is a type of friend who fights for his friend, and that the number of one's friends ought to be limited."[324] There are obvious connections with the writings of both Greek and Roman authors considered in section 2 (*Friendship in the First Century AD Graeco-Roman World*).

It should also be noted that Philo of Alexandria also has some things to say about 'friendship'. Gregory Sterling states, "Among Jewish writers indebted to Hellenistic philosophy, Philo of Alexandria has the most extensive comments on friendship. Although his observations are brief and bound up with his exegetical enterprise, he appears to have made use of the Stoic understanding of friendship as a means of

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[321] Olyan, *Friendship*, 83; see 61-86.

[322] Olyan, *Friendship*, 87-116; J. Corley, *Ben Sira's Teaching on Friendship* (Providence: Brown Judaic Studies, 2002). Space limitations preclude a fuller treatment of Corley's work but after dealing with previous research on friendship in Ben Sira, he gives an excellent and detailed analysis of the seven major pericopes in which Ben Sira treats friendship: 6:5-17; 9:10-16; 13:15-23; 19:13-17; 22:19-26; 27:16-21; and 37:1-6. He then concludes with a summary of what he considers the four most significant aspects of Ben Sira's teaching on friendship: the goodness of friendship, caution in friendship, faithfulness towards friends, and the fear of God as the most important quality of friendship.

[323] Corley, *Ben Sira on Friendship*, 213. Olyan similarly says: "the author has much to say about friendship; he stands in the biblical wisdom tradition, like the authors of Proverbs and Job; and he writes from a Hellenistic context, thereby allowing us to assess the degree of the influence of Greek thought on his ideas about friendship." See Olyan, *Friendship*, 87.

[324] Olyan, *Friendship*, 97.

universalizing the particularism of his native Judaism."[325] In his book chapter, Sterling presents a convincing argument that, while not providing a sustained treatment of φιλία, Philo does give enough references to the term and its implications to reconstruct a general understanding of his views on this topic, and finds that Philo is heavily indebted to the Stoic ideas of friendship while not accepting the Stoic perspective *tout a fait*.[326]

3.3. Summary of the Hebraic Background

In the Greek version of the Hebrew Bible, the Hebrew word אֱמֶת is sometimes rendered with ἀλήθεια and sometimes with πίστις which suggests that there is not a term which corresponds one-to-one with ἀλήθεια; indeed, the Hebrew concept of אֱמֶת expresses both 'truth' and 'faithfulness', two ideas which are actually complementary, for truth is a conformity to fact and so can be reliably depended upon, and dependable people are dependable because they tell the truth. Thus, we also find references in the Greek text of the OT and wider Judaism to παρρησία, linked at times with ἀλήθεια. It is a term which conveys the idea of 'freedom' to express the essence of a thing or oneself and was thus also used to communicate the idea of speaking with candour. It thus paralleled its usage in the ancient world and classical philosophy, where it was used to describe those who spoke the truth candidly with no fear of retribution. It was also sometimes used in the context of speaking the 'truth' in order to show 'love' or concern for others.

The words for 'love' in the LXX are a mixture of the ἀγαπᾶν/ἀγάπη and the φιλεῖν/φιλία words, with little difference in meaning, though some would suggest that the ἀγαπ- words have a stronger emphasis on deliberate choice or will. However, the notable thing about 'love' in the OT is that it has a tendency to describe an exclusive love; it is a love which chooses one above others, and thus describes a jealous love. This is true whether the sphere of 'love' is the human sphere or the divine sphere – i.e. whether it refers to human love for things, for others, or for God, or whether it is used of God's love for his people. Indeed, love was seen as the basic principle of all relationships between God, one's self, and one's neighbour, with people expected to act with love because God did so.

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[325] G. E. Sterling, "The Bond of Humanity: Friendship in Philo of Alexandria," in *Greco-Roman Perspectives on Friendship* (ed. J. T. Fitzgerald; vol. 34 of *SBL – Resources for Biblical Study,* ed. D. E. Aune; Missoula, MT; Chico, CA; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997), 203.

[326] Sterling, "The Bond of Humanity," 222. Sterling says, "The identification of his understanding with that of the Stoa is evident in a number of crucial aspects of friendship: he knows the Stoic concept of εὔνοια, sides with them against the Epicureans on the limits of friendship, and most important, draws from the Middle Stoa for his vision of the unity of the human race."

4. Truth and Love in the New Testament

We come now to consider the usage and meaning of the concepts of *truth* and *love* in the New Testament. We look first briefly at the language of these two concepts and then move on to consider their usage in the earlier writings of the NT, i.e. the Synoptic Gospels, the Pauline and Deutero-Pauline literature, and other NT writers. The more thorough consideration of the Johannine writings, which are believed to be some of the latest in the NT, is reserved for the next chapter.[327]

4.1. The Language of Truth and Love in the New Testament

4.1.1. The 'Truth' Vocabulary

The primary word for 'truth' in the NT is ἀλήθεια; this word along with its cognates occurs 183 times, around half of which are in the Johannine literature, and when John's Gospel is compared to the Synoptic Gospels, we find that the ἀληθ- word group occurs three times as often, which heightens its importance for the Johannine author.[328] The usage of these words may be tabulated as follows:

Greek Word	Occurrences in the Synoptic Gospels	Occurrences in the Gospel of John	Occurrences in the Epistles of John			Occurrences in Revelation	Other NT occurrences	Total NT occurrences
			1Jn.	2Jn.	3Jn.			
ἀλήθεια	7	25	9	5	6	-	57	**109**
ἀληθεύειν	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	**2**
ἀληθής	2	14	2	-	1	-	7	**26**
ἀλήθινος	1	9	4	-	-	10	4	**28**
ἀληθῶς	8	7	1	-	-	-	2	**18**
	18	**55**	**16**	**5**	**7**	**10**	**90**	**183**

[327] It is beyond the scope of this dissertation to give a full treatment of the meaning of love in the New Testament. The reader is referred to the following works for such treatments: Warfield, "Terminology of Love"; J. Moffatt, *Love in the New Testament* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1929); W. Lillie, "The Christian Conception of Love," *SJT* 12, no. 3 (1959); Furnish, *The LOVE Command*; F. F. Segovia, *Love Relationships in the Johannine Tradition: Agapē / Agapan in I John and the Fourth Gospel* (SBLDS 58; Missoula, MT; Chico, CA; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1982).

[328] When referring to Johannine literature here, the primary focus is on the Gospel and Epistles (which account for 83 of the 183 NT occurrences). If the book of Revelation was considered to be Johannine then the percentage of the ἀληθ- words in the Johannine literature would rise to 50.8%.

Truth and Love in the New Testament

The idea of 'conformity to fact' implicit in the Hebrew term אֱמֶת, which we saw in the last chapter, would appear to be the main idea of ἀλήθεια in the NT, while the second meaning of אֱמֶת ('faithfulness') is primarily represented in the NT by words of the πίστις family ('faithfulness', 'reliability', 'fidelity', 'commitment'), though as we have seen in the LXX, אֱמֶת is occasionally translated by some of the πίστις words.[329] While the idea of ἀλήθεια as faithfulness has receded into the background in the NT, the adjective ἀληθινός ('true') does occur four times in conjunction with πιστός ('faithful'),[330] and on one occasion (1 Tim. 2:7) ἀλήθεια ('truth') is linked with πίστις ('faith'), where the linkage emphasises that the witness is speaking the truth and is worthy of confidence; thus there remains a linkage between the ideas of 'conformity to fact' and 'faithfulness' which are the twin foci of the Hebrew אֱמֶת, albeit using two Greek words to communicate the different foci. As we shall see from the analysis below, ἀλήθεια in the NT is a little more than simply 'conformity to fact'; it can be "an external norm for behavior, a general label for honesty, or a statement of the absolute revealed truth of the gospel."[331]

But, as we have also seen, the concept of 'truth' is not confined simply to the ἀληθ- word group. While there is quite a wide range of Greek words in the 'true, false' semantic domain,[332] only three of these

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[329] Nicole notes that 6/7 occurrences of אֱנֶת are translated by ἀλήθεια in the LXX. Nicole, "Truth," 292.

[330] Rev. 3:14; 19:11; 21:5; 22:6.

[331] Mangum, *Theological Wordbook* "Truth": §Theological Overview.

[332] See Louw and Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the NT Based on Semantic Domains*, §72. The 'True, False' domain consists of two sub-domains:

A) True, False (which not only involves consistency with external facts but often implies positive or negative moral values with the latter conveying intent to deceive). It includes ἀληθής, ἀληθινός ('in accordance with historical fact', 'what really is'); ἀλήθεια ('the content of that which is true', 'the revelation of God'); φωτισμός ('truth', 'revealed truth'); παρίστημι, παρατίθεμαι ('to show to be true', 'to show evidence of truth', 'to prove'); ἐπιδείκνυμι, ἀποδείκνυμι ('to show to be true', 'to prove'); ἀμήν ('truly', 'indeed', 'it is true that'); δοκιμή ('evidence', 'proof of genuineness', 'evidence for the fact that'); ἔλεγχος ('the evidence as to the truth or reality of something'); δολόω ('to cause to be false', 'to distort'); κενός ('untrue', 'lacking in truth'); and πλαστός ('false', 'made up', 'invented').

B) Accurate, Inaccurate (which, similar to subdomain A, involves consistency with external facts but here includes additional features of detail and completeness of evidence and virtually no moral implications – positive or negative). It includes: καλῶς ('accurate', 'correctly', 'right'); ὀρθῶς ('correct', 'correctly'); ὑγιής ('right', 'accurate', 'sound'); ὑγιαίνω ('to be correct', 'to be sound', 'to be accurate'); ἐπανόρθωσις ('to correct', 'correcting faults'); διόρθωμα ('reforms'); νομίμως ('correctly', 'according to the rules'); ἀκριβῶς ('accurate', 'accurately', 'strict', 'strictly'); ἀκρίβεια ('strictness', 'strict conformance to', 'accurateness'); ἀργός ('careless', 'indifferent'); and κακῶς ('incorrect', 'wrong').

In addition ἀλήθεια with the prepositions ἐν, ἐπί and κατά is classified under the domain 'Real, Unreal' (§70) where the contrast is between that which actually happened and that which people may have thought or

(ἀμήν ['truly'], καλῶς ['rightly', 'well'], and κακῶς ['wrongly', 'wickedly']) occur in the Johannine literature and these will be dealt with in due course. But as we have seen in earlier sections, we also need to consider the word παρρησία, since this has some bearing on the issue of 'truth'. While this word can have the meaning 'courage', 'confidence', 'boldness', or 'fearlessness',[333] and this is how it is most often translated in the NT, it can also mean 'frankness', 'outspokenness', or 'plainness', and it is this usage to express the idea of frankness of speech that is relevant to our focus on the study on truth. Παρρησία occurs 31 times in the NT across at least four different writers, with 13 of these in the Johannine literature.[334] Given that the Johannine corpus constitutes only 12% of the NT, the fact that it contains over three times as many occurrences as one might proportionately expect, suggests that the Johannine author has a special interest in παρρησία with respect to the community to which he writes,[335] and that it is an important term when considering the concept of truth in the Johannine literature.

4.1.2. The 'Love' Vocabulary

Of the four main word groupings identified for the 'love'/'friendship' language in section 2.1 (*The Language of 'Friendship'*), it is only the first two groups which occur in the NT – i.e. the ἀγαπ- and φιλ- words. Indeed, it almost seems that the ἔρως and στοργή word groups are deliberately avoided in the NT.[336] This may have been because, as we noted in that earlier section, even amongst the Graeco-Roman philosophers at the turn of the eras, ἔρως was losing the positive image that it had previously had, with

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imagined took place These idioms are classified as having the literal meanings 'in truth', 'upon truth', and 'according to truth', and pertain to being a real or actual event or state, i.e. 'actually', 'really'.

Other than the words listed in the main body above, these words either do not occur in the Johannine literature or carry a meaning unrelated to 'truth'– e.g. παρίστημι occurs in Jn. 18:22 and 19:26 with the simple meaning 'standing by'; ὑγιής occurs in Jn. 5:6, 9, 11, 14, 15 and 7:23 with the health-related meaning of 'well'; similarly ὑγιαίνω in 3 Jn. 2 also has a health meaning, 'to be healthy'. The adjective τέλειος can have the meaning 'genuine, true' (it appears in Louw and Nida's 'Genuine, Phony' semantic domain) and it does occur in 1 Jn. 4:18 but there it is an adjective agreeing with the substantive ἀγάπη to create the meaning 'perfect love' or 'love which achieves its goal' rather than having the idea of 'genuine' or 'true'.

[333] This is why Louw and Nida categorise the word as part of the 'Courage/Boldness' semantic domain.

[334] Its verbal form παρρησιάζομαι also occurs 9 times – 7 times in Acts (9:27, 28; 13:46; 14:3; 18:26; 19:8; 26:26), once in Ephesians (6:20), and once in 1 Thess. (2:2). See the detailed discussion of the NT παρρησία language in Unnik, "Freedom of Speech": 466-488; Papademetriou, "Performative Meaning of παρρησία," 29-33.

[335] See Klassen, "ΠΑΡΡΗΣΙΑ," 239f. This is true irrespective of whether one sees the Johannine community as the author of the Johannine literature (as Klassen does) or whether it is simply the recipient of the material.

[336] While στοργή and στέργειν do not occur in the NT, they do appear in some compound forms: ἄστοργος (Rom. 1:31; 2 Tim. 3:3) and φιλόστοργος (Rom. 12:10). However, they are found in some early Christian writings (e.g. 1 Clem. 1:3; Polycarp 4:2).

philosophers seeing *eros* as a serious pathological disease in need of treatment, which is obviously quite different from Paul's attitude towards sexual intercourse, marriage, and love (cf. 1 Cor. 7:25-34).

Greek Word	Occurrences in the Synoptic Gospels	Occurrences in the Gospel of John	Occurrences in the Epistles of John			Occurrences in Revelation	Other NT occurrences	Total NT occurrences
			1Jn.	2Jn.	3Jn.			
ἀγάπη	2	7	18	2	1	2	84	**116**
ἀγαπᾶν	26	37	28	2	1	4	45	**143**
ἀγαπητός	-	-	6	-	4	8	43	**61**
φίλος	16	6	-	-	2	-	5	**29**
φιλεῖν	8	13	-	-	-	2	2	**25**
φιλία[337]	-	-	-	-	-	-	1 (Jam. 4:4)	**1**
	52	**63**	**52**	**4**	**8**	**16**	**180**	**375**[338]

Perhaps the most surprising thing about the 'love'/'friendship' language in the NT is the scarcity of the term φιλία, which is all the more startling in light of its positive reception in the Graeco-Roman world. It is evident from the table above that the NT writers preferred the ἀγαπ- words, and it is the contention of this thesis that the NT writers, and the Johannine author in particular, deliberately chose to avoid using φιλία because of its Graeco-Roman context and connotations; this issue will be discussed more fully in a later section.[339] The NT writers' preference for the ἀγαπ- words has been noted by many scholars. Raymond Brown is representative of such scholars and says of this word group:

> In classical Greek *agapē* is scarcely found, and the verb is used colorlessly, 'to like, prefer, be content with.' Even if there is some increase of its usage in the common secular Greek of the NT period, Christians gave a new intensity and specific meaning to *agapē/agapan/agapētos*. The basic picture that A. Nygren painted in his classic *Agape and Eros* (2 vols.; London: SPCK, 1932-37) was true of the usage in GJohn and remains true of the Epistles as well. *Agapē* is not a love originating in the human heart

[337] The verbal form φιλιάζειν does not occur anywhere in the NT but does appear about half a dozen times in the LXX.

[338] It is worth noting that the occurrences of these words in the so-called Johannine literature is 3.1 times higher than we might proportionately expect given that the Johannine literature is only around 12% of the NT corpus.

[339] See section 5.1.4 (*The Johannine Concept of Love*).

> and reaching out to possess noble goods needed for perfection; it is a spontaneous, unmerited, creative love flowing from God to the Christian, and from the Christian to a fellow Christian.[340]

The lack of occurrences in classical Greek and the significant usage in biblical usage has led some to suggest that *agapē* is exclusively, or almost exclusively, a biblical word, but this is not warranted – it was a pre-Christian word (cf. its usage in the LXX and Hellenistic Judaism) and far from being a 'holy' form of love as has often been said, it was used to describe ordinary love.[341] However, this does not preclude the possibility that early Christian usage of the *agapē* term invested the word with new meaning or that the word took on a particular meaning as a result of the way and the frequency with which it was used in the NT communities and writings.[342] Nevertheless, as evident from the table of occurrences above, both the ἀγαπ- and φιλ- word groups appear in the NT and importantly, there is little distinction in their meanings. This is evident in the way that NT writers use the words interchangeably when describing similar situations – e.g. when denouncing the 'loves' of the religious leaders, the Gospel writers use φιλεῖν on some occasions (Matt. 6:5; 23:6; Lk. 20:46) and ἀγαπᾶν on others (Lk. 11:43; Jn. 12:43); the scene involving

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[340] Brown, *Epistles of John*, 254f. See also the later edition of Nygren's work, *Agape and Eros*, 75-81. Nygren argues for four characteristics of divine love: (1) Agape is spontaneous and 'unmotivated' – that is, there is no quality or worth in the object of God's love which could possibly have evoked agape. Nor is there anything about the condition of man or the world which brings forth divine agape; (2) Agape is 'indifferent to value' – God does not love the sinner because he is a sinner, nor does he love the righteous because he is righteous. He loves the righteous apart from his righteousness and the sinner 'in spite of' his sin; (3) Agape is creative – it is not dependent on the merit of its human object but rather creates value in or confers value upon its object, the value being that God loves this or that person; and (4) Agape is the initiator of fellowship with God – fellowship with God is unattainable unless God himself takes the initiative, so agape is 'God's way to man'. For a critique of Nygren's view of agape, which argues that it fails to take adequate account of the OT view of love in: (1) its analysis of the love commandment; (2) the relationship between love and justice; and (3) the overemphasis on the spontaneous and 'uncaused' character of agape and God's sovereign purpose for his people, see W. Harrelson, "The Idea of Agape in the New Testament," *JR* 31, no. 3 (1951): 172-182.

[341] While the verb ἀγαπᾶν is attested in classical Greek from Homer on down, there is no certain instance of the noun ἀγάπη prior to its occurrence in the LXX (20x). See the Appendix in Furnish, *The LOVE Command*, 220f. See also Günther, Link and Brown, *NIDNTT* 2:539.

[342] See the discussion on 'love' in the New Testament in section 4.1.2 (*The 'Love' Vocabulary*). Note also James Barr's warning about the tendency of scholars to attribute to Christianity a 'language-moulding power'. He challenges this while acknowledging that Christianity did have an effect upon language. See Barr, *The Semantics of Biblical Language*, 246-252. Barr offers the following advice re the phrase, 'the language-moulding power of Christianity':

> We can thus speak of an effect of Christianity in language, but on two conditions which make the phrase appear rather different: *(a)* the effect is produced not by the divine or revelatory character of the new religion, but by its existence as a social group with a certain technically (in this case, sacrally) recognized pre-existent tradition; *(b)* the effect is like other linguistic changes logically (or theologically) haphazard and by its nature cannot be related directly to or correlated with the patterns of the theologically known divine acts and realities.

Jesus and Peter in John 21:15ff. shows that φιλεῖν and ἀγαπᾶν cannot neatly be distinguished despite the attempts of some to add theological meaning to the words;[343] Paul generally uses the term ἀγαπᾶν to describe love for God but in 1 Corinthians 16:22 he uses φιλεῖν for the same purpose; and when Proverbs 3:11 is used in the NT to speak of the Lord disciplining those he loves, Hebrews 12:6 uses φιλεῖν while Revelation 3:19 uses φιλεῖν. Such examples suggest that the NT writers did not see neat distinctions between the terms.[344]

Thus, it should not be argued that *agapē* means 'sacrificial love' as a number of scholars have done,[345] since there are evident examples in the LXX where *agapē* simply cannot mean this (e.g. 2 Sam. 13:4, 15).[346] It may be better to describe *agapē* as 'an intense feeling of love' which can then be manifested in a positive way (e.g. sacrificial or self-giving love) or a negative way (e.g. Amnon's rape of Tamar). Walther Günther and Hans-Georg Link note that where *agapē* is obviously directed towards things in the NT (citing as examples Lk. 11:43; Jn. 3:19; 12:43; and Paul's example of love for the present age in 2 Tim. 4:10), "the very use of the vb. *agapaō* is intended to make it plain that here love is directed to the wrong ends, i.e.

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[343] While Peter uses the word φιλεῖν and Jesus uses ἀγαπᾶν in verses 15 and 16 this distinction ceases in verse 17. For an example of someone seeing distinction and significance in the meanings of the two words see E. Evans, "The Verb ʼΑΓΑΠΑιΝ in the Fourth Gospel," in *Studies in the Fourth Gospel* (ed. F. L. Cross; London: Mowbrays, 1957). Evans sees φιλεῖν (a primary idea of affection with two secondary ideas of a deliberate or reasoned act, and some sort of approval or satisfaction with another) as a stronger word than ἀγαπᾶν (the general satisfaction of a superior with an inferior). A difference in meaning between the words would actually support the argument that the biblical writers chose to use the ἀγαπ- words in preference to the φιλ- words because they fitted their NT conception of 'love' better, but the wider NT usage favours the terms being used interchangeably, so the differentiation is not accepted.

[344] See Günther, Link and Brown, *NIDNTT* 2:548f.

[345] For example, C. H. Dodd, *Gospel and Law: The Relation of Faith and Ethics in Early Christianity* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1951), 42-45; Nygren, *Agape and Eros*, 118, 120, 130, 201, 209f., 236; K. Barth, *The Doctrine of Reconciliation* (Church Dogmatics IV; Part 2; eds. G. W. Bromiley, et al.; trans. G. W. Bromiley: Edinburgh; London; New York: T&T Clark; New York: Scribner's Sons, 1958), 745-751; Lillie, "The Christian Conception of Love": 226.

[346] See the excellent discussion of the common exegetical fallacies of confusing synonyms and semantic domains in D. A. Carson, *Exegetical Fallacies* (Second ed.; Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1996), 28, 31f., 51-53. Carson notes at least two common fallacies in relation to the ἀγαπ- and φιλ- word groups: (1) what he calls the *root fallacy* which argues "that every word actually *has* a meaning bound up with its shape or its components" and "there is nothing intrinsic to the verb ἀγαπάω (*agapaō*) or the noun ἀγάπη (*agapē*) to prove its real meaning or hidden meaning refers to some special kind of love"; and (2) the problems surrounding synonyms and componential analysis which are the fallacious ideas that synonyms are identical in more ways than the evidence allows and that meanings can be determined from components of the etymological roots of words. See also Barr's excellent discussion on the 'love words' in Greek in J. Barr, "Words for Love in Biblical Greek," in *The Glory of Christ in the New Testament: Studies in Christology in Memory of George Bradford Caird* (eds. L. D. Hurst, et al.: Oxford: Clarendon; Oxford:Oxford University Press, 1987).

not towards God."[347] Hence we must disagree with Dodd's view in which he says *agapē* is "energetic and beneficent good will which stops at nothing to secure the good of the beloved object; it is not primarily an emotion or an affection; it is primarily an active demonstration of the will."[348] We can agree with Dodd that it is an energetic action and an active demonstration of the will but reject his notion that it always operates for the good of the object. This is not to say that the NT writers did not think of God's love as unique in some way, but to say that an understanding of God's love must be gleaned from what the NT writers say in sentences, paragraphs, and discourses and not from the semantic range of a particular word or word group.[349] Similarly, the description and characteristics of divine love as Nygren outlines it (see footnote 340) is broadly accepted, but exception is taken to the way he presents this as the meaning of *agapē* rather than the more likely explanation that this is what *agapē* came to mean as a result of the way the NT writers used the term and its cognates.[350]

When one studies the various love relationships involving people found in the New Testament they can generally be divided into three broad categories: (1) the love of God for humankind; (2) the love of humankind for God; and (3) the love of humankind for all things 'human' (e.g. for each other, for self, for other things).[351] The following sections will show that these are not dealt with equally in the NT writings and that the Johannine literature has perhaps the fullest treatment of 'love' showing various nuances within these three categories.

Let us then examine the vocabulary of both 'truth' and 'love' in the various parts of the NT, before seeing what the Johannine author has to say.

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[347] *NIDNTT* 2:543.

[348] Dodd, *Gospel & Law*, 42.

[349] Carson, *Exegetical Fallacies*, footnote 65.

[350] See Klassen, "Love: NT and Early Jewish Literature," 4:381. Klassen notes that the range of meaning expressed by *agapaō* in the classical period includes affection, fondness, and simple contentedness and that the Hellenistic Jewish translators seem to have chosen to use 'the least marked Greek term' to express the Hebrew 'love' words in the LXX. He suggests that this "lexical selectivity of the LXX probably brought the *agapē* word family into greater prominence as a vocabulary suitable for religious and theological discourse in early grecophone Judaism. To a considerable extent, the NT writers continued this preference for the *agapē* family in their vocabulary choices."

[351] Not listed here but also a teaching of the New Testament is the love of God the Father for the Son – an example of the divine love operative within the triune godhead (e.g. cf. Mt. 3:17; 12:18; 17:5; Jn. 3:35; 5:20; 10:17; 14:31; 15:9).

4.2. The Synoptic Gospels

4.2.1. Truth

The 'truth' vocabulary occurs in all three of the Synoptic Gospels but with varying degrees of frequency:

- There are seven references to ἀλήθεια: one in Matthew, three in Mark, and three in Luke.[352] Six of these relate to the manner of speaking ('truly', 'in accordance with the truth') and one (Mk. 5:33) relates to the object of the speaking, i.e. the woman who touched Jesus' cloak εἶπεν αὐτῷ πᾶσαν τὴν ἀλήθειαν.

- The adjectives ἀληθής and ἀληθινός occur a total of three times[353] and convey an attribute of the person (Jesus) or object (τὸ ἀληθινόν – a substantive usage referring to 'riches') in focus – they have a character of sincerity, genuineness, or honesty.

- The adverb ἀληθῶς is best translated as 'truly' in all of its eight occurrences[354] and indicates that what is spoken is in accordance with the facts. This usage is much the same as the noun form preceded by the prepositions ἐν and ἐπί.

- The adverb ἀμήν occurs 50 times[355] and always in the formula Ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν/σοι… used by Jesus. In this usage, it essentially means 'I solemnly tell you…' or 'I assure you'. It is Jesus' way of telling his disciples that they could trust in and depend upon what he was telling them.

- There is only one reference (Mk. 8.32) to the παρρησία word group and it refers to the way in which Jesus speaks 'plainly' or 'frankly' about what must take place regarding his suffering, rejection, death and resurrection. But note that in this instance, παρρησίᾳ does not mean 'in public' because the whole incident takes place only with his closest disciples.[356]

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[352] Mt. 22:16; Mk. 5:33; 12:14, 32; Lk. 4:25; 20:21; 22:59.

[353] ἀληθής: Mt. 22:16; Mk. 12:14; ἀλήθινος: Lk. 16:11.

[354] Mt. 14:33; 26:73; 27:54; Mk. 14:70; 15:39; Lk. 9:27; 12:44; 21:3.

[355] 51 times if one includes the extra ending of Mark (i.e. 16:9-20). This is the one usage where αμήν does not occur in the Ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν/σοι 'formula' occurring instead at the conclusion of an extended verse 8 (with or without verses 9-20) essentially as a final word indicating the veracity of the record or as the final word in a prayer, though it does not much sound like a prayer. Its uniquely different usage strengthens the argument that the extra verses were not an original part of Mark's account.

[356] Unnik, "Freedom of Speech": 481. Van Unnik poses the puzzling question why the parallel account in Luke does not include it and suggests that it may be because Luke realises that Jesus' word about suffering could only be

We can thus conclude that the Synoptic uses of the 'truth' terminology all relate to the concept of conformity to reality or fact in opposition to lies or falsehood, particularly in the context of speaking, and primarily by Jesus, but also others. Truth is viewed simply as factuality,[357] and what is spoken is in accordance with the facts. It is perhaps difficult to base much upon the single occurrence of παρρησία in the Synoptic Gospels, but it is also used to describe a straightforward, factual account of what will transpire.

4.2.2. Love

In the Synoptic Gospels Jesus never explicitly describes God as love or speaks of God loving humankind, though the idea is implied (cf. Mt. 6:25-34; 10:29-31; Lk. 6:35f.) and Jesus himself is described as loving human beings (e.g. Mk. 10:21).[358] Far more frequent is the idea that human beings love God and their fellow human beings.

In his teaching Jesus summed up in two sentences the whole law and meaning of righteousness – ἀγαπήσεις κύριον τὸν θεόν, ἀγαπήσεις τὸν πλησίον (Mk. 12:30-31; Mt. 22:37, 39). Both are well known OT sayings but the linking of them together, the way both are expressed positively, the way Jesus demands love with an exclusiveness that puts all other commands in its wake such that it becomes the norm of all righteousness, and the way Jesus extends the love of neighbour beyond compatriots to include one's enemies (Mt. 5:43f.), make Jesus' command a 'new' demand which goes beyond that of the OT and the rabbinic world – love is to become a way of life (cf. the woman in Lk. 7:47 who is forgiven because she loves).[359]

This so-called 'double command' to love God and love one's neighbour (combining Deut. 6:4–5 and Lev. 19:18) is found only in the Synoptic Gospels (Mt. 22:37-40; Mk. 12:29-31; and Lk. 10:27).[360] There are references to the love of people for God elsewhere (e.g. Rom. 8:28; 1 Cor. 2:9; 8:3; 16:22; Eph. 6:24 and

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understood in light of the later events of Jesus' life and that παρρησία was only appropriate after the cross, citing Lk. 24:26f., 44ff. in support.

[357] Thiselton says that in the Synoptics the ἀληθ- words "have little distinctive theological significance". See Thiselton, *NIDNTT* 3:883.

[358] Moffatt, *Love*, 67-82.

[359] The fact that the two instances of the verb ἀγαπᾶν have no specific object point to loving as a way of life – rather than being required to love specific types of people, love is to fill a person and guide them in all their actions.

[360] Raymond Brown notes that the commandment in 1 Jn. 4:21, "The person who loves God must love his brother as well," is often described as the Johannine equivalent of Mk. 12:28-31, "[y]et the Johannine author does not speak of two commandments, nor does he give priority to love for God. The one commandment involves both love for brother and love for God; and if there is practical priority, it is with love for brother." See Brown, *Epistles of John*, 564f.

1 Jn. 4:20f.), and there are references to love of one's neighbour or one another (Jn. 13:34f.; Rom. 12:10; 13:8;[361] 1 Thess. 4:9; Heb. 13:1; 1 Pet. 1:22; 3:8; 5:14; 1 Jn. 3:11, 23; 4:7, 11; 2 Jn. 5), but the 'double command' occurs only in the Synoptics.[362] As might be expected, the context of each occurrence reflects the intentions of the writer, so Matthew's inclusion of the double command has a polemical thrust and the double commandment is key to interpreting the whole law. Mark has a missionary-apologetic concern and wants to link morality with belief in one God and contrast obedience to the moral law with cultic performance. Luke's focus is on exhortation, so he shows Jesus urging the questioner to be obedient to the command, and follows the exhortation with a practical illustration, the parable of the Good Samaritan (Lk. 10:30-37), which accentuates and concretises the meaning of neighbourly love.[363]

Also unique to the Synoptics, in fact only in Matthew and Luke (Mt. 5:43f.; Lk. 6:27, 35), is the command to love one's enemies – those who oppose God's people and therefore oppose God, and whose opposition is expressed in terms of persecution, cursing, or abuse. As far as Matthew is concerned, love of one's enemy is an expression of true righteousness; it shows that one is indeed a child of the Father in heaven.[364] The whole pericope, from Matthew 5:20 onwards, consists of illustrations of what it means to have a righteousness that exceeds that of the Pharisees, and love for one's enemies is one of the distinguishing marks of this kind of righteousness. Such a love is to be expressed in terms of doing good to them, blessing them, and praying for them (Lk. 6:28) – this is much more than toleration, it is serving them, affirming them, and being kind to them, with no expectation of reciprocity but with a desire to see God's purposes for them fulfilled.[365]

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[361] On the apparent reduction of the 'double command' to a single command in Paul's writings, see the next section.

[362] In the end then, the lack of references to the 'double command' outside of the Synoptics is not a cause for concern since the two commands are amply attested throughout the New Testament. For a discussion of the different settings and emphases of each Synoptic pericope, see Furnish, *The LOVE Command*, 30-38.

[363] Furnish, *The LOVE Command*, 59f.; F. Bovon, *Luke 2: A Commentary on the Gospel of Luke 9:51–19:27* (Hermeneia – A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible; ed. H. Koester; trans. D. S. Deer.; Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2013), 55. Bovon says: "What Luke emphasized most strongly was the putting into practice of what was required, of proper relationships, and of love; in this he followed the earliest Christian theology. The author of Scripture, God, expects from those whom he loves a living, earnest, and lasting reciprocity, beings with undivided loyalty, with 'whole' hearts."

[364] D. L. Turner, *Matthew* (BECNT; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 176f.; Furnish, *The LOVE Command*, 48.

[365] Furnish, *The LOVE Command*, 55-58, 66f. See also Moffatt, *Love*, 44, 110-117; L. Schottroff, "Non-Violence and the Love of One's Enemies," in *Essays on the Love Commandment* (trans. R. H. Fuller, et al.; Philadelphia, PA: Fortress, 1978). Moffatt (44) says, "instead of retaliating or criticizing them, when they injure us, we are bound to behave generously and steadily towards them as persons in whom God has ends of His own." Schottroff (24f.) argues that Christians should love others even when they refuse to reciprocate in order that they have a missionary opportunity to reach the enemy. The aim is to conquer the enemy through mission and conversion, to win over the enemy, to persuade him to lead a different kind of life, and to participate in the Christian hope.

Truth and Love in the New Testament

It is this love of enemies which most of all sets Jesus' love ethic apart from all other 'love ethics' of antiquity.[366] In his teaching, the love command is not restricted to a limited group of friends, associates, or kinsmen. This is different to Judaism and the Graeco-Roman society of the day in which 'neighbour love' was seen as quite narrow. Judaism saw 'neighbour love' as a primary responsibility to their own people, those who were part of their covenant with Yahweh; the Graeco-Roman world saw responsibility towards neighbours as based on one's status and what was appropriate to the neighbour's standing. Victor Furnish notes that "[e]ven the Stoic ideal of a universal brotherhood was not able to change the deeply ingrained Greek conviction that men are essentially unequal and that one's duties to them are to be appropriate to their status."[367] The lack of concern for status is further evidenced in Jesus' teaching about love in that such love does not await, anticipate, or require a response in kind.

Further, it must be noted that Jesus' instructions to love are not just random commands but an essential part of his proclamation of the kingdom of God.[368] The rule of the kingdom is the rule of God and the rule of God is the rule of love. The kingdom of God was not a new epoch in history but the establishment of God's sovereign power in judgement and love. This was what Jesus proclaimed in word and deed. His ministry was a call to reorder one's priorities and reorient oneself with a focus on God – repentance was the first step (cf. Mt. 4:17; Mk. 1:15; 6:12); a life of obedience characterised by love was the necessary corollary (cf. Mt 3:8; 22:37-39; 28:20; Lk. 11:28; Jn. 13:34f.; 14:15,23).[369]

In summary, the love language in the Synoptic Gospels implies something of the love of the Godhead for humanity but is used primarily to describe the love of human beings for God and each other, which is uniquely framed as a double commandment. In addition, the Synoptic Gospels uniquely widen both the Graeco-Roman and Judaistic concepts of 'neighbour love' to include one's enemies.

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[366] Adela Collins argues that the double command, and especially the command to love one's enemies, have their roots in Jesus' teaching. See A. Y. Collins, *Mark: A Commentary* (Hermeneia – A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible; ed. H. W. Attridge; Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2007), 570.

[367] Furnish, *The LOVE Command*, 65.

[368] For a thorough treatment of Jesus' call to love, especially one's enemies, as an essential part of his message about the kingdom of God, see chapters 3 and 5 in John Piper's doctoral dissertation published as *Love Your Enemies: Jesus' Love Command in the Synoptic Gospels and the Early Christian Paraenesis* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012).

[369] Furnish, *The LOVE Command*, 67-69.

4.3. The Pauline Epistles[370]

4.3.1. Truth

Not surprisingly given the volume of his writings Paul makes extensive use of 'truth' terminology.

- One of only two occurrences of the verbal form ἀληθεύω in the NT occurs in Gal. 4:16[371] and it carries the straightforward meaning of 'speak the truth'.

- Paul's usage of the substantive ἀλήθεια is somewhat varied.[372] Firstly, he uses the term to describe the gospel message: referring to ἡ ἀλήθεια τοῦ εὐαγγελίου (Gal. 2:5, 14), using the unqualified articular term ἡ ἀλήθεια as an equivalent term to the 'gospel message' (2 Cor. 13:8;[373] Gal. 5:7). These are examples of Paul equating the gospel message with truth because salvation is about coming to a knowledge of the fact or reality that deliverance is found in Jesus Christ. Secondly Paul uses ἀλήθεια to represent God's revelation of his will or his own being through either the law or creation (cf. Rom. 1:18, 25; 2:8, 20); Thirdly, Paul uses ἀλήθεια to stand in contrast to lying or deception, and often this reflects the actions which support one's words – i.e. sincerity or honesty (cf. Rom. 9:1; 2 Cor. 6:7; 7:14; 12:6); as such ἀλήθεια is demanded of Christians because they are part of the community of Christ (1 Cor. 5:8).

- The three uses of the adjective ἀληθής have the meaning 'truthful', 'righteous' or 'honest' in Romans 3:4 and 2 Corinthians 6:8 and 'according to fact' or 'true' in Philippians 4:8, and the only usage of ἀλήθινος (1 Thess. 1:9) overlaps in meaning with ἀληθής having the meaning of 'real' or 'genuine'.

- The adverb ἀληθῶς (1 Thess. 2:13) also has its usual meaning of 'really' or 'genuinely'.

- All references to ἀμήν in the Pauline literature occur at the end of prayers (Rom. 11:36; 16:27; Phil. 4:20; 1 Thess. 3:13), or are described as responses to greetings, prayers or statements about God,

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[370] Without endorsing any particular view, this thesis is dealing here with the thirteen epistles traditionally designated as Pauline in two groups – the undisputed Pauline Epistles: Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians, 1 Thessalonians, and Philemon; the disputed or Deutero-Pauline Epistles: 2 Thessalonians, Colossians, Ephesians, 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus. See H. Koester, *History and Literature of Early Christianity* (Second ed.; Introduction to the New Testament; 2 vols.; vol. 2; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2000), 52-56.

[371] The other occurs in Eph. 4:15 and will be dealt with in the next section.

[372] It occurs 22x across all of the letters considered genuinely Pauline, except 1 Thessalonians and Philemon.

[373] Here the term seems to represent the 'gospel message' as 'the truth' (i.e. 'true teaching' or 'true doctrine') in contrast to ἕτερον εὐαγγέλιον (cf. 2 Cor. 11:4).

showing assent to what has been said (Rom. 1:25; 9:5; 15:33; 1 Cor. 14:16; 2 Cor. 1:20; Gal. 1:5; 6:18), agreeing that it is 'right' or 'true'.

- Παρρησία occurs four times in the Pauline literature and its verbal form occurs once.[374] Unlike the original Greek concept of freedom to speak frankly or truthfully, the term carries more of the idea of the boldness required to perform actions in public,[375] although J. Paul Sampley argues that in Paul's time,

> the term's social context was friendship, and *parrēsia* was what friends owed one another. So the definition is that *parrēsia* is the frank speech delivered by a friend, and its aim is the friend's improvement – and it can range in form from the harshest rebuke to what Philodemus, a first-century C.E. educator, moralist, and rhetorician, called "the gentlest of stings" (*On Frank Criticism*, col. VIIIb).[376]

Examples of boldness can be seen in preaching, including in the face of opposition (cf. 1 Thess. 2:2; one could also perhaps include 2 Cor. 3:12),[377] in being prepared to suffer and die in order to honour Christ (Phil. 1:20), and speaking boldly when giving instruction (cf. 2 Cor. 7:4; Phm. 8).[378]

From this brief survey of the Pauline writings, it can be seen that the 'truth' vocabulary for Paul is consistent with that of the Synoptic Gospels in that it describes conformity to reality or fact in opposition to lies and falsehood; but it goes beyond that and is used to describe the characteristics of sincerity and honesty, and most significantly, it is used extensively as a synonym for the 'gospel message', which for Paul is the very 'truth'. The usage of παρρησία in the Pauline vocabulary also goes beyond the Synoptics'

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[374] Παρρησία: 2 Cor. 3:12; 7:4; Phil. 1:20; Phm. 8; παρρησιάζομαι: 1 Thess. 2:2.

[375] See for example Hahn, *NIDNTT* 2:736; D. E. Garland, *2 Corinthians* (NAC 29; Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 1999), 181.

[376] J. P. Sampley, "Paul and Frank Speech," in *Paul in the Greco-Roman World – A Handbook* (ed. J. P. Sampley; Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2003), 294. Sampley's chapter is well worth reading for some good examples of how Paul delivers exhortations aimed at moral improvement in Galatians, 2 Cor. 10-13, and Philippians.

[377] Note however, that rather than preaching the gospel, Garland thinks that "the word *parrēsia* is better understood in this context [2 Cor. 3:12] as referring to the right to speak freely and openly and to give frank criticism to cultivate moral improvement." See Garland, *2 Corinthians*, 181.

[378] Bert Lietaert Peerbolte notes that a classic case of Paul speaking μετὰ παρρησίας without actually using the term is the incident when Paul stands up against Peter in public in Gal. 2:11. This would have been seen as an insult in first century society for it should have been dealt with privately, but Paul was so convinced that he had been called by God to speak on his behalf that he broke social convention when it came to the matter of addressing unity in Christ. See B. J. Lietaert Peerbolte, "Introduction," in *Parrhesia: Ancient and Modern Perspectives on Freedom of Speech* (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 8.

idea of a straightforward, factual presentation, to describe the mode of its delivery – it is speaking and acting with boldness and courage and no fear of the consequences.

4.3.2. Love

The apostle Paul may well have been influenced by the negative philosophical approaches to ἔρως and this might account for the lack of usage of this term in his writings. In a similar vein to what the philosophers said about ἔρως, Paul mentions the struggle against 'the flesh' (cf. Rom. 7; 8:3; Gal. 5:13-25; 6:10-18) and 'lustful desires' (Rom. 1:26f.), and recommends celibacy (1 Cor. 7:25-28). He goes on to talk about the time running out and things like having a wife paling into insignificance, thus adding an eschatological dimension to the pursuit of love, something not readily apparent in the thinking of the Graeco-Roman philosophers.[379] However, Paul's recommendation to devote oneself to serving the Lord (1 Cor. 7:32-34) does find a parallel in the ancient philosophers' discussions about whether a philosopher should marry.[380]

Although the term ἔρως does not occur in Paul, the concept is certainly behind some of the things Paul says and he would have seen it as part and parcel of the divine plan for preserving the human race. Even the φιλ- words are not Paul's favourite words for 'love';[381] rather for Paul, love finds its consummation in the ἀγαπ- word group and this seems to be primarily used in the sense of charity, that is, a non-erotic love for others and sacrificing oneself for them as Christ had done. It is a love which is first of all demonstrated by God the Father in sending his Son (Rom. 5:8; 8:32, 35-39) and then is expressed by the love of the Son

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379 Brenk, "Most Beautiful and Divine," 108.

380 Plato, for example in his *Symposium* (200e-212c) has Socrates exhorting people to abandon the pursuit of human love and sex in order to devote themselves to the pursuit of divine beauty and immortality, and in his depiction of the ideal state he thought that wives and children should be held in common and marriage should be redefined in order to strengthen the state (*Republic*, IV.423e–424a; V.449a-466d). The popular quote attributed to Socrates, "By all means marry; if you get a good wife, you'll be happy. If you get a bad one, you'll become a philosopher... and that is a good thing for any man", does not have a foundation in any extant writings but is perhaps the 'bottom line' of Socrates' response to his wife being the hardest person to get along with, when he says that if he can endure his wife Xanthippe, he can endure any human being (Xenophon, *Symposium* 2.10). Aristotle, however, disagreed with the idea of celibacy and argued that it was unworkable. See the discussion in section 2.3.1 (*The Politics of Friendship*).

381 Of course, the φιλ- words can also refer to the concept of 'friendship' but Paul does not use the words in this way either. John Fitzgerald, in his 2007 article on Christian friendship, notes that Paul never uses the standard Greek terms associated with the concept of friendship – i.e. the words 'friendship' (*philia*) and 'friend' (*philos*) – but he draws "freely and repeatedly on the Greco-Roman topic (*topos*) of friendship, adopting and adapting terms and expressions for use in the Pauline churches". See J. T. Fitzgerald, "Christian Friendship: John, Paul, and the Philippians," *Interpretation* 61, no. 3 (2007): 287.

for humanity (Gal. 2:20).[382] But ultimately it is a love which is poured out into the hearts of God's people (Rom. 5:5) so that they might live in righteousness and holiness (Rom. 1:7; Col. 3:12-14) and that they too might display his love (2 Cor. 5:14-16).

Another feature of Paul's writing on *love* which is also evident in the Qumran literature and the OT,[383] but not so evident in the ancient philosophers or the Graeco-Roman world, is the concept that love is to be expressed firstly in love for God,[384] and then in love for one's neighbour. For Paul, this is intimately connected with his love of Christ, the driving force in his own life; it is his love for Christ that also drives his desire to spread the love of God to others (Rom. 8:35-39; 2 Cor. 5:11-21; 6:3-13) and it is Paul's desire that other Christians would also have the same love for God and for their neighbour (Rom. 12:10; 13:8-10; 1 Cor. 16:14; Gal. 5:13f.; Phil. 1:9-11; 2:1-4; 1 Thess. 4:10). The apparent reduction of the 'double love command' to a single command to love one's neighbour, which Paul says fulfils the law (Rom. 13:8-10; Gal. 5:14), cannot be taken in isolation from Paul's other teachings to also love God.[385] In fact, Paul sees love for others as something which is taught by God (1 Thess. 4:9) so love for God is implicit in the single command which fulfils the law – indeed love for others is a manifestation of love for God since it demonstrates obedience.[386] Thus, for Paul, the goal of love is not that God's people respond in love to

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[382] Moffatt (139) notes that Paul preferred to use 'righteousness' language to describe God's love for humankind while recognising that there is no problem in the relations between grace or love and righteousness. Moffatt suggests that for Paul, "'righteousness' covered not only the religious relation between God and men, which was fundamental, but also the moral issues of that relationship." He also suggests that it was the Johannine movement which boldly made 'love' the dominant term instead of righteousness.

[383] And we shall see in section 5.1.3 (*The 'Love' Vocabulary*) that it is also evident in the Johannine literature.

[384] There are only four references in Paul's undisputed writings of humankind's love for God – 1 Cor. 2:9f.; 8:3; 16:21f. and Rom. 8:28. Like Jesus, Paul seems to prefer *trust* or *faith* to *love* when expressing the attitude and relationship of human beings towards God. Paul understood himself as God's servant and love for God as "rejoicing in His will for us, by trusting Him bravely, in spite of appearances, and by hearty service that grudged nothing in His cause. Such actions of the soul were better expressed by faith than by love, if only for this reason that faith denoted a moral submission which might be missed in love." See Moffatt, *Love*, 162. See also Lillie, "The Christian Conception of Love": 231. He suggests that "it might appear blasphemous to use the same word for the perfect love of God and the warped, mixed-up aspirations of sinful men."

[385] Moffatt suggests that "Paul simply quotes *love your neighbour* as sufficient for his immediate purpose, without adding *love the Lord your God*." Moffatt, *Love*, 168. See also L. L. Welborn, *Paul's Summons to Messianic Life: Political Theology and the Coming Awakening* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015), 2. Welborn argues that Paul's reduction of the dual command reflects his conviction that the burden to love God "has been lifted from the shoulders of the new people of God, in consequence of the messianic event", which has transformed love for God into a love for "the nearest embodiment of the ones for whom the Messiah died, following the kenotic movement of divine love. Thus, the divine *kenosis* has sublated the first commandment." On how it is possible to fulfil the command to love one's neighbour see Welborn, *Paul's Summons*, 55-60, 69-70.

[386] The link between loving God and loving one's neighbour, where the latter flows from the former, is more evident in the Johannine author's writings (see 1 Jn. 4).

God, but that they give their lives in love to the service of their neighbour, which for Paul seems to consist of three concentric circles: (1) love for specific individuals in the churches – e.g. Philemon and Onesimus (Phm. 1, 16), Timothy (1 Cor. 4:17); (2) love for special groups or churches – e.g. the Thessalonians (1 Thess. 3:6), the Corinthians (1 Cor. 4:21; 16:24; 2 Cor. 2:4; 11:11), and the Philippians (Phil. 1:8); and (3) love for the outside world (Rom. 12:17f.; Gal 6:10).[387]

Ultimately for Paul, love is the heavenly gift surpassing all others, the καθ᾽ ὑπερβολὴν ὁδός (1 Cor. 12:31), which is expounded in the famous love chapter (1 Cor. 13). For Paul, as for Jesus, love is the only vital force which has a future because ἡ ἀγάπη οὐδέποτε πίπτει (1 Cor. 13:8).

The Pauline Epistles then, primarily using the ἀγαπ- words, express calls for a love which manifests itself as love for God in righteous and holy living, and then love for others in sacrificial service. Love for God is to drive love for one's fellow human beings, starting with individuals in the church, then groups or churches, then those who still need to hear about Jesus.

4.4. The Deutero-Pauline Epistles[388]

While the letters generally considered by many scholars today not to be authentically Pauline are treated in this separate section, much of what we see here parallels what Paul says in the undisputed Pauline letters, which of course is a potential argument for them being Pauline, but the debate about Pauline authorship is not germane to this thesis or analysis and it is sufficient to show that the Deutero-Pauline epistles present ideas of 'truth' and 'love' that are consonant with what we have already seen in the Synoptic Gospels and the Pauline Epistles.

4.4.1. Truth

- The second of only two occurrences of the verbal form ἀληθεύω in the NT occurs in Eph. 4:15 where it is qualified by ἐν ἀγάπῃ. It carries the straightforward meaning of 'speak the truth' but also adds a

[387] Moffatt, *Love*, 197-204; Quell and Stauffer, *TDNT* 1:39-43. As previously noted the verb στέργειν does not occur in the NT except in a positive form in the compound φιλόστοργος in Rom. 12:10. Significant for the present discussion is the fact that it has the meaning 'loving dearly', and Paul is here using an expression to emphasise the need for love in the church by piling up words that express the idea of love for one another: τῇ φιλαδελφίᾳ εἰς ἀλλήλους φιλόστοργοι, τῇ τιμῇ ἀλλήλους προηγούμενοι, "be devoted to one another in brotherly love; honour one another above yourselves". See Arndt, et al., *BDAG*, s.v. φίλος.

[388] Here we consider 2 Thessalonians, Colossians, Ephesians, and the so-called Pastoral Epistles, 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, and Titus.

qualifying domain, 'in love'. Interestingly, this is one of the non-Johannine linkages between truth and love.

- The usage of the substantive ἀλήθεια is also somewhat varied in the Deutero-Pauline Epistles but used in much the same way as Paul does.[389] Firstly, it is used to describe the gospel message in the same way Paul does – ἡ ἀλήθεια τοῦ εὐαγγελίου (Col. 1:5), and also via the unqualified articular term ἡ ἀλήθεια (2 Thess. 2:10, 12, 13;[390] 1 Tim. 2:4; 2 Tim. 3:7, 8), as well as the phrase ὁ λόγος τῆς ἀληθείας (2 Tim. 2:15). These are all examples of equating the gospel message with truth. The demands to exhibit ἀλήθεια in one's life are quite strident in the Deutero-Pauline Epistles with a strong emphasis on the truth being evident because they are to reflect the character of God and the body of Christ of which they are a part (Eph. 4:24, 25), it is the fruit of being in the light (Eph. 5:9), and it leads to godliness (Tit. 1:1).

- The adjective ἀληθής occurs in Titus 1:13 with the meaning 'according to fact' or 'true'.[391]

- All 4 references to ἀμήν (Eph. 3:21; 1 Tim. 1:17; 6:16; 2 Tim. 4:18) occur at the end of prayers, agreeing that what has been prayed is 'right' or 'true'.

- Παρρησία occurs four times in the Deutero-Pauline literature and its verbal form occurs once.[392] Like the Pauline uses it is used to describe the boldness required to perform actions in the face of opposition (Eph. 6:19f.), but it is also used to describe the freedom with which one can approach God (Eph. 3:12).[393] There is one reference in Colossians 2:15 to Christ doing something εἰ παρρησίᾳ ('in

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[389] It occurs 25x across all of the letters in the Deutero-Pauline group.

[390] Because the expression in 2 Thess. 2:13 is πίστει ἀληθείας, Ernest Best argues that "truth can be either that which creates **faith** (genitive of the subject) or that in which **faith** is placed (genitive of the object), or possibly that which gives its quality to **faith**, i.e. 'truthful faith' (genitive of quality)." If truth creates faith, then it essentially refers to the gospel which awakens faith; if truth is the genitive of the object then "the salvation of the believer takes place through his **faith in the truth** (the latter again in the sense 'gospel')" (Bold fonts original). Either way 'truth' seems to refer to the gospel message. See E. Best, *The First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians* (BNTC; London: Continuum, 1986), 315. Thiselton however, suggests that "*alētheia* here may mean either the gospel, as the message of salvation, or else (more probably) that which is real, in contrast to mere human imaginings." See Thiselton, *NIDNTT* 3:885.

[391] There are no references to the adverb ἀληθῶς in the Deutero-Pauline Epistles.

[392] Παρρησία: Eph. 3:12; 6:19; Col. 2:15; 1 Tim. 3:13; παρρησιάζομαι: Eph. 6:20.

[393] Interestingly here, the idea of 'boldness' is expressed with a different word, πεποίθησις. The writer speaks of approaching God with freedom (τὴν παρρησίαν) and confidence (ἐν πεποιθήσει).

public') but since the context is Christ triumphing over the powers and authorities, ἐν παρρησίᾳ here may not emphasise openness or boldness, but rather the superiority or ἐξουσία of Christ.[394]

The 'truth' vocabulary of the Deutero-Pauline writings is consistent with both the Synoptic Gospels and the recognised Pauline Epistles in describing conformity to reality or fact, characteristics of sincerity and honesty, and the 'gospel message', which is 'the truth' and 'the word of truth'. Παρρησία is again used to describe the boldness required to speak and live in the face of opposition, but additionally to describe the freedom with which one can approach God.

4.4.2. Love

The Deutero-Pauline Epistles add virtually nothing more to the NT understanding of love beyond what is already seen in the Pauline Epistles. There are no references here to ἔρως, but these epistles reinforce the need to wrestle with fleshly nature (Col. 2:10-15; 3:1-10) reminding us that it is God's love for us which has rescued us from its grip (Eph. 2:1-10; Tit. 3:3-7). The Son loves humanity and models how we are to love each other (Eph. 3:16-19; 4:32-5:2; 5:25-33; Col. 3:12-14). As in the Pauline Epistles, the love to be shown to one's neighbour includes specific individuals in the churches, e.g. Luke who is 'beloved' [ἀγαπητός] (Col. 4:14), Timothy likewise [ἀγαπητός] (2 Tim. 1:2), Titus whom Paul calls 'my true [γνήσιος] son in our common faith' (Tit. 1:4). It also included love for special groups or churches – e.g. the Ephesians', Colossians', and Thessalonians' love for all God's people (Eph. 1:15; Col. 1:4; 2 Thess. 1:3) – and it also included showing a degree of 'love' towards those outside the community of faith (e.g. Titus 3:2).

As we noted in the last section, the Epistle to the Ephesians links truth and love in Eph. 4:15, urging the Ephesian believers to speak the truth in love [ἀληθεύοντες δὲ ἐν ἀγάπῃ] so that they might become mature in Christ. Further links between 'truth' and 'love' are found in 2 Thessalonians. 2 Thessalonians 2:13 describes brothers and sisters as loved by the Lord [ἀδελφοὶ ἠγαπημένοι ὑπὸ κυρίου] because they were chosen as firstfruits to be saved by the Lord through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth [πίστει ἀληθείας]. This is in contrast to those who are perishing because they 'refused to love the truth' [τὴν ἀγάπην τῆς ἀληθείας οὐκ ἐδέξαντο] (2 Thess. 2:10).

The Deutero-Pauline Epistles echo Paul's teaching on love, reminding us that it is God's love which provides the impetus and model for loving others. But they also link love to truth as a reminder that salvation only comes to those who love the truth, that belief in the truth is an intrinsic part of salvation

[394] Schlier, *TDNT* 5:884.

and becoming part of those loved by God, and that speaking the truth in love is the means we are to use in bringing fellow believers to maturity.

4.5. Other NT Writings[395]

4.5.1. Truth

The truth vocabulary in Acts, not unexpectedly, conforms to the usage in Luke's Gospel – there are two uses of ἀλήθεια in prepositional phrases indicating the manner of speaking 'truly' or 'in reality' (Acts 4:27; 10:34) and one instance (Acts 26:25) where it refers to the content of what is spoken as that which is 'true' or 'genuine'; the adjective ἀληθής in Acts 12:9 connotes that which is 'genuine' or 'real'.[396]

One of the nuances of the 'truth' vocabulary not seen thus far is the idea of 'truth' as that which is not so much a contrast between correct and false, but rather between that which is complete, definitive, or fully-orbed, and that which is incomplete, provisional, or partial. This usage is similar to the idea of 'genuine' or 'real' but carries an added idea of 'completeness'. This nuance is evident in the usage of ἀληθινός in Hebrews 8:2 and 9:24. However, its usage in Hebrews 10:22 is the more standard nuance of 'true', 'genuine', or 'sincere'. The single usage of ἀλήθεια in Hebrews (10:26 – 'receive knowledge of the truth') is akin to Paul's usage of ἀλήθεια to refer to the content of the gospel message.[397]

James' references to ἀλήθεια (1:18; 3:14; 5:19) refer to 'truth' as a body of knowledge or the content of what is true, which again is usually a reference to the gospel message, and Peter's references are also to the gospel message as the truth to be obeyed (1 Pet. 1:22), the truth in which one is to be established (2 Pet. 1:12), and the way of truth (2 Pet. 2:2). Peter also uses the adjective ἀληθής once with the idea of 'true/real/genuine' (1 Pet. 5:12) and once with the idea of 'true/according to fact' (2 Pet. 2:22).[398]

The noun παρρησία occurs five times in Acts and four times in Hebrews while the verb παρρησιάζομαι occurs seven times in Acts. In all cases, the meaning relates to 'boldness' or 'confidence' including the

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[395] Other writings here refers to Acts, Hebrews, James, the Epistles of Peter, and Jude.

[396] See for example Quell, Kittel and Bultmann, *TDNT* 1:243f., 248.

[397] See for example P. Ellingworth, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids/Carlisle: Eerdmans/Paternoster, 1993), 401, 532f.; W. L. Lane, *Hebrews 9–13* (WBC 47B; Waco, TX; Dallas; Nashville: Word, 1991), 214, 276, 292.

[398] For a similar view see Thiselton, *NIDNTT* 3:888. Thiselton argues that while the reference in James 1:18 appears to refer to the gospel, "the context suggests that what is at issue is that God acts reliably and consistently." Bultmann suggests that in 1 Pet. 5:12, ἀληθής means 'constant' or 'valid', but constancy hardly fits the context; see *TDNT* 1:247. On truth in 1 Peter, see P. J. Achtemeier, *1 Peter* (Hermeneia – A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible; ed. E. J. Epp; Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1996), 136f.

ability to speak freely, boldly, or fearlessly,[399] as it does in the Pauline literature. This bold and fearless preaching has not come through the apostles receiving training in rhetorical skill; rather it is a gift of their Lord. He is the one who enables them to show παρρησία because they are "speaking boldly [παρρησιαζόμενοι] for the Lord, who confirmed the message of his grace by enabling them to perform signs and wonders." (Acts 14:3).[400]

All references to ἀμήν (five occurrences) in this literature are expressions of faith at the end of a doxology or prayer, expressing the speaker's assent to the things said, as in the Pauline literature.

The usage of the truth vocabulary in these writings is consistent with what we have seen so far in the Synoptic and Pauline literature, but the concept of truth is nuanced somewhat by extending it from being the opposite of lying, to include an added idea of 'completeness'; truth is not just that which is not lies, it is a contrast to all that is incomplete, partial, or unclear. And this 'truth' is to be proclaimed with boldness.

4.5.2. Love

Amongst the other NT writers, there are virtually no references to God's love for humankind with the only example being a quotation of Proverbs 3:11-12 in Hebrews 12:6 about God disciplining those he loves. There are a few references to the love of human beings for God in this group (cf. Heb. 6:10; Jam. 1:12; 2:5; 1 Pet. 1:8) and several references to the idea of 'brotherly' love.

Hebrews presents the idea that love is displayed in serving others (Heb. 6:10; 10:24f.), a love which was to be mutually expressed in the gathering together of believers and the stirring up of one another to love and good works. In a reiteration of the 'Golden Rule' James reinforces the need for love to be displayed in actions towards one's neighbours (which in context appears to be those in the community of faith) and this is not to be dispensed with any favouritism, for love is the law of the new kingdom, the νόμος βασιλικός (Jam. 2:8); it is the work of faith, demanded by it, made possible by it, and counted for righteousness on account of it (Jam. 2:14-26), and thus it is not possible that one can have a friendship

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[399] Schlier goes so far as to say that in Acts παρρησιάζομαι almost takes on the sense "to preach"; see *TDNT* 5:882. Schlier also notes that παρρησία in Hebrews is more about the confidence that one has in Christ. He says: "One has it, not as a subjective attitude, but as the appropriation of something already there. One keeps it by holding fast, not merely oneself as a believer, but the presupposition of faith in the promise, παρρησία is thus posited objectively with the object of hope, and it is worked out in a life which is commensurate with and has entered into this openness." See Schlier, *TDNT* 5:884. As such, παρρησία in Hebrews is more closely related to hope and access than it is to truth, however, to attain it one needs to draw near μετὰ ἀληθινῆς καρδίας ἐν πληροφορίᾳ πίστεως.

[400] See Schlier, *TDNT* 5:882; Papademetriou, "Performative Meaning of παρρησία," 31-32.

with, or love for, the world and God at the same time (Jam. 4:4) – friendship (the only reference to φιλία in the NT) with the world means enmity (ἔχθρα) with God. Peter speaks of love for the family of believers (1 Pet. 2:17; 3:8; 2 Pet. 1:7) which was to be sincere and deep (1 Pet. 1:22; 4:8) and which would effectively cover a multitude of sins (1 Pet. 4:8).[401] This final idea presents an outcome of brotherly love – the overlooking or hiding of the faults of others, perhaps echoing Paul's actions of love in 1 Corinthians 13:5-7.

These other NT writings align with what we have seen about the language of love in the NT and particularly focus on the expression of love to the community of faith, a love which is to be aimed at building up one's brothers and sisters, and is to be expressed impartially, sincerely, deeply, and in concrete actions. Using the language of friendship, James tells us that it is not possible to love God (and thus his people) while trying to love the world at the same time.

4.6. Summary of the Non-Johannine Passages

The language of truth (ἀλήθεια) in the non-Johannine writings focuses primarily on factuality – that which conforms to reality in opposition to falsehood. But it is also extended beyond this to describe the characteristics of sincerity and honesty, as well as being used as a synonym for the gospel message. In addition, it also has an added idea of 'completeness' in contrast to all that is incomplete, partial, or unclear. The usage of παρρησία is twofold – it depicts both a straightforward, factual presentation, as well as describing the mode of such a delivery (i.e. speaking with boldness and courage and no fear of consequences).[402]

In the era when the NT writings were being written, the Graeco-Roman world was using the ἀγαπ- and φιλ- words almost interchangeably to describe 'love' and 'friendship'. This interchangeability is reflected

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[401] Karen Jobes says, "The love Peter has in view is neither a warm, fuzzy feeling nor friendships around a coffeepot after worship, though love as Peter defines it may involve both. Rather, it refers to righteous relationships with each other that are based on God's character, which Christian behavior reflects." See K. H. Jobes, *1 Peter* (BECNT; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 123.

[402] Kyriakalou Papademetriou gives a helpful summary. See Papademetriou, "Performative Meaning of παρρησία," 33.

> παρρησία and the verb παρρησιάζομαι are associated with three kinds of speakers: a) with Jesus Christ, b) with the apostles, c) with the Christians. Jesus Christ speaks and walks with παρρησία, because he proves to have the appropriate features of the Christ; thus, he does not hide himself, but he acts openly and publicly. The apostles have παρρησία because they provide the credentials that they are genuine envoys of Christ. Christians can have παρρησία, because they are members of the body of Jesus Christ. Therefore, the use of the word defines the character of the Christian community, which constitutes the polity of a spiritual democracy.

in the NT writings, despite the fact that a number of scholars have argued that Christianity was beginning to favour the ἀγαπ- words and was giving them a new intensity and a specific meaning – perhaps best understood as 'an intense feeling of love' which can be manifested in a positive way (e.g. sacrificial or self-giving love) or a negative way (self-focused, grasping 'love' which might be better described as narcissism). The focus of the non-Johannine 'love' passages is twofold – love for God and love for one's fellow human beings, with the former being expressed in terms of the latter. Love for fellow human beings included those who were not part of one's community (which meant not only strangers and aliens, but also those who were opposed to both God and one's community – i.e. one's enemies). It was to be the believing community's way of life, the ethics of the kingdom community of which they were a part, and while brotherly love was a key aspect of this, what we see presented in the non-Johannine passages, though not consistently the same in all of them, is love as a series of concentric circles beginning with a love for God, then focusing upon love for one's immediate brotherhood or 'fellowship', then widening to the larger circle of fellow believers elsewhere, and finally expanding to the widest circle which covered the rest of humanity (including those who opposed believers and God). Like the ripples that emanate from a stone dropped in a pond, love is to be evidenced in ever-widening circles.

5. The Johannine Perspective

Having explored the issues of truth and love in the Graeco-Roman world, in Hebraic thought, and in the rest of the NT, we are now in a position to see what the Johannine author has to say in his writings and to then assess what might be the relationship between his views and those of the recipients to whom he writes.

5.1. Truth and Love in the Johannine Literature[403]

5.1.1. The 'Truth' Vocabulary

In section 4.1.1 (*The 'Truth' Vocabulary*) we found that almost half of all references to the ἀληθ- word group in the NT occur in the Johannine literature, which suggests that it is an important theme for the author. The appearance of 'truth' in the Prologue of John's Gospel (Jn. 1:1-18) which many commentators see as programmatic for the whole discourse of the Gospel,[404] reinforces this importance. Sverre Aalen says, "This theme is introduced in the Prologue, clearly as a kind of key to the whole book: 'The law was through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus' (John 1,17)."[405] David Hawkin suggests that "concern for truth belongs to the very substance of Johannine soteriology."[406] But exactly what does the Johannine author mean by 'truth' and does its meaning change dependent upon how it is used? A close look at ἀλήθεια in the Johannine literature is therefore warranted, but let us first look at some of the related words in the same semantic domain (see footnote 332) before considering how the author understands the concept of ἀλήθεια and what might have influenced his thinking.

As previously noted,[407] the two words in the 'True, False' semantic domain which occur in the Johannine literature are:

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[403] As previously stated in footnote 328, primary reference is to the Johannine Gospel and Epistles, though reference to the Revelation of John is made at times. Such references are not critical to the thesis and are primarily included because many historical works on the Johannine writings still include Revelation as Johannine.

[404] See for example D. Lioy, "The Biblical Concept of Truth in the Fourth Gospel," *Conspectus* 6, no. 1 (2008): 71; S. R. Valentine, "The Johannine Prologue – A Microcosm of the Gospel," *The Evangelical Quarterly* 68, no. 3 (1996): 293. For a challenge to the majority view that John 1:1-18 is a Prologue, see P. J. Williams, "Not the Prologue of John," *JSNT* 33, no. 4 (2011).

[405] S. Aalen, "'Truth', a Key Word in St. John's Gospel," in *SE* (ed. F. L. Cross; Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1964), 21.

[406] D. J. Hawkin, "The Johannine Concept of Truth and its Implications for a Technological Society," *EvQ* 59, no. 1 (1987): 3.

[407] See section 4.1.1 (*The 'Truth' Vocabulary*).

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- ἀμήν – while this generally has the meaning of 'truly', it also appears once in Revelation 3:14 where it is a designation of Christ as the ultimate affirmation.[408] Like its usage in the Synoptic Gospels, the fifty occurrences of ἀμήν in the Gospel of John appear in the words of Jesus with λέγω ὑμῖν/σοι, to introduce weighty, authoritative pronouncements made by Jesus. However, these 50 occurrences actually appear in John's Gospel in a form unique to this Gospel, namely the double form ἀμὴν ἀμήν, which makes Jesus' utterances even more emphatic and adds extra gravity to his pronouncements. There are no references to ἀμήν in the Johannine Epistles.

- καλῶς ('rightly', 'well') and κακῶς ('wrongly', 'wickedly').[409] Καλῶς occurs four times in the Gospel of John, all with verbs of speaking – 4:17; 8:48; and 13:13 where it is used to indicate that a true or correct answer has been given, and 18:23 where it is paired with the only Johannine usage of κακῶς, with both terms being used substantively by Jesus when he responds to the interrogation of the high priest, stating what they should do if he had said 'something wrong' and challenging the validity of their actions if he had spoken the 'truth'.[410] The only occurrence of καλῶς in the Johannine Epistles is in 3 John 6 where it is used with the verb ποιέω to positively affirm an intended action.

These terms are essentially used in the Johannine literature in much the same way as they are used elsewhere in the NT. Irrespective of one's view on the authorship of Revelation, it can certainly be said that the designation of Jesus as ὁ ἀμήν in Revelation 3:14 is unique and not found anywhere else in the NT. But let us now move on to the ἀληθ- and παρρησία words, firstly in the Johannine Gospel and then in the Johannine Epistles.

5.1.1.1. The Johannine Gospel

The standard lexicons show a fair degree of agreement on the general meanings of the 'truth' adjectives and adverbs in the Gospel of John:[411]

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[408] Definitions from Arndt, et al., *BDAG*. The other seven occurrences in Revelation, like the Pauline and Deutero-Pauline literature, occur in the context of prayers, showing assent to what is prayed.

[409] Meanings taken from Arndt, et al., *BDAG*.

[410] Jesus similarly uses καλῶς substantively to mean 'good' in Mt. 12:12 and Lk. 6:27, as does Paul in Gal. 4:17. The Holy Spirit also 'spoke the truth' (καλῶς τὸ ονεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον ἐλάλησεν) (Acts 28:25).

[411] See for example the definitions in *BDAG*, Louw & Nida's *Lexicon*, Swanson's *DBL*, *TDNT*, Balz & Schneider's *EDNT*.

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- ἀληθής occurs fourteen times and refers to 'that which is truthful and honest' (3:33; 7:18; 8:26), is 'in accordance with fact' (4:18; 5:31, 32; 8:13, 14, 17; 10:41; 19:35; 21:24), or is 'real' or 'genuine' (6:55[2x]).

- ἀληθινός occurs nine times and overlaps in meaning with ἀληθής, referring to 'that which is in accordance with what is true or trustworthy' (7:28), 'what is valid or in accordance with fact' (4:37; 8:16; 19:35), or what is 'real', 'genuine', or 'authentic' (1:9; 4:23; 6:32; 15:1; 17:3).[412]

- ἀληθῶς occurs seven times and refers to 'that which corresponds to reality' (1:47; 4:42; 6:14; 7:26, 40; 8:31; 17:8).

These meanings are consistent with how these words are used in the Synoptic Gospels,[413] the Pauline Epistles, and the Deutero-Paulines, but the meaning of ἀλήθεια in the Gospel of John does not enjoy such a consensus. Elizabeth Mburu cogently argues that the reasons for this lack of consensus include: (1) an overemphasis on a particular conceptual background; (2) a misuse of etymology; (3) a failure to recognize the polysemic nature of words; and (4) a general lack of integration of semantic principles in the exegetical process. She concludes that "most of the interpretive options offered for the meaning of ἀλήθεια reflect the undue emphasis that interpreters place on certain philosophical/theological issues, generally above semantic and linguistic considerations."[414] We shall consider the conceptual background shortly, but let us first look at the occurrences of the word and see what we can derive from the context of these uses.

The substantive ἀλήθεια occurs twenty-five times in the Gospel of John (1:14, 17; 3:21; 4:23, 24; 5:33; 8:32[2x], 40, 44[2x], 45, 46; 14:6, 17; 15:26; 16:7, 13[2x]; 17:17[2x], 19; 18:37[2x], 38). While the word can have the same three nuances as its two cognate adjectives – i.e.' the quality of being in accordance

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[412] Sverre Aalen argues that 'truth' in John can only really be understood by looking at this adjective ἀληθινός. See Aalen, "Truth," 13f. God is ἀληθής (truthful) and that is important, but other NT writers say this about God as well (e.g. Paul in Rom. 3:4, 7; 15:8). However, Paul only uses the form ἀληθινός once (1 Thess. 1:9) and Hebrews is the only other NT book to use the word ἀληθινός as a theological term, so John has particularly chosen to use this term. [It should be noted that Aalen completely omits the reference to ἀληθινός in Lk. 16:11 and also considers the book of Revelation as Johannine.] Aalen argues that ἀληθινός in secular Greek "indicates that something is not merely represented by ideas and concepts in a man's mind, but also really exists in an actual and effective reality"; he says that "John applies this idea to the longing and search for the true religion or revelation as distinct from all the false ways purporting to lead to God". Thus, in Aalen's view, John is appropriating a Hellenistic view of 'truth'.

[413] Note however that Michael Roberts suggests: "although the two adjectives and the adverb are used similarly in John and the Synoptics, in John they take on an added significance because of the unique force of the Johannine conception of *alētheia*." See M. D. Roberts, "The Idea of Truth as the Revelation of Covenant Faithfulness in the Gospel of John" (ThD Thesis, University of South Africa, 2003), 4.

[414] Mburu, "Truth Terminology", 7.

with what is true, *truthfulness*'; 'the content of what is true, *truth*'; and 'an actual event or state, *reality*' – *BDAG* indicates that the second meaning is predominant. According to *BDAG*, the prepositional usage in 17:19 fits in the third nuance but essentially becomes the adverbial idea of 'indeed' or 'truly'; all other occurrences of ἀλήθεια in the Gospel of John are allocated in *BDAG* to the second basic meaning ('the content of what is true'), though the fact that it is linked with various other terms in John's Gospel indicates that the term is given various nuances of meaning within this basic concept – e.g. ἀλήθεια is linked with χάρις (1:14, 17), with πνεῦμα (4:23f.; 14:17; 15:26; 16:13), with ὁ λόγος of God (17:17), with living in a particular way (3:21; 8:32, 44; 18:37), and with Jesus himself (1:17; 14:6). Michael Roberts says that in these occurrences it has various meanings but is still used to show veracity, though it takes on a much fuller and unique meaning which, as a starting point, indicates that "truth is the divine revelation of the incarnation, life, death, resurrection, and return to the Father of Jesus – testified to by various witnesses".[415] Dan Lioy is much broader in his conclusion of the usage of ἀλήθεια in John's Gospel when he says that it can refer to both objective and subjective entities.[416] As objective truth, he says that it refers to: (1) what is in accord with reality or fact (with no regard to the specific nature of the situation in view); (2) anything related to God or the ethical responsibilities of people; and (3) the revelation given by God in whatever form that occurs (e.g. general revelation in creation; revelation in and through the incarnation of divinity, i.e. through Jesus; revelation through the doctrines of the Bible). He also says that it can refer to subjective truth, which denotes the quality of a person's character as sincere, trustworthy, candid, and reliable. Mburu concludes her extensive analysis of each occurrence by suggesting that the Johannine author never intended to force one meaning of ἀλήθεια on all contexts and that "[r]ather than propose that truth for John means one thing and one thing alone, it is perhaps better to allow the various contexts to speak for themselves rather than have one passage (generally 1:14-18) determine what truth means throughout the Gospel."[417] Her final summary of the various uses and meanings of 'truth' in the Gospel of John is worth citing in full:

> In conclusion, this survey of the different contexts within which ἀλήθεια in its various combinations and relationships appears, has shown that John's use was varied. John uses ἀλήθεια in a number of ways: to signify the full and final/ultimate revelation of the redemptive purpose of God; to refer to God's faithfulness and reliability; to

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[415] Roberts, "The Idea of Truth", 3f. Roberts' argument is that revelation/witness is a key concept in the Gospel of John, and one cannot understand the concept of truth without understanding this connection (see pages ii, 1f., 28, 140, 251). His main chapter headings reveal the direction and thrust of his thesis: 1: The Significance of Truth in the Fourth Gospel; 2: Jesus Christ as the Revelation of Truth; 3: Jesus Christ as the Revealer of Truth; 4: Practicing the Truth.

[416] Lioy, "Truth": 69f.

[417] Mburu, "Truth Terminology", 137.

> indicate that which is both tangible and personal, embodied in Christ himself; to refer to the redemptive content of that which has been revealed in and through Jesus; propositionally, to reflect that which is conformed to fact, and hence opposed to falsehood; to specify the sphere of operation in which believers are to function for worship and sanctification, a sphere that is opposed to the world; to refer to a sphere of belonging that is also opposed to the world; and lastly, to refer to qualities inherent in the Holy Spirit. ἀλήθεια is also linked metaphorically with light and that which is opposed to it with darkness. There may occasionally be an overlap of these categories.[418]

Ewa Osek similarly finds that in the Johannine Gospel the truth vocabulary, and in particular ἀλήθεια, is used in a variety of different ways. As noted in section 2.3.3 (*Truth (ἀλήθεια) and Frank Speaking (παρρησία)*). Osek groups the meanings into: (1) pragmatic 'truth' ('verity' = that which corresponds to the facts of the matter); (2) legal or formal 'truth' ('veracity' or 'veritability' = an objective truth that is reconstructed and verified through prosecution and witness testimonies); (3) 'truth' as expressing the character or essential nature of its object = that which is real, genuine, authentic, proper, essential, pure, unadulterated, unmixed; (4) metaphysical 'truth' ('spirituality', 'eternity', 'divinity' = the equating of 'truth' with the divine being as in the classical Platonic view of truth in which 'truth' becomes connected also with concepts of justice, wisdom, and piety such that truth, divinity, and spirituality are united); (5) moral 'truth' ('righteousness' = truth is synonymous with δίκαιος meaning 'just', 'righteous' or 'honest'); and (6) mystical 'truth' ('doctrine', 'wisdom' = truth is a body of facts and concepts that can be sought, verified, found, gained, or known).[419] However, Osek thinks the primary meaning in John's Gospel is the

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[418] Mburu, "Truth Terminology", 142f.

[419] Osek, "ΑΛΗΘΕΙΑ": 55-66. While not explicitly saying that the author of the Fourth Gospel is suggesting an affinity between Socrates and Jesus, Osek points to the analogous contexts in which the ἀλήθεια terminology occurs and highlights a number of parallels between Socrates and Jesus. See Osek, "ΑΛΗΘΕΙΑ": 54-68.

- Socrates presents himself as a well-informed person from whom nothing can be concealed (*Apol.* 17a3; 19a5); in Jesus' conversation with the woman at the well who tries to hide personal facts from him, he shows that nothing is hidden from him about her true status (Jn. 4:1-26).
- Socrates' speech delivered before the jury parallels Jesus being interrogated by the Pharisees (Jn. 8) and just as Socrates fails to provide witnesses for his defence except that of his own poverty (*Apol.* 31.c2-3), and the God at Delphi (*Apol.* 20.e7), so also Jesus argues that he is his own witness and so is the Father (Jn. 8:13-17; see also Jn. 5:31-32).
- Socrates saw himself as a gadfly sent by the god at Delphi to keep awake a noble horse (the Athenians) (*Apol.* 21b-22a; 23b; 28b-d; 30a; 30e2-31a1; 33c; 37e); Jesus believed that he is the Father's own Son come down from heaven to save the whole world (Jn. 1:18; 3:17; 4:22, 25-26, 42; 6:38, 47-57; 11:27; 12:47; 13:3; 16:28; 17:4, 6, 9, 18).

metaphysical meaning – citing John 1:4 she says that "[t]his divine or absolute TRUTH is the most important theme".[420]

The scholars cited above are not alone in identifying a multi-faceted meaning of truth in John's Gospel, though other scholars do not necessarily see as many facets. Geerhardus Vos, for example, argues that "one linguistic term serves to describe two different qualities, each carrying within itself two differently meant opposites."[421] He goes on to suggest that the two ideas can be expressed by the adjectives 'veracious' and 'veritable' – 'veracious', which is interchangeable with the term 'true', "denotes the agreement of a concept or its expressions with the reality reflected in it", and this can be extended to the character of a person whose spoken word concords with their belief; 'veritable' is "that which answers to the highest conception or ideal of something". This duality is reflected in the substantive *alētheia* which Vos says had to render service for both concepts as there were not two substantives to express the difference between 'veraciousness' and 'veritableness'.[422] Köstenberger narrows the focus even more; he argues that "truth, for John, while also being propositional, is at the heart *a personal, relational* concept that has its roots and origin in none other than God himself… so John's Gospel proclaims that God is truth, and that therefore his Word is truth. Jesus, then, is the truth, because he is sent from God and has come to reveal the Father and to carry out his salvation-historical purposes."[423] A number of scholars have thus

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- Both prophets have a message from the God of Truth to all mankind which is to be proclaimed and witnessed to (*Apol.* 18b-19d; 21e-22a; 23a; 23c; 24b; 31b; Jn. 1:35-50; 6:66, 70; 8:37-40; 11:45-47; 12:10-11; 18:1-11).
- Both are heralded (either before or after) – Socrates by Chaerephon (*Apol.* 20e-21a); Jesus by John the Baptist (Jn. 1:15, 19-43; 3:28).
- Both try to advocate and defend the truth against most of the people who don't understand and hate the truth (*Apol.* 22e-23a; 28a4; 31e1; Jn. 3:11-12; 5:40; 8:45-47, 55).
- Both are misunderstood and must lose, and both are aware that they will be condemned to death not for their own alleged crimes but for the 'Truth' (*Apol.* 31a-38e; Jn. 8:45-46; 18:28-19:18); however, both also believe that their death is not the end of the proclamation of truth and that in fact their death is a return to the realm to which they belong – the realm of truth (*Apol.* 39b-42a; Jn. 12:25). Thus, for both, 'death' is in fact 'life' and a victory over the world (*Apol.* 30c9-d1; Jn. 16:33).

George Parsenios also draws parallels between Socrates and Jesus as portrayed in John's Gospel and argues that in both cases, truth is on trial. See Parsenios, "Confounding Foes and Counselling Friends," 261-269.

[420] Osek, "ΑΛΗΘΕΙΑ": 67. See also B. H. Jackayya, "Ἀλήθεια in the Johannine Corpus," *CTM* 41 (1970): 173f. Jackayya says: "Ἀλήθεια, according to John, specially denotes 'divine reality,' 'divine revelation,' 'divine truth' as coming down to us."

[421] G. Vos, "'True' and 'Truth' in the Johannine Writings," *Biblical Review* 12 (1927).

[422] Vos suggests that in general, *alethinos* means 'veritable', while *alethes* means 'veracious', but also acknowledges that there is doubling up of meaning, particularly for the adjective *alethes*.

[423] A. J. Köstenberger, "'What is Truth?' Pilate's Question in its Johannine and Larger Biblical Context," *JETS* 48, no. 1 (2005): 35. However, in his commentary on the Gospel of John, Köstenberger says that "The concept of truth

described Jesus as "the epitome and emissary of truth."[424]

From this brief survey of the usage of the 'truth' vocabulary in the Gospel of John and the analysis of various commentators, it can be seen that the Johannine author extends the concept of 'truth' beyond the ideas of conformity to reality or fact and the characteristics of sincerity and honesty, and more finely focuses 'truth' not on the 'gospel message', as other NT writers (especially Paul) do, but on the person of Jesus as the embodiment of truth.

Much less work has been done on the use of παρρησία in the Johannine literature. William Klassen claims that until 1996 no one had analysed the usage of the word in the Johannine corpus and that no special study of the use of παρρησία in the Johannine literature exists,[425] but this is overstating the case since Schlier gave such a treatment in 1954 in his article in *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament* as did Stanley Marrow in his *Speaking the Word Fearlessly* in 1982. Nevertheless, Klassen's own treatment is a worthwhile contribution to understanding how παρρησία functions and its relation to the Johannine concept of 'truth'. In the Gospel of John παρρησία occurs nine times with three distinct meanings which Klassen summarises as:[426]

1. Public versus private (Jn. 7:4, 13, 26; 11:54).
2. Plain against obscure (10:24; 11:14; 16:25, 29).[427]
3. Bold or courageous against timid (7:26; 18:20, related to meaning #1 as well).

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in John's Gospel encompasses several aspects: (1) truthfulness as opposed to falsehood: 'to speak the truth' means to make a true rather than false statement, that is, to represent the facts as they actually are (cf. 8:40, 45, 46; 16:7; 'to witness to the truth' [5:33; 18:37]); (2) truth in its finality as compared to previous, preliminary expressions: this is its eschatological dimension (esp. 1:17: 'the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ'); (3) truth as an identifiable body of knowledge with actual propositional content (e.g., 8:32: 'you will know the truth'; 16:13: 'he will guide you into all truth'); (4) truth as a sphere of operation, be it for worship (4:23–24) or sanctification (17:17, 19 [Swain 1998]); and (5) truth as relational fidelity (1:17; 14:6). The Spirit is involved in all five aspects: he accurately represents the truth regarding Jesus; he is the eschatological gift of God; he imparts true knowledge of God; he is operative in both worship and sanctification; and he points people to the person of Jesus." See A. J. Köstenberger, *John* (BECNT; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004), 438.

[424] See for example: Lioy, "Truth": 69, 73, 75, 80, 84, 90; Roberts, "The Idea of Truth", 140. Roberts uses the terms 'revelation' and 'revealer' but the idea is the same.

[425] Klassen, "ΠΑΡΡΗΣΙΑ," 227. For a recent treatment of *parrēsia* in John's Gospel see Parsenios, "Confounding Foes and Counselling Friends."

[426] Klassen, "ΠΑΡΡΗΣΙΑ," 243. See also Papademetriou, "Performative Meaning of παρρησία," 31-32.

[427] Lietaert Peerbolte argues that speaking μετὰ παρρησίας can sometimes be a dangerous thing to do. He says that 16:25 implies "that speaking plainly does also entail a certain danger, and this tension in the concept of παρρησία has always been present." See Lietaert Peerbolte, "Introduction," 8.

Of these, two (Jn. 7:4; 11:54) are connected to acting or doing things openly and in public, with the rest connected to speaking.[428] Klassen argues that the first of these meanings of παρρησία was practically unknown in Hellenistic Greek and supports Bultmann's contention that this differs from the original Greek meaning of "the right or the courage to appear in public, freedom of speech, or openness"; rather "it refers to actions performed in public".[429] With these meanings παρρησία mirrors the usage in the Synoptics and other NT literature (i.e. the boldness required to perform actions in public), rather than the original Greek understanding of freedom to speak frankly or truthfully.

5.1.1.2. The Johannine Epistles

With respect to the Johannine Epistles, the 'truth' terminology has not received such extensive treatment, and discussions have largely been confined to small sections in exegetical commentaries and theological dictionaries. However, what we find in the Johannine Epistles is consistent with what we have seen in the Gospel of John, as one might expect if the same author is responsible for both. Firstly, on the non-substantive forms of the ἀληθ- word group:

- ἀληθής occurs three times and as in the Gospel of John refers to 'that which is in accordance with fact' (1 Jn. 2:27; 3 Jn. 12) or is 'real' or 'genuine' (1 Jn. 2:8).
- ἀληθινός occurs four times and again parallels one of the meanings in the Gospel, referring to 'that which is real or genuine' (1 Jn. 2:8; 5:20[3x]).
- ἀληθῶς occurs only once and has the same meaning as in the Gospel which is to refer to 'that which corresponds to reality' (1 Jn. 2:5).

The adjectives, ἀληθής and ἀληθινός, which are often both translated as 'true', are of particular interest in the Johannine usage; they almost seem to be used interchangeably, though Robert Yarbrough has noted that "when John wants to use 'true' as a predicate adjective, his predilection is to use ἀληθής",[430] with its use as an attributive adjective occurring only in John 6:55 and as a substantive only in John 19:35.[431] Yarbrough continues, "On the other hand, while John can use ἀληθινός as a predicate adjective

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[428] Of course, the things done in public may well have involved speaking as well.

[429] Klassen, "ΠΑΡΡΗΣΙΑ," 243. See also R. K. Bultmann, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary* (eds. R. W. N. Hoare, et al.; trans. G. R. Beasley-Murray; Oxford: Blackwell, 1971), 291.

[430] Yarbrough, *1–3 John*, 110.

[431] Contra Brown who thinks there is a difference between the two terms; he says ἀληθινός conveys exclusivity ('the only real' as 'compared with the putative or would-be', and "ἀληθής means 'true, despite appearances' and does

(e.g., 4:37; 7:28; 8:16; 19:35) or a substantive (e.g., 1 John 5:20 [3×]), he prefers to use it when he wishes to attribute the quality of 'true' to a person or thing (as in 2:8: 'the true light')."[432] The suffix -ινος tends to convey the sense of being made of a particular type of 'material',[433] and in the Johannine author's writings the adjective ἀληθινός seems to be used to describe anything that is made of or possesses something of the divine nature; cf. 'the true light' coming into the world (Jn. 1:9; 1 Jn. 2:8), 'the true bread from heaven' (Jn. 6:32), the 'true God' (Jn. 7:28; 17:3), the 'true judgement' of Jesus (Jn. 8:16), 'the true vine' (Jn. 15:1), and three times in 1 John 5:20, Jesus is described as the one who is 'true' [2x] and 'the true God'.[434] However, there is probably little difference in the meaning of the two adjectives and both can be translated as 'true'.[435]

The substantive ἀλήθεια occurs twenty times in 17 verses (1 Jn. 1:6, 8; 2:4, 21(2x); 3:18, 19; 4:6; 5:6; 2 Jn. 1(2x), 2, 3, 4; 3 Jn. 1, 3(2x), 4, 8, 12) and as in the Gospel of John there is not one single meaning. There is, in fact, no common agreement on the various nuances of meaning, and even where there is overlap between commentators any one instance may be allocated by different authors to different meanings. The first reference to ἀλήθεια ('truth') in the first Johannine Epistle is in 1:6 where the author speaks of 'not doing the truth' (οὐ ποιοῦμεν τὴν ἀλήθειαν). While the author never spells out the particular content of the truth that is not being done, we can infer something of how he understands this concept from the vocabulary that he uses and how he uses it. In the Johannine Epistles, ἀλήθεια is generally found with the article except when it is being used adverbially with the preposition ἐν (cf. 1 Jn. 3:18; 2 Jn. 3, 4; 3 Jn. 1, 3, 4), where it could simply be an adverbial idea meaning 'truly' or 'really' or 'according to the demands of revealed truth', as Max Zerwick and Mary Grosvenor suggest,[436] or it could mean 'in the truth', where 'the truth' is a body of knowledge concerning Jesus Christ that was heard from the beginning and thus the

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not necessarily imply a contrast with something putative". See R. E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John (I–XII): Introduction, Translation, and Notes* (AB 29; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 500-501.

[432] Yarbrough, *1–3 John*, 110. Bultmann also acknowledges that the Johannine usage of these adjectives is a distinctive modification of Hellenistic usage, and that as an attribute of God, the preferred term is ἀληθινός. See *TDNT* 1:247-250.

[433] B. M. Metzger, *Lexical Aids for Students of New Testament Greek* (Third ed.; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1998), 44.

[434] If the 10 uses in Revelation are considered, we find also references to: 'the true heavenly Father' (Rev. 6:10), his 'true ways' (Rev. 15:3), 'true judgements' (Rev. 16:7; 19:2), and 'true words' (Rev. 19:9; 21:5; 22:6), and also Jesus himself described as 'true' (Rev. 3:7, 14; 19:11).

[435] See for example, Yarbrough, *1–3 John*, 110.

[436] M. Zerwick and M. Grosvenor, *A Grammatical Analysis of the Greek New Testament* (Rome: Biblical Institute, 1974).

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Johannine author loves the readers who share this body of knowledge with him.[437] Complicating the matter is whether the meaning is different if the term is arthrous or anarthrous.[438] Zerwick argues that the inclusion of the article with ἀλήθεια (as in Jn. 14:6 and the second and third references in 2 Jn. 1-3) point to Christ as the 'real truth', such that 'know the truth' = 'know Christ' (2 Jn. 1) and 'the truth which lives in us' = 'Christ who lives in us' (2 Jn. 2).[439] Such an understanding could also apply to other Johannine passages like 1 John 1:6, 8; 2:4 ('living out the truth' and the 'truth not being in us' could equally refer to 'living out Christ' and 'Christ not being in us'), 1 John 2:21 ('knowing the truth' *or* 'knowing Christ'; 'no lie comes from the truth' *or* 'no lie comes from Christ'), 1 John 3:19 ('we belong to the truth' *or* 'we belong to Christ and set our hearts at rest in his presence'), 3 John 3 ('faithfulness to the truth' = 'faithfulness to Christ'), 3 John 8 ('work together for the truth' = 'work together for Christ'). However, Christ cannot be equated with 'the truth' in other articular forms of ἀλήθεια: cf. 1 Jn. 5:6 ('the Spirit is truth' ≠ 'the Spirit is Christ'); 3 Jn. 12 (it would seem odd to describe Demetrius as one who 'is well spoken of… by Christ himself').

Broadly speaking, the possible meanings fall into two main groups: (1) truth as a body of knowledge known to the readers (1 Jn. 1:8; 2:21a, 21b; 3:19; 4:6; 5:6; 2 Jn. 1b, 2, 3; 3 Jn. 3a, 8, 12); and (2) truth as the ethical standards that God has established for his people as expressed in his commandments and which he expects to be carried out (1 Jn. 1:6; 2:4; 3:18; 2 Jn. 1a, 4; 3 Jn. 1, 3b, 4). The first group includes those uses of ἀλήθεια where 'the body of knowledge' refers to a set of core doctrinal beliefs, or some knowledge of the life and ministry of Jesus, or some understanding of the gospel. This group also includes the references to τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς ἀληθείας (1 Jn. 4:6) where πνεῦμα most likely refers to the Holy Spirit as it does in John 14:17, with the genitive τῆς ἀληθείας having a subjective meaning, i.e. that the Holy Spirit is the one who speaks 'a body of knowledge' (i.e. the truth) about God, Jesus, and the gospel; this group also includes τὸ

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[437] Cf. C. G. Kruse, *The Letters of John* (PNTC; ed. D. A. Carson: Grand Rapids: Eerdmans; Leicester: Apollos, 2000), 205. See also, G. W. Derickson, *First, Second, and Third John* (Evangelical Exegetical Commentary; eds. H. W. House, et al.; Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2012), 238; G. M. Burge, *Letters of John* (NIVAC; ed. T. C. Muck; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 129; Haas, Jonge and Swellengrebel, *A Handbook on the Letters of John*, 68; Strecker, *Johannine Letters*, 67; Dodd, *The Johannine Epistles*, 54; D. L. Akin, *1, 2, 3 John* (NAC 38; ed. E. R. Clendenen; Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 2001), 120; J. M. Lieu, *I, II & III John: A Commentary* (NTL; eds. C. C. Black, et al.; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2012), 104; S. S. Smalley, *1, 2, 3 John* (WBC 51; ed. R. P. Martin; Waco, TX; Dallas; Nashville: Word, 1984), 109.

[438] The distinction is not as clear in the Gospel of John where the anarthrous uses of ἀλήθεια are both adverbial (e.g. Jn. 8:46; 17:19) or represent the concept of 'truth' (e.g. Jn. 8:44; 17:17; 18:38), and the arthrous occurrences are not always obviously pointing to a body of doctrine (e.g. Jn. 14:6, 17; 15:26; 16:13; 18:37, which point more to the concept of 'truth', and 16:7, which is likely adverbial).

[439] M. Zerwick, *Biblical Greek Illustrated by Examples* (English ed.; Scripta Pontificii Instituti Biblici 114; Rome: Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 1963), 57 §178.

πνεῦμά ἐστιν ἡ ἀλήθεια (1 Jn. 5:6) which means that the Holy Spirit embodies the truth of God and testifies to it. The second group includes the use of the noun ἀλήθεια in prepositional phrases where it may be used adverbially to indicate how the action is carried out (i.e. 'in truth', 'sincerely', 'genuinely'; see for example 1 Jn. 2:21; 3:18f.; 2 Jn. 1, 3, 4; 3 Jn. 1, 3, 4), though Ernst Wendland argues that the phrase 'in truth' in 2 John should be understood in the light of prior knowledge of the author's use of the term ἀλήθεια elsewhere and should in fact be seen as a definite concept rather than some abstract notion (e.g. 'reality') or adverbial idea (e.g. 'truly' or 'genuinely').[440] Wendland's analysis of the conceptual range of ἀλήθεια is perhaps the most comprehensive of any. He argues that the principal sense of ἀλήθεια, meaning that which is in accordance with what actually happened, is nuanced by the context in which the term is used. He gives six categories of definition based on its usage in the Johannine literature:

(a) *factuality*, corresponding with the facts of the matter (Jn. 4:18; 10:24);

(b) *reliability*, trustworthiness, or faithfulness, in keeping with OT usage (2 Jn. 3:1; 3 Jn. 1);

(c) reality or *genuineness*, as opposed to what is false or counterfeit (Jn. 4:23-24; 6:55; 15:1);

(d) *revelation*, in contrast to what is hidden (Jn. 8:32; 14:17; 1 Jn. 4:6);

(e) *validity*, what has been attested or testified to (Jn. 5:31-32; 14:6);

(f) body of *genuine*/valid/revealed/etcetera *doctrine*, that is the 'faith' (2 Jn. 4; 3 Jn. 3).[441]

Of course, the various meanings of 'truth' can be categorised differently, even in the three short Johannine Epistles. Robert Yarbrough, for example, summarises the meanings of ἀλήθεια in the Johannine Epistles

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[440] E. R. Wendland, "What is Truth? Semantic Density and the Language of the Johannine Epistles (with Special Reference to 2 John)," *Neot* 24, no. 2 (1990): 309. See also Hans Hübner's discussion of the Johannine usage of the ἀληθ- words where he notes the shift in meaning between the Johannine Gospel to the Letters from the 'reality of God' to 'behavior of the believer'; H. Hübner, "ἀλήθεια, ας, ἡ *alētheia* truth," *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament* 1.60.

[441] Wendland, "What is Truth?": 312 [italics original]. However, Wendland notes that the different nuances are not so neatly distinguished in these Johannine passages, for on the principle of semantic density – Wendland's term for deliberate ambiguity in which a term which has several probable senses is used with the intention of more than one being in focus – the usage of ἀλήθεια in 2 Jn. 4 may well be appropriately categorised under sub-senses (b) and/or (c), in addition to (f).

Andreas Köstenberger also provides a list compiled from the Gospel of John on how the Johannine author understands 'truth'. It has some overlaps with Wendland's categories. See footnote 423.

in five categories, also giving examples of the correlative ideas in the Gospel of John to show that the usages in the Johannine Epistles are consistent with the Johannine Gospel:[442]

1. Truth is possessed and imparted by the Holy Spirit (1 John 2:20), who is truth (4:6; 5:6; 3 John 12; cf. John 14:17; 15:26; 16:13a).

2. Truth refers to the ethical standards that God has established for his people as expressed in his commandments (1 John 1:6; 2:21a; 3:18; 2 John 4; 3 John 3b, 4; cf. "doing the truth" in John 3:21; also 8:32; 14:15, 23; 15:10, 14).

3. Truth is God's revealed and personal sanctifying presence that gives the believer the capacity to reflect God's character traits, like love and aversion to sin (1 John 1:8; 2:4, 21b; cf. John 1:14, 17; 4:23–24; 8:32; 16:7; 17:17a, 19).

4. Truth refers to the quality of conformity to the way things are in God's omniscient wisdom (1 John 2:8; cf. John 5:33; 8:40, 44a, 45, 46).

5. Truth refers to the gospel of Jesus Christ, its implications, and the sphere of eternal life into which the gospel ushers those who embrace it (1 John 3:19; 2 John 1b, 2, 3; 3 John 1, 8; cf. John 14:6; 16:13b; 17:17b; 18:37a).

Unfortunately, what detracts from Yarbrough's analysis is that he omits reference to ἀλήθεια in 2 John 1a and 3 John 3a but includes reference to 1 John 2:8, which is in fact not a usage of ἀλήθεια but ἀληθής. Furthermore, Yarbrough's first, third, and fifth groups are all largely nuanced references to 'truth' as 'a body of knowledge'.

In a much more recent work, Gary Derickson notes that the Johannine author's understanding of truth is understood in three different ways amongst Johannine scholars: (1) as something one believes or seeks (cf. people's responses to Jesus in the Gospel; this is how Derickson says we should understand 'doing the truth' [ποιοῦμεν τὴν ἀλήθειαν] in 1 John 1:6; it is "the body of orthodox teachings that impact one's lifestyle"[443]); (2) as something known and acted upon, in particular conforming to the standard of God's will; and (3) as loving other Christians, which is in fact a special manifestation of 'doing the truth'. [444]

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[442] Yarbrough, *1–3 John*, 335f.

[443] Derickson, *First, Second, and Third John*, 140.

[444] Derickson, *First, Second, and Third John*, 98.

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The term παρρησία in the Johannine Epistles occurs only in 1 John, where it appears four times, all translated in English versions with the meaning of 'confidence' or 'boldness'. However, two of these are the confidence to ask (1 Jn. 3:21; 5:14), and two relate to confidence before God (1 Jn. 2:28 – at the coming of Jesus; 1 Jn. 4:17 – on the day of judgement); such παρρησία is based on love, which when brought to completion (cf. 1 Jn. 2:5; 4:12, 17), results in an openness before God on the final day.[445] Thus, all of these reflect the Graeco-Roman idea of 'frank speaking', since they implicitly contain the idea of confidence to speak, perhaps in defence of oneself, were that necessary. There is a παρρησία (where frankness = confidence) about the way the Johannine author speaks and acts in his task of revealing the Father to the world, and there is a παρρησία (where frankness = openness) that believers have before God as a result of having faith in Jesus Christ, loving their fellow human beings, and being indwelt by the Holy Spirit.

5.1.2. The Johannine Concept of Truth

Following an examination of the 'truth' vocabulary in the Johannine writings, we now consider what sources (if any) might have shaped the Johannine author's meaning and theological understanding of 'truth'. There have, in fact, been numerous suggestions regarding the likely background of the Johannine concept of 'truth' and a survey of the writings on this topic shows some major shifts in thinking. Up until the end of the nineteenth century scholars largely left the issue of influence untouched and focused on just the references to 'truth' and the ordinary meanings of the words. From the end of the nineteenth century scholars began to realise the need to consider the background behind an author's thinking.

Up to the 1960s most scholars argued that the Johannine author was deeply influenced by Hellenistic dualism based on Greek philosophy, particularly Platonism and Stoicism and the Greek idea of reality, though there were variations within this group. Robert H. Strachan (1941), for example, argued for Stoicism as the background of the Johannine λόγος concept.[446] Raymond Brown in his 1966 commentary on the Gospel of John and again in his later (1982) commentary on the Epistles of John, discusses at length the concept of truth in Johannine thought.[447] Drawing on the work of Rudolf Bultmann (1933), Charles Dodd (1953), and Ignace de la Potterie (1957)[448] he outlines the two main schools of thought – the Dodd-

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[445] See Klassen, "ΠΑΡΡΗΣΙΑ," 245-253; Schlier, *TDNT* 5:881f.

[446] R. H. Strachan, *The Fourth Gospel: Its Significance and Environment* (3rd ed.; London: SCM, 1941), 53.

[447] See Brown, *John (I–XII)*, 497-501; Brown, *Epistles of John*, 199-200.

[448] See C. H. Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel* (Cambridge: University Press, 1968 (1953)), 170-178; Quell, Kittel and Bultmann, *TDNT* 1:238-251; I. de La Potterie, "L'arrière-fond du thème johannique de vérité," in *SE: Papers Presented to the International Congress on 'The Four Gospels in 1957' held at Christ Church, Oxford,*

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Bultmann thesis of a Greek background in which truth is a quasi-Platonic heavenly reality, and the de la Potterie thesis of an OT and intertestamental background in which truth is predicated on God's mysterious plan of salvation now revealed to humanity. Both Dodd and Bultmann argued that the Johannine usage of 'truth' was closer to the Greek idea – Bultmann argued for a Gnostic myth or Mandaean background and that the Johannine usage of 'truth' reflected the 'divine reality' of Greek dualism,[449] which Brown says ends up being closest to the Gnostic Redeemer myth because this divine reality was revealed to humanity and offered the possibility of divine life.[450] Dodd agreed that the background was Greek, but saw the background in the Hermetic literature (though he also accepted possible influences from Philo and Rabbinic Judaism), and argued that it rested "upon common Hellenistic usage in which it hovers between the meanings of 'reality' or the 'the ultimate real', and 'knowledge of the real'."[451] By contrast, de la Potterie argues that the Johannine author's background is better found in Hebraic thought and particularly in the apocalyptic and sapiential literature of the OT, in which truth is associated with wisdom.[452] Brown finds the argument of de la Potterie most convincing and agrees that the primary influence on the Johannine author was Judaism and not Gnosticism or Hellenistic thought.[453] Furthermore, when discussing the phrase 'in truth' in the Johannine Epistles, Brown says that the idea of 'walking in truth' is a Semitic idea appearing frequently in the OT and other literature of Judaism.[454] He

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1957 (eds. K. Aland, et al.; Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1959), 277-294. See also I. de La Potterie, *La vérité dans Saint Jean* (AnBib; 2 vols.; vol. 73–74; Rome: Biblical Institute, 1977).

449 Quell, Kittel and Bultmann, *TDNT* 1:245.

450 Brown, *John (I–XII)*, 499.

451 Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, 173, 177f. While Dodd recognises an overlap between ἀλήθεια and אֱמֶת he believes that the Hebrew term is more of a moral term while the Greek term is intellectual, and this is what the *Gospel of John* reflects. It should be noted however, that Dodd does consider a Semitic element to the term ἀλήθεια suggesting that there are some OT echoes in certain Johannine phrases with the strongest contender being Jn. 3:21 (ὁ δὲ ποιῶν τὴν ἀλήθειαν ἔρχεται πρὸς τὸ φῶς) which he suggests might sound strange to a Greek reader. In the end, he thinks that for all possible contenders, "while the mould of the expression is determined by Hebrew usage, the actual sense of the words must be determined by Greek usage". Dodd, *The Johannine Epistles*, 176. For a good summary of Dodd's arguments from the Hermetic literature, in particular *Poimandres* and *De Regeneratione*, see Roberts, "The Idea of Truth", 12-14.

452 See La Potterie, *La vérité dans Saint Jean*; I. de La Potterie, "The Truth in Saint John," in *The Interpretation of John* (ed. J. Ashton; vol. 9 of *Issues in Religion and Theology,* eds. D. Knight, et al.; Philadelphia, PA/London: Fortress/SPCK, 1986). For a similar view that the background is Jewish apocalyptic, see Aalen, "Truth." Another commentator arguing for a greater affinity of the concept of 'truth' with the OT and Jewish thought is Rudolf Schnackenburg. See R. Schnackenburg, *The Johannine Epistles: Introduction and Commentary* (trans. Reginald and Ilse Fuller; Tunbridge Wells: Burns & Oates, 1992), 80-81.

453 Brown, *John (I–XII)*, 500.

454 See Brown, *Epistles of John*, 662. Brown cites verses from the OT (2 Kgs. 20:3; 1 Kgs. 2:4; Isa. 38:3; Ps. 86:11), the DSS (1QS 8:4; 4:17; 7:18), and other Jewish literature (e.g. *Aristeas* 260f.; *T. Judah* 24:3). See also, Marshall, *The Epistles of John*, 66; Painter, *1, 2, and 3 John*, 346; Yarbrough, *1–3 John*, 340.

concurs with other scholars in saying that loving in truth "would involve a love based on a revelation of God in Jesus Christ who is the truth",[455] and thus it refers to their conduct being in alignment with their knowledge of the truth. Dodd similarly thinks a theological meaning is intended but relates 'the truth' rather to "the Word of God in Christ to which they are all committed".[456]

Not all scholars before 1960 argued for a Hellenistic background; for example, Thomas F. Torrance in 1956/7 argued that because the Hebrew אֱמֶת is translated by ἀλήθεια, πίστις and δικαιοσύνη in the Septuagint, "[t]here is no doubt that again and again where we have the words *pistis* and *dikaiosune* in the New Testament we must see behind them the Hebrew words, *emeth* and *'emunah*', and where in the New Testament we have *aletheia* we must understand that not simply as a Greek word, but in the light of the Biblical inclusion of *pistis* and *dikaiosune* in the concept of truth."[457] Despite such views, most pre-1960 scholars did argue for a Hellenistic background. Since the 1960s, several scholars have followed Bultmann's idea of a Gnostic background (e.g. Hans Conzelmann [1969], Werner Kümmel [1975]), while others have followed Dodd in seeing the influence of the Hermetic literature on Johannine thinking (e.g. Rudolf Schnackenberg [1980]).[458] Taking a slightly different tack but still sitting in the Hellenistic-influence camp, Dwight Moody Smith (1995) thinks the Johannine Gospel reflects Greek philosophy and metaphysics.[459]

Despite these examples of scholars who have continued with a Hellenistic background of some kind, the post-1960s saw a significant shift with more scholars arguing for a Hebrew/Jewish background, and this has become the dominant thinking in the last half a century. The fact that the Johannine author presents Jesus as the fulfilment of OT prophecy and the Jewish cultus, has led many scholars to conclude that the Johannine literature is more likely influenced by the OT and Judaism. Again there are various streams within the field of Hebrew backgrounds – Ignace de la Potterie (1963) sees apocalyptic and wisdom literature as the background,[460] Raymond Brown (1966) argues for parallels with the Jewish wisdom tradition,[461] and Cornelis van der Waal (1972) argues that the Gospel of John is of a fully Jewish character

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455 Brown, *Epistles of John*, 655f.

456 Dodd, *The Johannine Epistles*, 146.

457 T. F. Torrance, "One Aspect of the Biblical Conception of Faith," *ExpTim* 68, no. 1 (1957): 112.

458 For a good summary of key scholars holding to the different Hellenistic views see Mburu, "Truth Terminology", 215-226.

459 D. M. Smith, *The Theology of the Gospel of John* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 11.

460 La Potterie, "The Truth in Saint John," 63.

461 See his latest thinking in R. E. Brown, *An Introduction to the Gospel of John* (ABRL; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 115-144. Brown (129) argues that "there is no real reason to suppose that the Gospel was

with its starting point being the covenant, though it is at the same time anti-Judaistic – the antithesis between Christianity and Judaism comes to the fore in the Gospel according to John.[462] Charles. K. Barrett (1978) thinks there are some instances where ἀλήθεια has a Greek meaning but overall it retains more of the meaning of the OT אֱמֶת,[463] and Anthony Thiselton (1986) concludes that "John uses *alētheia* regularly in the sense of reality in contrast to falsehood or mere appearance, but that this in no way provides evidence of Gk. affinities of ideas, or of disregard for the OT tradition."[464] Dan Lioy (2008) argues that the author of the Fourth Gospel affirms the established notion of truth found in the Old Testament, post-canonical Jewish writings, and Synoptic Gospels which is the view that the prevailing concept of ἀλήθεια is one of veracity and genuineness in stark contrast to all forms of falsehood.[465] Craig Keener (2012) summarises the issue well:

> The trend of recent scholarship has been away from a non-Jewish Hellenistic milieu and toward a Jewish matrix for early Christianity… Many scholars now acknowledge that the thought-world of John is thoroughly Jewish.[466]

It also possible that the early Christian writers invested the term with new meaning. B. H. Jackayya noted in 1970 that it is in the Johannine literature that we find the most distinctively Christian usage of the term ἀλήθεια.[467] Jackayya notes the following distinctive characteristics of ἀλήθεια: (1) in contrast to other religions this revelation of truth is not something that we seek after and find for ourselves; rather it is revealed to us; (2) this divine reality is revealed in Christ Jesus (Jn. 1:14, 17; 1 Jn. 2:21-22; 5:6-7); (3) in fact Jesus Christ is himself the Truth (Jn. 14:6; 1 Jn. 1:1-3); (4) Jesus communicates himself as the Truth through the working of the Holy Spirit (1 Jn. 5:7-8; 2:20, 27; Jn. 14:16; 15:26; 16:13; 1 Jn. 4:6; 5:7); and (5) most characteristic of John's view of ἀλήθεια is the phrase 'to do the truth' (1 Jn. 1:6; 3:21) which means that truth is something to be received and obeyed and not a matter of contemplation or speculation or something attained by mental or bodily exercises.[468] These points reinforce the view that 'truth' in the

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influenced by more Greek philosophy than what was already present in the general thought and speech of Palestine."

[462] C. van der Waal, "The Gospel According to John and the Old Testament," *Neot* 6 (1972): 43.

[463] C. K. Barrett, *The Gospel According to St. John: An Introduction with Commentary and Notes on the Greek Text* (Second ed.; London: SPCK, 1978), 167.

[464] Thiselton, *NIDNTT* 3:889.

[465] Lioy, "Truth": 90. For a good summary of the various possible Jewish backgrounds including wisdom literature, Rabbinic Judaism, the Qumran writings, and Samaritan religion, see Mburu, "Truth Terminology", 237-242.

[466] Keener, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary*, 171.

[467] See the earlier reference in footnote 420.

[468] Jackayya, "Ἀλήθεια": 173f.

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Johannine literature is christologically focused – Jesus Christ is the 'truth', he 'reveals the truth', and he exhorts his followers to 'do the truth'.[469]

The background and meaning of 'truth' in the Gospel of John has continued to stir interest amongst Johannine scholars, with a Jewish matrix the predominant perspective. In 2001, Herman Waetjen argued that a paradigm shift emerged in Hellenistic Judaism whereby "[t]he biblical Word of God was wedded to the Greek Logos, and the marriage gave birth to the objectification of truth. Audition was replaced by vision, and accordingly, truth was to be seen rather than heard."[470] Also proposing a Judaistic background, Michael Roberts, in his 2003 thesis, argued that the author of John's Gospel presents "Jesus as the revelation of truth" and "Jesus as the revealer of truth", that "truth is the person and work of Jesus of Nazareth", and that truth comes only from God and must therefore be revealed by witnesses, the preeminent one being Jesus himself. Roberts argues that the idea of truth in John's Gospel is the "revelation of covenant faithfulness".[471] In 2008 Elizabeth Mburu proposed that the Qumran document *The Community Rule* provided a valid linguistic resource for understanding the truth terminology in the Gospel of John.[472] However, in a 2011 article Ewa Osek challenges the current scholarly shift towards a Hebrew/Jewish background arguing that the Hebrew background explanation does not explain why the Johannine author places his 'truth' in a setting with synonyms and opposites like some Greek texts of the classical period and suggests instead that the Greek Orphic literature is a likely source of many of the Johannine dualistic ideas.[473] And in a 2013 thesis, Ji-Woon Yoo argued that the Johannine author's concept of truth was an alternative view of truth to that of the Roman Empire. He says:

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[469] For a good thesis which unpacks these three key ideas in the Gospel of John see Roberts, "The Idea of Truth". Josef Blanks similarly concludes: „So darf nun abschließend vom «christologischen Wahrheitsbegriff des Johannes» gesprochen werden." See J. Blank, "Der johannischer Wahrheitsbegriff," *BZ* 7, no. 1 (1963): 173.

[470] H. C. Waetjen, "Logos πρὸς τὸν θεόν and the Objectification of Truth in the Prologue of the Fourth Gospel," *CBQ* 63, no. 2 (2001): 266. Waetjen argued that Philo was the first to give expression to the idea of this paradigm shift. While this objectification of truth may have been a change in the thinking of Judaism from audible word to visible reality it accords with the Platonic views of reality, and knowledge of that reality through revelation, and it is paralleled in the Johannine literature in which the Logos of God came in the flesh as a manifestation of the godhead. It should be noted, however, that Waetjen is not suggesting that the Johannine author was directly influenced by the writings of Philo; nevertheless, he thinks there is a link between the two authors because the Johannine author has a "fundamental refutation of Philo's platonically-oriented objectification of the biblical word that is conveyed throughout the entire prologue". See Waetjen, "Objectification of Truth": 267. He goes on to identify some of the parallels and differences.

[471] Roberts, "The Idea of Truth", ii. Köstenberger similarly argues for a christological focus on truth when he says, "truth is first and foremost a theological, and perhaps even more accurately, a Christological concept." Köstenberger, "'What is Truth?'": 35. See also Osek, "ΑΛΗΘΕΙΑ": 52; Jackayya, "Ἀλήθεια": 173.

[472] Mburu, "Truth Terminology".

[473] Osek, "ΑΛΗΘΕΙΑ": 54, 72-75.

> [T]he concept of truth in the Gospel of John provides the Christian communities in Ephesus with an alternative to the Roman imperial version of truth and serves to strengthen the identity of those Johannine communities in the face of challenges they likely encountered on a daily basis from various societal groups in their imperial context.[474]

It is thus evident that the matter of the influences upon the Johannine concept of truth is not yet settled, despite some extensive discussions of the terminology and the history of interpretations.[475] Mburu notes that "[i]n the history of interpretation of the Gospel of John numerous interpretations have been given for the meaning of the word ἀλήθεια, reflecting a notable failure to arrive at a consensus of how truth terminology should be understood in this Gospel."[476] As we saw in the previous two sections, scholars have noted the various meanings of 'truth' with no single definition explaining every occurrence in the Johannine literature.

This overview is not a comprehensive examination of the various proposals for possible Johannine influences, but it serves to show that there has been much thought given to this matter and that there has been a fairly major shift (despite some protestations) towards seeing a strong Hebrew/Jewish background to many of the Johannine concepts. Nevertheless, it is worth comparing the Johannine presentation of 'truth' and 'frank-speaking' with contemporary writings in the Graeco-Roman world, because the Johannine author was writing to people shaped by such a world. We therefore consider now the Johannine presentation in the same categories used for 'truth' and 'frank speaking' in the Graeco-Roman world of the first two centuries AD.

5.1.2.1. The Johannine View on the Context of Truth-Telling

As we saw in section 2.3.3.1 (*The Context of Truth-Telling*), 'truth-telling' in the Graeco-Roman world of the first couple of centuries took place in the context of friendship. Those who had developed a friendship, on whatever basis, had the opportunity to speak frankly to each other, delivering instruction and correction where needed. When the Johannine author writes his Epistles, he is writing into a world which already understands this context for instruction and correction and so he does the same thing, reminding them continually of the relationship that exists between him and them. He continually addresses his

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[474] J. W. Yoo, "The Rhetoric of Truth in the Gospel of John: 'Truth' as Counter-Imperial Reality in the Face of Conflict and Stress" (PhD Thesis, The Lutheran School of Theology, 2013), 1.

[475] See for example, Roberts, "The Idea of Truth"; Mburu, "Truth Terminology".

[476] Mburu, "Truth Terminology", 1. Mburu goes on (pages 4-7) to give an excellent summary of the history of proposals for the interpretive framework of 'truth' in the Gospel of John.

readers as 'beloved/dear friends' (ἀγαπητοί; 1 Jn. 2:7; 3:2, 21; 4:1, 7, 11; 3 Jn. 1, 2, 5, 11), 'dear children' (τεκνία μου, τεκνία, παιδία; 1 Jn. 2:1, 12, 14, 18, 28; 3:1, 2, 7, 10, 18; 4:4; 5:2, 21; 2 Jn. 1, 4, 13; 3 Jn. 4), 'fathers' (πατέρες; 1 Jn. 2:13-14), 'young men' (νεανίσκοι; 1 Jn. 2:13-14), 'brothers and sisters' (ἀδελφοί; 1 Jn. 3:13, 16; 3 Jn. 5), 'the lady chosen by God and her children' (ἐκλεκτῇ κυρίᾳ καὶ τοῖς τέκνοις αὐτῆς; 2 Jn. 1), 'dear lady' (κυρία; 2 Jn. 5), and 'friends' (φίλοι; 3 Jn. 15); he also speaks of "loving them in the truth" (2 Jn. 1; 3 Jn. 1) – indeed the message that he shares with them is the message he has had from the beginning to love one another (1 Jn. 3:11-18, 23; 4:7-12, 19-21; 2 Jn. 4-6) and the author says that the person who claims to love God when they actually hate their brother or sister is a liar, a teller of 'untruths' (1 Jn. 4:20). Such a claim is demonstrably untrue (i.e. it is a lie); they cannot really love God if they hate a brother or sister.

The Johannine author certainly seems to think of his recipients as his 'friends' or perhaps more specifically as 'his children' – which sets up a parent-child relationship. Why does he do this? It may be because the expectation of his recipients is that only close friends can speak frankly, so for the author to be able to speak frankly, he must either establish them as his friends or take the role of the parent, which would also enable him to speak frankly in the way he wants. Malherbe has noted that the Apostle Paul does not speak much of friends and friendship but brothers and brotherly love, and suggests that Paul's readers would have noted the similarities and differences between relationships in the Christian community and those in friendship circles.[477] The communities addressed by the Johannine literature were likely later communities than those addressed by Paul and they would have similarly been aware of such differences and perhaps expected familial rather than friendship language. This question will be addressed in more depth after considering the other key characteristic demanded of the author's recipients, love; but let us first continue looking at his presentation of truth.

5.1.2.2. The Johannine View on the Manner of Truth-Telling

When we compare how the Johannine author communicates 'truth' with how other Graeco-Roman writers did so or how they wrote about how to do so (see section 2.3.3.2 [*The Manner of Truth-Telling*]), we see a number of similarities:

[477] Malherbe, *Paul and the Popular Philosophers*, 62-62. Malherbe suggests that while Paul was familiar with the *topos* of friendship it may be that friendship terms carried connotations that were too anthropocentric and did not cater for relationships established by the call of God, for which the language of familial relationships was more appropriate. While agreeing with Malherbe, this thesis argues that an alternate *topos* to 'friendship' and 'familial relationships' is 'fellowship'.

The Johannine Perspective

(1) The Johannine author also seems to think that truth-telling should be undertaken opportunely, repeatedly, frequently, and in a timely manner. In his letters, he also shows a tendency to address an issue repeatedly in slightly different ways (cf. the frequent usage of γράφω/ ἔγραψα ὑμῖν and repeated *topoi* – for example the matter of love for fellow believers is dealt with in 1 John 2:3-11, then again in 3:11-24 and 4:7-5:3.[478]

(2) The Johannine author also seems to think that the truth-teller should be careful how they speak and should be objective and clear. He proclaims only what he has seen and heard (1 Jn. 1:1-2, 5) and what the readers already know (1 Jn. 1:7; 2:21, 24, 27; 3:11; 2 Jn. 6), and furthermore he gives them several means of testing what he is saying (1 Jn. 1:6-10; 2:3-6, 9-11; 3:10, 17, 19-22; 4:1-6, 7-12, 13-16; 5:1-2; 2 Jn. 9; 3 Jn. 11). He uses terms of endearment and relationship when addressing the recipients, shows concern for connecting to what they already know, and have seen and heard, warns about the dangers of false teachers (1 Jn. 2:18-23, 26; 3:7-10; 4:1-3; 2 Jn. 7-11), and exhorts them to love in word and action, and in truth, and to 'do' the truth (1 Jn. 3:12; 2 Jn. 6; 3 Jn. 4) – all these demonstrate that the Johannine author is concerned about being objective, clear, and careful in how he speaks.

(3) Like the Graeco-Roman writers of his day, the Johannine author believed that truth-telling required an awareness of, and identification with, the recipients' situation. In his writings, he shows great sensitivity to the recipients of his letters and identifies himself with them. He knows that they are suffering a crisis of confidence and do not know whom to believe or trust (cf. 1 Jn. 2:19-27; 3:7-10; 4:1-6; 2 Jn. 7-11; 3 Jn. 11b), so he sets out to give them reasons for having confidence in what he writes, using the endearing terms noted in the preceding 'context' section. He also lets them know that they can have confidence in approaching God knowing that he will hear them (1 Jn. 5:14), that they have an advocate with the Father (1 Jn. 2:1), and that God has also provided a means of addressing failure (1 Jn. 1:9). Because both he and God can be trusted (1 Jn. 4:6), the author unashamedly and unreservedly lays out God's requirements for correct belief and behaviour, but he does so in a way which endears himself even further to his recipients – he uses 'we' and includes himself in the instructions. The Johannine author is thus reflecting standard practices regarding effective instruction.

(4) The Graeco-Roman world knew that the best way to deliver instruction or correction was with a combination of 'truth' and 'love' and the Johannine author does likewise. Mirroring Plutarch's

[478] For discussions and critiques of the cyclical nature of (at least) 1 John see for example: Brown, *Epistles of John*, 116-129; Akin, *1, 2, 3 John*, 37-48; Strecker, *Johannine Letters*, xlii-xliv.

description of a true friend, he demonstrates that he is a true friend by not simply tickling the ears of his recipients. He is one who fully understands that love is to be the driver for speaking the truth, and is fully conversant with the idea of mixing commendation with reproof, though the idea of giving commendation first is more evident in the shorter letters (2 and 3 John), perhaps because these follow the more standard style of a letter which includes positive commendations after the initial greetings.[479] In both these letters we find the following statements of affirmation before issues of concern are addressed:

> It has given me great joy to find some of your children walking in the truth, just as the Father commanded us. (2 Jn. 4)
>
> It gave me great joy when some believers came and testified about your faithfulness to the truth, telling how you continue to walk in it. I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth. Dear friend, you are faithful in what you are doing for the brothers and sisters, even though they are strangers to you. They have told the church about your love. (3 Jn. 3-5)

Because 1 John is missing the usual epistolary introduction, the commendation appears after the author's opening statements where he presents christological and ethical (love) tests of the claim to have union (κοινωνία) with God. It may be that because the community was traumatised and disturbed by the false teachers and those who had departed, and their faith had been undermined, the author dispenses with the usual epistolary introductions and immediately launches into theological argument in order to restore assurance and give it a solid basis.[480] The first commendation actually appears in 1 John 2:8 where the author tells his readers, "I am writing you a new command; its truth is seen in him and in you", which is a recognition that they are already doing the things that the author says show true union with God. Further commendations follow in 2:12-14 in terms of acknowledging that they have been forgiven, know the Father, are strong, have the word of God living in them, and have overcome the evil one. The Johannine author is nothing like Graeco-Roman flatterers who pretended to like what their target liked, to agree with their target's views, or to give pre-eminence to the target; rather he showed himself to be a true friend by agreeing with his readers and commending them when he could, because

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[479] For the specific treatment of the Johannine author's language of love see section 5.1.3 (*The 'Love' Vocabulary*) and for the interaction between 'truth' and 'love' in the Johannine literature see section 5.2 (*Conclusions re the Johannine Usage of 'Truth' and 'Love'*).

[480] Cf. Painter, *1, 2, and 3 John*, 116. But see also section 6.1 (*The Purpose of the Johannine Epistles*) where an alternative argument about the three Johannine Epistles letters being a package is presented, and this provides an alternative explanation for the missing epistolary introduction.

their beliefs and actions comported with the truth, but he was also unafraid to call them out on specific matters if he thought that they were in danger of walking away from the truth. He did not seek to give them any pre-eminence and only commended them for what was right and noble and true.[481]

(5) Like the Graeco-Roman writers, the Johannine author also thought that truth-telling should address issues of real importance. He showed himself prepared to speak honestly, to not sugar-coat his concerns, to call out his readers for what they were failing to do, and to use harsh or strong language when describing those who had departed or who were leading his beloved children astray. He called such a person a 'liar' (1 Jn. 2:4, 22), 'antichrist' (1 Jn. 2:18; 4:2; 2 Jn. 7), 'denier' (1 Jn. 2:22), 'false prophet' (1 Jn. 4:1), and 'deceiver' (2 Jn. 7; cf. 1 Jn. 2:26), and backed this up with descriptions of the things they did.[482] As an example of someone who was doing the wrong thing, Diotrephes is described as someone who: "loves to be first", "will not welcome us", is "spreading malicious nonsense about us", "refuses to welcome other believers", and "stops those who want to do so and puts them out of the church" (3 Jn. 9-10). The Johannine author is not afraid to use quite harsh and scathing descriptions of the people who are false teachers; and he deals with his recipients honestly and straightforwardly; he should thus be considered a true friend.

5.1.2.3. Where the Johannine Author Differs from His Contemporaries

While there are many similarities between what the Graeco-Roman writers and the Johannine author have to say about the context and characteristics of truth-telling, it is the differences about who can speak,

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[481] Not everyone thinks that the Johannine author is being completely transparent. In his article on the rhetorical argumentation of 3 John, Luca Marulli, for example, argues that in order to persuade the recipient, Gaius, the Elder ingratiates himself with Gaius and gains his "goodwill and attention by using praises drawn from the audience itself". See Marulli, "Letter of Recommendation?": 210. The Elder is almost certainly commending Gaius, but Marulli is overstating the case when he suggests that the Elder is using a rhetorical ploy (*captatio benevolentiae*) designed to facilitate his argument and "put the readers in a benevolent mood to receive the message which may contain a demand or even a warning", citing Brown, *Epistles of John*, 789. Commending someone for what is true and noble is not a sycophantic platitude but an acknowledgement of their character and actions.

[482] Examples include: "the truth is not in them" (1 Jn. 2:4), "this person is still in darkness" (1 Jn. 2:9, 11), "they do not know where they are going" (1 Jn. 2:11), "they did not really belong to us" (1 Jn. 2:19), "they do not acknowledge Jesus and they do not know God" (1 Jn. 4:2; 2 Jn. 7), "they speak from the viewpoint of the world and the world listens to them" (1 Jn. 4:5), "they do not bring this teaching [= the teaching of Christ]" (2 Jn. 10), and they do "wicked work" (2 Jn. 11).

where they speak, how they expect to be received, and what they consider the truth to be, which prove most illuminating.

(1) **The Participants in Truth-Telling**: The Johannine author differs from the Graeco-Roman writers regarding who can speak the truth. He sees truth-telling as the responsibility of all who have an anointing from the Holy Spirit. Such a person knows the truth and has the ability to discern truth from lies (1 Jn. 2:20-21), for the truth lives in them (2 Jn. 1-2); they will not be a loner but part of a believing community that is obedient to God's commands (1 Jn. 2:3-4). By contrast, those who have left the community but are still seeking to spread their message, do not know the truth and cannot discern between truth and lies. They have shown that they are not a part of the community and are not to be believed, trusted, accepted, or encouraged in any way (1 Jn. 2:19; 2 Jn. 7-11). They may be seeking to gain a hearing and may even use flattery but in fact they are liars, antichrists, false prophets, and deceivers. The Johannine writings also reflect a difference in the target of 'truth-speaking'. As we saw in section 2.3.3.3 (*The Participants in Truth-Telling*), the care of souls was seen by the Epicureans as a communal responsibility, and the New Testament agrees with this, but extends the scope beyond the community. The Synoptic Gospels, for example, extend care to those who were not even part of one's community (e.g. the Good Samaritan [Lk. 10:27-27]; and love of one's enemies [Mt. 5:43-48.; Lk. 6:27-36]). Perhaps surprisingly, the Johannine Epistles seem to follow more closely the Epicurean idea of care for the community of which one is a part, and the author advocates for love and care to be shown especially to the family of believers (Jn. 13:34f.; 15:17; 1 Jn. 3:23; 4:7, 11, 21).[483] This is because the focus of the Johannine Epistles is on distinguishing between true believers and those who have departed and shown that they are not of the family of God.[484] In this particular context the recipients of the Johannine Epistles would have fully understood the need to look after those who were a part of their community.

(2) **The Location of Truth-Telling:** The Johannine author was certainly not afraid to speak frankly and publicly; his letters were essentially public documents to be read in the church congregation.[485]

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[483] On the restriction of love to the closed community of believers see the next section. However, Furnish argues that the reference to loving one's 'brother' in 1 Jn. 2:9-11, 3:10-18, and 4:20-21 cannot be restricted solely to the Christian community and envisages the universal nature of love for others. See the discussion in Furnish, *The LOVE Command*, 152-154.

[484] They had shown themselves to be self-seeking and not concerned for the good of the community.

[485] At least 1 and 2 John would seem to be 'public' letters. Some have argued that 3 John was a private letter to Gaius, accompanying the other two – see the discussion of this in section 6.1 (*The Purpose of the Johannine Epistles*).

But he also values frank speaking in private and shows some sensitivity to his audience (and perhaps the content of what he wants to say) by saying that it would be better for some things to be said privately (στόμα πρὸς στόμα) (2 Jn. 12; 3 Jn. 13-14). His epistles thus show that he is not afraid to say hard things to his readers, but some things are better dealt with in person. Of course, a lot of what he has to say is not negative – throughout the letter he affirms his readers as those who have believed and are walking in the truth. However, he also warns them to look out for deceivers and not to associate with them.

(3) **The Expected Reception of Truth-Telling:** The expectation of how people should respond to frank speaking and truth-telling is quite different in the Johannine writings. The Johannine author seems to expect that everyone will respond well to his frank speaking because he presents himself not as one who has authority to tell them what to do but as their friend who cares for them. He expects that what he reveals will engender fellowship – between people (himself and his readers), and with the Father and the Son – and the end result would be a shared joy (1 Jn. 1:4; see also 2 Jn. 12). Unlike Philodemus and perhaps more like Plutarch, he commends before criticizing, he warms up before warning, and he encourages before exhorting.

Furthermore, it is not just the leaders or the mature who should heed his words and respond positively, but everyone. The referents of 'children', 'fathers' and 'young men' have long been debated but at the very least they refer to more than just the leaders,[486] and whichever view one settles on, it seems that the Johannine author expects *all* his readers to recognize the truth of what he is saying, to value the love he has for them, and to heed the urgency of his warnings about those who have departed. It appears that he connects 'truth' and 'love' (cf. 2 Jn. 1; 3 Jn. 1) in order that the readers would accept what he has to say. As Daniel Akin says:

> [H]is affirming love should move them to hear what he has to say. If love would appeal to their hearts, then truth would appeal to their minds… Truth is the framework, the principle, that guides and gives genuine meaning to his

[486] For a good summary of the views and who holds them see Marshall, *The Epistles of John*, 137f. Some have suggested the terms refer to literal age groups; some metaphorically to the three stages in Christian experience – young converts, those mature in the faith, and those somewhere in between; some suggest that the first refers to all believers while the latter two refer respectively to elders and deacons; some suggest that the terms are simply a rhetorical device indicating qualities appropriate to the three stages of life which ought to be true of all believers – i.e. all Christians should have the innocence of childhood, the strength of youth, and the mature knowledge of age.

> expression of love. In the absence of truth, true love is not present. John knew that both love and truth are essential and not optional.[487]

And further with respect to 3 John, he says:

> Truth is an important theme, for it is mentioned seven times in this brief letter (vv. 1, 3, [twice], 4, 8, 12 [twice]). Love does not function as some disconnected emotion with no substance or content. Without truth it will devolve into mere sentimentalism. Love and truth are necessary companions. They go together. They work together. They must stay together. John expresses sincere love flowing from both heart and head, a love rooted in him who is the "truth" and "true God" (John 14:6; 1 John 5:20).[488]

Howard Marshall goes further in arguing that knowing the truth is more than mere acceptance of facts, it must be accompanied by love.

> To know the truth means to know and accept the Christian message. Such knowing goes beyond merely knowing facts or doctrines to a positive acceptance of the truth and commitment to it. All who have come to know the truth in this way are brought into the same bond of mutual love which exists between the elder and this congregation. Acceptance of the truth involves active love; where love is absent, it is a sign that the truth has not been accepted.[489]

The Johannine author shows not only great concern that the truth be believed and lived out but that it also be guarded, protected, and quarantined from those who would seek to distort it. Those who do not acknowledge the incarnation, or who 'run ahead', or do not continue in the teaching of Christ, are not to be taken in or welcomed. The concern appears to be that if such a deceiver is welcomed, their deceit will affect the welcomer, who would then be drawn away from the truth, and be caused to be a participator in the evil work of the deceivers (2 Jn. 7-11). Thus, what is spoken or said can and must be subjected to testing. What is said may or may not be true and the speakers may or may not be trusted. Plutarch distinguished flatterers from friends; the Johannine author too urges his readers to test the spirits and discern between the spirit of truth and the

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[487] Akin, *1, 2, 3 John*, 221.

[488] Akin, *1, 2, 3 John*, 240.

[489] Marshall, *The Epistles of John*, 62.

spirit of falsehood (1 Jn. 4:1-6). Human testimony is often accepted readily when it may in fact not be reliable, which is why there was an established principle in the OT that multiple witnesses were needed to prove a point (cf. Deut. 17:6; 19:15; and see Matt. 18:16; 2 Cor. 13:1), a practice we see reflected in John's Epistles (cf. 1 Jn. 5:8; 3 Jn. 12).[490] The author however, argues that his testimony ought to be accepted because it comports with the testimony of the Holy Spirit who is truth (1 Jn. 5:6) as well as God's own testimony about his Son, and God is the one who is true (1 Jn. 5:20; cf. Jn. 3:33; 17:3).

The content of his writings and his multiple letters, however, show that the Johannine author's expectation of a good reception was not realised; what he expected, was not how everyone responded.

(4) **The Meaning of Truth:** Perhaps the most significant difference between the Graeco-Roman writers and the Johannine author is their different understanding of truth. His basis for instructing and correcting people in the community is the truth about Jesus – he proclaims what he and others had heard (ἀκηκόαμεν), had been eyewitnesses of (ἑωράκαμεν), had looked at (ἐθεασάμεθα), and handled (αἱ χεῖρες ἡμῶν ἐψηλάφησαν), so that they might have fellowship with him and ultimately with Jesus and his Father (1 Jn. 1:1-3). This Jesus is none other than the one who claimed to be the 'truth' (Jn. 14:6) and who had now appeared to them (1 Jn. 1:2); the author understands 'truth' to have taken on flesh in the person of Jesus and thus to have become personal and spiritual,[491] a fact which is to affect the way people behave both towards God and towards each other (cf. 1 Jn. 1:6-8; 2:3-8; 2 Jn. 4; 3 Jn. 3-4). Thus, for the Johannine author, 'truth' is christologically focused – Jesus Christ 'is the truth', he 'reveals the truth', and he exhorts his followers to 'do the truth'.[492]

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[490] Demetrius' character in 3 Jn. 12 is testified to by everyone who knew him, by 'the truth itself', and by the Johannine author himself; he has already established himself as a truthful witness and his word can be trusted over against any possible insinuations from Diotrephes. Marshall says that the testimony of 'the truth itself' is probably to be intended as a personification of the truth indicating that "if the truth could speak, it too would testify that Demetrius's life was in accord with its own standards". See Marshall, *The Epistles of John*, 93.

[491] Akin, *1, 2, 3 John*, 221.

[492] See Roberts, "The Idea of Truth". In his unpublished thesis, Roberts argues that truth is centred in Jesus and that Jesus is the 'revelation of truth' and the 'revealer of truth'. The 'truth' so revealed to humanity must then manifest itself in loving and serving God and others. Roberts' argument is comprehensive and well-articulated but only deals with the Johannine Gospel. However, it shows that what is suggested here about 'truth' in the Johannine Epistles, is present in much more depth in the longer Johannine Gospel, which likely pre-dates the Epistles.

5.1.2.4. Conclusion Regarding the Johannine View of Truth and its Reception

My comparative study of John's Epistles with the writings of Philodemus, Plutarch, and the Cynics, with respect to 'truth' and its reception by people in the first century AD Graeco-Roman world has uncovered several similarities. All the writers see that friendship or relationship is the ideal context for speaking the truth and all are similarly concerned about how truth-speaking should occur – in a timely manner but repeatedly and frequently, dispassionately and objectively but with care, through identification with the recipients and an awareness of their situation, giving both commendation and criticism, and addressing issues of real importance.

Philodemus and the Johannine author are both concerned with teachers and learners and how to instruct in ways which will benefit the recipients – the best ways to instruct, commend, correct, and exhort. The Cynics and the Johannine author are both concerned with giving instruction to those of a like mind, because such people 'get' what is being spoken about. Plutarch and the Johannine author are both concerned with distinguishing between those who seek the good of others and those who seek the good of themselves – a friend is one who speaks frankly and truthfully about what is good and what needs addressing in the beliefs and behaviour of those to whom he is writing; those who are not concerned with truth do not serve the recipients of their words well – Plutarch terms them 'flatterers'; the Johannine author is stronger calling them 'liars' and 'deceivers'.

The Johannine author writes as a friend and speaks frankly and truthfully without flattery though he is quick to commend where it is due and unafraid to correct when it is needed. His speaking may be frank, but it is always gracious and sensitive to the situation of his recipients and he seeks their 'improvement', though unlike Philodemus and Plutarch, it was not just moral improvement. The Johannine author wanted to correct beliefs as much as behaviour for he knew that the latter flows from the former.

The areas of difference between the writers relate to who can speak the truth, where they can speak, the expected responses to truth, and the meaning of truth. It is the last of these which turns out to be the most significant difference.

Philodemus, the Cynic writers, and Plutarch all have a conception of 'truth' which is philosophical and metaphysical – that which is in accordance with what really is, and which needs to be exposed or brought into the open or journeyed towards. Plutarch goes so far as to say that truth is the source of all good for gods and men. Thus while 'truth' may have its origin in something even beyond the gods, it is evident for these writers in the actions of gods and men; they look at the 'natural' actions and words of people and seek to determine the motivations or source behind them. If the motives are considered pure and for the

good of others and not self-serving then the words are regarded as true and the actions as expressions of truth – i.e. the words and actions reflect what really is, and not some pretence.

By contrast the Johannine author is not interested in revealing 'what is', in the sense of what can be seen or discerned from the words and actions of others; rather he sees the truth as the embodiment of the one true God in Jesus, who demonstrates what one should believe and how one should behave. 'Truth' for the Johannine author is related to both belief and behaviour; it is the revelation of what is right and that is best seen in Jesus Christ – he 'is the truth' and he 'reveals the truth'. This is the primary truth that must be revealed as far as the Johannine author is concerned, for behaviour and actions flow from having a right perspective of Jesus, the one who embodies truth – 'doing the truth' flows from 'knowing the truth'.

In all the Graeco-Roman writers and the Johannine Epistles there is an acknowledgement that deeds must reinforce what is said. But the Johannine author makes much more of the need to 'do' the truth and he describes it in various ways: 'living out' or 'walking in the truth'(1 Jn. 1:6; 2 Jn. 4; 3 Jn. 3f.),[493] 'walking' or 'remaining' in the light' (1 Jn. 1:4; 2:10), doing God's commands (1 Jn. 2:3; 3:22-24), obeying God's word (1 Jn. 2:5), doing the will of God (1 Jn. 2:17), and being in God's Son (1 Jn. 5:20). In all manifestations of truth, there is to be a consistency between what is said or claimed and the evidence of one's life and behaviour (1 Jn. 2:6) and this is to be evident to all; it is likened to darkness being dispelled by light (1 Jn. 2:8).

Finally, on the receptivity of truth, we find this is also an area of difference for the writers. Philodemus and Plutarch spend a significant portion of their works outlining that many people will not respond well to frank criticism, giving examples of such people and reasons for their non-acceptance or begrudging acceptance of 'truth'; similarly, the Cynic writers think that the general masses are incapable of comprehending what is said in frank speech because they are so deluded, and bereft of reason and self-control. But the Johannine author expects that his readers will accept his words readily and will respond appropriately to them. He certainly delivers them 'in love' but this is really no different to what Philodemus and Plutarch say about how truth should be delivered. It is not the means of delivery that

[493] Akin notes that: "'Walking in the truth' indicates that truth is both what we believe and how we live. It is doctrine and duty, creed and conduct." Akin, *1, 2, 3 John*, 225. Regarding Gaius in 3 John, Kruse says: "Given the overall context of the three letters of John, Gaius's faithfulness to the truth is to be understood as steadfast commitment to the message of the gospel as it was heard at the beginning, and his rejection of the new teaching being spread abroad by the secessionists. However, the news that came to the elder was not only that Gaius held on to the teachings, but that he continued 'to walk in the truth', that is, he continued to order his life in accordance with the truth." Kruse, *The Letters of John*, 222.

seems to result in the different expectations, but the fact that the Johannine author is convinced that what he is saying has the divine imprimatur and for that reason it should be accepted without question. In other words, he believes he is delivering the commands of God, the teaching of Christ, and Spirit-given knowledge, so people will accept it. Indeed, taking note of his words shows that they are part of the people of God; rejection shows that they are not – it is all very black and white for this author, and this also distinguishes him from other writers on the topic.

5.1.3. The 'Love' Vocabulary

The predominant 'love' vocabulary in the Johannine literature is by far and away based on the ἀγαπ- words, though there is still some usage of the φιλ- words too. As noted previously, this thesis is suggesting that the Johannine author has deliberately chosen to minimise usage of the φιλ- words because of the meaning invested in them by their Graeco-Roman context.[494]

5.1.3.1. The Johannine Gospel

The love references in John's Gospel have been the subject of debate, especially since some have argued that key passages discussing and exhorting 'love' are considered later redactions. Jürgen Becker, for example, finds that John 15:1-17; John 13:34-35; and John 15:18-16:15 are self-contained literary units that fit with the *Sitz im Leben* of 1 John and were a later addition to the Gospel.[495] Fernando Segovia largely agrees providing further support for the first two passages but differing on the third, seeing 16:4b-15 as a separate literary unit and arguing that 15:18-16:15 actually fits better with the *Sitz im Leben* of the Gospel with its synagogal opposition.[496] He sees that the life setting of the Gospel is a struggle between church and synagogue while the life setting of 1 John and the parts of John's Gospel which he sees as later redactions reflect an intra-church crisis.[497] Whether or not one agrees with Segovia's 'separation' of the disputed passages[498] and a different *Sitz im Leben* for them, it is still possible to identify the various love relationships in the Gospel of John.

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[494] See section 4.1.2 (*The 'Love' Vocabulary*).

[495] J. Becker, "Die Abschiedsreden Jesu im Johannesevangelium," *ZNW* 61, no. 3-4 (1970): 229, 235-236, 239-241, 246.

[496] Segovia, *Love Relationships*, 97-131.

[497] Segovia, *Love Relationships*, 179.

[498] In addition to Jn. 15:1-17; 13:34-35; 15:18-16:15 as disputed passages, Segovia also adds chapter 21 where the ἀγάπη/ἀγαπᾶν words occur 4x on the grounds that many see chapter 21 as a later addition to the Gospel of John.

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There are forty-four occurrences of the ἀγάπη/ἀγαπᾶν words in John's Gospel and thirteen occurrences of φιλεῖν.[499] While the ἀγάπη word group is most frequent, the use of φιλεῖν seems to be used almost interchangeably throughout the Johannine literature with no distinction in meaning; see for example the usage of both forms to describe the Father's love for the Son (Jn. 3:35 and 5:20), God's love for the disciples (14:23 and 16:27), Jesus' love for Lazarus (11:3 and 5), Jesus' love for the 'beloved disciple' (13:23 and 20:2), and Christians' love for one another (3 Jn. 2, 5, 11 and 3 Jn. 15).[500] A number of the references to the 'love' words in John's Gospel refer to either the 'beloved disciple' (Jn. 13:23; 19:26; 20:2) or love for a particular individual (11:3, 5, 36), but the remaining references, most of which occur in the Farewell Discourses,[501] can be divided up into the following love relationships, which are an expansion upon the three major categories (God's love for humanity; humanity's love for God; and brotherly love) discussed in the earlier sections:[502]

(1) **The love of the Father for Jesus** (Jn. 3:35; 5:20; 10:17; 15:9; 17:24-26) – This is manifested directly in the revelatory activity with which the Father has entrusted Jesus, in the fact that the Father shows the Son all that he does, in the fact that the Father loves the Son because he lays down his life in accordance with the Father's command, and in the glory that is bestowed upon the pre-existent Son by the Father.

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[499] ἀγάπη occurs in 5:42; 13:35; 15:9, 10(2x), 13; 17:26; ἀγαπᾶν occurs in 3:16, 19, 35; 8:42; 10:17; 11:5; 12:43; 13:1(2x), 23, 34(3x); 14:15, 21(4x), 23(2x), 24, 28, 31; 15:9(2x), 12(2x), 17; 17:23(2x), 24, 26; 19:26; 21:7, 15, 16, 20; φιλεῖν occurs in 5:20; 11:3, 36; 12:25; 15:19; 16:27(2x); 20:2; 21:15, 16, 17(3x).

[500] This is the conclusion of recent lexicographical studies. See the discussion in Brown, *John (I–XII)*, 498f. See also the Appendix in Furnish, *The LOVE Command*, 219-231.

[501] Chapters 13-17 of John's Gospel. Raymond Brown has helpfully noted that the Farewell Discourse (or Discourses) are very similar in literary genre to the farewell speeches of famous men anticipating their own death, a number of examples of which are found in the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*. See Brown, *The Gospel According to John (XIII-XXI): Introduction, Translation, and Notes*, 598-600. Furnish also suggests that Jesus is preparing his own people (his friends, his disciples) for his imminent departure by giving them words of counsel and comfort which are designed to strengthen them in his absence and to help them maintain their corporate identity as *his* people even under difficult circumstances. See Furnish, *The LOVE Command*, 135.

[502] In fact, there is really only one new major category in the following list, which is love within the godhead (the love of the Father for the Son, and the love of Jesus for the Father – points 1 and 4 in the list). All the others could be subsumed, as follows, under the previous categories if the final category was slightly broadened as indicated by the italics: God's love for humanity – points 2, 3, and 5; Humanity's love for God – points 6 and 10; Humanity's love for its own kind *and the world* – points 7, 8 and 9. Lee has five categories: (1) love within the godhead; (2) the Father's love for the world; (3) the love of Jesus for the disciples; (4) the disciples' love for Jesus; (5) the disciples' love for each other. See Lee, "Friendship, Love & Abiding," 59.

(2) **The love of the Father for the disciples** (Jn. 14:21b, 23b; 16:27;[503] 17:23) – whoever loves Jesus[504] can rest assured that the Father himself will love them in return; conversely, the one who does not love Jesus is not loved by the Father. This love of the Father is experienced in terms of the presence of the Paraclete within the community, in receiving and granting the disciples' prayers, and of a sharing in Jesus' glory.

(3) **The love of the Father for the world** (Jn. 3:16) – the meaning of 'love' here is much debated. While ἀγαπᾶν in 3:16 can be seen as a summary of the Johannine message and the Johannine conception of love in terms of a sacrifice (focusing on ἔδωκεν) it can also be interpreted (as Segovia does) in terms of the verb ἀπέστειλεν in 3:17 and be rather linked with the Johannine theme of 'sending'. Segovia says:

> such a concept of love … is compatible with the other love passages in the Gospel and not the love of a sacrifice for sins… the love of the Father for the world is expressed in terms of those elements which are constitutive of the Father-Son relationship of love; such love is manifested by Jesus' mission in general and by his death as the end and culmination of that mission in particular.[505]

(4) **The love of Jesus for the Father** (Jn. 14:31; 15:10) – is constituted and manifested by Jesus' execution of that which his Father commands, the end result of which is his death. Jesus manifests love for the Father in exactly the same way as the disciples should manifest their love for Jesus – through the execution of the loved one's commandments.

(5) **The love of Jesus for the disciples** (Jn. 13:1; 14:21c; 15:9f., 12) – the love of Jesus is returned to those who love (i.e. believe in) him. The love of Jesus for the disciples is also experienced in terms of the presence of the Paraclete within the community, since it is Jesus who requests the Father to send him. A special instance of Jesus' love for the disciples is his love for the 'beloved disciple' (Jn. 20:2; cf. 13:23; 19:26; 21:7, 20).[506]

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[503] This is the only verse in the NT in which φιλέω is used for God's love for humankind.

[504] Point 6 below will show that this essentially means "believes in Jesus' origin and identity". Ultimately, the love of the Father is predicated upon belief in his Son.

[505] Segovia, *Love Relationships*, 168.

[506] Given what has been said previously about the ἀγαπ- word group having the nuance of a love which chooses and prefers, one might expect that this would be the appropriate word to use in this category and indeed it is, though not exclusively, since 'love' in the phrase "the disciple whom Jesus loved" is 4 times out of 5 ἀγαπᾶν and once φιλεῖν (20:2) which confirms the interchangeability of these two verbs for love in the first century.

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(6) **The love of the disciples for Jesus** (Jn. 8:42; 12:43; 14:15, 21, 23a, 28; 15:9f.; 16:27) – these references to the disciples' love for Jesus include the idea of keeping and doing the commandments (ἐντολαί) and teaching (λόγος) of Jesus and it is most likely that 'love' is to be understood in terms of belief – a belief in Jesus' role, an acknowledgement of his origin and identity, and a recognition that he has been sent by the Father.[507] A special example of the disciples' love for Jesus is Peter's love for Jesus in John 21:15-17.[508]

(7) **The love of the disciples for one another** (Jn. 13:34f.; 15:17) – this love is not fully developed in the Gospel of John and seems to be more prominent in the Epistles of John. Nevertheless, John 13:15 has set the norm, "as *I* have done for *you*, so also *you* should do…" and the climax of this is reached in vv. 34-35 – as the disciples themselves have been served by Jesus' love for them, they are now obligated by what they themselves have received, to love one another.[509]

(8) **The love of the disciple for other things** – for their life (Jn. 12:25); for darkness (3:19).

(9) **The love of the world for its own** (Jn. 15:19). This is perhaps the clearest example in the Johannine Gospel of the original meaning of φιλέω – 'to love what belongs or is one's own'.

(10) **The Jews' lack of love for God** (Jn. 5:42) is essentially a statement about their lack of belief – they do not possess the word of God nor believe in the one who sent Jesus (5:38).[510]

The first five of these love relationships obviously refer to the love of the members of the Godhead – for each other, for humanity as a whole, and for the people of God in particular – while the remainder detail

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[507] See Stählin, *TDNT* 9:133.

[508] Although much has been made of Jesus' change in question from ἀγαπᾷς με; to φιλεῖς με; on the third occasion, with Peter responding each time, φιλῶ, it is most likely that ἀγαπάω and φιλέω are simply synonymous in this dialogue, as elsewhere in the Gospel, given the obvious parallelism in the three sayings and the use of other synonyms (e.g. βόσκω — ποιμαίνω, ἀρνίον — προβάτιον, σὺ οἶδας – σὺ γινώσκεις within the passage. See Section 4.1.2 (*The 'Love' Vocabulary*) and footnote 343. Don Carson makes the point that "it is rather strange to insist on a semantic distinction between the two words for 'to love' *in this context*, and not on small distinctions between other pairs of words in the same context." See Carson, *Exegetical Fallacies*, 53. Raymond Brown similarly challenges scholars like Ceslas Spicq and Anders Nygren who argue that there is a distinction between the two verbs 'to love' used by the Johannine author. See Brown, *Epistles of John*, 255.

[509] Furnish, *The LOVE Command*, 137.

[510] On the use of the Greek words in these relationships, see Stählin, *TDNT* 9:134. Stählin says, "In the mutual relations of love between God, Christ and the disciples, it is only occasionally that φιλέω is used to denote the love of God for the Son (5:20), the love of God for the disciples (16:27) and the love of the disciples for Jesus (16:27), whereas ἀγαπάω is always used to denote the love of Jesus for the disciples (13:1, 34; 14:21; 15:9, 12; cf. 11:5), the love of the disciples for one another (13:34; 15:12, 17), and especially the love of Jesus for the Father (14:31)."

the love relationships of human beings – for the godhead, for their fellow man, and for other things. The model presented for humanity's love is that of the godhead – as Jesus remained faithful to his mission in the world by keeping his Father's commands and remaining in his love, so the followers of Jesus are to remain faithful in their discipleship by keeping the Son's commands and remaining in his love (Jn. 15:10; cf. 14:15, 21, 23-24). The nature of this love is further expounded in John 15:12-17 where once again Jesus' love for his own is stressed as the ground for their obedience to the commandment to love one another (15:12; cf. 15:9; 13:15, 34). The highest and noblest form of this love for one another is the laying down of one's life for one's friends (15:13) which evokes the image of Christ's death as the culmination of his mission. However, this immediately raises the question, "For whom did Christ die?". The Johannine author seems to indicate here that love's scope is restricted to a closed circle of 'friends' from whom one might expect love in return, whereas the Synoptic Gospels, seem to speak of a wider love for one's enemies (see section 4.2 [*The Synoptic Gospels*]).

Consequently, when it comes to the scope and character of love in John's Gospel, commentators have widely divergent views. Rudolf Schnackenburg thinks that the writer has given "added profundity to the commandment of love" and has raised it "to be the ruling principle of Christian morality throughout all the ages".[511] On the other hand, commentators like Clayton Bowen think that the writer is teaching an inferior love – a love which is conditional upon humankind's prior love of God, and which shuts most people out since it is a love that is bestowed on friends.[512] Ernst Käsemann similarly agrees that the love of Jesus is of restricted scope and focused on those who are God's own and that the Son's mission of love is *to* the world only in the sense that it is to gather the scattered elect of God together, out of the world.[513] Victor Furnish agrees with Käsemann that love in the Johannine Gospel is no mere emotion or ethical feeling, but rather that "love is first of all that which unites the Father to his Son and then the Son to his own who are in the world (17:20-26; cf. 15:9). This is not just a static unity between Father and Son, and Son and disciples; it is a living and moving unity."[514] Ultimately, this unity between Father and Son is centred on Jesus' function as the one sent by God and not upon his nature. Likewise, when the unity of Jesus' followers with him is considered, it is a unity based upon their following, serving and obedience to

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[511] R. Schnackenburg, *The Moral Teaching of the New Testament* (2nd Rev. ed.; New York: Herder & Herder, 1969), 329.

[512] C. R. Bowen, "Love in the Fourth Gospel," *JR* 13, no. 1 (1933): 45, 42. For a similar view that Johannine love is narrowed in scope, see also Nygren, *Agape and Eros*, 153-155.

[513] E. Käsemann, *The Testament of Jesus: A Study of the Gospel of John in the Light of Chapter 17* (NTL; London: SCM, 1968), 59-65.

[514] Furnish, *The LOVE Command*, 145.

him just as Jesus 'obeys' the Father.[515] It must also be noted that the love mission of Jesus was to the world; he was the light of the world (Jn. 1:4, 9, 8:12; 9:5; 12:46), he was sent by God to save the world (Jn. 1:29; 3:16; 4:42; 12:47), he would draw all people to himself (Jn. 12:32). Furnish concludes his discussion of love in the Gospel of John by arguing that if it is correct to understand God's love and the Son's mission of love to be extended to all who will receive it (him) then it is also correct to say that the commandments to love one another need not be regarded as *excluding* love for 'neighbours' and 'enemies'. He argues that in this Gospel 'one another' has an eschatological reference not an ecclesiastical one. In the end Furnish concludes, "love for 'one another' is neither a softening nor a repudiation of the command to love the neighbour, but a special and indeed urgent form of it."[516]

5.1.3.2. The Johannine Epistles

In the Johannine Epistles Fernando Segovia finds four categories of love relationships which he says are different to the categories in the Gospel of John.[517] However, he seems to be overstating the case,[518] and it could be argued that they are essentially a subset of the relationships noted in the Gospel. Segovia's argument that the Epistles include a relationship of love which is completely left out of consideration in the Gospels, namely the love of the disciples for one another, is contradicted by John 15:17; his comment about the absence of the mutual Father-Son love in the Epistles is hardly surprising given their shortness and the specific issues being dealt with; and his argument that the love relationships which are found in both are quite different – e.g. the disciples love for the Father/Jesus is conceived solely in terms of belief in Jesus' origin and identity in the Gospel but in 1 John he says that the love relationship also includes correct praxis as well as correct belief – is dependent upon allocating particular Gospel passages to the same *Sitz im Leben* as 1 John and essentially excising them from the original Gospel of John. One could be forgiven for seeing a circular argument here. Contra Segovia, it seems more likely that the love

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[515] Furnish, *The LOVE Command*, 145. See also Moffatt, *Love*, 277-280. Culy makes a similar point in his *Echoes of Friendship in the Gospel of John.* His thesis is that Jesus' relationship with the Father exhibits unity, mutuality, and equality, and these same elements should also be evident in the relationships of Jesus' followers. See Culy, *Echoes*, 86-87,92-95,118-129,149-157,174-177. According to Culy, these three elements reflect the key elements of the 'friendship' theme in the Graeco-Roman world, but one wonders how much Culy's desire to show these three elements in relationships in the Gospel influenced his view that these are the three 'key' elements in the Graeco-Roman literature. This thesis argues that Graeco-Roman friendship had several more key elements.

[516] Furnish, *The LOVE Command*, 148.

[517] Segovia, *Love Relationships*, 74-76.

[518] Segovia, *Love Relationships*, 195-196. To a large degree, the overstatement is the result of Segovia excising certain passages from the Gospel (e.g. Jn. 15:1-17; Jn. 13:34-35) and seeing them as a later redaction inserted to align the Gospel with the Epistles.

relationships in the Johannine Epistles are a subset of the love relationships in the Johannine Gospel, and could therefore be grouped as follows:

(1) **The love of God towards humankind** which is described in terms of the mission of his Son and his death on behalf of the sins of humankind (1 Jn. 2:28-3:10; 4:9-10, 14-16).

(2) **The love of Jesus for his disciples** – The death of Christ is a manifestation of love towards his followers, though this could be seen in fact as a love for all humanity since he laid down his life before they were his followers (1 Jn. 3:16). Here we actually have a definition of love: ἐν τούτῳ ἐγνώκαμεν τὴν ἀγάπην ὅτι ἐκεῖνος ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ ἔθηκεν – it is the redemptive death of Jesus that is the prototype of all love.

(3) **The love of the disciples for God –** The correct kind of love towards God entails:

i. a knowledge of Jesus which requires the keeping of his commands (1 Jn. 2:3-5);[519]

ii. a complete exclusion of all love for the world (1 Jn. 2:15-17; 3:17);

iii. an acceptance that God first loved humanity through his Son (1 Jn. 4:10, 19-20);

iv. the love of one's brother in response (1 Jn. 4:21);

v. the keeping of God's commands which include believing in Jesus Christ (1 Jn. 3:23) and loving one another (1 Jn. 5:3).

In contrast, 'incorrect love' is:

i. a failure to execute Jesus' commands (1 Jn. 2:4);

ii. adopting the ways of the world and not helping a brother in need (1 Jn. 2:15-17; 3:17);

iii. claiming to love God directly without concern for others (1 Jn. 4:10, 20);

iv. hating one's 'brother' (1 Jn. 4:20);

v. failing to keep God's commands (1 Jn. 5:3).

[519] See the discussion below on whether ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ θεοῦ in 2:5 is subjective or objective.

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(4) **The love of disciples for one another** which receives a much fuller treatment in 1 John than in the Gospel and is described as:

i. abiding in the light (1 Jn. 2:9-11);

ii. doing righteousness (1 Jn. 3:10);

iii. a transformation from death to life (1 Jn. 3:14f.);

iv. incorporating God's example of love into one's own love (1 Jn. 3:16, 23f.; 4:11, 19, 21);

v. abiding in God and vice versa (1 Jn. 3:24; 4:12, 16b);

vi. having been born of God and knowing him (1 Jn. 4:7-8).

In 1 John 3:23, this love for one another is part of the two-pronged command of God – "to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another". This connection of love with faith or belief is important for it highlights that faith is to express itself in love.

These four particular 'love' relationships are featured in 1 John according to Segovia to address the arguments of the opponents and are consistent with the *Sitz im Leben* of the Letter.[520] He argues:

> [T]he author develops a two-pronged doctrine of love for the brethren; against *docetism*, he defines God's love toward man precisely in terms of the redemptive death of Jesus, his Son, and man's love for man in terms of acceptance of that death; against *libertinism*, he defines love as an execution of Jesus' commands (or God's commands) which is tantamount to an execution of righteousness and an avoidance of sin. In the terminology of v. 3:18, this is love ἐν ἔργῳ and καὶ [sic] ἀληθείᾳ.[521]

Interestingly, love for God is never explicitly mentioned in John's Gospel but is in the Epistle, whereas love for Jesus is found in the Gospel but not the Epistle. This is probably because the identity of Jesus was an issue amongst the secessionists in the Epistle and the more general reference of love for God would have been readily accepted. Of course, the Epistle argues that love for God actually entails keeping his commands which means believing in Jesus.

The issue of whether love for one another is restricted to love of those in the Christian community is also raised in the First Epistle of John (as it is in the Gospel) by what the author says in 1 John 4:21, which

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[520] Segovia, *Love Relationships*, 76-79.

[521] Segovia, *Love Relationships*, 78f.

speaks of loving God and loving one's brother. However, it is likely that 'brother' is synonymous with 'neighbour' or 'fellow-human' in 1 John.[522] The usage of the term 'brother' in 1 John 2:9-11, 3:10-18, and 4:20-21 cannot bear such a narrow meaning as only referring to the Christian community. For example, in 2:9, 11 those who hate their brothers are in darkness, so they are not believers or fellow Christians, and 'brother' must then refer to their fellow human beings in the world. Similarly, in 3:10-18 and 4:20-21, the term 'brother' is being used to refer to one's fellow-man, be that the Christian community or those in the world. Thus 1 John's usage of the term 'brother' seems to envisage the universal nature of love for others and is not an exclusive term.[523]

One final issue which has occasioned some debate is the description of 'the love of God' as 'having been perfected' (1 Jn. 2:5; 4:12, 17, 18). There has been debate, particularly in 2:5, as to whether ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ θεοῦ is speaking about our love for God (as per RSV, TNIV, NIV2011, NLT) or God's love for us (ISV, NCV, NiRV, NIV84),[524] but the later passages identify that it is God's love for humankind which is made complete or perfect when human beings love one another. The emphasis is on divine love (1 Jn. 3:1, 16; 4:9-11, 16, 19) which then elicits a response of love from people towards both God and one another (1 Jn. 3:16b; 4:11, 21). Divine love is extended to human beings and seeks and finds its completion in people's obedient response to the commandment, "Love one another". Thus, there is one grand continuum of love with two

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[522] Contra many writers including Haas, Jonge and Swellengrebel, *A Handbook on the Letters of John*, 47, 132; Brown, *Epistles of John*, 268f., 535.

[523] See the discussion in Furnish, *The LOVE Command*, 152-154. Other writers who see the term ἀδελφός as broader than one's community of fellow believers and more equated with 'neighbour' (or at least that it need not *exclude* those outside the church) include R. K. Bultmann, *The Johannine Epistles* (Hermeneia – A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible; ed. R. W. Funk; trans. L. C. M. R. Philip O'Hara, and Robert W. Funk; Philadelphia, PA: Fortress, 1973), 28; Smalley, *1, 2, 3 John*, 60, 263; S. J. Kistemaker, *Exposition of James and the Epistles of John* (NTC 14; Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1986), 342f. See also C. Bennema, *Mimesis in the Johannine Literature* (LNTS; ed. C. Keith; vol. 498; London: T&T Clark, 2017), 106-125. Bennema argues for a wider group than the followers of Jesus on the basis that the acts of service performed by Jesus are to be imitated by his followers – i.e. the washing of the 'outsider' Judas' feet shows a concern for outsiders, the love of the Father and Son for each other extends beyond themselves to others, and the acts of service done by Jesus were not done only to believers.

[524] Many English translations use the ambiguous genitive construction 'love of God'. See KJV, NASB, ESV, HCSB, NET, NRSV. Examples of scholars opting for the idea of love for God include Brooke (ICC), Dodd (Johannine Epistles), Marshall (NICNT), Stott (TNTC), Smalley (WBC), Burge (NIVAC), Kruse (PNTC), Akin (NAC), Culy (BHGNT), and Von Wahlde (ECC); those opting for God's love for humanity include Westcott (Epistles of St. John), Smith (EGT), Bultmann (Hermeneia), Kistemaker (NTC), and de Jonge and Swellengrebel (UBS Translator's Handbook), Yarbrough (BECNT), Jobes (ZECNT); Scholars opting for a plenary genitive (i.e. both ideas) include Strecker (Hermeneia), and Derickson (EEC).

segments – God's love for us and our love for one another. This is the meaning of the statement in 1 John 4:19, "We love, because he first loved us".[525]

5.1.4. The Johannine Concept of Love

It is obvious from the discussion in the last section that the Johannine author uses the common verbal forms of his day to describe the action of loving; i.e. he uses both ἀγαπᾶν and φιλεῖν with a noted preference for the former. But it also seems that his preferred word for the substantive concept 'love' is ἀγάπη not φιλία, and this raises some important questions. Why does the Johannine author use a different term to the one in wide usage in the world of his recipients? Is it legitimate to compare the Graeco-Roman concept of φιλία (with its basic idea of 'friendship', even though it could also be translated as 'love') with the term for 'love' that the Johannine author prefers, i.e. ἀγάπη? And does the Johannine author use another term in place of φιλία to express the Graeco-Roman idea of 'friendship'?

As we have seen, Graeco-Roman friendships were formed for a variety of reasons. The Graeco-Roman literature shows that friendship (φιλία) gave meaning to life and met people's emotional needs, and Aristotle described friendships as based on one of three grounds: the good (virtue) of the other person, the usefulness of a person (utility), or the enjoyment (pleasure) they gave. The highest and best forms of friendship were those established between equals who valued each other's good character and sought to encourage one another's virtue – such friendships exhibited trust, which was thought to only exist between 'good men' and, as a result, the friendships lasted. Friendships could however also occur between unequals, though these were more often based on utility or pleasure and subject to the emotions, which meant that the friendship might end when a 'friend' ceased to be useful or give pleasure. Φιλία was broad enough to incorporate both strong affective relationships and casual yet agreeable acquaintances, and was thus an all-encompassing term in the Graeco-Roman world to describe a variety of relationships, which were often political in nature and may or may not have included affection and emotion. It thus contributed to the stratification of the society, but was still seen as critical for social stability, for emotional well-being, and for fullness of life. However, as a concept that was heavily influenced by Platonic and Aristotelian views of virtue, utility, and pleasure, φιλία was not a term that suited the Johannine author's idea of relationships in the Christian community. While he would have valued several things about Graeco-Roman friendship – the breadth of relationships in φιλία, the fact that friendships were based on beliefs and judgements, that friendship exhibited a responsibility of duty, and that it was important for well-being, giving meaning to life, and meeting emotional needs – he would have

[525] Furnish, *The LOVE Command*, 158.

had serious problems with it being based on virtue, utility, or pleasure, which generated different types of relationship and resulted in, and supported, the stratification of society.[526] He would also have had issues with the philosophers' views that ideal friendships were rare because there were few good men, and the idea that one could not have many friends because there would be too many competing interests and values which would inhibit or limit the formation of friendships.

While some might think that the Johannine literature reflects a relationship between the author and his recipients which could be described as a friendship between unequals (and thus is representative of the stratification in society) the Johannine author hardly considers himself to be a 'superior' to his supposedly 'inferior' recipients, based on the way he describes himself, the recipients, and the relationship they share. Despite having authority over his readers and thus expecting them to heed his words, his continual usage of familial terms of endearment and affection is the result of the author and his readers having a shared ground of belief, which, to a large degree, levels the status difference between them. It is this shared ground of belief that brings the author and his recipients into a relationship, and it is the specific teaching and beliefs that they hold in common which shapes how they are to relate to one another. This relationship is a form of φιλία though it is not the word that the Johannine author chooses to use;[527] he

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[526] The stratification of society was something which did not fit with the teaching of Jesus and Christianity. Joel Green has highlighted that the message of Jesus "violates the sacred political order of the Roman world" and the new community he established was counter-cultural. The patronage system of Rome did not fit within the new community, just as the leadership of that community was to be very different to that of Rome: "Jesus' message is designed to qualify the character of that leadership: not like the Gentiles, but like Jesus. Not their kingdoms but the kingdom of God. Not status-minded benefaction, but giving freely, without any concern for repayment in honor or status." See J. B. Green, *The Theology of the Gospel of Luke* (New Testament Theology; Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 119-121. For a useful discussion on the relative levels of NT writers and the people mentioned in their letters, see Friesen, "Poverty in Pauline Studies"; Longenecker, "Revised Economy Scale". Both argue that Paul was likely in the same level as most of his recipients if not lower than some. Neither explicitly consider the Johannine author.

[527] Our previous analysis has shown that the term φιλία does not occur in either the Gospel or Epistles of John but the cognate noun (φίλος) does occur six times in the Gospel (Jn. 3:29; 11:11; 15:13, 14, 15; 19:12) and twice in the Epistles (3 Jn. 15 [2x]), and the cognate verb (φιλέω) occurs thirteen times in the Gospel (Jn. 5:20; 11:3, 36; 12:25; 15:9; 16:27[2x]; 20:2; 21:15, 16, 17[3x]), so the author is not unfamiliar with the language. The more common NT verb for 'love' ἀγαπάω, which many see as an equivalent in meaning to φιλέω, occurs thirty-seven times in the Gospel and thirty-one times in the Epistles.

In his analysis of the Gospel of John, Martin Culy first suggests that "the choice to use friendship language was almost certainly an unconscious one" but then a little later says "conventional notions associated with friendship would have provided the author of the Gospel of John with a powerful literary tool that he utilized both to make some audacious claims about Jesus' relationship with the Father and to put forward the equally audacious notion that the same quality of relationship was being extended to Jesus' followers"; see Culy, *Echoes*, 20f.,32. There seems to be some contradiction here about whether Culy think the Johannine author used friendship language unconsciously or intentionally. As will be seen shortly, this thesis argues that the Johannine author not only

prefers to use different language to describe the relationship while still preserving many of the aspects of the Graeco-Roman idea of 'friendship'. The word he chooses to use is κοινωνία (1 Jn. 1:3[2x], 6, 7) along with its cognate κοινωνέω (2 Jn. 11) to describe the 'partnership' or 'fellowship' he and his recipients have. These terms were terms used extensively in the Graeco-Roman world to describe business partnerships. Such partnerships had an implied equality about them, and this notion of equality suited the Johannine author's view of the relationship he saw between himself and his recipients.[528] But he also extensively uses familial, relational, and affectionate language to express his relationship with them and to describe the kind of relationships he wants them to exhibit with each other, preferring to use the NT language of 'love' (the ἀγαπ- language) instead of φιλία. While the ἀγαπ- language was not unknown in the Graeco-Roman world, it did not have the currency of the φιλ- language and could be used by the early Christians to communicate a different idea.[529] The absence of the term φιλία does not mean that the author is uninterested in 'friendship' but that he chooses to express the relationship between himself and his recipients in other ways, but still ways that reflect the notion of friendship, and which apparently involved affection as we shall now see. Following that, it will be argued that the Johannine author broadens and reframes the Graeco-Roman concept of 'friendship' to create the Christian concept of 'fellowship'.

5.1.4.1. The Johannine View on Φιλία and the Emotions

As we indicated earlier in section 2.3.2 (*The Place of Emotions in Friendship*), the way we assess emotions in friendship is to look at the terms of address used, the descriptions of the parties, the commendations given, and the corrections made, so we now look at these things in the Johannine literature. The nature of the relationship between the Johannine author and his recipients is most easily seen in the author's letters, precisely because they are personal correspondence between two parties. When we examine the Johannine Epistles, we see that the relationship between the author and his recipients is based on a shared understanding of the good news about Jesus as the Word of life which the recipients accepted (1 Jn. 1:1-3; 2:7-8, 24; 3:11; 4:4, 6, 13-15; 5:1, 11-13, 19-20; 2 Jn. 1-4, 9; 3 Jn. 1-4). This shared understanding enables a relationship of fellowship (κοινωνία) to be established, a relationship which it will be argued is a broadening and reframing of the Graeco-Roman idea of 'friendship'. But first, I want to establish that

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deliberately uses friendship language but recognises its shortcomings and so seeks to reframe it into the idea of a fellowship based on truth and love, a more appropriate relationship than friendship for followers of Jesus.

[528] See the fuller treatment of the Johannine author's concept of 'fellowship' in section 5.3 (*The Reframing of 'Friendship' as 'Fellowship'*).

[529] In the history of languages, it is usage which ends up determining the meaning of a word and it may well be that Christianity's usage of the ἀγαπ- words reshaped their meaning in time.

this relationship involves emotions. The Johannine author speaks of joy being 'completed' or experienced when he hears news of how the recipients are progressing in their faith (1 Jn. 1:4; 2 Jn. 4, 12; 3 Jn. 4). The fact that the apostles' joy is made complete by the inclusion of those to whom they have witnessed and to whom the author now writes demonstrates an emotional investment in the readers. The relationship is far more than a teacher-disciple, master-servant, patron-client relationship. The letters hint at a personal attachment to, and concern for, the readers. This is reinforced by the reference in 3 John 4 to the recipients being described as 'my children' (τὰ ἐμὰ τέκνα).[530] This kind of attachment and its relation to joy is an echo of the relationship between Jesus and his disciples. In the Gospel of John, Jesus calls his disciples his friends (φίλοι; Jn. 15:14f.) and says that when they remain in him and are obedient then his joy is in them and their joy is complete (Jn. 15:11).[531] Furthermore, it seems that the recipients form a well-defined community which includes the author – the references to the secessionists going 'out from us' and as those who 'do not belong to us' (1 Jn. 2:19) suggests that there was a clearly defined community to which people belonged or with which people identified. The author's references to 'we' and 'us' when the context makes it clear he is talking about himself and his recipients (e.g. 1 Jn. 1:6-10; 2:1-5, 18, 25, 28; 3:1-2, 10-24; 4:6b-21; 5:2, 9, 11, 14-20; 2 Jn. 2-6; 3 Jn. 8, 14) also point to the fact that he sees himself as part of the community with them. Such a community need not necessarily be one which demonstrated emotion or affection but the fact that the three Johannine letters are full of encouragements to lay down one's life for each other (1 Jn. 3:16), to love one another (1 Jn. 3:18, 23; 4:7, 11, 21; 2 Jn. 5), and to show hospitality (3 Jn. 8), all imply that such things were to be an expected part of community life and that there should be a degree of affection amongst the people in the community.

We see further expressions of emotion by the Johannine author when he uses terms of endearment throughout his epistles to address his recipients – the vocative τεκνία μου has an implicit notion of affection or endearment because it is a diminutive form. Raymond Brown argues:

> *Teknion*, "little child," is a diminutive of *teknon*… The two words were probably interchangeable in common speech, but their use is quite distinct in the Johannine writings. If *teknon* refers to God's children and is not an address, the 7 uses of *teknion* in I John (2:1, 12, 28; 3:7, 18; 4:4; 5:21) are direct addresses by the author to those

[530] "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth" (3 Jn. 4).

[531] Consider also the reference of John the Baptist to himself as a friend of the bridegroom who rejoices now that the bridegroom has come (Jn. 3:28-30).

> whom he considers his (spiritual) children. Teknion has a caritative or endearing force, setting up an affectionate relationship between the speaker and his audience.[532]

Numerous other scholars echo the view that the τεκνία μου form of address is designed to highlight the Johannine author's pastoral concern for and special relationship with his readers,[533] with Robert Yarbrough going so far as to say: "A τεκνίον is a τέκνον (in John always figurative) regarded personally and with deep filial love."[534] It is worth noting, however, that the author does not use the τεκνία language exclusively to refer to the recipients as his children – the alternative term παιδία is used three times in 1 John 2:14, 18 and 3:7, the first of these seemingly paralleling the τεκνία address in 2:12. Indeed verses 12-13 address the recipients as 'dear children' (τεκνία), 'fathers', and 'young men', and then verse 14 addresses the recipients in the same three groups but this time using παιδία for 'dear children',[535] but the critical thing to note here is that various people in the church are being described and addressed in relational, familial terms. Such terms point to a close relationship between the writer and the audience and evoke thoughts of affection. One can hardly think of family members without feeling some greater level of affection for them than one would feel for a neighbour or a fellow traveller or companion or friend. In 2 John 1 the address is ἐκλεκτῇ κυρίᾳ καὶ τοῖς τέκνοις αὐτῆς, addressees who are qualified with the relative pronoun clause, οὓς ἐγὼ ἀγαπῶ ἐν ἀληθείᾳ.[536] This again shows a special relationship between the author and his recipients as well as a measure of affection and a zeal for the truth.

Some translations choose to translate παιδία and τεκνία as 'dear friends', but this is not a good idea. While Johannes Louw and Eugene Nida argue that these two terms refer to "a person of any age for whom there is a special relationship of endearment and association" and thus give the glosses: 'my child, my dear friend, my dear man, my dear one, my dear lad', [537] other lexicons such as *BDAG* and *LSJ* do not

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[532] Brown, *Epistles of John*, 214. Brown goes on to say that the paternal language used here and elsewhere in the NT reflects the teaching of wisdom teachers who were accustomed to address those they instructed as 'child' or 'children' a practice which had its origins in a father's instructions to his sons.

[533] See for example: M. M. Thompson, *1–3 John* (IVPNTC; ed. G. R. Osborne; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1992), 48; P. Balla, *The Child-Parent Relationship in the New Testament snd Its Environment* (Tubingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 221; Witherington III, *A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on Titus, 1-2 Timothy and 1-3 John*, 458; Kruse, *The Letters of John*, 71.

[534] Yarbrough, *1–3 John*, 116.

[535] See the discussion in footnote 486 re whether these terms refer to one, two, three, or four groups of people.

[536] It is not critical for the discussion here, but for a succinct airing of the various scholarly views of who these terms refer to, see Akin, *1, 2, 3 John*, 220n224.

[537] Louw and Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the NT Based on Semantic Domains*, 109. In fact, they suggest that in a number of languages the best translation of παιδία in Jn. 21:5 is 'my good friends', 'my dear friends', or 'my dear comrades' because a translation involving the word 'children' in many languages would suggest a kinship relationship. Nevertheless, they agree that "the connotation of affection and endearment is in focus".

include 'friend' as a gloss for these terms. The two Greek terms convey the idea of the endearment shown by a parent for a much-loved child and Yarbrough suggests: "John's usage is of a piece with other General Epistles whose authors frequently use 'beloved' to connote both heartfelt human closeness and grateful acknowledgment of the corporate experience of undeserved divine favour."[538] Elsewhere, he comments, "As their spiritual advisor, if not father, it is appropriate for John to employ a term that is evocative of his leadership role yet at the same time of the divine parentage and resultant sibling ties shared by readers and writer."[539]

Τεκνία μου, however, is not the only form of address in the Johannine Letters. The other common vocative is ἀγαπητοί (frequently translated as 'beloved' or 'dear friends').[540] With this word too, a number of commentators have questioned the translation 'dear friends' as failing to capture the essence of the true meaning of this word. Gary Burge for example, thinks that the NIV translation of ἀγαπητοί as 'dear friends' "misses the power of John's endearing language".[541] An examination of some of the major lexicons shows that the term ἀγαπητός does not receive any gloss that includes 'friend' (cf. *BDAG*, *LSJ*, and *Louw & Nida*);[542] rather they indicate that the meaning is more intense than 'friend', giving glosses such as: 'loved dearly', 'only beloved', 'prized', 'valued', 'one who is in a very special relationship with another'. The *ISBE* entry on 'beloved' describes the term ἀγαπητός in the NT being "used exclusively of divine and Christian love, an affection begotten in the community of the new spiritual life in Christ".[543] Thus the term ἀγαπητός not only communicates love and affection for the recipients, it also highlights their status as beloved of God.[544] Gaius, in particular is singled out by name for special treatment as one who is much loved; he is

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538 Yarbrough, *1–3 John*, 97.

539 Yarbrough, *1–3 John*, 322.

540 1 Jn. 2:7; 3:2, 21; 4:1, 7, 11; 3 Jn. 1, 2, 5, 11. This is 10 of the total 61 references in the NT – a remarkably high frequency for three short epistles, which leads us to conclude that it is a significant term for the author who wants to describe his relationship with his recipients in affectionate terms.

541 Burge, *Letters of John*, 100, n.107.

542 The word available for 'friend' is φίλος.

543 D. M. Pratt, "Beloved," *ISBE* 455.

544 Cf. Marshall, *The Epistles of John*, 128; Painter, *1, 2, and 3 John*, 178; Derickson, *First, Second, and Third John*; Yarbrough, *1–3 John*, 96. Yarbrough, for example, argues:

> A range of older commentators translates "beloved" (Westcott 1883:52; Holtzmann 1908:332; Schlatter 1950:25 ["Geliebte"]), with no thought of a connotation of "friends" (cf. LSJ 6, where no gloss suggestive of "friends" is offered). For that the word φίλος (*philos*, friend) was available. But φίλος is never used in the NT to denote the relatedness that exists among Christian believers because of their shared union with Christ. Rather, lexical treatments often center on the connotation of the word "beloved," not in familiar terms of human friendship, but with reference to "the community of the new spiritual life in Christ" (D. M. Pratt, *ISBE* 1:432; cf. Westcott 1883:52), which in turn is associated with divine election (W. Günther and H.-G. Link, *NIDNTT* 2:544–45). Christians

addressed three times with the term Ἀγαπητέ (3 Jn. 2, 5, 11), and the qualifying relative pronoun clause ὃν ἐγὼ ἀγαπῶ ἐν ἀληθείᾳ is also applied to him. Similarly, Demetrius is also singled out as one who μεμαρτύρηται ὑπὸ πάντων καὶ ὑπὸ αὐτῆς τῆς ἀληθείας and to this the author adds his own testimony: καὶ ἡμεῖς δὲ μαρτυροῦμεν (3 Jn. 12). While the verb μαρτυρέω does not necessarily imply affection or emotion, the cumulative effect of everyone, the truth, and the Johannine author testifying to Demetrius suggests that he was held in high regard and with some affection.[545] On one occasion (1 Jn. 3:13), the author addresses his recipients with the vocative ἀδελφοί, a term which should be considered gender inclusive and which shows a familial relationship with his readers. Brown describes the term ἀδελφός as one of "inner-Johannine affection".[546] There thus seems little doubt that the Johannine author's terms of address – τεκνία (μου), παιδία, ἀγαπητοί, ἀδελφοί – carry a level of affection for his recipients.

The key passage on love in the Epistles, 1 John 4:7-21, contrasts God's love and ours, and we are urged to love others because God loved us (vv. 7, 11f., 19-21). But when we read that God loves us, does that mean he shows emotion or affection? Verses 9 and 10 certainly indicate the commitment involved in God loving us – he sent his one and only Son to give us life; he sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice. It is difficult for us to imagine that such an act by God would be devoid of emotion; that it would be purely a pragmatic action, or that it would involve purposeful sending without any concern, emotion, or affection either for his Son, or the recipients of his Son's death and atoning sacrifice. The change in verse 14 from saying that God sent his Son, to saying that "the Father has sent his Son", may have been a deliberate ploy to evoke

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> are "beloved" (not just "dear friends") because God has set his affection on them, in the same sense that his own Son was at once both "the beloved" (Matt. 3:17; 12:18 [cf. Isa. 42:1]; Matt. 17:5) and "the chosen" one (Luke 9:35; 23:35). Old Testament precedent for the close association between divine love and divine election is clear and extensive. In expressing affection for one another, God's people are acknowledging God's prior benevolent regard for them, which makes their loving community possible and fills mere human love with transcendent promise.

For a contra view that ἀγαπητός does not indicate a particularly close relationship between parties see Lieu, *I, II & III John: A Commentary*, 266f. Lieu suggests that this is why the relative pronoun clauses in 2 Jn. 1 and 3 Jn. 1 are added – they add a personal element.

[545] One might be tempted to argue that the use of personal names here also indicates an interest and affection in the person being so named but this would be reading too much into the use of a name. Diotrephes is also named explicitly but he is described as ὁ φιλοπρωτεύων αὐτῶν and λόγοις πονηροῖς φλυαρῶν ἡμᾶς and οὔτε αὐτὸς ἐπιδέχεται τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς καὶ τοὺς βουλομένους κωλύει καὶ ἐκ τῆς ἐκκλησίας ἐκβάλλει (3 Jn. 9-10). The use of specific names seems to function more to highlight a particular example of a person who exhibits certain characteristics, both good and bad – Gaius is a beloved brother and dear friend who exhibits great faithfulness and love, Demetrius is the finest example of one who has a good reputation with everyone, Diotrephes is the epitome of an inhospitable, self-serving, obstructionist – in fact he is the epitome of evil (3 Jn. 11).

[546] Brown, *Epistles of John*, 270.

an emotional connection in humans of the cost of giving up one's son, by introducing a familial relationship term.[547]

However, to speak in this way may simply be to impose anthropomorphic emotions on God.[548] In whatever way love operates for God, it results in action in the interests of others and this is the driver for how we are to respond. Verse 11 indicates that since God loved us, we are to also show love to one another; now that may simply mean that we too are to act in the interest of others, but for us it is impossible to divorce such actions from emotions. Given the emotion-charged existence of humankind, it seems incongruous that God would expect people to act towards each other dispassionately while acting in one another's interests. The fact that people are to love as he loves and that his love is made complete in people implies that God himself has some level of affection or emotion in his expression of love.[549] Furthermore, we are told in verse 18 that the emotion of fear is absent from love which implies that there can be, and perhaps should be, emotions tied to the action of love (just not fear). If love is made complete in people and, for people, love most often incorporates emotion and affection, it stands to reason that the source of that emotion or affection is God himself, since humanity is made in the image of God;[550] God loves with

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[547] It may however, have been a deliberate ploy to introduce a trinitarian reference to the action of God in giving us of himself, with the mention of Spirit in verse 13, and Father and the Son in verse 14 – all involved in establishing the relationship of mutual indwelling – God (Father, Son, and Spirit) in the believer, and the believer in God (Father, Son, and Spirit). However, a similar transition from 'God' to 'Father' also occurs in 2 Jn. 9 where there is no mention of Spirit, and of course the relationship between God and his Son is presented in the familial terms of 'Father' and 'Son' elsewhere in John's Epistles – cf. 1 Jn. 1:2-3; 2:1, 14-16, 22-24; 3:1; 2 Jn. 3-4 – so the change from 'God' to 'Father' in 4:14 is not necessarily to introduce a trinitarian reference.

[548] For an excellent discussion on the whole issue of whether God demonstrates emotion, see R. Lister, *God is Impassible and Impassioned: Toward a Theology of Divine Emotion* (Nottingham: InterVarsity Press, 2012).

[549] Lister argues that the Church Fathers seem to think of the incarnation as proof of, or the means whereby, deity experiences suffering; they believed that God was impassible in essence (and was unmoved by an outside force), but via the incarnation entered into experiences of emotion. Lister's survey of various Church Fathers provides ample evidence that they believed in a transcendent God who is not subject to the same passions and emotions of men, but who still shows emotions. He argues that the overwhelming view of the Patristic Fathers is that God is impassible, but in the sense that he is not subject to involuntary affection; he can and does show emotion as he chooses and does so entirely consistently with his unchanging and unwavering attributes. He is not ruled by his emotions, nor "experiences any and every kind of emotion known to man", but only those which are suited to and arise from his perfection. See Lister, *Impassible & Impassioned*, 64-94. It is acknowledged that one cannot give any sort of worthwhile treatment of such a complex debate here, and the reader is encouraged to read Lister's book to get a balanced and well-articulated view on the matter of God's impassibility.

[550] The early Church Father, Tertullian, argues that the point of comparison between the divine and the human regarding emotions actually flows from the divine to the human – "And this, therefore, is to be deemed the likeness of God in man, that the human soul have the same emotions and sensations as God, although they are not of the same kind;" (Tertullian, *Against Marcion* 2.16). See Tertullian, "The Five Books against Marcion.," in *Latin Christianity: Its Founder, Tertullian* (eds. A. Roberts, et al.; vol. 3 of *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*; trans. P. Holmes; Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Company, 1885).

emotion and affection and people also love with emotion and affection,[551] and in fact should do so with holy and righteous emotions – not fear, and envy, and jealousy – but as Paul says elsewhere, with joy and peace and patience and kindness and goodness and faithfulness and gentleness and self-control (Gal. 5:22-23). In addition, verse 17 says that in this world we are like Jesus and he certainly displayed emotions, so it seems that emotion is part of what it means to be like Jesus, to love as Jesus loved, to love as God loved.

But what of 1 John 5:1-3, which seems to suggest that love for God is about obedience, not the expression of an emotion? As John Stott succinctly states: "Love for God is not an emotional experience so much as a moral commitment."[552] There is little doubt that the Johannine author is arguing that love for God by those who have been regenerated is only real and evident when God's commands are kept – a consistent message of John's Gospel (cf. 14:15, 21, 23–24, 31; 15:10) – and this includes the command to love others, notably those who have likewise been transformed by the regenerating work of God. In fact, love for one's brothers and sisters is a prominent theme of 1 John (2:10; 3:10, 14, 18, 23; 4:7–8, 11–12, 19, 21), more prominent than love for God, though of course he is the divine motivator for it. As Yarbrough notes: "Just as siblings in a family normally hold each other in high regard, members of God's household care for one another and regard each other with the affection of personal kin in key respects. (Nothing indicates, however, that John intends this to be a criticism of natural family affection.)".[553] One way in which such love or affection for a brother or sister might be manifested is the concern that one shows in correcting a brother or sister who is sinning and in praying for their 'salvation' from this particular sin (1 Jn. 5:16-17). Implicit in such an action is the regard that one has for a brother or sister such that one is prepared to risk a negative response in order to help them avoid a greater condemnation; this is indeed a measure of affection. The Second and Third Epistles of John reinforce that love is not simply an emotion; it has a concrete manifestation which is intrinsically tied up with truth (cf. 2 Jn. 1-6; 3 Jn. 1-4).

The wishes that the Johannine author expresses for his recipients may also indicate his affection for them. In 3 John 2, the author prays that Gaius may enjoy good health and that all may go well with him physically even as he was getting along well spiritually. While some commentators think this is nothing more than the standard Graeco-Roman letter introduction and therefore does not indicate any close relationship

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[551] As Lister argues, this does not mean that divine and human emotion are exactly the same; rather they are analogical not identical in every respect; man is finite, visible, and passible while God is infinite, invisible, and impassible, but impassibility should not be interpreted as detached, apathetic, and unemotional. See Lister, *Impassible & Impassioned*, 68f.

[552] J. R. W. Stott, *The Letters of John: An Introduction and Commentary* (TNTC 19; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 173.

[553] Yarbrough, *1–3 John*, 270.

between the author and Gaius (so Brown),[554] others (e.g. Yarbrough)[555] do think that it is indicative of a close relationship. The fact that the author expresses joy (an emotion) over various believers' progress in faithfulness and walking in the truth (2 Jn. 4; 3 Jn. 3-4) reinforces the view that the relationship between the author and the recipients is more than a teacher-disciple, master-servant, leader-follower relationship. The desire to speak face-to-face about certain matters and the desire to be with the recipients soon (2 Jn. 12; 3 Jn. 13-14) demonstrate a pastoral concern and perhaps also a degree of affection. While the desire to see Gaius soon (3 Jn. 14) may reflect a concern over the urgency of dealing with Diotrephes, it would also still reflect a concern for the damage that Diotrephes might do to Gaius and the rest of the church, and this could well be expressing an element of affection for the recipients.

The one place in the NT where fellow believers are called 'friends' (φίλοι) is found in 3 John 15. It is an unusual way to describe fellow believers, for the term ἀδελφοί was more normally used. Φίλοι may, of course, derive from Jesus' use of the term to describe his disciples in John 15:13-15 where he says "Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends [φίλοι]", and then he adds "You are my friends [φίλοι] if you do what I command"; he also says that he calls them 'friends' because he has shared everything that he had learned from the Father with them. Most scholars, then, see the term in 3 John as an equivalent term to 'brothers',[556] but see more on this in section 6.2.1 (*Descriptions of the Recipients*).

We thus conclude that while φιλία was not the Johannine author's preferred term to describe relationships within the Christian community (including the community he shared with the recipients of his letters), the notion of friendship with affection is certainly evident in his writings. He saw Christian relationships as a form of κοινωνία based on shared beliefs; even though he was in a teacher-disciple relationship with the recipients of his writings, he continually identified himself with his audience, and continuously reinforced his affection for them, rejoicing over the reports he heard of them, commending them for how they continued to walk in the truth and demonstrate care for one another, expressing his concern for their well-being as a result of the threats to their beliefs from those who had proven themselves not to be a part of them, and sharing with them deep truths that would encourage them. The various expressions of his desire to be with them, to talk face-to-face with them, and to share their joy, all demonstrate that love and affection were a part of the relationships between believers in the NT world.

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554 Brown, *Epistles of John*, 739.

555 Yarbrough, *1–3 John*, 364.

556 E.g. Akin, *1, 2, 3 John*, 252; W. H. Harris III, *1, 2, 3 John – Comfort and Counsel for a Church in Crisis* (Galaxie Software, 2003), 269.

5.1.4.2. Conclusion re the Johannine View of Φιλία and the Emotions

The Johannine author, in his writings, is not doing something unique or new in expressing affection to his recipients; as we have seen, emotion and often affection were part and parcel of friendships in the first century Graeco-Roman world. The letters of John, like the letters of Pliny, reflect common features of first century letter writing – identifications of the sender and recipients, and greetings and salutations directed to the readers and their particular situations, and both contain expressions of affection. In this regard, the Johannine literature supports the views of those scholars who argue that emotion is a feature of friendship in the Graeco-Roman world.

However, there is a difference in the motivation for the affection. In the Graeco-Roman literature, affection is motivated by virtue, experience, duty, or altruism – for some, affection rises up naturally when they have friends with whom they share the same virtues and love for what is good; for some, affection is the result of a benefit they receive from a friendship (whether that be utility or pleasure); for some, affection accompanies their duty as a 'superior' providing care and concern for their 'inferiors' or subordinates (e.g. their wife, their household, their clients); and for some, expressions of affection were a means of trumpeting their acts of altruism as they sought to fulfil their civic responsibility. The Johannine author argues that there is to be a very different motivation for affection. In the Johannine Epistles, rather than being motivated by something like self-interest or benefits received, affection is motivated by the love of God – the love which God demonstrates to people is to be reciprocated with love for God (shown by obedience) and love for others (shown by care for others). There is no sense of φιλία being shown for one's own benefit.

Perhaps the biggest difference between the Graeco-Roman literature and the Johannine literature is in the usage of the familial terms of address to express endearment and affection. The Johannine author continually commends, reminds, exhorts, commands, warns, and rebukes his readers using familial and affectionate terms of address to communicate his intense fatherly passion for them, and his strong desire to protect and help them.

5.2. Conclusions re the Johannine Usage of 'Truth' and 'Love'

5.2.1. The Language of Truth

Andreas Köstenberger notes that the term 'truth' had currency in Greek philosophy, Roman thought, and the Hebrew Bible (which includes many uses in the LXX). In Greek philosophy one of the senses of *alētheia* involved an accurate perspective on reality; the Romans similarly spoke of *veritas* as a factual

representation of events; in the Hebrew Scriptures however, 'truth' (*'emeth, 'emunah*) primarily conveyed the notion of God's faithfulness revealed throughout the history of Israel.[557] Not surprisingly then, this has led to different suggestions re what influenced the Johannine author when he wrote about 'truth'. The suggestions, however, can largely be divided into two main streams – Graeco-Roman influences (e.g. Platonic dualistic thought, Gnosticism, Philo's allegorical exegesis) and Jewish focused influences (e.g. the OT, wider Judaism, rabbinic literature, Qumran literature).

In broad terms, Greek or Hellenistic thinking about 'truth' has two nuances: (1) it can refer to 'that which corresponds to the real facts' and thus refer to the abstract quality of truthfulness or the content of a statement; or (2) it can refer to 'reality' as opposed to 'appearance'.[558] In this latter usage, it is an abstract or theoretical concept tied closely with some timeless extra-historical realm which supposedly represents reality, whereas the physical world we see is in fact merely the appearance of what is real. As such 'truth' is something which cannot be seen, lacks any concrete form, does not change or deteriorate in any way, and is present only in a place of transcendence, perhaps the heavenly places; it may even be equated with the eternal, divine being or substance. However, it does have some impact on humanity for from this transcendent place comes an appeal to humankind to conform themselves to truth, or at least to seek to attain it by turning away from the physical world with its focus on the senses. Such conforming or seeking would endow human beings with the power believed to inhabit the divine or heavenly and may even, by some mystical experience, transform a person such that they merge with or become part of the heavenly substance.[559] The second of these two nuances (i.e. 'reality' as opposed to 'appearance') is perhaps the primary Hellenistic meaning of ἀλήθεια.

On the other hand, Hebrew or Hebraic thinking (both in the OT and Judaism of the intertestamental period and first century AD) viewed 'truth' as grounded in God's faithfulness, which is revealed in his words and deeds and evidenced in his involvement in the lives and experiences of his people; they in response practised truth in their daily encounters with each other and the nations around them, by exhibiting honesty, integrity, and moral uprightness.[560] As such, it is more of a moral concept than an intellectual one, and has the connotation of 'trustworthiness' or 'steadfastness' which is very much part of the character of God.

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[557] Köstenberger, "'What is Truth?'": 34.

[558] Hawkin, "Johannine Concept of Truth": 6.

[559] Aalen, "Truth," 4.

[560] Lioy, "Truth": 70.

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In the last generation of scholarly work on the Johannine literature, the focus has seemingly shifted. In the past many scholars argued for a Hellenistic dualistic philosophical background to the concept of 'truth' with the meaning of ἀλήθεια hovering between 'reality' or the 'ultimate real', and the knowledge of the real.[561] It is not surprising that scholars have seen such a dualistic philosophical influence behind the Johannine literature because there are unequivocal references to Jesus coming from above (Jn. 1:14; 3:31; 5:43; 8:23, 42; 13:1, 3; 1 Jn. 1:2; 3:5; 4:2, 9-10, 14; 5:19-20) to the world below. As far back as 1927, however, Geerhardus Vos was arguing that it is a mistake to conceive of the heavenly-earthly contrast as primarily intended to convey philosophical ideas. He says:

> The difference between "the true things" and "the not-true things" is not conceived after a Platonic or Philonic fashion. The world above is not called "true" as though it contained a higher reality of being in the substantial metaphysical sense. Both spheres are equally real. The difference comes in through an appraisal of quality and importance. What is practically involved is the principle of ultimate spiritual value in regard to destiny. The practical name for this is the principle of "otherworldliness."[562]

After examining various ideas found conjoined with the concept of 'truth' in the Johannine writings (e.g. fellowship, love, teaching, and command),[563] Ernst Wendland concludes that the author is trying to get across to his readers the answer to the question, "What is [the] truth?". Wendland suggests that the Johannine author sees truth as a broad concept related to "the general framework of *factivity*, or consistency in relation to externally verifiable facts",[564] but that in any given reference to 'truth' more than one nuance of meaning within this broad framework may well apply. Wendland concludes:

> *TRUTH* in the sense of reality, genuineness, validity, reliability, revelation, fidelity, and Christological doctrine (whatever shading happens to apply in a given Johannine passage) is basically an active, concrete concept, one that focuses on the facts of a matter. It is manifested in two chief ways: a true personal confession of faith in Christ as the incarnate God-man (i.e. TEACHING), and an active LOVE for fellow believers. The

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561 Waal, "The Gospel According to John and the Old Testament": 29.

562 Vos, "'True' and 'Truth'".

563 More on this later. Wendland has correctly noted the connections between various themes in the Johannine literature including the connection between 'truth' and 'love' and 'fellowship' which is a focus of this dissertation.

564 Wendland, "What is Truth?": 312.

> result is an unbreakable bond of FELLOWSHIP with both God and man that reaches its consummation in Spiritual LIFE, both now and in the eternal hereafter.[565]

It would seem that for the Johannine author 'truth' is a multi-faceted and fully-orbed concept. It combines the insights and conceptual frameworks of both the Hellenistic and Hebraic worlds (and likely multiple perspectives within each of these two broad conceptual backgrounds) and it is unhelpful to overemphasise one conceptual background over another. 'Truth' for the Johannine author is that which is in accordance with the facts or reality and finds its ultimate expression in the character of God, and this is made visible to humanity in the person of Jesus who embodies truth, making God's faithfulness and reliability known by acting only in accordance with what the Father has revealed and made known. The followers of Jesus are to also demonstrate these same characteristics in their own lives, to speak and act in ways that are in accordance with the character of God who has given them the Spirit of Truth to guide them in understanding what truth is and how it is to be manifested in their lives. The extensive dualistic metaphors used by the Johannine author – e.g. 'truth' and 'falsehood/lie', 'light' and 'darkness', 'reality' and 'appearance', 'Spirit' and 'flesh', 'the Spirit of truth' and 'the spirit of deceit', 'life' and 'death', and 'love' and 'hatred' – are not reflecting a philosophical distinction between an ideal transcendent world of reality and an actual visible world that we inhabit, but the means of contrasting two modes of existence; a mode that is guided by God through his revelation in Jesus and the guiding presence of the Holy Spirit, and a mode which follows the values and mores of the world.

Thus Johannine 'truth' represents *true reality* as an implicit contrast to *false reality* – whether that be dualistic Platonic ideas of the world above and the world below, the false claims of the Roman Empire re providing life and peace, a misunderstanding of God's covenant relationship that excused personal responsibility, or the false teaching of those opposed to the gospel who were seeking to mislead the Johannine communities.

When we look carefully at the Johannine writings for what the author says about truth and how he speaks frankly to his readers, and then do the same with his contemporary writers, who also wrote about similar things, it becomes fairly obvious that there are many similarities in what they say about truth, truth-telling, and how truth is to be received. But we also find some stark differences. There are similarities in the context and characteristics of truth-telling, but differences in who can speak the truth, where they can speak it, how it is expected to be received, and what 'truth' actually means.

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[565] Wendland, "What is Truth?": 314. Capitals and italics original.

5.2.2. The Language of Love

While the NT does not seem to display the same interest as the Graeco-Roman writers in friendship as an ideal or in the virtues and qualities which should characterise filial relationships, the same φίλος/φιλεῖν words are used in the everyday secular Greek sense of 'friend' by NT writers, especially Luke in his Gospel and Acts. The words were used to refer to friends, to close filial or para-familial relationships (e.g. Mt. 10:37; Tit. 3:15), to friendship with God (Jam. 2:23), and to Jesus' friendship with tax-collectors and sinners (Mt. 11:19; Lk. 7:34). But as we have seen above, it is in the NT book which most uses the ἀγάπη/ἀγαπᾶν word group, i.e. John's Gospel, that the φίλος/φιλεῖν concept receives its most distinctive NT treatment. It is used to speak of God's love (for his Son, Jn. 5:20; for human beings, Jn. 16:27a), of Jesus' love for individuals (Lazarus, Jn. 11:3, 11, 36; an unnamed disciple, Jn. 20:2), and of the disciples' love for Jesus (Jn. 16:27b; see also John the Baptist's use of φίλος in 3:29 where he identifies himself as a 'friend' of the bridegroom, Jesus). Jesus also declares his disciples to be 'friends' instead of 'slaves' and describes laying down one's life for one's friends with the term ἀγάπη (Jn. 15:12-15).[566]

While the ἀγάπη/ἀγαπᾶν word group was not a significant part of the classical Greek religious and philosophical vocabulary of love it was not unknown and was starting to gain ascendency over the φίλος/φιλεῖν words to describe non-sensual love. In any case, the NT writers seem to have preferred the ἀγαπ- words to ἔρως and that may be because the term ἀγάπη did not have the philosophical, religious, and ethical baggage associated with ἔρως, and to a lesser extent, with φιλία. The question that is difficult to answer is whether the ἀγαπ- forms for love in the New Testament undergo a fundamental revaluation in relation to the common Greek language usage and have a theological import attached to them. Anders Nygren evidently thinks so,[567] and so does Hélène Petré. She argues that the early Christian claim of a new gospel required a new vocabulary to express that claim and its ramifications, and because the early Christian writers were not privy to some special language but rather spoke the languages of their context, first Greek and then Latin, they utilised and redefined the language available to them.[568]

When the various types of literature and eras are compared, it is evident that there are several shades of meaning for the concept of love and that it operates in different ways at different levels, though there is overlap in meanings and expression. The love which operates between deity and humanity (the love of a

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566 Furnish, *The LOVE Command*, 227.

567 Nygren, *Agape and Eros*.

568 H Pétré, *Caritas: Étude sur le vocabulaire latin de la charité chrétienne* (Louvain: Spicilegium sacrum Lovaniense, 1948), 8-14; see also C. Lindberg, *Love: A Brief History through Western Christianity* (Malden, MA.: Blackwell, 2008), 16f.

god for human beings and the love of human beings for the divine) is expressed differently to the love that is expressed purely within the human sphere, which in itself consists of a wide variety of expressions of love, often determined by the object of love – one's self, one's partner, one's family, one's close friends, one's community/nation, other people, or other things.

Divine-Human Love

In the sphere of divine-human love there is firstly the love of God for human beings – the care and concern of the divine for his creation.[569] This kind of love is found in the Qumran literature and the biblical literature, though in the former, it is limited to the forefathers and members of the sect, while the biblical literature (especially the Johannine) displays a much broader recipient base. The Gospel of John highlights the love of God for all humanity, for the κόσμος (Jn. 3:16); the Epistles on the other hand, like the Qumran literature, seem to highlight more God's love for his 'children'. Nevertheless, this love is described in 1 John in terms of the mission of God's Son and his death on behalf of the sins of humankind (1 Jn. 2:28-3:10; 4:9-10, 14-16). Thus, God's love for humankind is expressed both in terms of the love of God in sending his Son, and in terms of the love of the Son Jesus in laying down his life – his death being the clearest manifestation of love (see 1 Jn. 3:16). This idea of God loving the world seems to be absent in the pseudepigraphal works as it is also absent in much of the classical literature. Also, the idea that God loves his Son and that this love forms the basis of all real love is foreign to the Qumran group.[570]

Secondly, there is the love of human beings for God. This is an idea found in all of the literature examined and may have originated in the OT where it seems often to be connected with keeping the commandments. What the Johannine literature does is to argue that keeping the commandments is not irksome because of God's love. Correct love entails a series of 'positive' beliefs and actions (e.g. knowledge of Jesus, keeping his commands and the commands of God, active exclusion of love for the world since this equates to enmity towards God), while incorrect love is essentially a failure to do these things or to do the opposite.

Finally, the conception of friendship between God and a human being is a uniquely biblical idea in which God and human beings are almost seen as 'equals' in the context of friendship, a relationship which is expressed in spending time with one another, confiding in one another, and sharing plans.

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[569] Here deity refers to 'God' by which is meant the Christian conception of God rather than the Graeco-Roman pantheon of the gods. While some of what is said would equally apply to other gods, it is the Christian God who shows the greatest concern for his creation.

[570] Fensham, "Qumrân & John," 74.

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Human-Human Love

In the sphere of human love there are perhaps three clusters or semantic domains of the language of 'love': (1) sensual love – which expresses itself in spontaneity and passion, and involves caressing, kissing, fondling, and the sexual act; (2) affection or friendship – which can be expressed in a variety of ways including choice, showing preference or favour, obligation, duty, adherence, faithfulness, self-giving or sacrifice; and (3) pity – which manifests itself in altruism, duty, and obligation. These three domains represent the expression of love appropriate to the 'distance' of the object of love from the one loving – sensual love is appropriate for the closest and most intimate relationship which the Bible reserves exclusively for the husband-wife relationship; affectionate love or friendship is the kind of love appropriate to the family, friends, and communities; pity, which results in altruistic action, is most often directed towards the more distant person in need whom we have seen or about whom we have heard.

The literature reviewed earlier shows evidence of all three expressions of human love, but it is the idea of love for other human beings, the 'love for one another' that is most fully developed, though with some variation in the different types of literature. For example, in the OT love for the neighbour is first and foremost for one's compatriots but can extend outwards in concentric circle to include others. In the Qumran writings, love is often presented as a dualistic command – love those within the community but hate those outside (the enemies of God). The Synoptic Gospels, and the Pauline and Deutero-Pauline Epistles, have a broad meaning for 'one another' incorporating not just the Christian community but the wider community and even one's enemies. In the Johannine epistles, where the 'neighbour' of Lev. 19:18 is changed to 'brother' (1 Jn. 4:21), the recipients seem to be narrowed down. However, 'brother' was used in the first century to denote membership of a community,[571] so perhaps not too much should be made of this apparent narrowing. The motivation for such love also differs in the different writings. In the Johannine literature a person is to love their brother or sister because God first loved them, which he proved by sending his Son Jesus Christ, who in turn loved humanity so much that he readily died to save them.

In his analysis of Plutarch's essay *De Fraterno Amore*, Hans Dieter Betz notes that terms and concepts related to 'brotherly love' could appear frequently in the NT with little explanation of their meaning because the concept was well known and simply pre-supposed. However, he also notes that in Christianity the terms are transformed and no longer refer to family relationships, but to the Christian

[571] A person can be figuratively viewed as a brother in terms of close affinity, someone who shares beliefs, a compatriot, or even someone who shares neither faith nor nationality but is simply a neighbour. See for example Arndt, et al., *BDAG*, s.v. ἀδελφός.2.

'brotherhood'[572] – a brotherhood which is spiritual rather than familial. Within the Christian community, family relationships are relativised – made second in importance to, or even rejected as incompatible with, the kingdom of God; the Christian 'brother' is given priority over the 'natural' brother.[573] Plutarch himself had recognised that the natural bonds of brotherhood were under strain, which was why he wrote *De Fraterno Amore*.[574] The early Christian writers also found that there was a crisis in family relations as part of the eschatological crisis and as a consequence of Jesus' message (cf. Lk. 12:49-53; 14:26) but they overcame this crisis, according to Betz, with the new concept of love for which they used the term ἀγάπη and which for them was identical with Christian 'brotherhood'.[575] In addition to Betz's suggestion about 'love', I would add that the early Christian writers, and the Johannine author in particular, came to understand that the Graeco-Roman concept of 'friendship' needed to be broadened and reframed for the Christian community, in order to express the new kind of relationship that was to exist amongst the followers of Jesus.

5.3.The Reframing of 'Friendship' as 'Fellowship'

Having considered the Johannine perspective on 'truth' and 'love' and having raised the issue that the Johannine author's understanding of these two idea caused him to reframe his thinking about how relationships in the Christian community should be formed and maintained, it is necessary to establish more firmly that what the Johannine author is doing is broadening and reframing the Graeco-Roman idea of 'friendship'. Κοινωνία ('fellowship') becomes the new paradigm.

In the opening verses of his first letter, the Johannine author states that one of his intentions in writing is that 'fellowship' might exist in all their relationships – between them and himself (1 Jn. 1:3b), between them and God (1 Jn. 1:3c), and within their community (1 Jn. 1:7). Straight away, we are alerted to the fact that the relationship between the sender and his recipients is only part of his concern, and such a relationship cannot be separated from the relationships that each of them has with God, nor from the

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572 Betz, "De Fraterno Amore," 232. See also Furnish, *The LOVE Command*, 231.

573 Betz, "De Fraterno Amore," 233. Such a term as 'brother' should not be seen as excluding women. Betz goes on to argue that the Christian 'brotherhood' overcomes the old problem of φιλαδελφία referring to men only since the 'spiritual brotherhood' incudes 'sisters in Christ' as well as giving them equal status even when only 'brothers' are mentioned.

574 See Plutarch, "On Brotherly Love," in *Moralia VI* (vol. 337 of *LCL,* ed. J. Henderson; trans. W. C. Helmbold; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1939), ch. 1.

575 Betz, "De Fraterno Amore," 234.

way that the recipients relate to each other. The Greek word for 'fellowship' (κοινωνία) occurs 19 times in the NT with 4 of these occurring in 1 John (1:3 [2x], 6, 7).[576]

5.3.1. The Non-Biblical Usage of Κοινωνία (and *Societas*)

According to *BDAG*, κοινωνία has the meaning of "close association involving mutual interests and sharing, *association, communion, fellowship, close relationship*".[577] Aristotle uses the term κοινωνία extensively and in a variety of ways: for business partnerships (*NE* VIII.14.1163a), commercial arrangements (*NE* V.5.1133a-b; *NE* IX.1.1164a), the marriage relationship (including the sexual union) (VII.10.1242a; *Oeconomica* I.III.1343b), social associations (including religious guilds and dining clubs) (*NE* VIII.9.1160a), and common occupations (*NE* IV.8.1128b); he also calls the household the 'primary association' [πρώτη κοινωνία] (*Pol.* I.1257a).[578] However, most occurrences of the word in Aristotle's writings refer to civic associations, i.e. political communities (*NE* V.1.1129b1130a; numerous references in *Politics* which is all about ἡ κοινωνία ἡ πολιτική). In fact, Aristotle argues that κοινωνία finds its highest form in the political sphere; the state was a partnership of free men (κοινωνία τῶν ἐλευθέρων) (*Pol.* III.1279a), and all associations (κοινωνίαι) – trading groups, sailors, comrades in arms, religious guilds, dining clubs – were all parts of the association of the state, and thus lesser than the political form of κοινωνία (*NE* VIII.9.1159b-1160a). He actually begins his treatise on politics by saying:

> Every state is as we see a sort of partnership [κοινωνίαν], and every partnership [κοινωνίαν] is formed with a view to some good (since all the actions of all mankind are done with a view to what they think to be good). It is therefore evident that, while all partnerships aim at some good, the partnership that is the most supreme of all and includes all the others does so most of all, and aims at the most supreme of all goods; and this is the partnership entitled the state, the political association [ἡ κοινωνία ἡ πολιτική]. (*Politics* I.1252a)[579]

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576 The verbal form κοινωνέω, to 'share, have a share, participate in' occurs 13 times in the Septuagint (2 Chron. 20:35; Job 34:8; Prov. 1:11; Ecc. 9:4; Wisd. of Sol. 6:23; Sirach 13:1, 2, 17; 2 Macc. 5:20; 14:25; 3 Macc. 2:31; 4:11) and 8 times in the NT (Rom. 12:13; 15:27; Gal. 6:6; Phil. 4:15; 1 Tim. 5:22; Heb. 2:14; 1 Pet. 4:13; and 2 Jn. 11).

577 Arndt, et al., *BDAG*, s.v. κοινωνία.1.

578 Aristotle says that the friendship of a man and wife is one of utility, a partnership, and that married life is akin to the partnership between citizens [ἐγγὺς τῆς πολιτικῆς κοινωνίας ὁ βίος αὐτῶν] since although the wife is inferior to her husband, she is closer to him than anyone else in the household and in a sense more nearly his equal (*Magna Moralia* I.1194b). He also uses the term κοινωνία for more unusual 'partnerships' – e.g. the association formed between the soul and the body (*On Length and Shortness of Life* 465a), and the pairing of animals (*Historia Animalium* VIII.612b).

579 Translation from Aristotle, *XXI: Politics* (LCL 264; ed. J. Henderson; trans. H. Rackham; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1944). See also *Politics* II.I.1260b-1261a; VII.VII.1328a.

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Of particular interest to this thesis is the way that Aristotle links φιλία and κοινωνία. He suggests that all friendship (φιλία) involves community (κοινωνία) (*NE* VIII.12.1161b) and community is the essence of friendship (ἐν κοινωνίᾳ γὰρ ἡ φιλία) (*NE* VIII.9.1159b; VIII.12.1161b; IX.12.1171b – "friendship is essentially a partnership"). In addition, just as there are different kinds of equality in friendship (φιλία), so there are different kinds of equality in a partnership (κοινωνία). Aristotle notes that there is numerical equality where the two parties really are equal, and there is proportional equality where the two parties equally contribute their relative proportion to the arrangement – such are aristocratic and royal partnerships (*EE* VII.9.1241b). Aristotle also describes civic friendships, which he sees as friendships of equality, as not merely friendships but also as partnerships on a friendly footing (καὶ ὡς φίλοι κοινωνοῦσιν) (*EE* VII.10.1242a). When discussing the state as a partnership of families and clans who live together in order to have a full and independent life, he argues that "such organization is produced by the feeling of friendship, for friendship is the motive of social life" (*Pol.* III.1281a) and "friendliness is an element of partnership" (*Pol.* IV.1295b). Thus, φιλία is seen by Aristotle as a lesser form of relationship than κοινωνία; the former gives rise to the latter. [580] For Aristotle then, κοινωνία expresses the highest form of partnership or association – it is friendship in a common activity or goal.

Later writers continued to use κοινωνία with the same range of meanings as Aristotle. At the change of eras, Greek writers like Philo, Plutarch, Epictetus, Marcus Aurelius, and Lucian were still using κοινωνία, and Latin writers like Cicero, Livy, Seneca, Pliny the Elder, and Pliny the Younger were using its equivalent, *societas*. Both terms were used to describe political alliances and associations,[581] society in general (along with various groups, associations, guilds, and clubs, within society),[582] community (of possessions, wives,

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[580] Interestingly, in *NE* VIII.14.1163a, Aristotle suggests that when there is inequality in a 'relationship' it becomes more of a charity (λειτουργία) than a friendship (φιλία) if one does not get enough to repay their 'investment' in another. He argues that "men think that it ought to be in a friendship (ἐκ τῆς φιλίας) as it is in a business partnership (ἐν χρημάτων κοινωνίᾳ), where those who contribute more capital take more of the profits." This suggests that Aristotle saw κοινωνία as something more equitable than φιλία.

[581] For example: Plutarch, *Lives* V.385, 570; VI.39; XIV.25; XXVIII.902; XLVII.691; Cicero, *Rhetorica ad Herennium* IV.13; *Pro Sexto Roscio Amerino* XXXI.87; XXXIII.93; XL.117; XLIII.124; *De Haruspicum Responsis* XX.42; *De Inventione* I.1; II.168; *Letters to Atticus* 195.2; *Letters to Friends* 382.3; 405.6; *The Republic* I.49; IV.3; *Verrine Orations* II.55, 67, 72, 84, 88, 93; *Pro Sulla* 16, 70; *De Legibus* II.16; Livy, *History of Rome* IV.1; V.3-4; VI.2, 4-7; VII.1-4, 8-9; IX.2, 8; XXXI.5; XXXII.1, 4, 11, 12, 28; XXXIII.1, 6, 9-11; XXXIV.10, 13, 15, 17; XXXVIII.5; XXXIX.7, 10; XLIV.2, 8; XLI.2, 9, 16; XLII.1-2, 4-10, 12; XLIII.4;+ numerous other references; Seneca, *Epistles* VI.3; Pliny, *Natural History* II.29; VI.211; XVIII.273; VIII.102; X.105.

[582] For example: Plutarch, *Moralia* 787E; 791C; 786C; 796E; 1108C; 1125E; 1129B; *Stoic Self-Contradiction* 1038E; *Can Virtue be Taught* 439E; *Table Talk IX* 741D; Epictetus, *Fragments* 1; *Discourses* II.6; III.77; Philo, *Flaccus* XVII.135; Cicero, *Pro Sexto Roscio Amerino* XXXVIII.111; *Letters to Atticus* 125.4; *Letters to Friends* 370.3; 73.9; *The Republic* II.48; *Verrine Orations* II.15, 38, 167; *De Legibus* I.42, 43, 49; *De Officiis* I.15, 17, 20, 21, 22, 50, 51, 53, 60, 157, 158, 160; III.21, 22, 28-32, 52, 118; Livy *History of Rome* III.3; IV.10; XXV.15; Seneca, *On Benefits* I.2; *On Firmness* II.1; *On Anger* 31.8; *Epistles* IX.17.

and children),[583] the marriage union (including the sexual union),[584] business associations (e.g. companies, commercial arrangements, partnerships, and enterprises),[585] and in a few cases to describe fellowship with divinity (with God, with a god, or amongst the gods).[586]

But just as Aristotle saw some difference between φιλία/*amicitia* and κοινωνία/*societas* so too did later writers. For example, Philo distinguishes the two terms when discussing land and housing – he says that when feelings of unity and friendship (κοινωνίας καὶ φιλίας) naturally grew stronger between inhabitants of the land, they began to build dwellings next to each other and cities began to form (*Special Laws* XXIII.119); unity was the step beyond friendship which saw people cooperating in forming a new society. Marcus Tullius Cicero sees *societas* as a relationship beyond *amicitia*. In *De Finibus Bonorum et Malorum* (V.65-66), he says "there is nothing more glorious nor of wider range than the solidarity of mankind, that species of alliance [*societas*] and partnership of interests [*communicatio utilitatum*] which exists between man and man" and then he goes on to describe how affection spreads its influence; it comes upon us at birth, for children are loved by their parents and family, then "gradually spreads its influence beyond the home, first by blood relationships, then by connections through marriage, later by friendships [*amicitiis*], afterwards by the bonds of neighbourhood, then to fellow-citizens and political allies and friends, and lastly by embracing the whole of the human race." The sequence of relationships shows that Cicero sees *societas* as a step or two beyond *amicitia*. Lucius Annaeus Seneca also sees *societas* as a more intimate relationship than *amicitia*, arguing that 'fellowship' (*societas*) is based on friendship (*amicitia*), is more intimate, and has things in common. In a letter which deals with the unworthiness of quibbling for a philosopher he argues:

> … the fact is, the same thing is advantageous to me which is advantageous to you; for I am not your friend [*amicus*] unless whatever is at issue concerning you is my concern also. Friendship [*amicitia*] produces between us a partnership [*consortium*] in all our

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583 For example: Plutarch, *Lives* III.76; VII.798; X.485; Philo, *Hypothetica* 11.1; 11.14; *On the Virtues* IX.51; XX.104; XXIII.119; *Who is the Heir?* XXXVIII.183; *Every Good Man is Free* XIII.91; *The Contemplative Life* III.24; *The Confusion of Tongues* XII.48; *The Decalogue* XXX.162; *On Rewards and Punishments* XVI.92; *The Special Laws III* XXIII.132; *On Abraham* XVI.74; Seneca, *Epistles* XC.3.

584 For example: Plutarch, *Advice to Bride and Groom* 138C; *Lives:* XV.49; LXX.656; *Moralia* 752B; 763F; 769F; Philo, *The Preliminary Studies* XXII.121; *On Abraham* XX.100; XLIII.248; *The Special Laws* V.29.

585 For example: Plutarch, *Lives* VI.444; VIII.838; XXI.349; XXIII.123; XXXII.972; Cicero, *Letters to Friends* 57.2; 134.2; 139:1-3; 277.2; 360.2; *Verrine Orations* II.165, 168, 171, 173, 180, 182, 184, 186, 188; *De Officiis* I.12; Livy, *History of Rome* XXIII.1; XXV.5.

586 For example: Epictetus, II.19.28; Cicero argues that the gods are in a sort of social community or fellowship (*De Natura Deorum* II).78-80; Philo describes Moses as the partner (κοινωνός) of and in partnership (κοινωνία) with God (Philo, *Moses I* 155-158); he also describes Moses as the friend (φίλος) of and heir (κληρονόμος) of God; Pliny, *Natural History* II.27.

> interests. There is no such thing as good or bad fortune for the individual; we live in common [*in commune*]. And no one can live happily who has regard to himself alone and transforms everything into a question of his own utility; you must live for your neighbour [*alteri*], if you would live for yourself. This fellowship [*societas*], maintained with scrupulous care, which makes us mingle as men with our fellow-men [*homines hominibus*] and holds that the human race have certain rights in common [*esse commune*], is also of great help in cherishing the more intimate fellowship [*interiorem societatem*] which is based on friendship [*amicitiae*], concerning which I began to speak above. For he that has much in common with a fellow-man [*cum homine*] will have all things in common [*communia habebit*] with a friend [*cum amico*].
>
> (Seneca, *Epistles* XLVIII.3)[587]

It would seem from the things that Aristotle, Cicero, and Seneca say, that they saw the idea of 'fellowship' (κοινωνία/*societas*) as a stronger and greater relationship than φιλία/*amicitia*. It was characterised by unity, common interests or goals, and intimacy.

5.3.2. The Biblical and Johannine Usage of Κοινωνία

The characteristics of unity, common interests or goals, and intimacy make κοινωνία a very suitable word to describe close relationships between people, and so it is a word frequently used in the biblical literature. It is used in the apocryphal literature to refer to young women who had just entered the bridal chamber to share married life (3 Macc. 4:6). In the NT it is used to describe the sharing or association of the early Christians who devoted themselves to a close community (Acts 2:42), of various believers who took a particular interest in helping out their fellow believers (Rom. 15:26; 2 Cor. 8:4; 9:13; Heb. 13:16), of the pillars of the Jerusalem church who extended the right hand of fellowship to Paul and Barnabas (Gal. 2:9), and of the believers in the Johannine communities who had a close relationship (1 Jn. 1:3a, 7). Its root meaning also makes κοινωνία a suitable word to describe a relationship with members of the godhead and this is the way it is used in several places including two instances in the Johannine Epistles (cf. 1 Cor. 1:9; 2 Cor. 13:13; Phil. 2:1; 1 Jn. 1:3b, 6). The fact that a relationship between believers, and a relationship with God, is described by the same word in the same pericope (1 Jn. 1:1-7) points to the fact that there is something which unites them; in this pericope it is the fact that all accept the message that God is light and Jesus is the Word of life, and later we find that God's Spirit dwells in the believer (in 1 Jn. 3:24; 4:13) enabling them to know the truth of this message (cf. 1 Jn. 4:1-6, 13-15; 5:6-12). The word

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[587] Seneca, *Epistles 1-65* (LCL 75; ed. J. Henderson; trans. R. Gummere; 3 vols.; vol. I; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1917), 315.

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κοινωνία and its cognates can also be used to identify an association between things – cf. the renown gained in sharing wisdom's words (Wisdom of Sol. 8:18), partnership in the gospel (Phil. 1:5), sharing in God's grace (Phil. 1:7), a sharing in suffering (Phil. 3:10; cf. also a cognate verbal form in 4:14), a sharing in financial needs (Phil. 4:15), a participation in the blood and body of Christ (1 Cor. 10:16), and a partnership in the faith (Phm. 6) – and it is also used to describe what cannot exist between two antithetical entities – cf. the fact that darkness and light cannot share a close relationship (2 Cor. 6:14).

In the Second Epistle of John, while there may be debate about who the 'elect lady' (KJV, NRSV, ESV, HCSB, NET), 'lady chosen by God' (NIV; NAB has simply 'chosen lady') was, and also some debate about whether 'her children' were literal or metaphorical, there is little debate that the author voices ardent affection and deep concern for this 'lady' and 'her children', as well as a zeal for the truth that he himself has, and which he hears the recipients have too. These two foci create the basis for a shared relationship, though in this case the author does not use the term κοινωνία. He is a pastoral writer who expresses his affection for his readers as well as his concern for them. As we have seen, it was quite common for friendships to involve emotion and for letter writers to express that emotion to their recipients; the Johannine author is no different. Affection is evident in 2 John with the use of four occurrences of verbs or nouns describing 'love' in the first six verses (2 Jn. 1, 3, 5, 6). Concern is equally evident in the five references to truth in the first four verses (2 Jn. 1[2x], 2, 3, 4) and subsequent warnings against false teachers leading them astray in verses 7-11; the writer is concerned that his readers not be deceived, distracted, or led astray by the false teachers, and while he intends to be with them soon, so there is no need to write a long letter (2 Jn. 12), his concern for them in the meantime has still necessitated a letter, short though it may be. The pressing matter was the teaching of the πολλοὶ πλάνοι, which had the potential for destruction of the fellowship of believers and the creation of a new fellowship with the false teachers. While the noun κοινωνία is not used in 2 John, we do find in verse 11 the cognate verb κοινωνέω, which is used to describe what happens when believers welcome false teachers – it results in a sharing in their wicked work. The verb is used elsewhere in the NT to describe the kind of sharing that takes place when believers live in ways that God calls the Christian community to live – meeting the needs of fellow believers (Rom. 12:13), offering the gospel to Gentiles so that they can participate equally with Jews in the good news about Jesus (Rom. 15:27), the sharing of personal goods with one's teacher (Gal. 6:6), the assisting of others through financial support (Phil. 4:15), and participation in the sufferings of Christ (1 Pet. 4:13). These are all the kinds of things that unite believers and build a common experience. They are the essence of the fellowship that is to characterise the Christian community, and participation with false teachers and deceivers strikes at the very core of this fellowship, so there is little wonder that the Johannine author equates any sharing with them as participation in their wicked work; it is the exact opposite of what they

should be doing. This reflects what the author has already said in the First Epistle about the need to remain in Jesus (1 Jn. 2:26-27). Failure to do so will impact one's fellowship with God and thus with each other.[588]

5.3.3. The Johannine Reframing of 'Friendship' as 'Fellowship'

As we saw in section 5.3.1 (*The Non-Biblical Usage of Κοινωνία (and Societas)*), for Aristotle, Cicero, and Seneca, fellowship is a step beyond friendship, and that certainly seems to be how the Johannine author also thought of fellowship. It was an important concept to him and something he wanted his recipients to know about and practise. As we saw in section 5.2 (*Conclusions re the Johannine Usage of 'Truth' and 'Love'*) truth and love were to characterise the followers of Jesus, the ultimate embodiment of these characteristics. This is the superordinate goal of followers of Jesus and it is epitomised in the Johannine Epistles in the commands and exhortations to walk in the truth (1 Jn. 1:6-7; 2 Jn. 4,6; 3 Jn. 3-4) and to love one another (1 Jn. 2:15; 3:11-18,23; 4:7-12,19-21; 5:1-3; 2 Jn. 5-6; 3 Jn. 6). The Johannine author calls the followers of Jesus to demonstrate, in their own lives, the characteristics of truth and love that Jesus himself demonstrated and this will lead to a κοινωνία which demonstrates unity, common good, and intimacy. He therefore warns them about what will cut them off from fellowship and what will ensure that it continues. What will cut them off is claiming a closeness to God but living in a way which is contrary to God's character as light (1 Jn. 1:5); this is, in fact, walking in darkness, and since there is no darkness in God at all (1 Jn. 1:5b) then there can be no fellowship between God and those who walk in this way, and consequently, there can neither be any fellowship between those who walk in the light and those who walk in darkness. Such people are not only behaving in ways contrary to God's character of light, they are also contrary to his character of truth (1 Jn. 1:6b; cf. 3:19; 5:6, 20; 2 Jn. 2). This connection between truth and light has already been made by the Johannine author in his Gospel in John 3:19-21. In verse 21 he says, "But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what they have done has been done in the sight of God." Contra Yarbrough, who argues that these are the words of Jesus,[589] the author here stipulates truths that he repeats in his Epistles – walking in truth is the same as walking in the light, and darkness is the domain of falsehood. The eternal life which is in the Son (1 Jn. 1:2) and the light of God which he reveals and models (1 Jn. 1:5), is meant to result in fellowship and joy (1 Jn. 1:3f., 7) and forgiveness (1 Jn. 1:7, 9), but instead some live in darkness (1 Jn. 1:6), either preferring it (cf. Jn. 3:19-21) or hypocritically thinking that darkness is light. But fellowship with God and with other believers is only possible when one lives authentically and consistently with the character of God, which is walking in the light (1 Jn. 1:7). Such a walk is more than reflective of the character of God; it actually

[588] Derickson, *First, Second, and Third John*, 252.

[589] Yarbrough, *1–3 John*, 55.

creates a bond between believers, it results in 'fellowship' with one another. Furthermore, walking in the light as he is in the light creates a fellowship with God, which the author says is made possible through the shed blood of Jesus that purifies people from sin and thus removes the barrier between God and people (1 Jn. 1:7b).

It must also be noted that 'fellowship' in the Johannine Epistles is not entirely constrained to the κοινωνία/κοινωνέω vocabulary. Expressing the same idea of mutual sharing is the Johannine author's use of the verb μένω ('live', 'dwell', 'remain') to describe the relationship between God and believers. The verb is a favourite of the author, occurring twenty-four times in 1 John, and three times in 2 John, with a further forty references in the Gospel of John.[590] In 1 John 2:6 the author states that a claim to 'live in Jesus' (ὁ λέγων ἐν αὐτῷ μένειν) necessitates 'living like Jesus' (καθὼς ἐκεῖνος περιεπάτησεν, καὶ αὐτὸς οὕτως περιπατεῖν),[591] which is also described as 'living in the light' (1 Jn. 2:10), and this idea of dwelling (μένω) in the Son and/or the Father occurs in several other places (1 Jn. 2:24, 27, 28; 3:6, 24; 4:13, 15, 16; cf. 2 Jn. 9 where continuing in the teaching of Christ means having [ἔχω] the Father and the Son). The reverse idea of God or Jesus living (μένω) in the believer is also a common expression of the author expressed in a variety of ways – the word of God dwelling in them (1 Jn. 2:14), the anointing received from God dwelling in them (1 Jn. 2:27), God's seed dwelling in them (1 Jn. 3:9), God's love remaining in them (1 Jn. 3:17),[592] God dwelling in them (1 Jn. 3:24; 4:12, 13, 15, 16), and the truth dwelling in them (2 Jn. 2). The Johannine author also speaks of believers living together and sharing (1 Jn. 2:19), and the evidence of being a part of the one community or fellowship is being ἐξ ημῶν and μεμενήκεισαν ἂν μεθ' ἡμῶν. The departure of certain people indicated that they were never really a part of the fellowship. As can be seen from footnote 590, 1 John 4:12-16 has a high number of occurrences of μένω, all of which express the mutual abiding of God and believers, and link that abiding to the operation and manifestation of 'love'; it

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590 1 John: 2:6, 10, 14, 17, 19, 24 [3x], 27 [2x], 28; 3:6, 9, 14, 15, 17, 24 [2x]; 4:12, 13, 15, 16 [3x]; 2 John: 2, 9[2x]; The Gospel of John: 1:32, 33, 38, 39[2x]; 2:12; 3:36; 4:40[2x]; 5:38; 6:27, 56; 7:9; 8:31, 35[2x]; 9:41; 10:40; 11:6, 54; 12:24, 34, 46; 14:10, 17, 25; 15:4[3x], 5, 6, 7[2x], 9, 10[2x], 16; 10:31; 21:22, 23. For a discussion of the usage of this verb in the Gospel of John see Lee, "Friendship, Love & Abiding," 63-68.

591 The textual evidence for the inclusion of οὕτως is fairly evenly balanced. The argument on transcriptional grounds is also fairly evenly balanced – it could have been omitted accidentally following αὐτός or it could have been deliberately added to provide an emphatic correlative for the καθώς in the previous clause. As a result, the UBS committee rated it as {C}, meaning they had difficulty deciding which variant to put in the text. Whether it was originally there or not, the point is unchanged, as the καί is adverbial and the αὐτός is emphatic.

592 Depending on how one takes the genitive 'love of God'. While it can be taken as objective ('love for God'; as per A. E. Brooke (97), F. F. Bruce (101), M. M. Culy (89), I. H. Marshall (194), R. C. H. Lenski (473), J. M. Lieu (152), U. C. Von Wahlde (3:121)), or plenary (both 'love for God' and 'God's love for humanity'; as per B. F. Wescott (115), C. G. Kruse (138)), slightly more scholars take it as subjective ('God's love for humanity'; as per R. E. Brown (451), R. Bultmann (56), J. R. W. Stott (144), J. L. Houlden (101), S. J. Kistemaker (311), R. W. Yarbrough (205), G. Strecker (117), J. Painter (242), G. W. Derickson (358)).

is love for one's fellow believers which affirms God's abiding presence with believers; fellowship between believers is proof of fellowship with God, and "God's love in us attains its goal only as we exercise it within the body of Christ toward fellow believers".[593] Further proof of the 'fellowship' that exists between God and believers is found in believers receiving the gift of the Spirit (1 Jn. 4:13), and the acknowledgement by believers that God sent his Son to be the Saviour of the world (1 Jn. 4:14); these two things show the reality of a believer's relationship with God. In fact, as Gary Derickson has noted:

> As God being light (moral purity) requires our moral purity for fellowship, and His being righteous demands our righteousness, so, too, His love demands we be loving if we are to commune with Him… What John has said about God's love to this point is that it is both experienced through abiding and expressed through conduct. Loving believers *does* evidence a relationship with God. Only believers can love with God's kind of love, though not all do. Failure to love does not prove one is unregenerate. If it were impossible for a believer to fail to love other believers then we would not have the command to do so. By its very nature, any command, whether positive ("do this") or negative ("don't do that") implies that believers can do the opposite of what is commanded. They can disobey. Thus, believers can and do fail to love other believers with God's love. The consequence is loss of mutual relationship with God (fellowship) as well as with other believers.[594]

In Third John, after commending Gaius and other believers for being faithful to the truth (3 Jn. 3-4) the author once again reinforces the idea of fellowship. Gaius was not only faithful to the truth but also faithful in practical ways, in what he was doing for the brothers and sisters (3 Jn. 5 – πιστὸν ποιεῖς ὃ ἐὰν ἐργάσῃ εἰς τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς). The term κοινωνία or its cognates are not used here, and neither is μένω, but the concept of fellowship is still evident in terms of showing hospitality to 'missionary' workers (ὑπὲρ γὰρ τοῦ ὀνόματος ἐξῆλθον … ἡμεῖς οὖν ὀφείλομεν ὑπολαμβάνειν τοὺς τοιούτους) (3 Jn. 7-8) and working together (ἵνα συνεργοὶ γινώμεθα) (3 Jn. 8). Such people were simultaneously 'fellow-workers' (συνεργοί) and 'brothers and sisters' (ἀδελφοὺς), but also 'strangers' (ξένους), who did not receive help from outsiders (ἀπὸ τῶν ἐθνικῶν) (3 Jn. 7), so the responsibility to assist them fell to the community of believers; such assistance was a practical demonstration of fellowship in the work of God. It was such an important thing to do that anyone who stood in its way or stopped it from happening, as Diotrephes was doing, needed to be dealt with most severely (3 Jn. 9-10). The author goes so far as to describe the one who supports fellow workers as ὁ ἀγαθοποιῶν and says this is evidence that they are in fact ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ

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[593] Derickson, *First, Second, and Third John*, 446.

[594] Derickson, *First, Second, and Third John*, 460f.

(3 Jn. 11). Believers who are in a 'fellowship' show who they really are ('brothers and sisters', 'fellow workers', and that they are 'of God'), share a commitment to the truth, and actively love and support one another and do good.

This survey of the language of 'fellowship' covering the Greek words κοινωνία, κοινωνέω, and μένω and the calls to hospitality and co-working, show that the Johannine author sees this as the new form of relationships in the Christian community. He thus broadens and reframes the Graeco-Roman idea of 'friendship' into the Christian idea of a 'fellowship' based on truth and love and uses language which appropriately reflects the kind of relationships he envisions.

5.4. Conclusion re the Johannine Perspective

Hans Dieter Betz' argument about the early Christians overcoming the crisis in family relations caused by the teaching of Jesus and eschatological expectations with the new concept of love designated by ἀγάπη is accepted, but as noted above it has also been suggested that Betz does not go far enough. The early Christian writers, and the Johannine author in particular, reframed the Graeco-Roman idea of 'friendship' into not just a 'brotherhood' but a new 'partnership' or 'fellowship' (κοινωνία) which was based on a new understanding of love AND a new understanding of truth.

A new vocabulary was needed to describe this new relationship. The Graeco-Roman word φιλία needed to be split into two concepts – κοινωνία to describe the 'partnership', 'fellowship', or 'friendship' aspect, which was to exist between believers, and ἀγάπη, which could be used to describe the love and affection aspect of the relationship. While many of the Graeco-Roman characteristics of friendship (e.g. frank speaking, reciprocity, obligation, civic duty, loyalty, and gratitude) were still needed in relationships within the Christian community, the Johannine author believed that the basis for these relationships had changed – there was now an equality between Christians that the philosophers only dreamed of and considered a rarity, and the basis of Christian friendship was the 'truth' and 'love' embodied in the life and ministry of Jesus, who expected his followers to be, and believe, and do, as he did.

Consequently, while some of the vocabulary used to describe Graeco-Roman friendships could be retained, it needed to be nuanced somewhat, and over time these new nuances became part of the semantic domain of those words. Παρρησία, for example, still functioned to describe the frank speaking that fellow believers were to exhibit both to each other and to God, but because they were secure in their new relationships they could speak frankly with great confidence and boldness, and the word παρρησία

came to take on this meaning.[595] Similarly, ἀλήθεια was still used to describe 'truth' as conformity to fact, but the early Christians came to realise that it meant more than this; they understood ἀλήθεια to be the revelation of what is right, and that was best seen in Jesus Christ – he is the 'truth' and he 'reveals the truth'. Thus, it is concluded that the Johannine author employs a vocabulary which involves some innovation, and a broadening and reframing of the Graeco-Roman concept of 'friendship' and its various aspects.

[595] 'Confidence' and 'boldness' are in fact the most common English translations given to παρρησία in NT translations. Marrow speaks of "a specifically Christian *parrhēsia* which, even when it needs its Greek background and origin for the proper grasp of its meaning, is a distinctly religious term that became part of the Christian stock vocabulary very early in the first century." See Marrow, *Speaking the Word*, 65.

6. Implications for Exegesis

The final main section of this thesis presents some implications for exegesis in light of understanding that the Johannine author considers the recipients of his writings to be a community which exhibits many of the characteristics of Graeco-Roman friendship, but which is better described as a fellowship based on truth and love. It has been shown in the argument to this point, that truth, love, and fellowship are key themes in the Johannine Epistles, so let us begin by considering why the author would focus on such topics.

6.1. The Purpose of the Johannine Epistles

While the author of the Johannine Epistles is generally understood to be writing 'letters', what is not so clear is the purpose of his writing. William Loader notes that the author and his readers are both passionately involved in the issues evident in the letters, and describes the writer as showing both joy and pain; he says, "This is not an exercise in abstract speculation; it is engaged pastoral care. And secondly, the heart of that concern is community, *common life*."[596] Similarly, Terry Griffith argues that 1 John "has primarily pastoral, rather than polemical, aims."[597] Robert Yarbrough compares the Johannine author to other Graeco-Roman writers and concludes that "John writes not as a man of letters (like, say, Seneca) or a philosopher (like Epictetus) or an ideologue (like Juvenal). He writes rather as a pastoral counsellor and practical theologian."[598]

Letter writing was a common form of correspondence between family members and friends in the Graeco-Roman world and the two Johannine Epistles which most closely resemble such letters are 2 and 3 John.[599] The latter is, in fact, the most personal of the three letters and the only one to mention specific names of individuals; it is perhaps the closest parallel to Graeco-Roman letters between friends.[600] These two Johannine letters show some similarities, in terms of length and content, to papyrus letters which predate

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[596] W. R. G. Loader, *The Johannine Epistles* (Epworth Commentaries; ed. I. H. Jones; London: Epworth, 1992), 3. Italics original.

[597] T. Griffith, *Keep Yourself from Idols: A New Look at 1 John* (JSNTSup 233; ed. S. E. Porter; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2002), 1.

[598] Yarbrough, *1–3 John*, 29.

[599] For a discussion of letter writing in the ancient world, see section 1.3 (*Methodology*) and footnotes 43-50. For a good summary of the features of Graeco-Roman letters see Lieu, *I, II & III John: A Commentary*, 265. For a fuller treatment of Graeco-Roman letter writing and the various types of letters see especially Part II of Stowers, *Letter Writing*.

[600] Lieu also comes to this conclusion. See Lieu, *I, II & III John: A Commentary*, 4. But see also footnote 50.

the Christian writings. For example, Oxyrhynchus Papyrus 292 is a letter of recommendation from Theon to Tyrannus written about AD 25. In it, Theon gives greetings, introduces the bearer of the letter and commends him with passion to the care of Tyrannus, invokes the support of the recipient's brother, and wishes him good health and prosperity:

> Theon to his esteemed Tyrannus, many greetings. Heraclides, the bearer of this letter, is my brother. I therefore entreat you with all my power to treat him as your protégé. I have also written to your brother Hermias asking him to communicate with you about him. You will confer upon me a very great favour if Heraclides gains your notice. Before all else you have my good wishes for unbroken health and prosperity. Good-bye. Addressed 'To Tyrannus, dioecetes.'[601]

A number of these features are evident in 2 and 3 John – e.g. warm greetings (2 Jn. 1-3, 13; 3 Jn. 1), a passionate entreating of the recipients (2 Jn. 4-11; 3 Jn. 5-8, 11), wishes for good health and good circumstances (3 Jn. 2), commendation of the letter carrier (3 Jn. 12), and interceding on behalf of others by invoking the support of the recipients (3 Jn. 6-8). But beyond these basic elements of letters, their content was also shaped to some degree by Christianity. In a third century letter from a Christian boy by the name of Besas, to his mother, in addition to the usual greetings and concerns for health, there are references to 'God', 'our Father', 'the God of truth', 'the Spirit who is the Comforter', the tripartite form of humanity (body, soul, and spirit), the Christian holiday 'Easter', and prayer:

> To my most precious mother, from Besas, many greetings in God. Before all I pray to our Father, the God of truth, and to the Spirit who is the Comforter that he may guard you in soul, body, and spirit, and give health to your body, cheerfulness to your spirit, and eternal life to your soul. If you find someone coming my direction, do not hesitate to write me a letter concerning your health so that I might hear and rejoice. Do not neglect to send me a cloak for the Easter holiday and send my brother to me. I salute my father and my brothers. I pray that all of you might have continual good health.
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> *P.Harr.* 107[602]

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[601] *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri* (eds. B. P. Grenfell, et al.; vol. II; London; Boston, MA; Edinburgh; New York: Egypt Exploration Fund: Graeco-Roman Branch; The Offices of the Egypt Exploration Fund; Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co.; Bernard Quaritch; Asher & Co.; Henry Frowde, 1899), 292. 'Dioecetes' is essentially a transliteration of the truncated and reconstructed last line which ends with διοικ(ητῇ); the word means 'administrator' or 'governor'.

[602] See *P.Harr.: The Rendel Harris Papyri of Woodbrooke College, Birmingham*, (Duke Data Bank of Documentary Papyri: Perseus Digital Library, n.d.). Translation from Stowers, *Letter Writing*, 74.

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While 2 and 3 John shows signs of being Graeco-Roman style letters, 1 John does not appear to follow the same form, though most scholars consider it a letter and group it with the other two Johannine letters. And there are plausible explanations for why 1 John is missing the customary opening and closing of a Graeco-Roman letter. Luke Timothy Johnson, for example, suggests that the three Johannine Epistles were written as a 'three-letter packet'. He suggests that 3 John was a letter of recommendation from the Johannine author to Gaius commending Demetrius, the carrier of the letters, that 2 John was an introduction and cover letter for 1 John, intended to be read aloud to Gaius' church, and that 1 John was, in fact, not a letter at all but an exhortation or homily for the church, urging them to live by the commandment that they had had from the beginning: love one another.[603] This argument, while unprovable, certainly provides a possible and plausible explanation for why 1 John is constructed differently from 2 and 3 John, while accounting for the multiple similarities in wording and content of all three epistles. Let us then consider further, the author and recipients of these three 'letters'.

6.2. Understanding the Relationship between Sender and Recipients

6.2.1. Descriptions of the Recipients

The relationship between sender and recipients is evident in the language the Johannine author uses to address and describe his readers. While Jesus called his disciples 'friends' (Jn. 15:14), we have already seen that the language of 'friendship' is not perpetuated by the NT writers. The reason for this, according to this thesis, is that the NT writers believed that the Christian community formed by believers meeting regularly together, reflected something more than friendship; they were seeing a new kind of relationship that exceeded their understanding of friendship as it was practised in the Graeco-Roman world, and it had a different basis. The language used in the NT to address and describe believers gives us some clues as to how the NT writers saw things differently in the Christian community. Stowers notes that "Jewish traditions, like the Roman, tended to emphasize the family and heterosexual relationships in a way that made the classical Greek ideal of friendship uncongenial."[604] Christianity with its roots in Judaism reflects

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[603] See L. T. Johnson, *The Writings of the New Testament: An Interpretation* (Third ed.; Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2010), 495-503. Yarbrough tentatively takes the same line. See Yarbrough, *1–3 John*, 329. For an alternate view that 3 John is not, in fact, a letter of recommendation but "an epideictic rhetorical attempt to restore the Elder's honor (discredited by Diotrephes) in Gaius' eyes and persuade him to detach himself from Diotrephes' reprehensible behaviour by extending hospitality to the Elder's envoys", see Marulli, "Letter of Recommendation?": 205.

[604] Stowers, *Letter Writing*, 30. Plutarch writing in the first century AD stated that heterosexual and conjugal love were superior to other kinds of sexual connection because they provided companionship, could provide children, and were morally uplifting. Cf. Plutarch, *Advice* 15, 34, 42; *The Dialogue on Love* 4, 21.

this more Roman view of friendship and it is thus not surprising that the NT letters address fellow Christians as family members.

The forms of address used in the Johannine Epistles literature were previously discussed in section 5.1.4.1 (*The Johannine View on Φιλία and the Emotions*) so it will not be repeated here but the descriptions of believers needs further treatment, both in the Johannine literature and the wider NT. Followers of Jesus throughout the NT are called the 'beloved' of God (ἀγαπητοί in Rom. 11:28; 12:19; 1 Cor. 10:14; 15:58; 2 Cor. 7:1; 12:19; Phil. 2:12; 4:1; 1 Thess. 2:8; 1 Tim. 6:2; Heb. 6:9; Jam. 1:16, 19; 2:5; 1 Pet. 2:11; 4:12; 2 Pet. 3:1, 8, 14, 17; 1 Jn. 2:7; 3:2, 21; 4:1, 7, 11; Jude 3, 17, 20; ἠγαπημένοι in Col. 3:12; 1 Thess. 1:4; 2 Thess. 2:13), and the love command given by Jesus insisted that they be the beloved of one another (Jn. 13:34f.; 15:12, 17). Consequently, a form of the ἀγαπ- words is used by all the NT writers to urge such love (cf. Rom. 12:10; 13:8; Gal. 5:13; Eph. 4:2; 1 Thess. 3:12; Heb. 10:24; 1 Pet. 1:22; 3:8; 1 Jn. 3:11, 23; 4:7, 11; 2 Jn. 5), and to record that the followers of Jesus did in fact show love towards one another (1 Thess. 4:9; 2 Thess. 1:3; 1 Pet. 1:22).

As we have seen, the Johannine author uses the terms ἀγαπητοί/ἀγαπητέ, παιδία, τεκνία, and ἀδελφοί as forms of address, with the first of these being his favoured term, but in addition to the forms of address there are various other descriptions of the recipients which reinforce the idea that the relationship between the sender and his recipients exhibits affection. Interestingly, Jesus had told his disciples that they needed to become παιδία (Matt. 18:3) and the Johannine author records Jesus himself using this term to describe them in John 21:5; similarly, Jesus uses the term τεκνία to describe his disciples in John 13:33. In the Epistles, the author uses both the terms τέκνα (1 Jn. 3:10; 5:2; 2 Jn. 1, 4, 13) and τεκνία (1 Jn. 3:18; 4:4; 5:21) as descriptive terms of his readers, identifying himself with them in some places (cf. 1 Jn. 3:1, 2; 3 Jn. 4). One of the key compounded terms of relationship that we also see in the Johannine literature is the qualified form τέκνα θεοῦ; it is found in both the Gospel of John (Jn. 1:12; 11:52) and the First Epistle (1 Jn. 3:1, 2, 10; 5:2). The third chapter of 1 John, in particular, reinforces that the status of believers as 'children of God' is a gift from God; as Lieu notes this status is "a gift, an act of unmerited and unimaginable generosity, founded not on any obligation felt by God nor on any expectation, but on love".[605] Yarbrough says that the love of the Father which results in believers being called 'children of God' in the Johannine Epistles is a love which is very different to the love of a father in the Graeco-Roman world.[606] Whilst Graeco-Roman fathers could show love for their children, they were not always

[605] Lieu, *I, II & III John: A Commentary*, 123.

[606] Yarbrough, *1–3 John*, 175f. He argues that God's love is great because of: (1) its effect, in making people τέκνα θεοῦ; (2) its purpose – so that John and his readers might enjoy familial favour; and (3) its quality, which stands in contrast to other expressions of parental love in that era.

affectionate towards them, nor treated them equitably; the children might be unwanted and therefore 'exposed' – left outdoors in a remote place to die – or they may have been abused.[607] Tertullian, the Church Father, notes that under the proconsulship of Tiberius in North Africa, the murder of children was not uncommon; they were either sacrificed to Saturn, who himself did not spare his own children, or disposed of by means of drowning, exposure to cold, starvation, or attacks by dogs (*Apology*, 9). In contrast, the Johannine author wonders at the kind of love (ποταπὴν ἀγάπην) which God has shown (1 Jn. 3:1); it is a love which is lavished on those who are not naturally children so that they might become 'children' and experience a familial love which endures. The child of God is one who ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ γεγέννηται and σπέρμα αὐτοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ μένει and as a result the character of God should be evident in that child. Thus, the author says of the child of God, ἁμαρτίαν οὐ ποιεῖ (1 Jn. 3:9). This 'new birth' and the Spirit who is given as part of it (1 Jn. 3:24; 4:13) equip the children of God with something they did not have before, the power and ability to do what is right and not to sin; their new 'genus' and the Holy Spirit together enable them to do what they could not naturally do. This contrasts with the prevailing views of the time. Seneca the Roman moralist, for example, believed that the ability to do good and be happy came from within a person so that nothing from outside could hinder it. In a letter regarding business as the enemy of philosophy he says:

> [T]he joy of a wise man, on the other hand, is a woven fabric, rent by no chance happening and by no change of fortune; at all times and in all places he is at peace. For his joy depends on nothing external and looks for no boon from man or fortune. His happiness is something within himself; it would depart from his soul if it entered in from the outside; it is born there. (Seneca, *Epistles* 72.6)[608]

Another key descriptive term of relationship which appears in 1 and 3 John is ἀδελφός (see 1 Jn. 2:9, 10, 11; 3:10, 12 [x2], 13 [the only vocative use], 14, 15, 16, 17; 4:20 [x2], 21; 5:16; 3 Jn. 3, 5, 10) which, while literally meaning 'brother', is most frequently used as an inclusive term of both men and women, and is thus often translated (in the plural) as 'brothers and sisters'; it refers to a 'fellow' in the community that

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[607] For a helpful discussion on the legal powers of Roman fathers (the *patria potestas*) and their "power of life and death" (*vitae necisque potestas*), even when the sons had grown to adulthood, see L. L. Welborn, *The Young Against the Old: Generational Conflict in First Clement* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books; Philadelphia: Fortress Academic, 2018), 54-59. Welborn states, "A father's right to expose his newborn child was taken for granted" and cites, in support, a passage from Seneca the Elder's *Controversiae* 10.4.16 as well as several studies on child exposure and the *vitae necisque potestas*. See Welborn, *Young Against the Old*, 55 and notes 73-76.

[608] Seneca, *Epistles 66-92* (LCL 76; ed. J. Henderson; trans. R. Gummere; 3 vols.; vol. II; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1920), 99.

one is a part of and can thus also be translated as 'fellow believer'.[609] The term 'brother' has a long history in Jewish thinking with Jews calling their fellow citizens 'brothers', since they could trace their roots back to the sons of Jacob, and all the tribes of Israel were part of the one original family.[610] In the Graeco-Roman world, ἀδελφός was also used to describe those who were part of one's social, political, or religious group.[611] The Johannine author's audience was likely a mixed group of Jewish and Gentile believers, with the latter probably predominant; the Jewish believers would have been used to, and comfortable with, using ἀδελφός to describe a fellow believer, and while the Gentile believers may not have had the same history with the term, they too would have found it an acceptable word to describe those with whom they shared knowledge and experiences. Hans von Soden suggests that "ἀδελφός is one of the religious titles of the people of Israel taken over by the Christian community",[612] and there would seem to be merit in this suggestion, for the Johannine author frequently use the term when describing the behaviour of fellow believers, or in Brown's words, 'spiritual relatives' or 'coreligionists'.[613]

As we saw earlier, in 3 John the author addresses Gaius three times with the vocative form ἀγαπητέ (vv. 2, 5, and 11), but he also describes Gaius as 'beloved' in verse 1 in the letter's opening. It has been suggested that the form of the opening of this letter, in which 'the elder' (ὁ πρεσβύτερος) appears before the name of the recipient (Γαΐῳ τῷ ἀγαπητῷ), indicates either a patron-client relationship (the patron's name appearing first), or a relationship between two equals. The presence of the health wishes, third party greetings, and indirect requests, argues against the former view and it is more likely that the author regards Gaius as having equal social status.[614] Thomas Johnson argues instead, that Gaius is more likely to be a loyal follower rather than a close friend and may not have even been known personally by the elder, and only by report (3 Jn. 3, 4). If this was so, then the term ἀγαπητός would simply be the term used by the Johannine author to describe all those who are first loved by God (1 Jn. 4:11, 19), as it is in 1 John 2:7;

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609 See for example Derickson, *First, Second, and Third John*, 334; Strecker, *Johannine Letters*, 106; Brown, *Epistles of John*, 269, 417; Lieu, *I, II & III John: A Commentary*, 80; Painter, *1, 2, and 3 John*, 172. Bultmann prefers to keep the term more generic and thus translates it as 'neighbor'; in his view the references to ἀδελφός in 2:9; 3:15, and 4:20 all refer not especially to the Christian comrade in the faith but to one's fellowman or 'neighbor'. See Bultmann, *Johannine Epistles*, 28, 54.

610 Brown identifies several factors which explain this development and cites usage of the term ἀδελφός in the OT (e.g. Jer. 22:18), in the Qumran community where it was used of one admitted to membership, and in Josephus' *War* 2.8.3 #122, the term is used to describe the brotherhood existing amongst the Essenes. See the discussion in Brown, *Epistles of John*, 269-270.

611 H. F. von Soden, "ἀδελφός, ἀδελφή, ἀδελφότης, φιλάδελφος, φιλαδελφία, ψευδάδελφος," *TDNT* 1:146. Contra Derickson, *First, Second, and Third John*, 334.

612 Soden, *TDNT* 1:145.

613 Brown, *Epistles of John*, 269.

614 See the arguments in favour of this view in: Marulli, "Letter of Recommendation?": 204.

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3:2, 21; 4:1, 7, 11.[615] However, the frequent mentions of how much the author loves Gaius, the use of the emphatic ἐγώ pronoun, the concern he expresses for him, and the commendations he gives (numerous times in the first six verses and again in the final verse), would seem to suggest a closer relationship than loyal follower.

While it was noted at the start of this section that Jesus' use of the term φίλοι is not perpetuated by the NT writers, it was also noted earlier that 3 John 15 is the one place in the NT where fellow Christians are called 'friends'.[616] The friends are unnamed, but the use of the article seems to indicate that they were known to Gaius, though whether they were personal friends, or simply 'fellow believers', is uncertain. John Painter argues that while the final greeting is a mark of Hellenistic letters, the reference to φίλοι here is odd when throughout the letter, the author has referred to fellow believers using the term ἀδελφοί. He argues that 'friends' has a secular ring about it while 'brothers' has a Christian connotation.[617] Against this, Martin Culy suggests that the use of the term οἱ φίλοι, rather than οἱ ἀδελφοί, "may highlight a strong personal affinity, which goes beyond simple brotherhood in Christ, between those in the Elder's church and the group to which he is writing."[618] Derickson supports this view and says, "They are not just fellow Christians who love each other because they are fellow Christians. They are fellow Christians who desire to be together and enjoy each other's company as well."[619] There would appear to be merit in the view that the Johannine author sees more than a Graeco-Roman style of friendship between followers of Jesus. It is true that the community of believers in Jesus has an identity as children of God and are brothers and sisters in Christ, but they are still living in a world where friendship has certain conventions and obligations and the Johannine author shows an awareness of this in the close of his Third Epistle. While the author is writing to Gaius and his congregation, he does not want to establish a position of superiority. By calling both the Christians with him and the Christians with Gaius, 'friends', he places both communities on the same plane; for him these are friendships of equality.

The desire not to be seen as an authoritarian is also evident in the First Epistle of John. In 1 John 2:21 the author says that he is not writing because they don't know the truth but because they do. Alan Culpepper sees this as the author limiting his authority with respect to his readers; he thinks that in the Johannine author's appeal for the community to remain faithful to the tradition they had received, the author shows that his authority is limited because they all had the anointing of the Holy Spirit and the community was

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615 T. F. Johnson, *1, 2, and 3 John* (NIBCNT; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1995), 165.

616 See section 5.1.4.1 (*The Johannine View on Φιλία and the Emotions*).

617 Painter, *1, 2, and 3 John*, 380.

618 M. M. Culy, *1, 2, 3 John: A Handbook on the Greek Text* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2004), 168.

619 Derickson, *First, Second, and Third John*, 705.

very egalitarian.[620] Dodd says that "[t]here is a note of authority in his writing, but it is not an authority that will override the judgment or conscience of his readers."[621] Burge notes, "Curiously, John does not confront the secessionists with his own apostolic authority as Paul did the Judaizers in Galatia. He realizes that in such a context, this sort of authority is useless. Instead, he must give tools from within the pneumatic setting that will strengthen his followers' faith."[622] The few scholars who comment on this issue, generally think, like Burge, that the author's ploy here is to convince his readers that they have the knowledge necessary to protect themselves from the antichrists, with Yarbrough suggesting that the author's aim is not to provide them with weaponry to defeat the secessionists but "to stir up zeal for truth and love".[623] The relationship thus established between the Johannine author and his readers enables him to give very direct teaching, warnings, and instruction to them. Yarbrough notes that the first imperative in 1 John actually appears in 2:15 ("do not love the world or anything in the world") but before the command is given, the author softens up his readers by commending them for how they have responded to God's touch; and even then the "imperative does not come from a pitiless ivory tower but from the soul of a pastoral leader with heartfelt ties to his readers",[624] thereby ensuring that the recipients will not block their ears or hear the command as censure but would instead take it as an exhortation and see in it the promise of a reward for obedience. Yarbrough argues that the whole section from 2:7-17 is in fact the author establishing a deposit of goodwill upon which he can then base his warnings and commands – for the next section 2:18-3:8 contains five more imperatives.[625] All of these perspectives show that the Johannine author is not presenting himself as an authoritarian or unfeeling superior, but as one who shows real concern for the recipients of his letters.

6.2.2. God as the Third Party in the Relationship

One cannot leave the discussion of the relationship between the Johannine author and his readers without noting how important to him is the relationship with God, a relationship which he argues he shares with his readers. Loader says that the common life shared by the Christian believers "is community

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[620] R. A. Culpepper, *The Gospel and Letters of John* (Interpreting Biblical Texts; ed. C. B. Cousar; Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1998), 262.

[621] Dodd, *The Johannine Epistles*, 54.

[622] Burge, *Letters of John*, 129.

[623] Cf. Marshall, *The Epistles of John*, 156; Strecker, *Johannine Letters*, 67; Kruse, *The Letters of John*, 104; Akin, *1, 2, 3 John*, 120; Yarbrough, *1–3 John*, 151-153; Lieu, *I, II & III John: A Commentary*, 104.

[624] Yarbrough, *1–3 John*, 93.

[625] Yarbrough, *1–3 John*, 94. The imperatives are found in 2:24 ("see that what you have heard from the beginning remains in you"), 28 ("continue in him"); 3:1 ("see what great love the Father has lavished on us"), 7 ("do not let anyone lead you astray"), 13 ("do not be surprised, my brothers and sisters, if the world hates you").

with God through Christ and especially community of Christians with one another, and the two are related."[626] Yarbrough notes the importance of Christianity as a religion which has redemptive love at its centre, along with the idea of a personal and intimate relationship with God who cares for his worshippers and unites them into a community of followers; he says this was something unknown in the Graeco-Roman religions and philosophies that would have been indigenous to Asia Minor.[627] Stoic philosophy provides an example of this. According to the Stoic philosopher Seneca, the gods admitted that life was tough but people just needed to tough it out, responding to the difficulties of life with indifference if possible, and if not, then taking the easy way out via death (cf. *De Providentia* 6.6, 7, 9).[628] Stoic philosophy also saw that the goal of life was to be alone so that others could not make demands upon you. Seneca made it a priority not to be disturbed and to know tranquillity of mind (cf. *De Tranquillitate Animi* 2.1-5),[629] while Epictetus also called for detachment from people, even one's wife and children, in order to flourish and achieve greater things (cf. *Encheiridion* 1-7).[630] The Stoic depiction of a god who was indifferent to the lot of his followers, not caring whether they lived or died, is in stark contrast to the Johannine God of love who showed his love by sending "his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him" (1 Jn. 4:9), and furthermore, "he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins" (1 Jn. 4:10).

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[626] Loader, *The Johannine Epistles*, 3.

[627] Yarbrough, *1–3 John*, 142.

[628] See Seneca, "On Providence," in *Seneca: Moral Essays I* (vol. 214 of *LCL,* ed. J. Henderson; trans. J. Basore; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1928). Seneca says:

> 'Yet,' you say, 'many sorrows, things dreadful and hard to bear, do befall us.' Yes, because I could not withdraw you from their path, I have armed your minds to withstand them all; endure with fortitude. In this you may outstrip God; he is exempt from enduring evil, while you are superior to it. Scorn poverty; no one lives as poor as he was born. Scorn pain; it will either be relieved or relieve you. Scorn death, which either ends you or transfers you. Scorn Fortune; I have given her no weapon with which she may strike your soul. Above all, I have taken pains that nothing should keep you here against your will; the way out lies open. If you do not choose to fight, you may run away. Therefore of all things that I have deemed necessary for you, I have made nothing easier than dying… death lies near at hand. For these mortal strokes I have set no definite spot; anywhere you wish, the way is open. Even that which we call dying, the moment when the breath forsakes the body, is so brief that its fleetness cannot come within the ken. Whether the throat is strangled by a knot, or water stops the breathing, or the hard ground crushes in the skull of one falling headlong to its surface, or flame inhaled cuts off the course of respiration,—be it what it may, the end is swift.
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> (*On Providence* 6.6, 7, 9)

[629] See Seneca, "On Tranquility of Mind," in *Seneca: Moral Essays II* (ed. J. Henderson; vol. 254 of *LCL*; trans. J. Basore; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1932), 212-215. For this references to Seneca and the following one to Epictetus, thanks to Yarbrough, *1–3 John*, 142.

[630] See Epictetus, "Encheiridion," in *Epictetus II* (ed. J. Henderson; vol. 218 of *LCL*; trans. W. A. Oldfather; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1925), 482-491.

Implications for Exegesis

Of all the gods in the ancient world, the Egyptian goddess Isis is the only one who is described as showing love or concern for her devotees.[631] In an invocation of Isis in *P.Oxy*.1380 there is a list of descriptive terms attributed to Isis by various cities and regions; amongst these are descriptions of her as the goddess of truth and love (l.63 ἀλήθεια, 'truth'; l.109 ἀγάπη θεῶν, 'the love of the gods'; l.28 ἀγάπ[ην, 'love'; l.94 φιλία, 'friendship'; l.137 μισεχθής, 'enmity-hating'), and several other terms show her affection for her devotees: she is also called φιλόστοργος, 'affectionate' (ll.12 and 131); ἠπία, 'gentle' (ll.11, 86, and 155); χαριτοδώτειραν, 'giver of favours' (l.10); δότειραν, 'giver' (l.13); σώτειραν, 'saviour' (l.20); ὀρθωσίαν, 'supporter' (l.39); ἀνδρασώτειραν, 'saviour of men' (l.55); ὁρμίστριαν, 'bringer to harbour' (l.74), σώζουσαν, 'she who saves' (l.76); πανάφθον[ο]ν, 'all-bounteous' (ll.88-89); ἐπίτροπον και ὁδηγόν, 'guardian and guide' (ll.121-122), and ἡδίας εὐπορίαν, 'providing sweetness' (l.132).[632] While such a list of descriptions is impressive, there was not the same level of personal and intimate relationship between a human being and the divine as is evident in the Johannine literature. And neither was there the creation of a community or fellowship of the devotees, as was evident in the Christian communities, and as was advocated by the Johannine author, who not only loved, cared for, and found joy in his recipients, but also exhorted them to display the same love, care, and joy towards each other.

This love is a focus of the central part of 1 John,[633] and here the author urges love by means of three dualities (two paternities – child of the devil or child of God; two options – hatred or love; and two ways of life – taking a life or giving one's life) in which the negative aspects are foils for the author's real purpose. In 3:9-10, the children of the devil are contrasted with the children of God who do what is right and love one another; in 3:11-12, Cain's hatred for his brother, which results in murder, is the foil for the love that believers are to show for one another; in 3:13–18, the hatred of the world is contrasted with the love that exists within the fellowship of believers, in which taking the life of another is replaced by giving

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[631] A. A. Bell Jr., *Exploring the New Testament World: An Illustrated Guide to the World of Jesus and the First Christians* (Nashville, TN; London: Nelson, 1998), 139.

[632] *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri* (eds. B. P. Grenfell, et al.; vol. XI; London; Boston, MA; Edinburgh; New York: Egypt Exploration Fund: Graeco-Roman Branch; The Offices of the Egypt Exploration Fund; Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co.; Bernard Quaritch; Asher & Co.; C. F. Clay; Humphrey Milford, 1915), 193. See also the article by J. Gwyn Griffiths who identifies these terms and argues that these are evidence of the concept of ἀγάπη. See J. G. Griffiths, "Isis and 'The Love of the Gods'," *JTS* XXIX, no. 1 (1978). He goes on to say, "Isis conveys to mankind the love of the gods and she is specially qualified to do so since in herself she unites the functions of a multitude of other deities". See "Isis": 148.

[633] Yarbrough sees 1 John as an epistle in 7 parts with the central part being 3:9-4:6 in which he argues that the Johannine author focuses on three of his key ideas: an urging to love one another, good works as the practical manifestation of religious confession and love for God, and faith, trust, or belief in the name of Jesus, which is in fact linked closely with love for one another (cf. 3:23).

one's own life for another.[634] It is thus appropriate that we now move on to consider the theme of 'love' and how this is influenced by, and in turn influences, the surrounding cultures, as well as our exegesis of the Johannine letters.

6.3. The Significance of the Call to Love

We have already noted the affectionate terms used by the Johannine author for his readers and talked of how he declares his love for them, but this is all just modelling what he believes God wants both for himself and for them – i.e. to love one another. This is a primary call within the Epistles of John.

The first explicit reference to 'love' in the Johannine Epistles occurs in 1 John 2:5 in the phrase ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ θεοῦ τετελείωται.[635] The nature of the genitive here is much debated. Most suggest that it is objective, 'humankind's love for God', while some argue for a subjective meaning, 'God's love for humankind', some for a qualitative genitive, 'a divine kind of love', and some for a deliberate and intentionally ambiguous plenary genitive, which retains both the subjective and objective senses.[636] The meaning of τετελείωται correspondingly changes depending on the previous decision; it could mean that a person's love for God grows to such an extent that they mature and keep his word, or it could mean that God's love for humanity grows to completeness or fullness as a person pursues fellowship with God and obedience to his word.[637]

Consistent with the many dualistic ideas presented in the Johannine writings,[638] a love for the world is seen as antithetical to a love for God (1 Jn. 2:15). Yarbrough defines the verb ἀγαπάω here as 'set affection

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[634] Yarbrough, *1–3 John*, 191f.

[635] The Johannine author introduces the theme of love here in 1 Jn. 2:5 and then unpacks it only cursorily in 2:7-11; it is then further developed in 3:11-18; finally, it is given its fullest treatment in 4:7-21, where the theological grounding for love is presented – here the author outlines love's origin (God) and love's effect (to produce love in those who are granted spiritual rebirth and who know God and believe in him). See Yarbrough, *1–3 John*, 235.

[636] For example, Akin, Brooke, Bruce, Burge, Marshall (wrongly described as 'qualitative' in Derickson), Smalley, and Stott all take it as objective; Bultmann, and de Jonge, and Swellengrebel, Houlden, Kistemaker, Yarbrough, and Westcott, take it as subjective, Schnackenburg takes it as qualitative, and Strecker, and Derickson takes it as plenary. The same discussion is also pertinent to the phrase ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ πατρός (a unique expression in the NT) in 1 Jn. 2:15 with many suggesting that how one takes the meaning in 2:5 should also be reflected in 2:15.

[637] Derickson, *First, Second, and Third John*, 152.

[638] The Johannine author seems to write into and perhaps from a dualistic worldview; frequently noted dualisms in the Johannine literature include: e.g. light and darkness, truth and falsehood, love and hate, above and below, spirit and flesh, belief and unbelief, life and death, children of God and children of the devil. For detailed discussion on the issue of dualism in John's Gospel and possible influences on his presentation of these various contrasts see Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, 103-109; S. C. Barton, "Johannine Dualism and Contemporary Pluralism," in *The Gospel of John and Christian Theology* (eds. R. Bauckham, et al.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans 2008), 3-50; Köstenberger, *A Theology of John's Gospel and Letters: The Word, the Christ, the Son of God*, 282-292; Brown, *John (I–XII)*, lii-lxiv; Strecker, *Johannine Letters*, 25-34; Lieu, *I, II & III John: A Commentary*,

upon' and argues that one cannot love both God and the world, for "authentic love for God exists only when it has no essential rivals".[639] If one loves God, then they will love the things that God loves – namely, the people of God (Lev. 19:18, 34; Deut. 10:19; Jn. 13:34-35; Rom. 13:8; 1 Pet. 1:22), his dwelling place (Pss. 26:8; 84:1), and his commandments (Ps. 119).[640] However, the argument of 2:15-17 seems to be that both believers and unbelievers can be drawn into the world system and its values, and it is possible that even believers, who know 'the truth', may not hear the message being communicated by the author. As he goes on to say a little later in the letter (1 Jn. 4:6), it is the expectation that those who are believers will actually listen and this is in fact the real test of who has the Spirit of truth (τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς ἀληθείας) and who has the spirit of falsehood (τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς πλάνης), for the response to the apostolic message reveals the spirit in operation in a person.[641] As Derickson notes, "John's point that he repeatedly makes in this epistle is that false teachers are *not* believers. Unbelievers follow false teachers. Consequently, believers should not do likewise, though they may, by implication."[642] The Johannine author's presentation of 'love' in this dualistic way causes some problems for how we are to understand his language of 'love' and 'hate'; indeed, he seems to say that lovelessness = hatred = murder (see 1 Jn. 3:10-15). Georg Strecker notes that the Johannine author is actually using the broad ethical tradition of the rabbis and that the whole "dualistic concept is crassly stated".[643] Yarbrough helpfully points out that the author is "not marshalling a strictly logical and literal argument. He is rather using the sort of either/or imagery found in the Sermon on the Mount".[644] Thus, it is not the case that if we do not love another person, we have murdered them in the same way that Cain killed Abel (1 Jn. 3:12). Nevertheless, the point of the strong language is that believers are really not much different to Cain when they 'hate' their fellow believers – that is how significant an issue this is for the author; he does not see the issue as having a range of possible levels of 'loving' – his dualistic thinking drives him to see things in black and white terms, in stark contrasts – love or hate. Thus, love for the world is hatred of God, lovelessness towards a brother or sister is tantamount to hatred and murder of them.

18-23; K. H. Jobes, *1, 2, & 3 John* (ZECNT; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 65-67; Derickson, *First, Second, and Third John*, 34-35.

639 Yarbrough, *1–3 John*, 127, 130.

640 Yarbrough, *1–3 John*, 127. It should be noted that Yarbrough explicitly states that the love of the world which believers are not to practise, excludes loving the people of the world. Since God himself loves the people of the world (cf. Jn. 3:16; 1 Jn. 3:16), believers too are to love them.

641 Bultmann, *Johannine Epistles*, 64.

642 Derickson, *First, Second, and Third John*, 413.

643 Strecker, *Johannine Letters*, 113.

644 Yarbrough, *1–3 John*, 201.

Implications for Exegesis

According to the Johannine author, what helps us to understand the concept of love is the self-sacrifice of Jesus. In 1 John 3:16-18 we see that love is demonstrated by action. Just as God's love was demonstrated by sending his Son Jesus (cf. Jn. 3:16; Rom. 5:8), so also Jesus' love is demonstrated by his self-sacrifice (1 Jn. 3:16), and followers of Jesus are exhorted to likewise show their love by their actions (cf. 1 Jn. 3:16b-18). 1 John 4:7-21 is the key Johannine passage on God's love and its implications, but unlike Paul's quintessential passage on love (1 Cor. 13) this passage is hortatory rather than expositional. This is because the purpose of the two writers was different; Paul sought to establish the Christian way of love as the framework within which the spiritual gifts (discussed in the chapters either side of 1 Cor. 13) must be understood; the Johannine author instead is prevailing upon his readers to put into practice the commands (1 Jn. 2:7-17), counsel (1 Jn. 2:18-38) and teaching (1 Jn. 3:9-4:6) he has given in the first part of his letter.[645] What is also interesting are the forms of the verb ἀγαπάω used by the Johannine author. As Yarbrough notes:

> It will be seen that only Jesus, Paul, and Peter issue commands to love other people in second-person imperatival form (and even they do so sparingly). John's preferred mode of address is different and in fact unique. His epistles stand alone among all NT books in using a first-person plural form of ἀγαπάω to call readers to love others (1 John 3:11, 18; 4:7, 12, 19; 2 John 5).[646]

Furthermore, the Johannine author has a different view of humanity and its relationships as the preceding discussions have shown. He realises that the love towards one another that he is calling for, is not actually the norm for human beings, and he is going against the prevailing thinking of the philosophers of his day. Seneca, for example, in *De Tranquillitate Animi* (15.1) argues that "one is sometimes seized by hatred for the whole human race". He argues that it is easy to become disillusioned when one realises how scarce simplicity, innocence, and good faith are, and how rife crime, lust, and ambition are, and his answer to these ills is to either laugh them off or to just "accept calmly ['stoically'] the ways of the public and the vices of man, and be thrown neither into laughter nor into tears".[647] This is not the Johannine author's view of humanity nor his response to others; he calls upon his fellow believers not to write people off, ridicule them, or accept the way they are with a fateful resignation, but instead to operate on a higher plane, and love them.[648] Dwight Moody Smith says that human affection apart from the gospel message and our grateful response to it, might be said to be inherently self-interested, but acknowledges that we

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[645] Yarbrough, *1–3 John*, 231.

[646] Yarbrough, *1–3 John*, 233.

[647] Seneca, "Tranquility," 273.

[648] An idea suggested in Yarbrough, *1–3 John*, 202.

need not deny its genuineness. Nevertheless, he argues, "God's love is prior, but shared human love vindicates and validates the claim that God loves. It makes the message of God's love credible in witness to the world."[649] Yarbrough reinforces this idea by saying that "John is calling for a love grounded in God's perfection in contradistinction to human fallenness, a hallmark of which is selfishness rather than love."[650] Furthermore, he argues that the love which the author is talking about in the whole section from 4:7-21, is "a christologically and theologically defined love".[651] It does not come from some abstract idea of god, from some universal divinity such as Plato's ideal form, 'the good' (cf. Plato, *Republic*, VI.508e); rather, according to the Johannine author, it is a love that cannot be known apart from the manifestation of God in and through his Son, Jesus, whom he sent to effect redemption (1 Jn. 3:16; 4:9-10).

In his theologically rich discussion of the origin and effects of love in 1 John 4, the Johannine author affirms that failure to love indicates that the person does not really know God, and that one cannot have an intimate relationship with God without loving others (1 Jn. 4:8).[652] The relationship between 'being' and 'doing' is then explicated in what follows; the one who has been born of God and knows God is required in response to model their action on what the God of love has demonstrated – sacrificial love. God expresses his love by sending his Son as an atoning sacrifice, and he did this so that believers might live through him (1 Jn. 4:9-10). The consequence of this is that they should live in a similar manner, for in the following verse (1 Jn. 4:11) the author, in his usual pastorally sensitive manner, urges his 'beloved' (ἀγαπητοί), "we also ought to love one another" (καὶ ἡμεῖς ὀφείλομεν ἀλλήλους ἀγαπᾶν) since this is how God has loved us (εἰ οὕτως ὁ θεὸς ἠγάπησεν ἡμᾶς). The God who is love (1 Jn. 4:7-8, 16) is thus the source of love for believers – the relational God not only wants fellowship with his 'children', he also wants them to have fellowship with each other. This is necessary because God is seen by people though the love of his children; this is what Jesus told his disciples in John 13:35 and the Johannine author reinforces that in his epistles and particularly in this passage in chapter 4. But that is not the end of what he has to say, for he continues to reinforce, at the start of his final chapter, the fact that love for God must manifest itself in love for others. God's love for his children flows back to him and then on to his other children; it is the teaching of the Johannine author that one cannot, in fact, love God without loving one's fellow believer (1 Jn. 5:1-3).

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649 D. M. Smith, *First, Second, and Third John* (Interpretation, a Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching; Louisville, KY: John Knox, 1991), 111f.

650 Yarbrough, *1–3 John*, 239.

651 Yarbrough, *1–3 John*, 257.

652 R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of the Epistles of St. Peter, St. John and St. Jude* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg, 1966), 496; Derickson, *First, Second, and Third John*, 429-430.

Implications for Exegesis

The love to be shown by those in the community of faith was not simply to be in word but also in deed (1 Jn. 3:18) and was a response to the grace of God in Jesus (1 Jn. 4:19). This is somewhat different to earlier Jewish writings in which doing good was to be focused only on the righteous and was a means of acquiring grace (Sirach 12:1-7); furthermore, Ben Sira argues that atonement could be obtained through various 'good deeds' such as honouring one's father (Sirach 3:3), giving alms to the poor (Sirach 3:30), or pleasing 'the great' (Sirach 20:28). But the tradition of loving others has a long history in the OT (cf. Deut. 6:5; 10:19; Lev. 19:18) and Yarbrough points out that there is evidence to suggest that even in wider Judaism this was extended beyond love for God and his people, to one's enemies.[653] While the idea of helping one's own is very evident in the OT (cf. Deut. 15:7-11; 22:1–4; Lev. 25:35; Josh. 1:14-15), we should not overlook passages like Lev. 23:4-5 and Prov. 25:21-22, which encourage aid to one's enemies, or Lev. 25:35 which encourages Israelites to help strangers as well as their own. In the *Letter of Aristeas* (written sometime in the period 250 BC-100 AD) the Macedonian king of Egypt, Ptolemy II Philadelphus, poses some difficult questions to a group of Jewish scholars and one of the questions asked is about generosity and to whom one should be generous. A scholar replied:

> It is a man's duty … (to be generous) toward those who are amicably disposed to us. That is the general opinion. My belief is that we must (also) show liberal charity to our opponents so that in this manner we may convert them to what is proper and fitting to them. (*Aristeas* 227)[654]

When another is asked to whom one must show favour, he replied:

> To his parents, always, for God's very great commandment concerns the honor due to parents. Next (and closely connected) he reckons the honor due to friends, calling the friend an equal of one's own self. You do well if you bring all men into friendship with yourself. (*Aristeas* 228)

It is thus evident that love for others was something well understood in the background of the OT and Judaism, though the priority was to care for one's own. This priority seems to also be reflected in the Johannine author's writings where he seems to focus on the love to be shown to those in the community rather than to the outsider. The love for enemies called for in the Synoptic Gospels (cf. Mt. 5:38-48; Lk. 6:27-36) is not found in the Johannine Gospel nor Epistles; the great love command of the Johannine author is the love for one another (cf. Jn. 13:34-35; 15:12, 17; 1 Jn. 3:11, 23; 4:7, 11, 21; 2 Jn. 5), which seems to be restricted to the community of believers, though as we have seen it is possible that 'brother'

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[653] See Yarbrough, *1–3 John*, 109-110.

[654] Translations from Charlesworth, *OT Pseudepigrapha*.

should be understood as 'fellow human being'. There seems little doubt that the author has in mind believers in 1 John 4:12, for he describes the outcome of loving one another as "God lives in us" (ὁ θεὸς ἐν ἡμῖν μένει). Having established that God loves us (in sending his Son and giving his Spirit) and arguing that this love is evidence of our relationship with God (1 Jn. 4:13-16), the author then identifies how God's love reaches its triumph – when we live as Jesus lives, and love as Jesus loves (1 Jn. 4:17-19). Finally, he highlights the necessity of human love – a lack of love for one's fellow believers puts a lie to any claim to love God (1 Jn. 4:20-21). The repetition by Jesus of the command to love one another (the original command was given by Jesus in John 13:34a and then repeated four more times – John 13:34b, 35; 15:12, 17) and the repeated reference to it by the author (see 1 Jn. 3:11, 23; 4:7, 11, 12; 2 Jn. 5) indicate that the command was important to Jesus and was seen by the Johannine author as central to the Christian life.

Whether 2 John was written before or after or concurrent with 1 John, many of the themes of 1 John are also found in 2 John and given the author's obvious affection and concern for his readers, it is not surprising to find numerous references to 'love' here as well. As Marshall observes, practical costly caring for the needy can also include, and in fact often gives rise to, real affection for one's fellow-believers – "it is difficult not to care for other people and to be conscious for their needs without feelings of sympathy, compassion, and affection developing spontaneously."[655] The Johannine author begins by describing the recipients of this particular letter as those whom ἐγὼ ἀγαπῶ ἐν ἀληθείᾳ, with the prepositional phrase being hotly debated; it could be either adverbial, 'truly love', 'love with sincerity and integrity' or it could be a dative of sphere meaning 'love in the sphere of truth' which gives it a more theological meaning – i.e. that love operates within the sphere of truth which is the domain where Christians have their community identity and shared set of beliefs and thus act in accordance with them; it would then refer to those who like the Johannine author "continue faithful to the truth concerning Jesus Christ as it was heard at the beginning".[656] The commentators are fairly evenly divided on how to take it, but the fact that the author uses the adverb ἀληθῶς in 1 John 2:5 when he really wants an adverbial idea, and the fact that the further discussion of truth in 2 John is connected with a body of doctrine and facts, from which the false teachers are trying to lead them away, suggest that 'in truth' is the better option than the adverbial idea.[657] The second reference to 'love' in verse 3 (ἐν ἀληθείᾳ καὶ ἀγάπῃ) forms an *inclusio* with verse 1's ἐγὼ ἀγαπῶ ἐν ἀληθείᾳ and marks off the end of the greeting. The third reference to love in verse 5 is the author's sixth reference to Jesus' command to love one another as noted earlier. It is not obvious why the

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[655] Marshall, *The Epistles of John*, 67.

[656] Kruse, *The Letters of John*, 205.

[657] For more on the issue and usage of the Johannine author's 'truth' vocabulary, see section 5.1.1 (*The 'Truth' Vocabulary*) and the next section.

author raises this issue here. Was it because they were doing extremely well in walking in the truth but were lacking in the relational aspects of community life, or was it more like an exhortation for the whole congregation to exhibit the love that only some of them were showing, i.e. those whom the author was aware of (the 'some of your children' in v. 4)? It is evident from the linkage of 'love' and 'truth' in the greeting that the author sees them as two sides of the same coin and it is perhaps more likely that he is comparing two different groups rather than one group which was doing well in one area but not another. The author immediately expounds on what 'love' is in verse 6; it is obedience to God's commands; 'walk in love' = 'walk in obedience'. Such a walk is necessary because many deceivers and false teachers are present in the world (2 Jn. 7; cf. 1 Jn. 4:1), and the unity provided by mutual love within the fellowship of believers was the protection they needed to help them avoid being deceived by the false teachers.

One of the interesting words in 3 John related to the 'love' vocabulary, and found only here in the NT,[658] is the description of Diotrephes as ὁ φιλοπρωτεύων αὐτῶν ('who loves to be first', 3 Jn. 9). A compound of the common verb for love, φιλέω, it is a word which indicates a strong desire for a position of leadership and to be in control, but it is a word which the Johannine author uses (he may even have coined it) to describe misdirected love. It is, no doubt, a strong form of 'love' evidenced by the lengths to which Diotrephes will go to ostracise people, spread malicious gossip, refuse to welcome other believers, stop others from doing so, and excommunicate them, but it is a love directed towards self and not towards the good of others. It is not the kind of love espoused by Jesus or the Johannine author, for this kind of love does nothing to build up the fellowship; rather it tears it down. For the present-day reader this highlights the need for love to operate in the correct way; it is not to be self-directed, but towards others. Furthermore, not only must it be directed properly, it also needs to be governed by another idea that is very important to the Johannine author, 'truth', so let us now turn to that topic.

6.4. The Importance of Truth

The fact that half of all the ἀληθ- words in the NT occur in the Johannine writings indicate that the concept of 'truth' is important to the Johannine author.[659] Our earlier investigation of the Johannine vocabulary

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[658] *BDAG* (s.v. φιλοπρωτεύω) notes that this verbal form is also not found in non-biblical literature, but the adjectival form φιλόπρωτος is found in several places (Plut., *Mor*. 471d, Solon 95 [29, 5], Alcib. 192 [2, 1]; Artem. 2, 32) and the noun form φιλοπρωτεία also exists (e.g. Philod., *Herculanensia Volumina* coll. 2, vol. I 86, 6; VII 176, 16 [Philod., *Rhet*. II 159 Fgm. 19 Sudh.]; Porphyr., Vi. Plot. 10, 53 Harder [=AKirchhoff, Plotini Op. I 1856 p. xxvii=Plotini Op. I 1954 p. 12 Bréhier]).

[659] See the table of occurrences of the ἀληθ- words in section 4.1.1 (*The 'Truth' Vocabulary*). See also the discussion of 'truth' in the Johannine vocabulary sections (5.1.1 [*The 'Truth' Vocabulary*] and 5.1.2 [*The Johannine Concept of Truth*]).

and concept of 'truth' showed that the author uses the term ἀλήθεια to communicate a number of different, but related, ideas involving both a body of facts to be believed about Jesus, and the ethical behaviour which is consistent with the knowledge of that body.[660] It would seem that the recipients of the Johannine Epistles were faced with a situation in which the body of truth to be believed was being challenged, particularly by those who had departed the group, and the recipients were no longer sure about what was 'true'. In his discussion of the 'truth' adjectives, Yarbrough notes that for something to be true in the Johannine author's world it needed to have an ancient heritage (which is why the Gospels record genealogies); it was not enough that it offer utility or profitability.[661] Thus, the author highlights that what he is saying has such a heritage; it is the same command they have had from the beginning. Rudolf Schnackenburg also notes the importance of this 'old' connection: "To hold fast to the old, to what was preached from the beginning, is for the author the seal of truth. Any novelty that is not a part of the original teaching has departed from the one truth, which comes from God".[662] But what is this teaching that they have had from 'the beginning' and which was 'old' (1 Jn. 1:1; 2:7)? The background is most likely referring to Jesus' imperative to love (Jn. 13:34; 15:17) which in turn is based upon the OT (cf. Deut. 6:5 and Lev. 19:18).[663] Some however, have suggested that rather than the specific love command, the 'old' teaching refers to the commandment which is mediated through the Christian tradition and refers to the commandments given in 1 John 2:3-6 which Rudolf Bultmann says are included in the commandment to love in verse 7, a commandment that the false teachers are not presenting because they are giving

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[660] See Derickson, *First, Second, and Third John*, 662. Derickson says, "As a Johannine term, ἀληθεία often indicates a body of doctrinal (christological) truth (1 John 2:21–23; 4:2, 6; 5:10, 20; 2 John 7) or ethical behavior (1 John 1:6; 2:4; 3:18–19; 4:20)."

[661] Yarbrough, *1–3 John*, 98. He cites Mark McVann's article on change and novelty which argues that "change or novelty in traditional religion or religious doctrine and practice met with especially violent rejection" and "Religious doctrine and practice… are regarded as having been divinely mandated. Therefore, tampering with them is tantamount to a rejection of God and an expression of contempt for the people who belong to him." See M. McVann, "Change/Novelty Orientation," in *Handbook of Biblical Social Values* (eds. J. J. Pilch, et al., 1998), 19, 20.

[662] Schnackenburg, *The Johannine Epistles: Introduction and Commentary*, 104.

[663] Brown (*Epistles of John*, 265) has argued that "the epistolary author is implicitly equating the commandment of Jesus with the Decalogue, the covenant demand of the OT (Exod 34:28)", but there is no reason to equate this to such a specific reference where the command to love each other is not explicit (however implicit it may be in the decalogue commands directed towards others). In any case, as Yarbrough points out, the issue of love "is grounded in God's eternal character and existence and was integral to the creation order reflected in the rapport between Adam and Eve (in Matt. 19:4, 18 Jesus uses the language of *ap' archês*, from the beginning, to refer to God's creation of humans in the Garden)"; See *1–3 John*, 97. Marshall suggests that "John regards all the commandments as being summed up in one" and that the love command of Jesus is that summative command; see Marshall, *The Epistles of John*, 129. So also Akin, *1, 2, 3 John*, 96. Lieu agrees, but based on 1 Jn. 3:23 adds the need to believe in Jesus; see Lieu, *I, II & III John: A Commentary*, 76.

something new;[664] others suggest that it could possibly refer to the obligation in 1 John 2:6 to imitate the example of Christ.[665] But on the whole most commentators see in 1 John 2:7 a reference to the love command of Jesus as summative of the OT teaching.[666] Burge says ἀρχή ('beginning') in 1 John 2:7 refers to the events surrounding Jesus' life and ministry and it has the same meaning in 1 John 1:1; 2:13 and 3:8,[667] but Yarbrough helpfully points out that the author uses the term in a variety of ways. It appears 12 times in the Johannine writings (of the 19 in the NT) and is used to refer "to Satan's point of origin (John 8:44; 1 John 3:8), the beginning of Jesus's public ministry (John 15:27; cf. Luke 1:2), the invisible (to humans) horizon of eternity past (1 John 1:1; 2:13, 14), and the time when a particular individual or group first heard and received the gospel (1 John 2:24 [2×]; 3:11; 2 John 5, 6)."[668] But it still has a 'new' element to it, which Burge argues is because it takes on a new form with the coming of Christ who exemplified self-giving love and enabled his followers to love in like manner.[669] Whichever view one takes, the Johannine author's point is that the recipients must hold fast to what they had been instructed in and which had not changed. It could be trusted; it may have had a new form, as exemplified by Jesus, but it did not contradict what had been passed on to them, unlike the teaching of the departed false teachers, which was 'new' and suspect because it denied that Jesus was the Christ.

As we have seen the Johannine author is fond of using dualistic ideas. In his literature, he contrasts 'truth', 'speaking the truth', and 'doing the truth' with things like 'falsehood', 'telling lies', and 'practising idolatry'. It is thus important for us to consider what the Johannine author has to say about these matters. The language for 'untruths' in the Johannine literature include terms such as 'liar' (ψεύστης), 'tell lies' (ψευδόμαι), 'lie' (ψεῦδος), 'false prophet' (ψευδοπροφήτης), 'deceive' (πλανάω), 'falsehood' (πλάνη), and 'deceiver' (ὁ πλάνος). The term for liar (ψεύστης) occurs twice in the Gospel of John and five times in 1 John. In his Gospel, the author uses ψεύστης to describe the character of the devil; he is one who ἐν τῇ ἀληθείᾳ οὐκ ἕστηκεν, ὅτι οὐκ ἔστιν ἀλήθεια ἐν αὐτῷ. ὅταν λαλῇ τὸ ψεῦδος, ἐκ τῶν ἰδίων λαλεῖ, ὅτι ψεύστης ἐστὶν καὶ ὁ πατὴρ αὐτοῦ (Jn. 8:44). It is also used to describe what God or Jesus would be, if what they said was untrue. In John 8, the Jews claim to know God, but they really don't. Jesus tells them that he would be a 'liar' like them if he claimed that he did not know God, because he really did, and, in fact, obeyed his every word (Jn. 8:55). The Johannine author also says that a ψεύστης is what God would be if

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[664] Bultmann, *Johannine Epistles*, 27. See also Von Wahlde, *The Gospel and Letters of John*, 3:62.

[665] Hiebert, *Epistles of John*, 85.

[666] Recall the necessity to love in the previous section.

[667] See Burge, *Letters of John*, 100.

[668] Yarbrough, *1–3 John*, 98.

[669] Burge, *Letters of John*, 100. Bultmann likewise says that it is new "as an eschatological reality"; see Bultmann, *Johannine Epistles*, 28.

we claimed that we had not sinned (1 Jn. 1:10), or if we did not believe the testimony that God has given about his Son (1 Jn. 5:10). More frequently, the term is used to describe someone who says they know God but do not obey him (1 Jn. 2:4; cf. Jn. 8), or who denies that Jesus is the Christ (1 Jn. 2:22), or who claims to love God but hates their fellow believer (1 Jn. 4:20). As such, it is a term that can be applied to both believers and unbelievers but at its heart, the term is about making false claims (i.e. claims which do not align with the truth), which sadly, even believers can make. This is evident in 1 John 1:6 where the author tells us that if we claim to have fellowship with God but walk in darkness then ψευδόμεθα καὶ οὐ ποιοῦμεν τὴν ἀλήθειαν – telling lies is the antithesis of living out the truth. Ψεῦδος occurs in 1 John 2:21 to present what is antithetical to 'truth' ("no lie comes from the truth"), and in 1 John 2:27 to identify that the anointing the readers received was not a ψεῦδος but was in fact ἀληθής. The only reference to ψευδοπροφήτης occurs in 1 John 4:1 when the author urges his readers to test the spirits because πολλοὶ ψευδοπροφῆται ἐξεληλύθασιν εἰς τὸν κόσμον. The verbal form for 'deceive' (πλανάω) occurs twice in John's Gospel (7:12, where some assess Jesus as one who deceives people; and 7:47, where the Pharisees accuse the temple guards of having been deceived by Jesus) and three times in 1 John (1:8, where believers who claim to be without sin are described as deceiving themselves; and in 2:26 and 3:7, which both refer to those who are leading astray the readers of the author's letter), while the noun πλάνη occurs only in 1 John 4:6 to describe the spirit of falsehood, deceit or error, and the adjective πλάνος is used substantively twice by the author, only in 2 John 7, to describe those who deceive the world.[670] Such frequent criticisms of the things which are untrue and the people who propagate untruths, and the use of dualistic language to present stark contrasts, all serve to highlight the importance of truth for the Johannine author.

Given the many dualistic contrasts in the Johannine writings, and the obvious plethora of terms about 'untruths' just noted, one might have expected something in the Johannine Epistles about 'false gods' in contrast to the 'one true God', and indeed there is such a comment, but it appears somewhat unexpectedly as the final warning in the First Epistle of John. The final warning to the readers about keeping themselves from idols has been noted by many scholars as an unusually abrupt ending to 1 John, and it appears to bear little connection to the preceding series of affirmations, but it could (and should in my view) be seen as part of the Johannine author's concern for the truth. The usual concluding farewell in letters and often the inclusion of a formal doxology at the end of most letters is missing from 1 John and instead the author addresses his readers with his final term of endearment, Τεκνία ("Dear children"), and then commands them (using a second person Aorist imperative) – "keep yourselves from idols". Colin Kruse notes that this exhortation has puzzled interpreters and that the debate has largely centred on

[670] The Johannine author is so scathing of such people that he also calls them ἀντίχριστος in the same verse.

whether it is to be taken literally as a warning against idolatry, or whether it should be taken in some metaphorical way.[671] He goes on to identify a number of scholars who have taken it literally with some arguing for a background of persecution in which certain Christians had renounced Jesus to avoid martyrdom (e.g. Edwards), and others seeing a background in the potential for apostasy (not heresy), potentially related to the sin which leads to death (1 Jn. 5:16-17) (Stegemann, Hills, Strecker). Kruse then identifies a number of scholars who have taken the exhortation metaphorically. In such interpretations 'idols' could mean 'phantoms' or 'false ideas' such as the false ideas of the Docetists and those who denied the reality of Jesus' life and resurrection body (Sugit), or it could mean 'sin as a satanic power' so the exhortation is to keep way from sin (Nauck, Schnackenburg), or it could be a reference to keeping away from the secessionists who have become children of the devil having developed a different understanding of God reflected in Christ and underplaying the importance of moral behaviour (Brown).[672]

In his published dissertation on re-reading 1 John in the light of the epistle's 'closural strategy', Terry Griffith argues that contrary to popular views that 1 John was written in response to docetic or gnosticizing movements and an intra-Christian dispute, "1 John is the product of a continuing debate between Jews and Jewish-Christians over whether Jesus was the Messiah, at a time when some Jewish-Christians belonging to Johannine Christianity had reverted to Judaism."[673] In his view, the Johannine traditions of 1 John must be located in a setting of Judaism and the letter is primarily pastoral, with the author trying to prevent further apostasy amongst the Christians in the community to which he writes "by strengthening their identity and cohesion". He says, "[t]his aim is achieved through (a) a call to maintain the foundational confession of Johannine Christianity, namely, that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God (as in Jn. 20.31); (b) an appeal to strengthen fellowship with one another by obedience to the command to love one another; and (c) a strong warning to avoid idols."[674] On this last point, Griffith argues in his thesis that the contrast at the end between the true God (ὁ ἀληθινὸς θεός) and idols (εἴδωλα) (1 Jn. 5:20e-21) is couched in typically Jewish vocabulary concerning the way of dealing with idolatry. He suggests that there are strong parallels with the vocabulary and phrasing in *Joseph and Aseneth*, which recounts the conversion of Aseneth, the daughter of an Egyptian high priest, who converts from idolatry to being a proselyte of Judaism in order that she might marry the patriarch Joseph, a righteous Jew.[675] Thus Griffith concludes

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671 Kruse, *The Letters of John*, 200.

672 Kruse, *The Letters of John*, 201. See also Brown, *Epistles of John*, 627-629. Brown identifies 10 different interpretations covering both literal and metaphorical explanations. In Brown's view, 'going after idols' referred to "speaking of joining the secession and accepting its theology".

673 Griffith, *Keep Yourself from Idols*, 1.

674 Griffith, *Keep Yourself from Idols*, 1-2.

675 Griffith, *Keep Yourself from Idols*, 80-81.

that the language of the ending of 1 John "is inspired by the idol polemic of the LXX, and that the form of the ending itself has parallels in the Hellenistic Jewish literature of the period".[676] Griffith may be right, but irrespective of the particular referent of 'idols', there is a contrast between what is true (the true God who brings eternal life) and that which is not true (idols, the following of whom will lead only to death).

Guarding oneself from evil is a concern of all Christians and no less so for the Johannine author. In 2 John, he warns of false teachers and deceivers (those who do not speak the truth) who spread a faulty view of Christ's person and work (v. 7) which causes people to behave in faulty ways and break loyalties (vv. 9-11) – i.e. they deviate from or deny the teaching of Christ (the 'truth'), which was passed on by the apostles such as John, and cause a break in the bonds of friendship or fellowship. The message preached by John and the other apostles, when believed, created a fellowship between the Father, the Son, and the believer; those who ran ahead and did not continue in what was handed down caused a rupture in this fellowship. A communal bond of fellowship like friendship can only be based on truth-speaking between the parties. Thus, on the one hand the Johannine author commends an 'open door policy' to those who share the communal bond (3 Jn. 5-7), but on the other he warns against receiving strangers who do not share the same bond (2 Jn. 7-11). This was not a situation unique to this author. In Sirach 11:29-34 a similar warning about showing hospitality can be found; here too the writer is warning about the difficult task of knowing a person's true character, and that some would take advantage of friendship, so he urges caution about taking a person into one's home:

> [29] Be careful about the kind of person you invite into your home, because clever people can fool you in many ways. [30] A proud person is a decoy to lure you into danger; like a spy, he will look for your weaknesses. [31] He will make good appear evil and find fault with the noblest actions. [32] A single spark can set a pile of coals ablaze, and a sinner is just waiting for a chance to do violence. [33] Watch out for such people and their evil plans; they will ruin you permanently. [34] If you bring a stranger home with you, it will only cause trouble, even between you and your own family.
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> (Sirach 11:29-34 [GNT])[677]

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[676] Griffith, *Keep Yourself from Idols*, 208. Likewise, Julian Hills says, "once the Jewish... background of the Johannine tradition is recognized, it is very difficult to admit any other than the Septuagintal meanings of εἴδωλον into the discussion." See J. Hills, "'Little Children, Keep Yourselves from Idols': 1 John 5:21 Reconsidered," *CBQ* 51, no. 2 (1989): 294.

[677] The *Good News Translation* (GNT) is copyright 1992 by the American Bible Society. Ben Sira discusses the themes of friendship and hospitality also in 6:5-17; 12:8-13:1; and 37:1-6.

Implications for Exegesis

The final reference to 'truth' in the Johannine Epistles occurs in 3 John 12 in the context of commending Demetrius, possibly the letter bearer, as a person who is well spoken of by everyone, by the Johannine author (whose testimony they know is 'true'), and even by the 'truth' itself. Here 'truth' is being personified as one of the three testifiers of Demetrius. As Lieu notes, "[t]he language is that of the law court, where the case for or against someone is—so it is argued—beyond questioning",[678] but it is also the language of the OT where a matter is established on the basis of two or three witnesses (cf. Deut. 17:6; 19:15), and it was a principle endorsed by Jesus himself (Mt. 18:16), as well as other Christian writers (cf. 2 Cor. 13:1; 1 Tim. 5:19; Heb. 10:28). As in other uses of the term 'truth', there is debate about what the Johannine author means here, with some commentators arguing that it refers to the gospel truth affirmed by all orthodox believers (cf. Marshall, 93; Kruse, 233; Akin, 250; Jobes, 330), God's Word (Kistemaker, 400), a member of the godhead – God or Christ or the Spirit (e.g. Yarbrough, 383; Brooke, 192-193), or a poetic personification of the truth (e.g. Dodd, 167; von Wahlde, 3:267; Painter, 379). Brown argues against an identification with a member of the godhead but takes a meditating position which tries to draw in the various ideas that the Johannine author attributes to truth when he says, "Without eliminating the divine element in the testimony by the truth, it seems best here to think of the truth that abides in the Christian (2 John 2) and to which the Christian belongs (1 John 3:19), namely, a truth about Jesus that has been appropriated through faith and that expresses itself in the way one walks (3 John 3) and manifests itself in love (3 John 6; 1 John 3:18)".[679] Whichever view is taken, the fact is that Demetrius' character is beyond question and no court of law would find against him. The point seems to be that Gaius and those he is responsible for should have every confidence in Demetrius. Such an endorsement may have been necessary if Demetrius was not simply the letter bearer, but the head of the delegation sent by the Johannine author.

There is little doubt that the Johannine author sees 'truth' as of the greatest importance, but it should be noted that the Hellenistic world also thought it important. In the book of 1 Esdras, there is a story of three youths who seek the approval of King Darius by debating which was the greatest out of wine, the king, and women. The debate was won by Zerubbabel, the third debater, who argued that "women are strongest, but above all things truth is victor" (1 Esdras 3:12).[680] After establishing that women have mastery over men and the king, because men will do anything to please the woman they love, Zerubbabel then says that despite women being strong, "truth is great and stronger than all things" (1 Esdras 4:35). He goes on:

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[678] Lieu, *I, II & III John: A Commentary*, 279.

[679] Brown, *Epistles of John*, 723-724.

[680] All quotations from 1 Esdras are from the NRSV translation.

Implications for Exegesis

> The whole earth calls upon truth, and heaven blesses it. All God's works quake and tremble, and with him there is nothing unrighteous. [37] Wine is unrighteous, the king is unrighteous, women are unrighteous, all human beings are unrighteous, all their works are unrighteous, and all such things. There is no truth in them and in their unrighteousness they will perish. [38] But truth endures and is strong forever, and lives and prevails forever and ever. [39] With it there is no partiality or preference, but it does what is righteous instead of anything that is unrighteous or wicked. Everyone approves its deeds, [40] and there is nothing unrighteous in its judgment. To it belongs the strength and the kingship and the power and the majesty of all the ages. Blessed be the God of truth! (1 Esdras:4:36-40)

The response of the people to Zerubbabel's argument was "great is truth, and strongest of all" (1 Esdras 4:41). Such a respect for 'truth' is, in fact, elevating truth to the highest position and this was not something that the Johannine author was prepared to do. For him, truth was certainly associated with the divine,[681] because it was an attribute of God and described God's work and God's revelation, but it was not to receive the praise that was due to God alone. Furthermore, since truth was a characteristic of God, and followers of Jesus are called τὰ τέκνα τοῦ θεοῦ, believers are to be people of truth – people who love the truth, hold to the truth, have the truth in them, do (or live out) the truth, speak the truth, and work together for the truth. There is no doubt, that truth was important to the Johannine author, but that is because it was part of the character of God and was also to be characteristic of his followers.

6.5. The Interrelationship of Fellowship, Love, and Truth

While it has been convenient to look separately at the three key themes being considered in this chapter – the 'relationship of fellowship between the Johannine author and his readers', 'love', and 'truth' – the reality is that these three themes are closely interwoven; cognate forms of 'love' and 'truth' are found together in 1 John 3:18, 2 John 1 and 3, and 3 John 1, and are found in close proximity in the pericopes 1 John 2:3-11, 3:10-24, 2 John 1-7, and 3 John 1-8. The concepts of 'truth' and 'fellowship' appear in 1 John 1:5-11; 2:20-27, and 2 John 2. 'Love' and 'fellowship' are found together in 1 John 2:15-17 and 4:7-21. And all three themes are interwoven in 1 John 2:3-11. It is therefore important to consider just how the Johannine author artfully combines the three themes before we finally turn to how the reframing of friendship by the author should inform exegesis of the Johannine Epistles.

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[681] As Yarbrough notes, "In John's writings 'truth' is associated with the Father (John 15:26), the Son (1:14, 17; 14:6; 18:37), the Holy Spirit (14:17; 15:26; 16:13; 1 John 4:6; 5:6), and the divine word (associated with Father, Son, and Spirit alike) that sanctifies believers (John 17:17)." Yarbrough, *1–3 John*, 62, 283.

Implications for Exegesis

Robert Yarbrough proposes that when considered as a whole, the First Epistle of John is about knowing God in a saving way, and that this consists of three dimensions – the pistic, the ethical, and the agapic.[682] He argues that there is a need for the believers to know or believe certain things (the body of truth passed on from the author) – the pistic dimension; there is also a need for believers to do certain things (e.g. show obedience to God, do good deeds) – the ethical dimension; finally, there is a need to have a heart characterised by certain affections, towards God and toward others – the agapic dimension. But it seems to me, that what Yarbrough considers the third 'dimension' (the agapic) is really a particular manifestation of the 'ethical' dimension – how one is to behave, what one is to do. I would argue, instead, that the thrust of the First Epistle of John is that the author wants to correct misunderstandings that his readers have, perhaps as a result of the false teachers and secessionists who were once amongst them but have now left. The misunderstandings are about who they are, what they are to believe, and what they are to do. I propose, therefore, that the key thing the author is trying to communicate to his readers is that they are a community which needs to understand its identity, shared beliefs, and obligations so that they can truly be who God has called them to be, know the truth, and practice the love which God has called for in this new community. Thus, I argue that the three 'dimensions' of 'knowing God' presented by the author are really an ontological dimension (who they are as children of God, as beloved brothers and sisters, and as a fellowship rather than a friendship group), a pistic dimension (what they need to know about God and Jesus and the Holy Spirit, what they are to believe), and an ethical dimension (the required obedience to God's commands, the need for good works, and the need for love towards God and their fellow believers). Alternatively, these three dimensions might be described as 'nature', 'belief', and 'action'.[683]

As noted above, in several places throughout the Epistles, two or more of these elements are brought together or linked. In his First Epistle, the author begins with describing how he and his fellow apostles have shared their knowledge and understanding with the readers so that they might all have a common knowledge and belief and thus have a basis for fellowship; he deals with this issue before dealing with how they were to behave and how they were to love one another and all the while, he continually reminds them of who they are and what they believe, and warns them not to follow after the false teachers. In addition, continual descriptions of the readers as his dear children and his beloved, serve to remind them of his pastoral care for them, and that all he is telling them is for their benefit and good. All this suggests that belief and an understanding of one's nature as part of a fellowship of believers, are the precursors to

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[682] Yarbrough, *1–3 John*, 71-75.

[683] In yet another alternative, one could think of these three dimensions as 'being', 'knowing', and 'doing'. These three terms seem to me to more clearly represent three different dimensions and remove the overlap implicit in Yarbrough's three dimensions, especially between his ethical and agapic dimensions, which I think are both part of 'doing'.

ethical action. The Johannine author's practice is that of all good communicators: start with what people know or with what they are familiar and then move to what they don't know; and repeat the key points over and over.

In 1 John 2:3-11, love and fellowship and truth are inextricably linked. A condition of being in a relationship with one's brother or sister (i.e. being in fellowship with them) is that one loves them, but also that one is in fellowship with God. If one is not 'walking in the light', then they are out of fellowship with God *and* their brother or sister; indeed, it is love for a brother of sister that shows that a person is in fellowship with God, and the absence of love towards fellow believers invalidates a person's claim to be in fellowship with God. The terminology used in this passage is quite strong, with the author using the term 'hate' to describe those who do not love, who walk in the darkness, or who make false claims about being in the light. Such language is not simply emotion laden, but action based; for this author, 'hate' describes a disposition as well as unloving actions.[684] Brown has suggested that darkness, falsehood, and hate are equivalent terms in 1 John and similarly, light, truth, and love are 'virtually interchangeable'.[685] But 'fellowship' is also inextricably linked to 'truth'. As Derickson says:

> One cannot fellowship with (abide in) God apart from being rightly related to His Son. Furthermore, one cannot be rightly related to His Son if he believes the wrong things about Him. Fellowship with God is as contingent on truth as it is on moral purity. Both are sourced in God. Both are spheres in which a believer must walk in order to abide and thereby experience the eternal life they possess.[686]

1 John 3:9-24 uses several of the author's dualistic themes (love and hate, children of God and children of the devil, righteousness and evil, life and death) to bring together nature, belief, and ethical action. Those who are children of God (3:9-10) and have passed from death to life (3:14), demonstrate their nature by what they believe and the way that they behave – they believe in Jesus Christ and know that he lives in them and they have his Spirit (3:23-24), they keep his commands (3:22), they do what is right (3:10, 16-18), and they love their fellow believers (3:10, 14). It is their shared nature and beliefs which enable the author to summon them to love each other all the more. Towards the end of this discussion, love is linked

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[684] Yarbrough notes that Jesus himself may have helped the Johannine author develop this understanding of 'hate' when he expounded what it means for the world to hate his followers in the Lukan version of the Beatitudes. In Lk. 6:22 Jesus says: "Blessed are you when people hate you, when they exclude you and insult you and reject your name as evil because of the Son of Man" – 'hatred' included exclusion, insults, and rejection. See Yarbrough, *1–3 John*, 104.

[685] Brown, *Epistles of John*, 290.

[686] Derickson, *First, Second, and Third John*, 259.

with truth, when the author says Τεκνία, μὴ ἀγαπῶμεν λόγῳ μηδὲ τῇ γλώσσῃ, ἀλλ᾽ ἐν ἔργῳ καὶ ἀληθείᾳ (3:18). As noted earlier, there is debate in the Johannine literature about the function of the prepositional phrase 'in truth' re whether it is adverbial (meaning 'sincerely' or 'truly') or whether it refers to a body of revealed truth. W. Hall Harris rejects the adverbial idea here, arguing that the first noun in each pair is produced by the second noun – i.e. words are produced by the tongue and righteous deeds are produced by the truth.[687] It is probably better, in this case, to see the anarthrous 'truth' here as having an 'understood' article and then treat it as all the other arthrous occurrences of ἀλήθεια, as the body of truth passed on by the apostles. The meaning then is that one loves others by "'doing something appropriate to the body of truth delivered by the apostles,' or 'acting on what you have been taught.'"[688]

This combining of love and truth confirms one's parentage as being a child of God; when one loves like God does and one is ἐκ τῆς ἀληθείας (a unique Johannine expression found only in Jn. 18:37; 1 Jn. 2:21; 3:19, and not in any other NT writer or the LXX), then one is certain that the source of their identity and life as a believer is the truth as it is revealed in Christ, for the Johannine author sees Jesus Christ as the embodiment of truth (cf. Jn. 14:6; 1:14, 17; 8:32). Such certainty enables the believer to have παρρησία ('confidence', 'boldness', 'frankness') before God (1 Jn. 3:21; 4:17; 5:14), something that is also the result of remaining in Christ (cf. 1 Jn. 2:28), and something which is the opposite of φόβος ('fear'; cf. 1 Jn. 4:17-18).

At the end of this discussion 'love' and 'belief' are linked when the Johannine author summarises Jesus' command and what believers are to do – "to believe in the name of God's Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us." (1 Jn. 3:23). Richard Lenski summarises the author's point well when he says, "These are not two commandments: to believe and to love. These two are one. You cannot believe without loving nor love without believing."[689]

This idea is reinforced at the beginning of the final chapter in 1 John, where 'nature' and 'belief' and 'ethical action' are all brought together and interwoven as the Johannine author brings his argument to a climax. Those who believe that Jesus is the Christ are born of God and those who are born of God, love him and love his children as well (1 Jn. 5:1-3). Yarbrough notes that "[t]he juxtaposition of love and commandment-keeping has a significant OT counterpart that no doubt informs John's Christian understanding and is worth underscoring"; he cites in support passages like Deuteronomy 6:2, 5; 10:12;

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[687] Harris III, *1, 2, 3 John – Comfort and Counsel for a Church in Crisis*, 162.

[688] Derickson, *First, Second, and Third John*, 361.

[689] Lenski, *Interpretation of the Epistles of John*, 479.

11:1, 13, 22; Joshua 22:5 and 23:6, 11, where command-keeping and love are linked.[690] A substantial portion of the letter has dealt with the ethical action flowing from who the readers are as children of God, but the author wants to conclude with ensuring that his readers know what they should believe. As Yarbrough succinctly states: "The key to Christian identity, John has been insisting, is love. The road to love, he will now affirm, is paved with faith".[691] The vocabulary of 'belief' – the noun πίστις ('faith'), the verb πιστεύω ('believe') and the adjective πιστός ('faithful', 'reliable', 'believing') – is frequent throughout the Johannine literature and most prominent in 1 John 5.[692] Those who are the children of God are those who believe *that* Jesus is the Christ (5:1) and the Son of God (5:5), believe the testimony *about* the Son given by God (5:10), and believe *in* the Son of God (5:10) and his name (5:13).

At the end of chapter five, the Johannine author presents three statements of knowledge and belief that are foundational truths which link a believer to God and to each other – the first person plural οἴδαμεν at the beginning of each of verses 18, 19, and 20 binds the community of believers together with each other, and with the author, on the basis of a shared set of beliefs. Firstly, they know that those who have been born of God do not continue to sin (5:18); as believers who have been brought into a relationship with God and given a new nature, they must live in ways that are consistent with the character of God and the enabling power to do this is provided by God himself. Secondly, they know that they are in fact children of God, a new family, community, or fellowship which is separate from the world that is under the control of the evil one (5:19). And thirdly, they know that the understanding they have has been given to them by the Son of God who came to reveal the true God; the revelation they received was that eternal life was only to be found in him and that this was gained by being *in* Jesus and thus being *in* the Father. Ultimately, the coming of the Son was not so that people could learn truths about the one who is true (τὸν ἀληθινόν), but that they might have fellowship with him and his Son (ἐσμὲν ἐν τῷ ἀληθινῷ, ἐν τῷ υἱῷ αὐτοῦ Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ). As we can see in this final climactic chapter of 1 John the ontological, pistic, and ethical dimensions of knowing God are all brought together and the Johannine author shows that the friendships which exist in the Christian community are really a fellowship of people who are all children of God and who have God in them, who all believe the same things, and who all desire to keep God's commands and show love towards one another.

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690 Yarbrough, *1–3 John*, 272.

691 Yarbrough, *1–3 John*, 269.

692 Seven of the eleven Johannine Epistle references to the 'belief' vocabulary occur in 1 John 5.
Πίστις occurs 5x: in 1 Jn. 5:4; Rev. 2:13, 19; 13:10; 14:12.
Πιστός occurs 11x: in Jn. 20:27; 1 Jn. 1:9; 3 Jn. 5; Rev. 1:5; 2:10, 13; 3:14; 17:14; 19:11; 21:5; 22:6.
Πιστεύω occurs 107x: 98x in the Gospel of John; and in: 1 Jn. 3:23; 4:1, 16; 5:1, 5, 10[3x], 13.

Implications for Exegesis

The Johannine author's penchant for linking truth and love in his writings is evident again in 2 John: The greeting at the beginning is book-ended by the two terms (the addressees are described as those "whom I love in the truth" (v. 1), and the greeting closes with the assurance that the three great aspects of a Christian greeting (grace, mercy, and peace) "will be with us in truth and love" (v. 3). Adolf Schlatter says about this letter opening, "Even in wishing them blessing, he cites the two great components truth and love, which together are the sign of genuinely constituted Christian existence".[693] Westcott says that "Truth and love describe an intellectual harmony and a moral harmony; and the two correspond with each other according to their subject matter. Love is truth in human action; and truth is love in regard to the order of things".[694] In 2 John 1-3, the author is assuring his readers that the truth to which they have entrusted themselves is the gospel message of Jesus and that it has a permanency about it which ensures their eternal future. The strong emphasis on truth and love in this opening greeting reflects the author's conviction that these two innate characteristics of the godhead (cf. 1 Jn. 4:8; 5:20; see also Jn. 3:33; 17:3) are the foundation of the eternal fellowship which exists between God and humanity and which in turn must be the foundation for relationships between human beings. Virtue, utility, or pleasure are not the bases upon which Christian friendships are built. The Christian community is a fellowship founded on truth and love. Thus, the Johannine author in his affection and concern for this community addresses both of these issues. But this is not just a sentimental or emotive letter. We saw earlier in section 5.1.2.3 (*Where the Johannine Author Differs from His Contemporaries*) that Daniel Akin has suggested that truth and love are key words for the author because love appeals to the hearts of the recipients while truth appeals to their minds. He also spoke of truth being the framework which "guides and gives genuine meaning to his expression of love" and argues that "John knew that both love and truth are essential". He immediately goes on to say:

> John will go on to explain that love walks in obedience to God's commands and is expressed in relation to one another (in this context note Paul's magnificent description of love in 1 Cor 13:4–8). Truth, interestingly, is related to both belief and behavior. John's interest in truth is not so much philosophical as it is spiritual and personal. Truth is that which is embodied in Jesus Christ (John 14:6), who he is and what he has done. John is especially concerned with the person of Christ in this letter (v. 7).[695]

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[693] A. Schlatter, *Die Briefe und die Offenbarung des Johannes* (Erläuterungen zum Neuen Testament 10; Stuttgart: Calwer, 1950), 115. Cited in Yarbrough, *1–3 John*, 333.

[694] Westcott, *Epistles of St. John*, 226.

[695] Akin, *1, 2, 3 John*, 221.

Implications for Exegesis

In 3 John, once again, love and truth are linked together. The author and Gaius enjoyed a warm relationship, which was based on both love and truth. The author repeatedly calls Gaius 'beloved' (ἀγαπητός) (vv. 1, 2, 5, 11) and says that he "loves him in [the] truth" (ὃν ἐγὼ ἀγαπῶ ἐν ἀληθείᾳ); Gaius is also renowned for the love he shows (v. 6). But 'truth' also seems to bind the two men together; beyond the opening statement in which the author indicates that his love is 'in truth' (v. 1) he also rejoices over reports that Gaius is faithful to the truth (vv. 3 and 4), urges further working together for the truth (v. 8), and tells Gaius that the highest commendation of Demetrius is that the truth itself testifies to how well he is doing (v. 12). There may well be ecclesial politics at play in 3 John, especially when much of the letter is assessing the behaviour and beliefs of particular people who seem to have positions of influence in the church – e.g. Diotrephes is condemned for his pride, his lack of hospitability, his malicious gossip, and his control over other believers; Demetrius is commended for his exemplary life and conduct. And Gaius himself may well have been a pastor under the Johannine author's oversight, so the letter is also a commendation of his life and conduct, an encouragement to continue strongly, and advice about what the author intends to do with the 'problem' Diotrephes. If Johnson's 'three-letter packet' suggestion, outlined earlier, has merit, then it may well be that Gaius was the pastor responsible for the 'elect lady' house church mentioned in 2 John, and Demetrius may have been the letter carrier. In any case, as with all the Johannine Epistles, truth and love are evident as key themes.

I conclude this section by reiterating that the Johannine author sees three dimensions of what it means to truly know God and experience life with him – nature, belief, and action. He affirms who they are, what they all believe, and what actions flow from that knowledge. He highlights that those who are children of God have shared beliefs about God and Jesus and the Holy Spirit, which binds them into a fellowship that is committed to the truth and does good, especially loving one other. The three themes of fellowship, truth, and love permeate all three Epistles of John and are used by the author to highlight a shift in how his readers should understand relationships. They have a relationship with God, relationships with each other, and a relationship with the author which go beyond the Graeco-Roman ideas of devotion to the gods, client-patron relationships, friendships between equals or unequals, and service to others. The normal Graeco-Roman features of relationships – frank speaking, reciprocity, obligation, civic duty, loyalty, and gratitude – are all still present and necessary in their upward (with God), inward (within their community or fellowship), and outward (with the author and other believers elsewhere) relationships, but the basis of these relationships is their shared life in Christ, their shared beliefs, and their shared love – nature, belief, and action.

6.6. Exegeting Reframed Friendship

The last paragraph sets the scene for my argument that the Johannine author is reframing the Graeco-Roman concept of friendship. When the Johannine author wrote, he did not write into a vacuum and the world at that time was steeped in the Graeco-Roman culture. Whether the intended recipients of the Johannine literature were Jewish or Gentile in their orientation, the kinds of relationships the author writes about and describes, and the kind of relationship he himself had with the recipients of his writings, would have been viewed with respect to, and in contrast to, the friendships of the Graeco-Roman world, friendships which the philosophers said were based on virtue, utility, or pleasure. They would have been viewed through the 'grid' of known and existing relationships, be they relationships within families or between friends, or the relationships between teachers and pupils, religious leaders and followers, Jews and Samaritans, or Jews and Gentiles (including the Roman overlords). We must therefore consider what sort of 'friendships' existed amongst Christians in the first century.

6.6.1. The Influence of Friendship on Christianity

The Graeco-Roman views of particular concepts did have some influence and impact on Christianity. Troels Engberg-Pedersen, for example, notes that:

> [W]henever early Christian writers make use of concepts belonging within the nexus of friendship, flattery and frank criticism…, they too betray a concern about the status system and a set of counter-values. To the extent, therefore, that their use of those concepts enters directly into the formulation of their own religious message (as I think it often does), that message too will be partly *about* the status system and a set of counter-values. And so work on friendship, flattery and frank criticism will tell us more about the meaning of the religious message itself. The point of the Greek philosophical 'moral system' (or rather one of its points) helps to elucidate the meaning of the Christian message.[696]

The preferred metaphors for Christian solidarity seem to be derived from kinship (e.g. the relationship between brothers, a father-son relationship) rather than friendship (*amicitia* or φιλία). It has even been suggested that in the fourth century AD, some Christians came to regard friendship as a pagan ideal distinct from Christian love. For example, Paulinus of Nola apparently distinguishes pagan and Christian

[696] T. Engberg-Pedersen, "Plutarch to Prince Philopappus on How to Tell a Flatterer from a Friend," in *Friendship, Flattery, and Frankness of Speech: Studies on Friendship in the New Testament World* (ed. J. T. Fitzgerald; Leiden: Brill, 1996), 79.

love, using *caritas* as the main word to describe love among Christians. In a letter to Severus, he seems to be distinguishing between the established Graeco-Roman idea of friendship and the new relationship in Christ when he says:[697]

> [Y]ou, who have become my brother not only for succor in the present but also for eternal companionship [*consortium*], exceed in dearness my bodily relatives in the same degree as you are my brother [*germanus*] by virtue of a greater parent than those who are united to me by mere flesh and blood. For where is that brotherhood in blood [*consanguinea germanitas*] now? Where that former friendship [*amicitia*]? Where that previous comradeship [*contubernia*]? I have died to all of them.
>
> (Paulinus of Nola, *Epistles* 11.3)

And again, in another letter to Pammachius:

> Therefore in the truth in which we stand in Christ, receive my spirit as it is expressed to you in this letter, and do not measure our friendship [*amicitiam*] by time. For it is not as a secular friendship [*secularis*], which is often begotten more in hope than in faith, but rather that spiritual kind [*spiritalis*], which is produced by God as its source and is joined in a brotherhood of souls [*spirituum germanitate*]. Consequently, it does not develop toward love [*amorem*] by daily familiarity nor does it depend on anticipation of proof but, as is worthy of a daughter of truth, it is born at once stable and great, because it arises out of fullness through Christ.
>
> (Paulinus of Nola, *Epistles* 13.2)

Why Paulinus uses such language has been debated but Konstan is probably right when he suggests that Paulinus prefers to use *caritas* over *amicitia* because *caritas* more closely approximates the unmerited and undeserved nature of Christian love, whereas *amicitia* implies a mutual action and a pre-supposition of moral virtue, which would seem counter to the humility enjoined by Jesus Christ.[698] Other Latin writers (e.g. Jerome and Augustine) also "commonly resort to the metaphor of brotherhood and substitute *caritas* for *amicitia* or *philia*, preferring to represent themselves as brothers united in Christ by virtue of their faith rather than claim the name of friends on the basis of their own excellence", and Konstan notes that the Greek writer Basil of Caesarea also avoided using the language of friendship preferring ἀγάπη in place

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[697] This quotation and the next from Paulinus are cited in Konstan, *Friendship*, 158. See also, Paulinus, *Letters of St. Paulinus of Nola* (trans. P. G. Walsh; vol. I: Letters 1-22; New York, NY: Newman Press, 1966), 91, 119.

[698] Konstan, *Friendship*, 159f.

of φιλία.[699] In the light of words like those in James 4:4 – "You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world means enmity against God? Therefore, anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God" – it is perhaps unsurprising that there may well have been a desire to separate God's love from human attachments, which in the Graeco-Roman conception seemed to carry the potential for pride in one's own accomplishments or virtue. Terms such as *caritas* and ἀγάπη seem to speak more of grace and abundant love, and thus be more appropriate terms to describe what should characterise Christian relationships. It is partly for this reason that this thesis argues for the Johannine author choosing to use a different set of words to describe Christian relationships; as will be seen in due course, he similarly uses familial language but also introduces the idea of the Christian community as a κοινωνία rather than a group practising φιλία.

One of the unique conceptions in Christian literature is the possibility of friendship between human and divine beings. This conception in the Judaeo-Christian texts has its roots in the Bible with people like Moses and Abraham being described as friends of God (cf. Ex. 33:11; 2 Chron. 20:7; Isa. 41:8; Jam. 2:23), and we find the concept of Christians being friends of Jesus in passages such as Luke 12:4 and John 15:14. As we noted earlier, Aristotle had categorically denied the possibility of friendship between a human being and a god because of the great distance between them (*NE* VIII.7.1158b-1159a), though Plato and the Platonists did believe in gods that 'care for man' and his individual soul (cf. Plato, *Apol*. 30e-31a; *Laws* X.904c-905b; cf. X.906a-b), and the Stoics did think that it was possible for a sage to become a friend of the gods.[700] However, it is unlikely that the Stoic idea of friendship with the gods influenced the Christian concept because the relationship so established was nothing like the Stoic idea of friendship between equals. And furthermore, the early Christians realised that the bonds of love that existed in their community did not come through personal attachment or affection, since the believers came together from all walks of life and ethnicities and social classes, but through God's dispensation of love to them. Being in Christ, and God being in them, is what created the new community.

The apparent problem with the Graeco-Roman language of friendship was not that the injunction to universal love was too wide for the narrower partial or particular affection represented by the Graeco-Roman concept of friendship, nor was it that Graeco-Roman friendship disallowed the possibility of being friends with God. More likely, according to Konstan, is that classical friendship and the ideals of equality

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[699] Konstan, *Friendship*, 161. See Konstan, 161-166 for examples from Basil of Caesarea, Augustine, John Chrysostom, Gregory of Nazianzus, and John Cassian.

[700] Epictetus, *Disc.* 2.17.29; 4.3.10. Konstan also cites a reference to pseudo-Plutarch's *Life of Homer* which reports "The Stoics, who declare that good men are friends of gods [genitive], took this too from Homer. See Konstan, *Friendship*, 169.

and mutual virtue that it suggested would have seemed incompatible with Christian humility and the sense of sin.[701] But, I would also suggest that a friendship based on either a person's innate virtue, or the usefulness or pleasure they can provide, is contrary to the Christian idea of being other-person focused, of loving one's 'brother', and of acting in their best interests. Such a concern for fellow-believers is the consistent teaching of the NT. One might have expected the relationship between Jesus and his disciples, and the relationship between the Johannine author and the recipients of his epistles, to be relationships of inequality, relationships between unequals, for in the former case we have a teacher-disciple relationship and in the latter, an elder-congregant relationship (or possibly a father-child relationship if the relationship was viewed in metaphorical or spiritual terms). These relationships might therefore potentially have been viewed as political friendships based on utility and usefulness, but this is not what we see in the biblical literature. The kind of language seen in the Johannine Gospel and Epistles seems to suggest that while the 'lesser' parties saw themselves as recipients of benefits and services from the one who was over them, the 'greater' party saw themselves as motivated by love and affection for those they considered family and friends. As the following discussion shows, the levels of affection demonstrated in the Johannine literature show that the relationships were more familial than political.

6.6.2. The Johannine Gospel

In the Johannine Gospel, the disciples' preferred terms for addressing Jesus are Ῥαββί (Jn. 1:38, 49; 3:2; 4:31; 6:25; 9:2; 11:8)[702] and Κύριε (Jn. 6:68; 11:3, 8, 12, 21, 27, 32, 34, 39; 13:6, 9, 25, 36, 37; 14:5, 7, 22), both of which reflect a relationship of inequality in which the disciples see themselves as the pupils of their teacher, or the servants of their master. In John 13:13, Jesus seems to affirm this when he says, "You call me teacher [διδάσκαλος] and Lord [κύριος], and rightly so, for that is what I am". But in contrast, Jesus also seems to express a different perspective on his relationship with his followers. He described close acquaintances such as Lazarus and his disciples, as friends using the term φίλος (Jn. 11:11; 15:9-16), reflecting a more equal relationship. But he also calls them 'little children' (παιδία) (Jn. 21:5), a more familial term of endearment.[703] The author also describes those who believe in Jesus as children of God

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[701] Konstan, "Friendship, Frankness & Flattery," 16.

[702] The Greek equivalent term Διδάσκαλε is given as a translation of Ῥαββί by disciples of Jesus in 1:38 and 20:16. The Jewish leaders also used the term to address Jesus in 8:4, but this appears in a passage not found in the earliest textual witnesses.

[703] Lee notes, "Familial images are important in the Fourth Gospel to designate the intimacy lying at the core of faith." See Lee, "Friendship, Love & Abiding," 69. But she also notes an important qualification. Friendship between Jesus and his disciples does "not dissolve the distinction between divine and human. Disciples are friends of Jesus, abiding in love, but they remain disciples, followers of the *Kyrios* who is the source of their love and worship. Friendship and obedience, in this case, do not cancel each other out. They exist in dialectical

(τέκνα θεοῦ) (Jn. 1:12), the diminutive form of which (τεκνία), Jesus uses to address his followers when he tells them he will only be with them for a little while longer (Jn. 13:33), again reflecting a term of endearment and perhaps concern. It would seem natural for the disciples to respect Jesus and view him as the superior party in an unequal relationship but Jesus himself seeks to 'reform' what friendship should look like for kingdom people, and the Johannine author seems to pick up on this.

This 'reform' of Jesus is evident in the way the Johannine author describes Jesus in his various relationships in the Gospel. Jesus is described as one who loves Lazarus and his sisters (φιλέω – Jn. 11:3, 36; ἀγαπάω – 11:5) and the one who had loved (ἀγαπήσας) and would keep on loving (εἰς τέλος ἠγάπησεν) his own who were in the world (Jn. 13:1).[704] There are also several references to the 'one whom Jesus loved' (also called 'the beloved disciple', possibly the Johannine author himself) (φιλέω – Jn. 20:2; ἀγαπάω – Jn. 13:23; 19:26; 21:7, 20).

The apparent 'equality' in relationships that Jesus seems to want to foster between himself and his disciples, and also amongst the disciples themselves, is evident in a number of incidents in the Gospel of John. In the Prologue of John's Gospel, Jesus is described as coming to his own but his own did not recognise or receive him. However, to those who did receive him he gave the right to become τέκνα θεοῦ, children born of God (Jn. 1:10-13), which reflects a changed status whereby people become part of God's family. Of course, being part of the same family does not guarantee like-mindedness (or equality of mind), for John 7:2-5 tells us that Jesus' own biological brothers did not believe in him despite seeing the things he was doing. Nevertheless, to those who do believe and become a part of the family of God, the revelation of glory is given (Jn. 1:14, 18, 51; 2:11), the kind of revelation which the Gospel of John later says is only given to friends (Jn. 15:15);[705] so, believers, as children of God, receive at the very least what friends also receive. The action of Jesus giving Simon the name Peter (Jn. 1:42) would also seem to be the action of one seeking to establish a closer relationship, much like a nickname might be given to a sibling or close friend.

In a number of interactions between Jesus and his disciples, mutual trust is evident. John the Baptist acknowledges that Jesus surpasses him, that he is not worthy to stoop down and untie Jesus' sandals (Jn.

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relationship, both equally necessary in defining the profound relationship between disciples and the one who is their Lord and Friend." Lee, "Friendship, Love & Abiding," 71.

[704] God the Father is also described as one who loves (φιλέω) the disciples because they loved (φιλέω) Jesus (16:27).

[705] Interestingly, Fitzgerald points out that what Jesus is actually doing here is reversing the standard logic. Graeco-Roman logic would suggest that revelation is given to those who have been associates for a long time, earned trust, and become friends, but Jesus reverses this and says that he is calling them friends *because* he had made known to them everything that the Father had revealed to him. In Fitzgerald's words, "Revelation here creates friendship rather than presupposes it". See Fitzgerald, "Christian Friendship": 285.

1:15, 27), and that Jesus must become greater and himself less (Jn. 3:30), yet Jesus acknowledges that John has a special status amongst all humanity (cf. Mt. 11:11).[706] In response to the repentance of people, Jesus delegates the task of baptism to his disciples rather than doing it himself (Jn. 3 and 4), trusting them to carry out this important task. In the account of the good shepherd and his sheep in John 10, Jesus calls himself the shepherd who knows and cares for his sheep and is prepared to lay down his life for them, while it is evident that the sheep trust the shepherd since they listen to, know, and follow him. The disciples were even prepared to lay down their own lives for Jesus (cf. Thomas' words in Jn. 11:16 and Simon Peter's words in Jn. 13:37). Jesus also really wants his disciples to always be present with him (Jn. 12:26; 14:1-4). The difference in status (shepherd versus sheep; rabbi versus disciples) does not detract from the depth of intimacy and relationship shown in both directions.

The close relationship Jesus wants with his disciples is to be reflected in the disciples' relationship with each other. When Jesus graphically demonstrates his love for his disciples by washing their feet (Jn. 13:1-12), he acknowledges that no servant can be greater than his master or no messenger greater than the one who sent him, but nevertheless wants them to do for each other as he had done for them (Jn. 13:13-17). He calls them to be servants and messengers of God, just as he himself was. In the next strophe, he tells his disciples that whoever accepts anyone that he sends, is actually accepting Jesus himself, and this is tantamount to accepting God the Father (Jn. 13:20). He is once again putting his disciples on an equal footing with himself as the messenger of God. In John 13:34-35, the great command to love one another is given as an instruction based on the same love that Jesus had already shown them – καθὼς ἠγάπησα ὑμᾶς ἵνα καὶ ὑμεῖς ἀγαπᾶτε ἀλλήλους. This is repeated and reinforced in John 15:12. Furthermore, when Thomas and Philip engage in discussions with Jesus about knowing the way and seeing the Father (Jn. 14:5-14), Jesus concludes by assuring them that, as his disciples, they will do the same things as he himself was doing and in fact even greater things, and that whatever they asked for in his name, he would do it (Jn. 14:12-14). This is certainly a strong indication that Jesus did not think of his disciples as lesser parties in their 'fellowship' in the gospel. The proof of this was of course the giving of the Holy Spirit so that they would not be left as orphans (Jn. 14:15-31), and he would be the one who would equip and empower them to carry on the mission that Jesus himself had started. In a relationship, parties show a real interest in, concern for, and delight in the other party, and Jesus does not want to leave his disciples without such support, so he promises that when he is gone the disciples will not be left alone. The παράκλητος will be sent to them to help them and continue teaching them (Jn. 14:26; 16:13-15). He tells them that his

[706] While Jesus says, "among those born of women there has not risen anyone greater than John the Baptist", he goes on to say, "yet whoever is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he" (Mt. 11 ‖ Lk. 7:28), which highlights that those who are part of the kingdom of heaven/God have a higher status than John who was the forerunner and proclaimer of Jesus, the one who would usher in the kingdom.

departure is for their good (Jn. 16:7), and they in turn, needed to be glad that he was going to the Father (Jn. 14:28). All this was revealed to them because he treated them as his friends, and one reveals things to one's friends (Jn. 15:15).

Two other incidents are worthy of mention: Firstly, in the appearance of Jesus to Mary Magdalene in John 20, Jesus tells Mary to report to the rest of the disciples, "I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God." Such a description indicates that both Jesus and the disciples are in a relationship with the Father, and both call the Father 'my God'. This can only be described as a 'similar' relationship because Jesus is the Son, while believers are God's children; and there is a difference in the status of 'son' and 'child'. Jesus has a unique relationship with God as the Son, but both still call God 'my Father' and 'my God', so there is some equality in the way Jesus and his followers relate to God the Father.[707] Secondly, in the dialogue between Jesus and Peter in John 21, when Jesus restores Peter to a role of useful service after his earlier denial, Jesus questions Peter about his love for his master using both the 'love' verbs (ἀγαπάω – Jn. 21:15, 16; φιλέω – Jn. 21:17) with Peter responding on each occasion with the φιλέω verb. While much has been made about the change in verb in Jesus' repeated question to Peter,[708] the point being made here is that there is an evident love and affection between Peter and Jesus; despite the denial, Jesus wants to restore Peter and give him the responsibility to care for Jesus' other followers, and Peter wants Jesus to know that he loves him and is committed to him. While there may be inequality in the 'status' of Peter and Jesus, the relationship is really based on mutual love and respect.

What Jesus is doing for his disciples is modelling how they should behave towards God and others. He wants them to do as he did, to equal him in their love for God and their fellow human beings, though they are not equal to Jesus in essence; as noted above, he is the Son of God, and they are 'children' or 'sons' of God, he is the master and they are his servants. As a result, they are expected to show loyalty and obedience to him (cf. Jn. 8:31) and Jesus calls upon their affection and love for him to be the basis for that obedience (Jn. 14:15, 23f.). They are to emulate Jesus' own loyalty and obedience to the Father. John 15:9-17 tells us that the love that Jesus has for the disciples is in turn to be shown by the disciples' obedience to him; i.e. the love-obedience dynamic between the Father and the Son is 'equated' to the love-obedience dynamic between Jesus and his disciples. But it is to go further than that; it is in turn to be emulated in the Christian community. The service that Jesus shows towards his disciples in washing their feet (Jn. 13:14-17), and the love he has for them (Jn. 13:34), are to become hallmarks of the

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[707] Interestingly, Jesus never calls God 'our Father' when talking with his disciples; he tells them that that is how they should address God (cf. Mt. 6:9), but he never uses the term to equate the disciples and himself as the same 'offspring' of the Father.

[708] See footnote 508.

fellowship of believers. In fact, their love for God and obedience to him was constituted in the very act of loving one another (Jn. 13:35).

The love of the Godhead for humanity and humanity's response of love and obedience towards both God and one's Christian brothers and sisters has consequences. Firstly, it results in God and Jesus revealing themselves to their disciples (Jn. 14:21) and sharing things with them (Jn. 15:15) – a servant is not greater than his master, but Jesus does not treat his servants lesser than their master either. Throughout this narrative, we find Jesus, who was ostensibly the 'greater' party in the relationship, treating his followers as his friends and 'equals', not as slaves.[709] One shares things with one's friends and Jesus is prepared to share all that he had learned from the Father with them. A second consequence is that the disciples experience the same hatred and persecution from the world as Jesus experienced (Jn. 15:18-25). The third consequence is unity; there is a oneness within the Christian community (Jn. 17:6-19) that is modelled on the oneness of Jesus and the Father. Jesus explicitly prays for unity for his disciples (Jn. 17:11), but his prayer is not only for the disciples of that time; it is also for all who would later believe and follow him. He wanted all his followers to be one, to be a testimony to God's love for his people (Jn. 17:20-23), and to be with him so that they might see his glory (Jn. 17:24). Such sharing of the very heart and truths of God with his disciples and the desire to have them with him, show that Jesus sees his disciples as worth investing in; he does not see them as servants or clients from whom one might withhold things and whom one does not want continuously in one's presence. This sharing, common experience, and unity between Jesus and his followers is to be perpetuated in the Christian community; Jesus wants them to also treat each other as equals. The disciples' love for God, which was to be demonstrated in obedience, would also become the great leveller of human relationships, for it removes the inequalities between people. The

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[709] A number of scholars have pointed out the need to be careful in using the term equality between Jesus and his followers, even to describe an equality of friendship; cf. E. Haenchen, *John 2: A Commentary on the Gospel of John, Chapters 7-21* (eds. R. W. Funk, et al.; trans. R. W. Funk; Philadelphia, PA: Fortress, 1984), 132; Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 522; E. Puthenkandathil, *A Designation for the Jesus-Disciple Relationship: An Exegetico-Theological Investigation of the Term in the Fourth Gospel* (New York: Peter Lang, 1993), 239; Culy, *Echoes*. Puthenkandathil puts it well:

> The intimacy between Jesus and the believer is an intimacy honoured by the term φίλοι; but this 'friendship' must be carefully understood. It is to be noted that the disciples are Jesus' friends, but Jesus is not called their friend. It seems to be a deliberate attempt of the Evangelist to show that friendship is an offer on the part of Jesus to His disciples. They must still enjoy certain qualities in themselves to reach a status to call Jesus their real friend. By keeping Jesus' commandment of fraternal love and bearing fruit the disciples can establish a friendship with Him.

people of God are to treat each other as friends and be one, and that does not permit of graded friendships.[710]

There is one more point that is worth making. It is a natural human tendency to form alliances and friendships with those in a position of power and influence. We certainly see this in the many political friendships of the Graeco-Roman world, and we see it in the modern world with friendships based on expediency. The Johannine author wants his readers to know that a friendship with God and/or Jesus, is a friendship worth having, and lots of benefits accompany such a friendship – difficulties for the disciples were inevitable, but they would see great things (Jn. 1:51; 11:40) and they would do great things (Jn. 14:12); Jesus would conquer death (Jn. 2:19-22); people would have an eternity in heaven with him and the Father (Jn. 3:16, 36; 5:21, 24; 6:39-40, 58; 14:1-3); Jesus has overcome the world (Jn. 16:33) and no-one can defeat him or ultimately harm his people (Jn. 10:27-29; 11:25-26; 17:11-19). In the meantime, the disciples would be sustained by Jesus as the water of life and the bread of life (Jn. 4:13-14; 6:35, 48-51; 7:37-38), walk by the light he provides them (Jn. 8:12), and bear fruit by abiding in him (Jn. 15:5-8, 16); they would also be sustained by the advocate that Jesus would send when he departed (Jn. 14:16-17, 26; 16:7-15).

While one might expect that a teacher-disciple relationship would be one of inequality, it would seem from the forms of address which Jesus uses, the ways in which Jesus' disciples are called his friends, the things he says to them, the expectations he has of them, and the promises given to those who are aligned with God and Jesus, that Jesus did not see his friendships that way. There are frequent expressions of affection expressed in both directions, and Jesus shows real concern that his disciples know why he had come so that they might be prepared for what was to come thereafter.

But is this changed form of friendship evident in the ongoing community of Christ-followers? Do the disciples take up and continue this more egalitarian form of friendship? In a world in which friendships were primarily formed on the basis of pleasure or utility, and without the presence of Jesus to continually

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[710] Despite the existence of an apparent inner circle of disciples consisting of Peter, James, and John, who were present with Jesus at some of his most intimate moments (e.g. the transfiguration, prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane), they are not given preferential treatment or treated as 'top-tier' friends with respect to revelation and the responsibility of continuing the word and work of Jesus.

Culy has a similar conclusion; see Culy, *Echoes*, 84. He says:

> while friendship was something that only a select few – or even only mythical figures – enjoyed in the Greco-Roman world, such intimacy, which was characterized by unity, mutuality, and equality, was the distinguishing mark of the Christian community.

model a friendship based on love, how would the later disciples fare? Let us turn then to John's Epistles, to see how friendships unfolded in the era following Christ's departure.

6.6.3. The Johannine Epistles

In the Johannine Epistles the preferred terms of the author for addressing his recipients are the diminutive forms τεκνία (1 Jn. 2:1, 12, 28; 3:18; 4:4; 5:21) and παιδία (1 Jn. 2:14, 18; 3:7) and the adjectival form ἀγαπητοί used substantively (1 Jn. 2:7; 3:2, 21; 4:1, 7, 11; also, ἀγαπητέ: 3 Jn. 2, 5, 11). Along with these are a few other familial terms: ἀδελφοί (1 Jn. 3:13), νεανίσκοι (1 Jn. 2:13, 14), and πατέρες (1 Jn. 2:13, 14), along with one term κυρία (2 Jn. 5), which may refer to an individual or a corporate group. Such terms of address reflect the writer's care and concern for those to whom he is writing and indicate a closeness of relationship. While these terms may appear to grade the readers, they are probably reflective of the age or spiritual maturity of the readers and are not intended to identify different tiers of relationships.[711] The differing terms are used in the context of encouraging ALL believers to persevere in their knowledge of God and in overcoming the evil one. Such relational, familial terms are very much in line with the way we saw Jesus addressing his disciples in the Fourth Gospel and it would seem that those who have the responsibility of being teachers and leaders of the fledgling communities of believers are emulating their Lord and Master in how they address those entrusted to their care. We cannot tell, however, how the recipients addressed their teachers and leaders in return, given that the source documents we have are only letters from the Johannine author to his recipients, with no replies known or preserved.[712]

In 2 and 3 John the author expresses his affection for the recipients in the letter opening as he identifies the ones to whom he is writing – "To the lady chosen by God and to her children, οὓς ἐγὼ ἀγαπῶ ἐν ἀληθείᾳ" (2 Jn. 1); "To my dear friend Gaius ὃν ἐγὼ ἀγαπῶ ἐν ἀληθείᾳ" (3 Jn. 1). While 1 John is lacking such an opening, the affection of the author for his recipients is still very evident throughout the letter, given the frequent address of the recipients as 'beloved', as noted above. While the author of these letters may well be writing to correct misunderstandings, give instruction, and exhort and/or warn his readers, it is evident that he does not seek to come across as the superior party in the relationship but rather seeks to establish fatherly concern for those he considers his children. This is hardly a patron-client or political relationship in which each party gains something from the other in proportion to their worth and

[711] See the earlier discussion in footnote 486.

[712] We have already noted that 2 and 3 John are more obviously framed as letters, having the usual components of author, addressee, greetings, health wish/prayer/thanksgiving, main body, and closing greetings/farewell, while 1 John lacks many of these features but is still regarded as a letter, perhaps stripped of its specific 'headers' and 'footers' to make it more general.

according to an agreement between them; nor is it a friendship based simply on the pleasure enjoyed in one another's company or shared interests, though there are expressions of joy by the author when he hears good reports of the way that the recipients are walking in the truth (2 Jn. 4; 3 Jn. 3-4), and he looks forward to 'completing their joy' when he can finally fellowship with them face-to-face (1 Jn. 1:4; 2 Jn. 12). The relationship between the Johannine author and his recipients may possibly have closest affinities with Aristotle's idea of a friendship based on virtue in which each person sees the virtue or good in the other party and loves the other person for their own intrinsic goodness and value, but Aristotle sees such relationships as rare and only sustainable with a handful of people because they require both parties to be 'good' people (of which he says there are not many), and they require a huge investment of time and intimacy. The Johannine author would agree, to a degree, that Christian friendships are founded on the basis of virtue but would argue that such virtue comes from a shared set of values and beliefs grounded in the love and truth modelled by Jesus Christ, and that it is possible to have such friendships with many people irrespective of their social status. There is to be no grading of friendships in the Christian community.

In 1 John, the author begins by outlining the basis of fellowship (κοινωνία), which seems to be his preferred term for describing the relationship between believers (1 Jn. 1:3 [twice], 6, 7). It is based on both parties having a fellowship with God the Father and his Son, Jesus Christ (1 Jn. 1:2), and walking in the light which is equated with living out the truth (1 Jn. 1:5-7). Furthermore, it is demonstrated in love for, and obedience to, God, and in love for others (1 Jn. 2:3-11). Such love and affection can only be shown to those in the fellowship, those of like mind; it cannot be shared with a love for the world (1 Jn. 2:15-16), and it is definitely not evident in people who leave the 'fellowship', as some had (cf. 1 Jn. 2:19). The shared beliefs and practices of the 'fellowship' of believers include the acknowledgement of Jesus as the incarnate Christ and Son of God (1 Jn. 2:20-24; 4:1-3, 13-15; 5:1, 5), remaining committed to the handed-down doctrine (1 Jn. 1:1-3; 2:3-11, 24; 3:23; see also 2 Jn. 4-5, 7-9), repenting of sin (1 Jn. 1:8-2:2; 3:4-6), obedience to the commands of God (1 Jn. 2:3-6; 3:9-10; 5:2-4; see also 2 Jn. 6), remaining in Christ (1 Jn. 2:24-28), maintaining purity of life (1 Jn. 3:3; 5:18, 21; see also 3 Jn. 11-12), and commitment to loving one's fellow believers (1 Jn. 2:9-10; 3:10-18; 4:7-12, 16-21; see also 2 Jn. 5-6; 3 Jn. 5-8). Such beliefs and practices, when held by each believer in the community, justify calling the community τέκνα θεοῦ (1 Jn. 3:1-2).

The warnings and exhortations throughout the three epistles also highlight for us the particular interest that the author has in his recipients. He is focused on their good and their interests. He is not focused on what utility or pleasure he gains from the relationship, nor seeking to impose his own will upon the people for some noble cause or ideal. Rather he is concerned that his readers maintain fellowship with him, with

each other, and with all other people who are part of the τέκνα θεοῦ. There are several things that might destroy such a fellowship and so through explicit imperatives and the logic of his arguments, the author warns his readers against such things. For example, he warns his readers about those who claim to be sinless – they are in fact, by such claims, deceiving themselves and making God out to be a liar (1 Jn. 1:8, 10); he also warns them against loving the world and anything in it (1 Jn. 2:15), about those who have left them to pursue their own anti-Christ agenda and are now deceiving people and teaching untruths (1 Jn. 2:18-23; 2 Jn. 7-11), about being led astray (1 Jn. 2:26; 3:7), and about the hatred of the world (1 Jn. 3:13). On the other hand, through a combination of imperatives and hortatory subjunctives the author encourages his readers and exhorts them to pursue the things that maintain fellowship and through a series of reminders about who they are in Christ he affirms them as God's children. All these warnings and exhortations show that there is a close relationship between the author and his readers. He can speak frankly and directly to them as he warns, reminds, and urges them to keep on walking in truth and love.

It is evident from this summary of the three Epistles of John with respect to the forms of address used by the author, the expressions of affection by the author for his readers, the descriptions of how fellowship amongst the Johannine communities was to function based on truth (beliefs about Jesus and God) and love (for God and for one's fellow believers), and the numerous frank warnings and exhortations, that the relationship between the author and his recipients was a relationship that flowed out of a shared set of beliefs and values. The author and his readers are both part of a community for which familial terms like 'children' and 'brothers and sisters', communal terms such as 'fellowship', and affectionate terms such as 'beloved', are appropriate descriptions and forms of address. Thus it is reasonable to say that the later followers of Jesus, both those with responsibility to lead and shepherd the flock and those who were the recipients of their teaching and instruction, continued to model their relationships and friendships on how Jesus himself had related to his first followers. 'Friendships' between Christians were established on the basis of their shared belief and life in Christ, and a desire to help one another be who they were called to be, the children of God with no differences in equality.

6.6.4. Conclusion re the Reframing of Friendship

When Christianity began to permeate the first century Graeco-Roman world it was confronted with existing forms of society and social constructs, and with various beliefs and cultural practices. It did not seek to overthrow such long-established mores but rather sought to transform them in light of the revelation of God's kingdom that had been announced by Jesus and thereafter proclaimed by his followers. This has been well established by a number of scholars in various ways.

Implications for Exegesis

On the matter of social practices in cities, both Peter Brown and Arjan Zuiderhoek have noted that Christianity was to a large degree responsible for a 'revolution in the social imagination' of ancient cities, with "a shift from a pagan, civic, model of society" in which beneficence and euergetism were seen as a political cultural reaction to the increasing disparity between the rich and the poor, "to a Judeo-Christian, more comprehensive model that emphasised primarily the vital relations of charity between the rich and poor".[713] Indeed Brown argues that Christian and Jewish charity was not simply one accustomed form of generosity like other acts of beneficence, but was instead a new departure from the previous ideals of public beneficence towards a recognition of the clear divide between the rich and poor and the obligation of the rich to help the poor.[714] Christianity changed society's attitudes towards acts of kindness and beneficence, from being acts motivated by political benefit to acts motivated by affection for others.

On the matter of letter writing, Stanley Stowers argues that Christianity reshaped letters to some degree. He says that most of the letters we have from the Graeco-Roman world deal with relationships between friends, relationships between patrons and clients, and household matters. Then he goes on to say, "Christian letters also fit into these contexts, *but with modifications created by the institutions and ethos of the church*. All three forms of social relationships played important roles within the developing life of the Christian groups of antiquity. Most Christian letter writing is understandable within these contexts."[715] Here too, Christianity has reshaped the motivations for the writing of letters; the desire to 'grease the wheels' of commerce and communal activity is replaced by a desire to help fellow believers who are treated with affection as family members.

On the matter of friendships, the specific concern of this thesis, it is suggested that once again we see Christianity bringing transformation to long held views. We have seen that the predominant view of friendships in the Graeco-Roman world was that they were largely relationships formed on the basis of virtue, utility, or pleasure, with perhaps the dominant form being friendships based on utility in which people received benefits from one another. The Platonic ideal was that friendships could only be formed between equals, though in practice this did not often seem to be the case, as Aristotle notes. One common form of utility friendship in the first century Graeco-Roman world was the patron-client relationship, which might at first glance appear to be a relationship between unequals, but in reality, since each party entered the patron-client 'friendship' arrangement in order to receive specific benefits, they entered on

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[713] P. Brown, *Poverty and Leadership in the Later Roman Empire* (Hanover and London: Brandeis University Press, 2002), 1; A. Zuiderhoek, *The Politics of Munificence in the Roman Empire* (Greek Culture in the Roman World; eds. S. E. Alcock, et al.; Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 156.

[714] Brown, *Poverty and Leadership*, 5-6.

[715] Stowers, *Letter Writing*, 31. Italics mine.

an equal footing, so some kind of equality was present. Whether such arrangements in the Graeco-Roman world were primarily political or commercial, and whether affection was a part of these relationships, are much debated issues, but most friendships in the Graeco-Roman world were characterised by frank speaking, reciprocity, obligation, civic duty, loyalty, and gratitude.

The Johannine author, this thesis has argued, saw relationships differently, and his thinking had an impact on such relationships in the first century AD. He expresses a form of friendship which is much more egalitarian than that of the Graeco-Roman world. Since both men and women from all levels of society and various ethnic backgrounds had become believers, there was a great deal of apparent social inequality amongst the Christian community. But what appeared to be a relationship between unequals was in fact not so. Christian unity, based on fellowship with Christ and shared beliefs and values, made all people equal such that any friendship now became inherently a friendship between equals, actually realising the Platonic view of ideal friendship. Christians' love for God and his Son, Jesus Christ, motivated their love for each other and removed any barriers that may have been caused by social inequality or the prevalent views of friendship influenced by the philosophers. Thus, while maintaining many of the characteristics of Graeco-Roman friendships, the Johannine author reshaped the purpose, basis, and goals of friendship, and redefined the pragmatic 'politics' of friendship. In so doing, he also realised that new language was needed to describe these new relationships. In his view a better term to describe Christian relationships was κοινωνία ('fellowship'), a term which broadened the Greek concept of φιλία ('friendship'). This new 'fellowship' of equal brothers and sisters was based on a shared truth and active love for one another, and it allowed the Johannine author to speak frankly with the expectation that his words would be heard and accepted and would result in those communities continuing to walk in truth and love. We thus conclude that the friendships of the first century Graeco-Roman world, which were such an important and prevalent part of society, were transformed by the Johannine author into a fellowship of truth and love.

7. Conclusion

7.1. A Summary of the Argument

My hypothesis is that the Johannine author transformed the Graeco-Roman concept of *philia* into a 'fellowship' (κοινωνία) based on truth (ἀλήθεια) and love (ἀγάπη) which he had come to understand from a Christian perspective. The methodology employed to explore this hypothesis was an eclectic mix of philological, comparative, and exegetical study. Personal reading of the Johannine Epistles had noted that ἀλήθεια and ἀγάπη were significant themes in the Johannine Epistles, so a natural place to start the research was with an in-depth study of the etymology and usage of these words (or their equivalents) in the Graeco-Roman writings, the Hebrew Scriptures, the wider NT, and then specifically in the Johannine literature. This was followed by several in-depth comparative studies of the language and concept of 'friendship' and 'frank-speaking' in the Graeco-Roman world and the Johannine literature, in order to identify similarities and differences, and finally, the insights gained from these first two steps were applied to a careful and close reading of the Johannine Epistles to see what light the author's new understanding of 'truth' and 'love' and 'fellowship' might shed on the exegesis of these Epistles.

The research revealed that the Johannine author was seeking to broaden the Graeco-Roman concept of φιλία ('friendship') into what he preferred to think of as a κοινωνία ('fellowship') of ἀλήθεια (truth) and ἀγάπη (love). In order to demonstrate this, the argument presented in this thesis was developed. The key components of this argument are:

- An outline of the Graeco-Roman understanding of φιλία. This details the language used to express φιλία, its grounding in the ancient world, and the various aspects that made up friendship.

- An examination of the Hebraic and wider NT backgrounds of 'truth' and 'love', since these are prominent themes in the Johannine Epistles, and the Hebraic and Graeco-Roman understandings of these terms were very likely strong influences upon how the author viewed relationships.

- A detailed discussion of the author's perspective on 'truth' and 'love' as revealed in his Gospel and Epistles which considers how these concepts related to the Graeco-Roman idea of φιλία.

- The conclusion that the Johannine author broadened the Graeco-Roman concept of φιλία into a new form of relationship, one which he presented as a 'fellowship of truth and love'.

Conclusion

7.1.1. Friendship in the First Century Graeco-Roman World

The traditional friendships of the Graeco-Roman world were exemplified by Plato's ideas of friendship and the development of these ideas by Aristotle. The latter argued that ideal friendship (φιλία) was a relationship between equals and based on virtue, and such friendships were rare because it was thought that there were not many virtuous men. Other forms of friendship were between unequals and based on utility or pleasure and were much more common. In other words, friendships were status-bound. Many facets of Graeco-Roman society in the first century AD were based on these types of friendships. Political alliances, patron-client arrangements, acts of beneficence for the civic good, the operation of households, and even familial relationships, were frequently the result of friendships based on utility with mutual benefits for both the parties involved. Friendships based on pleasure were considered to be the closest form of friendship to the ideal form since both parties gain the same benefits from, and delight in, each other. However, friendships based on utility or pleasure would only last as long as such benefits continued. Nevertheless, certain practices characterised these friendships – reciprocity, obligation, civic duty, loyalty, gratitude, and frank speaking.

Research into φιλία (*philia*) in the Graeco-Roman world has borne much fruit over recent decades with a number of scholars exploring various facets of the relationships evident in all levels of society in the first-century Graeco-Roman world, and noting that the language of friendship is wider than the single term φιλία. While the term is usually translated as 'friendship', it can also be translated as 'love' or 'affectionate regard', so it was necessary to look at other terms which parallel this range of ideas. That meant looking at other words for 'love' – e.g. the ἀγαπ- words (ἀγάπη, ἀγαπητός, ἀγαπᾶν), words like ἔρως/ἐρᾶν, and στοργή/στέργειν, and the cognates of φιλία (φίλος, φιλεῖν, and φιλιάζειν) – as well as other terms that reflect the idea of friendship – e.g. ἑταῖρος, θεράπων, and qualified forms of ξένος. However, φιλία was still seen as the highest and most important of all these words and the term which best sums them up. It was a love which encapsulated goodwill, trust, mutual respect, and care for one another, and was seen by the philosophers as the foundation of familial, business, political, and philanthropic relationships. Indeed, it was seen as the foundation of all relationships in society, for it enhanced the stability and security of the society, and the lack of friends or deprivation of friendship was seen as a form of extreme suffering.

The language of *philia* exists in the classical literature from the Homeric epics of the 8th century BC to the Christian empire of the 4th and 5th centuries AD and one might expect that, over such a period and over such a diverse area as the Mediterranean world, friendship would vary quite considerably from one place to another. But perhaps because of the pervasiveness of the Graeco-Roman culture around the Mediterranean world, a pervasiveness which brought a degree of homogeneity to the region, *philia*

continued to describe relationships which exhibited the traits of goodwill, trust, mutual respect, and care; traits which one expects to see in families, but which in fact characterised many relationships within society. While at one time it was used to describe any relationship in which one had special affection for another, be they family or otherwise, it was a term that came to be used to describe a relationship where one had a close personal bond with another who was not one's kin. Scholars debate whether such relationships in the ancient world involved affection or emotion (see Section 2.2 [*Friendship's Grounding in the Ancient World*]), but the general consensus is that the specific term φιλία was about affectionate attachment, and 'friendship' was thus a subset of φιλία in which the key characteristic was good-will towards another. Furthermore, according to Aristotle, true φιλία could really only exist between equals and was usually based on the virtue of each person. A lower degree of φιλία occurred in unequal relationships, based on the relative utility (i.e. usefulness) or pleasure provided by each party. It ceased altogether between parties which were quite remote from one another in their standing. Consequently, in Graeco-Roman thought, a friendship with the gods was not possible, since they were seen to be far superior to human beings. It is perhaps for this reason that Plutarch considered φιλία to be a derivative relationship of brotherhood which he saw as a greater bond between people, and thus for him φιλαδελφία was a much stronger form of friendship than φιλία, or the lesser used but interchangeable term ἀγάπη, both of which were used to describe affection between parties. Nevertheless, there certainly seems to be grounds for agreeing with Konstan's assessment that in the ancient world, 'friendship' was a personal relationship between two parties who were bound to each other by bonds of mutual loyalty, trust, and love (see section 2.2 [*Friendship's Grounding in the Ancient World*]).

Politics, Emotion, and Frank-Speaking

The exploration of φιλία and its equivalent Latin term *amicitia* in the first century Graeco-Roman world uncovered a number of issues that have been much debated – the place of politics in friendship, whether friendship involved emotion, and the role of frank-speaking or truth-telling (παρρησία).

Aristotle had long before noted that most friendships in society revolved around some kind of 'political' relationship – be that an alliance of people with the same views, or an arrangement in which there were reciprocal obligations upon both parties for some personal or civic (i.e. 'political') gain or benefit. Thus, some have argued that friendships of that time sprang out of political dealings, although others have equally argued that friendships gave rise to politics. A potential reason for this, as identified by Stanley Stowers (see section 2.3.1 [*The Politics of Friendship*]), is that the modern distinction between private and public, whereby we often think of friendships as private and politics as public, just simply did not exist in the Graeco-Roman world – the private-public boundary was blurred and letters between friends were often full of political discussions.

Conclusion

Even in the numerous patron-client relationships of the world of that time, the preferred term to describe the relationship, especially by the clients, was 'friendship' (*philia* or *amicitia*) and the parties saw each other as friends (*philoi* or *amici*) – the patron saw the client as a friend who gave him moral and vocal support, and someone upon whom he could count to be a part of his retinue when required for political purposes, while the client saw the patron as a friend who would help him in his needs. Both had needs, albeit very different, that their 'friend' could meet. This is not to say that all friends were the same for it certainly seems that there were different levels of friends who were then treated in different ways; such a grading was evident in the Roman world through the addition of qualifying words to the term *amici*, words like *superiores*, *pares*, *inferiores*, and *clientes*. Nevertheless, whether one considers the exchange of gifts and favours as 'reciprocity' (the favoured Greek term) or 'patronage' (the favoured Roman term), it is not so much that the acts of beneficence created a friendship as that it was an obligation inherent in the friendship.

Not all scholars see friendship as political, for the range of relationships, which terms like *philia* and *amicitia* are used to describe, is very broad. Peter Brunt has shown that the range of *amicitia* is vast, covering all kinds of relationships, from those of virtuous people or like-minded people expressing constant intimacy and goodwill, to those who expressed simple courtesy to others. It was also used to describe every degree of amicable relationships, be they genuine or apparent. In many respects, the friendships of the Graeco-Roman world were formally 'undefined' and did not carry legal consequences or enduring obligations – while they lasted, they exhibited a variety of exchanges (e.g. services, benefits, regard, loyalty) but these did not translate into a legal or even moral set of rights and duties – they were in fact quite fluid in terms of their prescriptions and the exchange of services was not always for political purposes. While some friendships were political, others were not; while some friendships may have been business oriented or politically motivated and more transactional in nature, others were driven by reciprocal benefits or mutual pleasure and exhibited varying degrees of affection.

This is in fact the second area of debate: how much was emotion and affection a part of friendships in the Graeco-Roman world? While some scholars have argued that *amicitia* in the early Roman Empire was largely a patronage arrangement devoid of affection, others have argued that the emotion of love was indeed a part of many friendships, including some of the patronage relationships – see section 2.3.2 (*The Place of Emotions in Friendship*). The teachings of Aristotle were still the background of friendships in the Graeco-Roman era of the first century AD, and he had said that friendships of utility and pleasure were very much subject to emotions with the result that if either party no longer provided benefit or pleasure, the friendship would dissolve. The better basis for a friendship, in his view, was one based on the virtue or character of the parties; this would lead to friendships which, while not devoid of emotion, would not be ruled by it. Irrespective of the basis, however, Aristotle saw emotion and affection as a central and

foundational component of all friendships, even in the relationships between unequals which he considered less than ideal.

A number of later philosophers and writers on friendship also considered affection and emotion to be an intrinsic part of φιλία/*amicitia*. Cicero, for example, thought that friendship sprang more from nature than need, from inclinations of the soul and feelings of love rather than calculations of benefit and profit. In his view, a friendship that was based on need would last only as long as the need existed, but a friendship based on nature would last eternally because nature is unchangeable. Furthermore, love and kindly affection spring from nature, and these drive the parties in a friendship to vie with and exceed each other in matters of character and virtue and demonstrated affection. While he did agree that there were limits on how far one should go for love (e.g. love should not drive someone to do something unlawful or dishonourable), Cicero believed that life was enriched by friendships, and they ought not to be avoided simply because they had the potential to generate some worry. Indeed, he thought that when the soul was deprived of emotion, there was little difference between a man, an animal, or a stone, and he was scathing about relationships which were reciprocal and focused on the benefits one could gain, or were guarded in order to protect from potential future hurts. In his view, such attitudes and practices sucked the vitality and value out of the friendship. Like Aristotle, Cicero saw virtue as the ideal basis for a friendship and recommended that one should be first of all a person of virtue themselves, and then seek another like oneself; but he also saw friendship as the ideal place for virtue to attain its highest aims. Affection would naturally develop once the friendship was formed; trying to do things in the reverse order would likely result in the breakdown of friendship when some offence arose. Consequently, if an offence did occur, then it should be dealt with honestly and frankly in order to preserve the friendship because friendship is so important – fullness of life requires emotional support and friendship provides that support.

Other Graeco-Roman writers give examples of how friendship really operated in practice, and emotion and affection were evident in the relationships they describe. The author of *Laus Pisonis* described his 'patron' Piso as unlike normal patrons who sought clients for economic or status reasons. Instead, he accepted clients on the basis of pure affection, and this was reciprocated by the author. Epictetus demonstrates how one's interests predominate in every relationship and how these interests drive one's emotions when testing circumstances come. Consequently, a friendship will only last if one's interest in the other person is because of some good that one sees in them or because the interest in the other aligns with one's own moral purpose. Plutarch saw value in creating friendships with people in positions of power, for they were able to do great good for the greatest number, but he also counselled against acquiring many friends because in the constant chasing after new friends, one missed out on the

friendship and intimacy that were already within one's grasp. He also thought that having many friends placed one in danger of only having friendships that lacked depth and close ties, thereby enfeebling affection. In any case, friendships with multiple people were not actually possible because the basis of friendship is goodwill and graciousness combined with virtue, and virtue is a rare commodity. Plutarch also advised people to take their time and be discerning about accepting new friends and warned about the dangers of flattery – it affects a person's ability to judge rightly. Thus, Plutarch advised having a limited number of friends for pragmatic, logistical, and emotional reasons – friendships require an investment of time, energy, and emotion. Pliny, like Aristotle, saw a true friend as a 'second self' and just as one loves oneself, so one loves one's friend. His numerous letters thus reflect high levels of affection and emotion as well as the obligations expected of friends. They show general affection and emotion, expressions of grief over the loss of a friend and reminiscences of the affection they had shared, affection for those of lower status, affections from and for patrons, and requests for affection from people in a position to help one of his friends. The variety of expressions of affection in Pliny's letters and the other Graeco-Roman writers show that emotion, and in particular affection, were an intrinsic part of φιλία in the first century Graeco-Roman world, whether these friendships were between equals or unequals, and it is also evident that speaking one's mind was a part of φιλία too.

This issue of speaking one's mind is the third area of debate. It was considered extremely important in friendship to speak the truth frankly. Both historians and philosophers made use of the 'truth' vocabulary; historians to denote real events, philosophers to indicate real being in an absolute sense. Thus, for the former ἀλήθεια was more the concrete idea of 'factuality' while for the latter it was more the metaphysical idea of 'truth'. However, Anthony Thiselton has shown that for most Graeco-Roman writers, ἀλήθεια and its associated cognates were generally used as a contrast to lies or withheld information; ἀλήθεια was the opposite of falsehood. An examination of Plato's, Aristotle's and the Stoics' usage of the ἀληθ- words shows that in the ancient world these words were used in three main ways to describe: (1) reality, (that) which 'is' as opposed to appearance; (2) the characteristics of a person who was just, righteous, genuine, and acted in accordance with the facts; and (3) a body of known things (e.g. knowledge, wisdom, doctrine). An equally important word for the matter of speaking the truth was the word παρρησία.

The Context, Manner, Participants, Location, and Expected Reception of Truth-Telling

Παρρησία was a word used in political settings to indicate the democratic right to freedom of speech granted to the citizens of a Greek city state. In its various uses it had three nuances: (1) to express the right to say anything without fear; (2) to focus on the actuality of things (which basically aligns its meaning with ἀλήθεια); and (3) to refer to the courage needed when those who had the right to speak freely, faced

opposition. It was thus the openness to be frank and candid and speak the truth without fear of retribution. Musonius Rufus describes the importance of παρρησία for citizens and highlights that the greatest loss of a person in exile was the ability to speak freely and frankly.

In addition to political settings, παρρησία was also used in the private and moral spheres, and over time it became more dominant in these areas. In the private sphere it was frequently found in the context of φιλία, for friends know each other well, including each other's faults, but also love each other enough to speak the truth and do it in an appropriate and sensitive way; they were not afraid to speak the truth to each other. The existence of φιλία in other relationships – e.g. parent-child, patron-client – where love and respect were evident, also made these an ideal context for παρρησία to occur. In the moral sphere παρρησία ('freedom of speech') was adopted by various philosophical schools, such as those of Philodemus, and the Cynics, as a companion virtue to ἐλευθερία ('freedom from moral passions'). Their schools were seen as places of φιλία in which friends (both teacher-student and student-student) were open and honest with each other and did not seek to be something other than they were; they were consistent in life and word. It was seen as a key strategy in moral reform and used to counter the vice of κολακεία ('flattery'). The Cynics wanted their lives to be a blazon of truth and example to others and they achieved this, in part, through frankly speaking out against the social institutions and engaging in provocative dialogue; in their view, truth-telling when no-one else would. Plutarch highlights the danger of flattery – it renders a person incapable of making right judgements about themselves; he thus expresses concerns about the failure to speak with παρρησία.

The works consulted show a remarkable consistency in how truth-telling should occur. It should be undertaken in a timely manner, repeatedly, frequently, and at opportune moments. It should be dispassionate and objective with the truth-teller taking care how they speak. It requires an awareness of and identification with the recipients' situation, and it involves both commendation and criticism. It should be used to address issues of real importance. Flatterers tended to address inconsequential things whereas a true friend will address the difficult and important things.

Philodemus and the Cynics consider that telling the truth is the domain of the philosopher, wise man, teacher, or sage. They are the person who can see the faults in others and make demands that were usually reserved for the Gods to make. Plutarch however sees it as the role of a friend, while the Epicureans considered the care of souls a communal responsibility. But whoever it was, they were not suitable if they thought themselves faultless, desired reputation, thought they had superior intelligence, focused on their own interests, or spoke words that served no benefit.

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As far as where truth-telling should take place, Philodemus thought it should be done in public (though this may well mean within the school community rather than in an open public forum) in order to obtain the best results. Plutarch was more circumspect and thought it should be done in private so that the recipient would not lose face with others. The Cynics also saw value in both public and private frank speaking and considered frank speaking in letters as equal to face-to-face communication in some cases.

Ideally, a frank speaker should not have to worry about how his words were being received since he was speaking to a friend. Philodemus thought that the recipient would actually appreciate the correction and instruction; Plutarch also thought that people should accept the words of a true friend because, unlike flatterers, they speak plainly, simply, and unaffectedly. But truth-speakers did not always get a good reception. The Cynics, for example, were often accused of misanthropy because of their pessimistic view of humanity's ability to understand serious and important matters. Philodemus describes a range of responses: resistance, rejection, discomfort, annoyance, and anger. Plutarch also notes the possibility of anger by the recipients of frank speech, and thus reminds his readers to avoid mockery and abusive language, to show sensitivity to the recipients, and to comfort, console, and encourage them. It was also acknowledged that the truth-speaker would be better received if they had no personal advantage to gain from speaking the truth.

The Meaning of Truth

While Philodemus does not speak much about truth, he has a lot to say about frank speaking and his whole treatise *On Frank Criticism* is about the 'truth' that is exposed when one speaks frankly. The Cynic writer Socrates understood truth to be that which accords with reality, but also understood it as a destination towards which one journeys. Other Cynic writers saw truth as the opposite of popular opinion, as found in simplicity and freedom from earthly pursuits, or as only attainable by the Cynic philosopher, but some also personified truth almost as a divine being who speaks through an oracle. Thus, for the Cynics, 'truth' is 'what is so', a destination to be attained, or the personification of a deity. Plutarch sees truth as having a divine dimension and something which is ordained by the gods and which manifests itself in nature and the behaviour of people, though sadly not always so, flatterers being the prime example. For Plutarch, 'truth' is what a true friend speaks in contrast to a flatterer; 'truth' is 'that which is so' and what a true friend is unafraid to deliver.

7.1.2. The Hebraic Background of Truth and Love

The Hebrew word which most nearly equates to the Greek word ἀλήθεια is אֱמֶת (which is usually translated as 'truth', 'dependability' or 'faithfulness') but in the LXX this word is also translated by πίστις

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('faith' or 'faithfulness') and δικαιοσύνη ('righteousness'). The term is basically used in two main ways: (1) as a legal term referring to the actual truth of a process or cause, thus 'truth' or 'veracity'; (2) as a religious term where it denotes either the lived out response to one's knowledge of God or a trust/confidence in God. This strong emphasis of 'faithfulness' in the Hebrew term אֱמֶת has caused some to suggest that the Hebrew concept of 'truth' differs from the Greek concept, but there is no need to see them as different simply because the OT has two meanings for אֱמֶת ('conformity to fact' and 'faithfulness') with the context of each usage being the determinative factor as to which usage is intended. Indeed, the two ideas are very much related in the OT for the God who is faithful to his covenant is the God who reveals himself and his truth, in both word and deed. And furthermore, he expects his covenant people to be like him and also be faithful in word and deed. However, in the post-canonical Jewish writings, ἀλήθεια is mostly used to mean 'truth' in contrast to 'falsehood', and in the Qumran writings, 'truth' is essentially a moral behaviour.

There is no single Hebrew equivalent of παρρησία, which in the LXX is used to translate several Hebrew words – יפע (*ypʿ*, 'to shine forth'); ענג (*ʿng*, 'take delight in'), and the adverb קוֹמְמִיּוּת (*qômĕmiyyût*, 'upright') – but the common idea is that παρρησία expresses the manifestation of the essence of a thing – e.g. the mark of a free man who can speak/voice his opinion as distinct to the slave, the ability to pray freely to God. In the later Jewish writings of Philo and Josephus, παρρησία is used in the same way as the Graeco-Roman world to mean 'frank-speaking' or 'candour' and it occurs in connection with terms like φίλοι ('friends') and εὐγένεια ('the free-born', 'high-born', 'nobility'). Usually, it expresses truth in the context of concern for the other. Thus, we see already existing in both the OT and Hebrew literature a linkage between 'frank-speaking' and 'concern' for others, between 'truth' and 'love'. This is an idea we see even more strongly evident in the NT literature and particularly in the Johannine literature.

The most used words for 'love' in the Hebrew Bible are derivatives of the root אהב and these words can be used to express love for people, for things and actions, and for God; some alternatively describe these differing ideas as the secular and religious/theological uses of love, or the divine and human spheres of love. The LXX mostly renders אהב with ἀγαπᾶν, though on about a dozen occasions it is rendered by one of the φιλεῖν/φιλία words. The contextual usage of the 'love' words in the OT shows that 'love' in the OT is basically a spontaneous feeling which drives a person to give of themselves, to grasp the thing that awakens their feeling, or to perform some pleasurable action. The distinctive characteristic of both the divine and Israelite expression of 'love' however, is its jealous exclusivism, whereby one is chosen above others – God loved his people Israel above all nations, Jacob loved Rachel more than Leah, and he loved Joseph more than his brothers. The LXX however uses all four of the main Greek verbs for love, ἀγαπᾶν, φιλεῖν, ἐρᾶσθαι, and στέργειν with around 93% of all references to the idea of loving a person, a thing, or

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God utilising ἀγαπᾶν, and only around 5% utilising φιλεῖν, which is a complete reversal of the usage of the two words in classical literature. It was also noted that when love of Yahweh is mentioned, it is frequently linked with keeping his commandments, serving him, or walking in his ways, which suggests that these ideas explicate what it means to love God.

In Hellenistic Judaism, the OT understanding of love as a relationship of faithfulness between God and human beings still predominates, with God being seen as the source of human love both towards God and towards others, though, according to Philo, 'others' was understood first and foremost as compatriots, but then in ever widening circles as proselytes, fellow residents, enemies, slaves, and even animals and plants. In Rabbinic Judaism, unsurprisingly, the relationship between God and Israel was seen as an expression of love in both directions – from God: faithfulness, mercy, and the Law as a gift; from the people: obedience, loyalty, suffering, and service (to both God and others). Indeed, for the rabbis, love was the basic principle of all relationships, with God and with others. The intertestamental writings also reflect the OT concept of love for God and love for one's neighbour, as do the writings of Qumran, though in this latter case, 'neighbour' really meant those children of light who were part of the Qumran community and God's love for people was seen as restricted to the forefathers and those of the sect.

7.1.3. Truth and Love in the NT

The primary word for 'truth' in the NT is ἀλήθεια, and it occurs 183 times with around half in the Johannine literature. The basic idea from an etymological perspective is that it refers to 'that which comes to be known', which is related to the Hebrew idea of 'conformity to fact', one of the key meanings of אֱמֶת. However, the NT uses ἀλήθεια to represent more than conformity to fact; it is also used as a standard of behaviour (contrasted with wickedness), as a way of describing the concept of honesty, as a description of the completeness of revelation, and as a euphemism for the gospel. Greek does have quite a variety of words in the 'true, false' semantic domain, but only ἀμήν ('truly'), καλῶς ('rightly', 'well'), and κακῶς ('wrongly', 'wickedly') occur in the Johannine literature. Παρρησία occurs 31 times in the NT (13 in the Johannine literature), and is most often translated as 'courage', 'confidence', 'boldness', or 'fearlessness', though it can also be translated as 'frankness', 'outspokenness', or 'plainness'. The very high proportion of occurrences of παρρησία and ἀλήθεια words in the Johannine literature when compared to the rest of the NT, suggest that the Johannine author has a special interest in frank-speaking and the truth.

Equally interesting is the high frequency of the 'love' vocabulary (the ἀγαπ- and φιλ- words) in the Johannine literature. These two word groups are the only ones of the previously mentioned Greek 'love' words which appear in the NT. 143 of the 375 occurrences in the NT occur in the Johannine literature, which at around 12% of the NT corpus contains around three times as many occurrence as one might

expect. But the most interesting thing about the NT love language is the apparent preference for the ἀγαπ- words. This thesis argues that the NT writers, and the Johannine author in particular, deliberately chose to use such words rather than φιλία and its cognates because of the latter's Graeco-Roman context and connotations. However, it must also be noted that ἀγάπη is not an exclusively biblical word; it was a pre-Christian word and it was used almost interchangeably with φιλία to describe ordinary 'love'. This does not however, preclude the possibility that early Christian usage invested the word with new meaning or that the word came to have a new meaning as a result of its particular and frequent usage in the NT. The word ἀγάπη has unfortunately been attributed the meaning of 'sacrificial love', 'divine love', or 'energetic and beneficent good will' by a number of scholars, but such a meaning is not warranted. The classic work *Agape and Eros* by Anders Nygren, in my view, correctly identifies the characteristics of divine love, but incorrectly gives this as the definition of ἀγάπη. The term may have come to carry these ideas, but they do not prescribe the meaning of the word. The reality of the NT usage is that ἀγάπη and its cognates are used to describe all types of love – the love of God for humankind, the love of humankind for God, and the love of humankind for all things 'human' (e.g. each other, self, things).

The Synoptic Gospels

The Synoptic uses of the 'truth' terminology all relate to the concept of 'conformity to reality or fact' in contrast to 'lies' or 'falsehood' and primarily in the context of what is spoken, mostly by Jesus but also by others. The single usage of παρρησία comports with the idea of presenting something plainly and factually. The love language of the Synoptics is primarily used to describe the love of human beings for God and for each other, introducing two quite radical ideas – the double command to love both God and one's neighbour, and the extension of 'neighbour' to also include one's enemies. The command to love God seems to imply the possibility of a relationship with God which was something the ancient Greeks did not think possible, though of course Judaism did. The widening of the recipients of 'neighbour love' was an extension to both Judaism's and the Graeco-Roman ideas of the 'neighbour', which were much narrower in focus.

The Pauline Epistles

The truth vocabulary in the undisputed Pauline Epistles is consistent with what we find in the Synoptic Gospels in that it describes 'conformity to reality or fact', but Paul adds some other nuances. It is used by him to describe characteristics of 'sincerity' and 'honesty' and most significantly, it is used as a synonym for the 'gospel message', which Paul says is the 'truth'. In addition, Paul's use of παρρησία takes it beyond describing a straightforward factual presentation to indicating the mode of its delivery, speaking and acting with boldness and courage and no fear of the consequences. Regarding the love language, Paul has

a preference for using the ἀγαπ- words and issues numerous calls for followers of Jesus to love, both God and others. Love for God is to be demonstrated in righteous and holy living; love for others is to be demonstrated in sacrificial service, and while starting with those in the community of faith, it is to also be shown to those who have not yet become a part of that community with the intent of sharing the message of Jesus with them.

The Deutero-Pauline Epistles

The Deutero-Pauline Epistles also reflect what Paul teaches about truth and love. The truth vocabulary used in these Epistles is consistent with both the Synoptic Gospels and the recognised Pauline Epistles, reflecting conformity to reality, sincerity and honesty, and the 'gospel message' which is also described in these writings as 'the truth' and 'the word of truth'. Παρρησία is used in the same way as Paul, to describe the boldness required to speak in the face of opposition, but also to describe the freedom one has in approaching God. The Deutero-Pauline Epistles also echo Paul's teaching on love, repeating that it is God's love for humanity which motivates people to love each other. They also link truth and love together and show its importance in salvation (only those who love the truth will be saved and those who believe the truth are loved by God), as well as in maturity (speaking the truth in love is the way we bring fellow believers to maturity).

Other NT Writings

Unsurprisingly, the language of truth and love in Acts conforms to the usage in Luke's Gospel and adds nothing new. The book of Hebrews however adds a new aspect of 'completeness' to the idea of truth; no longer is truth simply that which is 'genuine' or 'real', but it is also that which is 'complete', 'definitive', or 'fully-orbed' in contrast to that which is 'incomplete', 'partial', or 'unclear'. James and Peter use the language of truth in the same way as the other NT writings already considered, but especially of the gospel message as the truth. The παρρησία language (noun and verb forms), found in Acts and Hebrews, all refers to the boldness or confidence one has in speaking freely and fearlessly. There is little in these writings about God's love for humankind, but there are a few references to humanity's love for God and several to the idea of 'brotherly' love. Such love is to build up one another and be expressed without favouritism and in good works; it is a manifestation of one's love for God and it is a love which cannot be divided between God and the world. James says that friendship (φιλία) with the world means enmity with God.

Summary of the Non-Johannine Passages

The language of truth (ἀλήθεια) in the non-Johannine writings focuses primarily on factuality, but also extends to characteristics of sincerity, honesty, and completeness, and is used as a synonym for the

'gospel message'. The παρρησία language depicts both a straightforward, factual presentation of the message to be communicated as well as the boldness and courage required in the delivery of the message.

The love language of the NT uses both the ἀγαπ- and φιλ- words almost interchangeably but with an increasing preference for the former. The real focus of the non-Johannine passages is twofold – love for God and love for one's fellow human beings. This was to operate firstly and primarily towards one's immediate 'brotherhood' or 'fellowship', but then in ever widening circles towards believers elsewhere, and eventually towards those outside of the community of the faithful.

7.1.4. The Johannine Perspective

The Johannine Truth Vocabulary

Scholars agree that the ἀληθ- adjectives and adverb in the Johannine literature carry the same ideas as the previously seen uses in the rest of the NT – to refer to 'that which is truthful and honest', 'in accordance with the facts or reality', or 'real and genuine'. The substantive ἀλήθεια, however, does not seem to enjoy the same consensus amongst scholars, partly because interpreters place undue emphasis on certain philosophical or theological issues above the semantic and linguistic considerations.

Truth in the Johannine Gospel

The 25 occurrences of ἀλήθεια in the Gospel of John are used in a variety of ways by the author – ἀλήθεια is used to refer to God's revelation of himself and his purposes (e.g. his faithfulness and reliability, the incarnation of Jesus who is the embodiment of truth, the qualities inherent in the Holy Spirit, and the redemptive content of what Jesus has revealed), to reflect that which is conformed to fact, and to specify the sphere of operation for believers (for belonging, for worship, and for sanctification). Many commentators have suggested that 'truth' in John's Gospel is best understood in terms of Jesus as the epitome and emissary of truth. Thus, in John's Gospel, the author extends the concept of 'truth' beyond the ideas of conformity to reality or fact and the characteristics of sincerity and honesty, and more finely focuses 'truth' not on the 'gospel message', as other NT writers do, but on the person of Jesus as the embodiment of truth. The παρρησία language occurs nine times with the broad idea of 'openness' but with various nuances: 'public' (as opposed to 'private'), 'plain' (as opposed to 'obscure'), and 'bold/courageous' (as opposed to 'timid'). Many of the uses in John's Gospel relate to speaking, but a couple refer more widely to action done openly and in public. This would seem to be a development of the Graeco-Roman concept of παρρησία, a development from freedom of speech to public actions.

Conclusion

Truth in the Johannine Epistles

The substantive ἀλήθεια occurs 20 times in the Johannine Epistles which is a remarkable number for such a small body of writing. As in the Gospel, there is not one single meaning, and little consensus amongst scholars about what several of the instances actually mean or how to categorise the uses. While the uses of ἀλήθεια have been grouped into five or six groupings, in general terms, the possible meanings fall into two main groups: (1) truth as a body of knowledge which the readers know (e.g. core doctrinal beliefs, some knowledge of the life and ministry of Jesus, some understanding of the gospel); and (2) truth as the ethical standards that God has established for his people. Many would agree with Michael Roberts' dissertation conclusions that Jesus Christ is the 'truth', he 'reveals the truth', and he exhorts his followers to 'do the truth'. The four instances of παρρησία in the Johannine Epistles occur in 1 John with the meaning of 'confidence or boldness before God', both here and now in prayer, but also at the coming of Jesus; it is a confidence born out of God's love for humanity and the response of love from those who believed the message of Jesus and remained in him. Love is made complete in them and they are enabled to be frank and open with God on the final day.

The Johannine Concept of Truth

There has been a long history of debate about the source of the Johannine author's concept of 'truth'. Some have seen the source in the Hellenistic world (be that some form of a Platonic dualistic philosophy, some early form of Gnosticism, the Hermetic literature, the Orphic literature, or the Roman Empire), while others have argued for a source in the Hebraic world (the apocalyptic and sapiential literature of the OT, the writings of wider Judaism, or the Qumran literature). Since the 1960s, the view which has become predominant amongst scholars is that the thought world of the Johannine author is thoroughly Jewish. Several studies in the early 2000s have strengthened this view. Herman Waetjen suggested there had been a paradigm shift in Hellenistic Judaism in which truth had become objectified through the marriage of the Greek Logos to the biblical Word of God and now needed to be seen rather than heard; Michael Roberts suggested that the Johannine concept of truth is the revelation of covenant faithfulness and that this occurs in two ways: "Jesus as the revelation of truth" and "Jesus as the revealer of truth"; Elizabeth Mburu proposed that John's understanding of truth could be found in the Qumran document, *The Community Rule*. However, in this same period, contrary ideas have still been suggested – Ewa Osek, for example, argues for the Greek Orphic literature as the best explanation of the synonyms and opposites in the Johannine presentation of truth; and Ji-Woon Yoo has argued that the Johannine author's concept of truth was an alternative view to that of the Roman Empire.

Conclusion

The Johannine author is dealing with people who are very likely influenced by both their historical Judaistic background as well as the Graeco-Roman world of the first century AD in which they lived. He therefore makes use of the mores of both these 'cultures', calling upon their philosophical and religious understanding, and the cultural and societal practices that were so familiar to them, though re-shaping these to suit his purposes. Firstly, like the Graeco-Roman writers, he adopts the context of friendship as the best forum to speak the truth, continually reminding them of the relationship that exists between them. Secondly, he approaches truth-telling in a similar way to how it was done in the Graeco-Roman world: he undertakes it opportunely, repeatedly, frequently, and in a timely manner; he takes care how he speaks and does so objectively and clearly, without the use of any flattery; he demonstrates an awareness of the recipients' situation and identifies himself with them; he knows that the best way to deliver instruction or correction is with a combination of 'truth' and 'love'; and his desire is to see 'improvement' in his recipients, not just in their moral behaviour but also in their underlying beliefs, for he knows that correct behaviour flows from correct belief. Thus, he addresses matters of real importance with his recipients.

But there are some areas of difference to the Graeco-Roman truth-tellers, areas where the Johannine author differed in his approach, reshaping or redefining certain aspects of frank speaking. Firstly, regarding the participants in truth-telling: the Johannine author sees truth-telling as the responsibility of all who have an anointing from the Holy Spirit and know the truth, not just the philosopher or wise man. With regard to the recipients of the truth, the wider NT presents the need for truth to be spoken not just to one's own community, but also to those outside the community, and even to one's enemies. However, the Johannine author is dealing with a dilemma in his recipients' community – some have left and have caused a major problem – so the first responsibility is to speak the truth to the remaining community, in order that they can be comforted, and encouraged, and strengthened. Secondly, while the Johannine author was not afraid to speak frankly and publicly (his letters were essentially public), he recognised that some things are better dealt with face to face and so he leaves certain things until he could be there in person. Thirdly, the Johannine author expects that everyone will respond well to his frank speaking because he presents himself as a friend and not as someone with authority over them; he expects that what he has to say will engender fellowship with himself and between them and God, and he always speaks positively before raising issues. He expects that by connecting 'truth' and 'love' his words will be accepted and the desired outcomes will be achieved. He also argues that his testimony ought to be accepted because it comports with the testimony of the Holy Spirit who is truth, and with God's own testimony about his Son, and God is the one who is true. But the content of his writings and his multiple letters show that his expectation of a good reception was not realised. Fourthly, and most significantly, the Johannine author has a different understanding of truth to the Graeco-Roman writers. Their

conception was more philosophical and metaphysical – that which was in accordance with what really is, and which needs to be exposed and brought into the open, or towards which one journeys. The Johannine author on the other hand is not interested in revealing what is, in the sense of what can be seen or discerned from the words and actions of others; rather he sees the truth as the embodiment of the one true God in Jesus. The basis of his instructions and corrections is the truth about Jesus, who demonstrated what one should believe and how one should behave. 'Truth' for the Johannine author is related to both belief and behaviour; it is the revelation of what is right and that is best seen in Jesus Christ – he 'is the truth' and he 'reveals the truth'.

The Johannine Love Vocabulary

The predominant lemmas for 'love' in the Johannine literature are the ἀγαπ- words, though the φιλ- words do occur and seem to be used interchangeably with the ἀγαπ- words. Several descriptions of love relationships of the same type (i.e. God's love for humanity, humanity's love for God, humanity's love for others) are described using each set of words in different places. The kinds of love relationships described have been analysed and categorised by scholars in a variety of ways but can basically be subsumed into the three major categories seen in the rest of the NT, with the addition of one more major category – love within the Godhead.

Love in the Johannine Gospel

The love relationships described in the Gospel of John can thus be grouped into four main categories:

(1) God's love for humanity: the love of the Father for the disciples, the love of the Father for the world, the love of Jesus for the disciples.
(2) Humanity's love for God: the love of the disciples for Jesus, the Jews' lack of love for God.
(3) Humanity's love for its own: the love of the disciples for one another, the love of the disciples for other things, the love of the world for its own.
(4) Love within the Godhead: the love of the Father for Jesus, the love of Jesus for the Father.

The love relationships demonstrated by the members of the Godhead are the model for how humanity is to love. As Jesus remained faithful to his mission in the world by keeping his Father's commands and remaining in his love, so the followers of Jesus are to remain faithful to their discipleship by keeping the Son's commands and remaining in his love. Thus, love is demonstrated by belief and obedience. The highest expression of love, according to Jesus, is the sacrifice of one's life for one's friends (Jn. 15:13), which raises the question of the scope of both Jesus' love and death. The Johannine Gospel seems to suggest that the scope of love is restricted to a closed circle of friends from whom one might expect a response of love, whereas the Synoptics speak of a wider love which includes one's enemies. But Jesus'

mission of love is to the whole world, and he is the light of the world and the Saviour of the world, so his followers must also have a wider focus and cannot simply reduce their love to fellow believers.

Love in the Johannine Epistles

The love relationships described in the Johannine Epistles can be categorised in the same way as the Gospel. Given the shortness of these letters, it is not surprising that the fourth category is absent, but the other three categories are well covered. The Godhead's love for humanity is described in terms of Jesus' mission and his death on behalf of the sins of humanity; indeed, we have here a definition of love in 1 Jn. 3:16 – "This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us" – and it is the prototype for all love. The love of humanity for God is described in contrasting ways – a correct kind of love which includes knowing Jesus, believing in him, keeping the divine commands, loving one's fellow believers, and excluding love for the world; an incorrect kind of love which fails to obey the divine commands, claims to love God but ignores one's fellow man (even to the extent of 'hating one's brother'), and adopts the ways of the world. The love of humanity for its own receives its fullest treatment in 1 John and is described in terms of abiding in the light, abiding in God and having him abide in the believer, being born of God and knowing him, doing righteousness, a transformation from death to life, and reflecting God's example of love. It reinforces the idea that faith is to express itself in love and once again the question of the scope of that love is raised, when the Johannine author reports in 4:21, "anyone who loves God must also love their brother and sister". However, it is unlikely that all references to 'brother' throughout the Epistles can be so narrowed down as to only refer to one's Christian brothers and sisters. The description "anyone who hates a brothers or sister is in the darkness" suggests that 'brother' must be understood as synonymous with 'neighbour' or 'fellow-human'. The thrust of the whole of 1 John is that divine love is extended to human beings and it finds its completion in people's obedient response to the command to "love one another", which must necessarily include those outside the community of faith.

The Johannine Concept of Love

The language of 'love' used by the Johannine author raises several questions – about his preference for the ἀγαπ- words, about the legitimacy of comparing φιλία and ἀγάπη, and about whether he has another term which is equivalent to φιλία. As a concept which was heavily influenced by Platonic and Aristotelian views (having different forms based on virtue, utility, and pleasure, as well as on equality and inequality in social standing), and as a term which was used to describe political and commercial relationships, φιλία was not a term that suited the Johannine author's idea of relationships in the Christian community. Based on the way he describes himself, the recipients, and the relationship they share, and based on the content of his letters which contain much instruction, exhortation, and warning, one might expect the relationship

between the author and his readers to be, at best, a 'friendship' between unequals. But the Johannine author seems to consider that they are, in fact, on a much more equal footing with each other. The continual usage of familial terms of endearment and affection, and the specific teaching and beliefs that they hold in common seem to level the ground between them and shape the way that they are to relate to each other. Furthermore, it seems that the Johannine author thinks that the term φιλία and the normal word to describe the action of loving (φιλεῖν) were not the best words to use to describe the relationship which was to exist amongst those in the community of faith. He chooses instead to use the less familiar ἀγαπ-words and, as we eventually see, the language of 'fellowship' or 'partnership' (κοινωνία, κοινωνέω), to describe the new partnership that exists. This is not a business partnership, the usual context for the Graeco-Roman usage of κοινωνία, but a partnership that was based on shared truth and love in action. However, it still contained many of the key characteristics of φιλία, things like frank speaking, reciprocity, obligation, civic duty, loyalty, gratitude, and even emotion/affection.

The Johannine author certainly demonstrates a good deal of affection and emotion in his letters. He speaks of the joy that is made complete when they and he share news of how the followers of Jesus are progressing in their faith; he identifies with them as part of the one community of faith and continually addresses them with familial and relational language and terms of endearment; he constantly expresses his concern for their well-being as a result of the threats to their beliefs from those who had proved not to be a part of their community, and so he shares with them deep truths to encourage them; and he urges them to express love and affection for one another, to show hospitality, and to be prepared to lay down their lives for each other. Finally, the various expressions of his desire to be with them, to talk face-to-face with them, and to share their joy, all demonstrate that love and affection were a part of the relationships between believers in the NT world.

Conclusion re the Johannine Usage of Truth and Love

On the matter of 'truth', Greek thinking had two nuances: (1) that which corresponds to the real facts; and (2) reality as opposed to appearance. The Greeks thought of this second nuance as an abstract or theoretical concept in which reality existed in some transcendent place, and the physical world as we know it was just an appearance of what was real. This meant that truth would never change or deteriorate (which of course the physical world does), but it was not visible and lacked any concrete forms. Nevertheless, people were called to seek it by turning away from the physical world and its senses and to journey towards it, a journey which itself would enable and empower the person to connect with this other-world existence and perhaps even become a part of it. It was thus a highly unattainable thing. Jewish thinking, on the other hand, viewed 'truth' as grounded in God's faithfulness, and 'truth' was revealed in his words and deeds through his involvement with his people. They, in turn, experienced

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'truth' as they responded to God's covenant with them, a covenant which regulated their interactions with God, their interactions with each other, and their interactions with the nations around them – it involved honesty, integrity, moral uprightness, trustworthiness, and steadfastness, characteristics of God himself; as such it was more of a moral concept than an intellectual one.

While the Johannine literature has many dualistic ideas which seem to resonate well with the Greek dualistic concepts of the ideal/real and the physical/apparent, it seems fairly evident that the Johannine author does not see the heavenly realm, or the world above, as something 'true' and the earthly world, the world below, as something 'not true'; i.e. the heavenly/earthly contrast is not a philosophical idea for him. Rather, he seems to combine the insights and conceptual frameworks of both the Hellenistic and Hebraic worlds. 'Truth' for the Johannine author is that which is in accordance with the facts or reality and finds its ultimate expression in the character of God, and this is made visible to humanity in the person of Jesus who embodies truth, making God's faithfulness and reliability known by acting only in accordance with what the Father has revealed and made known. With truth now available to humanity, the required response is for people, aided by the Spirit of Truth, to reflect the character of God and show these characteristics in their own lives in their dealings with God and each other. This is true reality. The alternatives were all false reality and the ways of the world – e.g. following after dualistic Platonic ideas and pursuing a journey towards an elusive reality, accepting Roman ideas of life and peace through Imperial control and a stratified society, misunderstanding the covenant relationship and excusing personal responsibility, or chasing after the false teaching of those who opposed or distorted the gospel message about who Jesus really was.

On the matter of 'love', the Johannine author knows and uses the language of his day to describe the various 'love' relationships. He uses both the φιλ- and ἀγαπ- word groups to describe the relationships, with a distinct preference for the latter. Possibly because the ἀγαπ- words were not widely used in the Graeco-Roman world of the first century, and the φιλ- words were loaded with Graeco-Roman ideas which he felt did not reflect the kind of relationships that God required – relationships which the 'truth' embodied in Jesus had made known – he chooses to use words that did not carry such cultural baggage. It may be that such usage ended up investing the ἀγαπ- words with new theological import; a number of scholars certainly think so. In any case, the words were used to describe various love relationships and they did not always mean the same thing. The same words are used to describe love relationships between divinity and humanity, as well as love relationships between human beings, but they did not necessarily mean exactly the same thing.

The love of divinity for humanity describes the care and concern of God for his creation and is expressed in God sending his Son to die for the sins of humankind, and the Son's willingness to lay down his life to

actualise that love. The love of humanity for God is expressed in terms of knowing Jesus, of keeping the divine commands, and excluding love for the world, since this would equate to enmity towards God. The remarkable thing about the love relationship between divinity and humanity is that it is presented almost as a friendship of 'equals' between God and human beings, in which the parties spend time together, confide in one another, and share plans together. The love of humanity for its own also has a range of relationships and expressions, largely related to the 'distance' between the parties: (1) sensual love which expresses itself in spontaneity and passion and physical acts – appropriate for the husband-wife relationship; (2) affection and friendship which expresses itself in choice, preference, obligation, duty, adherence, faithfulness, self-giving, and sacrifice – appropriate for family, friends, and communities; and (3) pity, which manifests itself in altruism, duty, and obligation – appropriate for the more distant person in need. The Johannine author most fully develops the idea of 'love for one another', which at first glance appears to narrow down the Synoptic version of this idea. The Synoptics see love for one's brother as operating in ever-widening circles of one's local community, others in the community of faith, and then people in the wider community, and even one's enemies. The Johannine Epistles seems to focus only on one's local community which may have been because of the challenges being faced by the communities to which the author is writing (e.g. the problems caused by those who were never really a part of them, who were false teachers, and who had departed from amongst them), but the Johannine literature teaches that God loves the world and sent his Son for the sins of the world so 'brother' should be seen more widely as one's fellow human being.

The Reframing of 'Friendship' as 'Fellowship'

In the opening verses of 1 John, the author says that his purpose for writing is to engender 'fellowship' (κοινωνία) in all relationships – between them and himself, them and God, and within their community. The specific relationship between the author and the recipients of his letters is only a part of his concern and cannot be separated from these other relationships. The term κοινωνία carries the meaning of 'close association involving mutual interests' and was used in non-biblical literature for the marriage relationship and to describe various secular partnerships and associations (e.g. political alliances, commercial arrangements, business partnerships, guilds and clubs), as well as to describe the harmony that exists in nature and music. In biblical literature it is used to describe the sharing and association of the early Christians who devoted themselves to a close community whose members helped out one another, to describe the close partnership of Paul and Barnabas with the Jerusalem church leaders, and to describe the close relationships of believers in the Johannine communities. Philo uses the word to describe Moses' partnership with God and it is used similarly in the NT by Paul and the Johannine author to describe a partnership with God. The fact that the relationship with God and the relationship between believers are

both described by the same word in the one pericope (1 Jn. 1:1-7) indicates that there is a commonality about them.

The Johannine author also expresses concern that believers who welcome false teachers could end up sharing (κοινωνέω) in their wicked work. Such a partnership would destroy the 'fellowship' of believers and establish a new 'fellowship' of evil-doers. Like other NT writers who use this verb to describe the sharing of various things that build community (meeting the needs of fellow believers, assisting others with financial support, participating together in the sufferings of Christ, and even sharing the gospel with Gentiles), the author is concerned that the recipients of his letters build the kind of community that was appropriate for believers, a community that was based on a set of common shared beliefs and a common care for each other. Seneca, writing in the first century AD, described 'fellowship' (*societas*) as based on friendship (*amicitia*) but being more intimate and having things in common. He saw fellowship as a step beyond friendship, and whether the Johannine author knew of his writings or not, he certainly seems to think the same way – that fellowship is better than friendship and a more appropriate term to describe the kind of relationships he believed were needed amongst Christians. He thus warns his readers about what will cut them off from fellowship (e.g. claiming a closeness with God but living in a way that is contrary to God's character as light), and what will ensure it continues. The idea of fellowship is also expressed in the Johannine Epistles through use of the verb μένω and 1 Jn. 4:12-16, which has a high number of occurrences of this verb, links the mutual abiding of God and believers with 'love' – it is love for one's fellow-believers which affirms God's abiding presence with believers; fellowship between believers is proof of fellowship with God, and God's love in people is made complete only as believers exercise it within the body of Christ. Finally, the concept of fellowship is evident in 3 John in the call to show hospitality towards those who are strangers yet fellow workers. The use of the words κοινωνία, κοινωνέω, and μένω, and the calls to hospitality and co-working, show that the Johannine author sees believers as a sharing community of equal partners. He thus reframes the Graeco-Roman idea of 'friendship' into the Christian idea of a 'fellowship' based on truth and love using language which appropriately reflects the kind of relationships he envisions.

Conclusion re the Johannine Perspective

Writers like Hans Dieter Betz have suggested that the early Christians overcame the crisis in family relations caused by the teaching of Jesus and eschatological expectations, with the new concept of love as designated by ἀγάπη (i.e. ἀγάπη is the new paradigm for Christians), but he doesn't go far enough. The Johannine author reframed the Graeco-Roman idea of friendship (φιλία) into not just a new 'brotherhood', but a new 'partnership' or 'fellowship' (κοινωνία) based on a new understanding of love AND a new understanding of truth. This also gave rise to additional nuances for a number of terms

associated with φιλία: words like ἀλήθεια and παρρησία, in time, came to have new 'Christian' meanings added to their semantic range. Ἀλήθεια was still used to describe 'truth' as 'conformity to fact', but the early Christians came to realise that it meant more than this; they understood ἀλήθεια to be the revelation of what is right, and that was best seen in Jesus Christ – he is the 'truth' and he 'reveals the truth'. And παρρησία still functioned to describe the 'frank speaking' that fellow believers were to exhibit both to each other and to God, but because they were secure in their new relationships they could speak frankly with great confidence and boldness, and the word παρρησία came to take on this meaning.

7.1.5. Implications for Exegesis

The Second and Third Johannine Epistles reflect features and content which parallel other Graeco-Roman letters of the first century AD while the First Epistle may have been more of a homily accompanying the other two letters. In any case, the three letters all seem to have, primarily, a pastoral thrust which is concerned with the common life of the recipients of the letters, a community which the author prefers to think of as a fellowship based on truth and love. The final section of the thesis draws out some of the implications of this new view of the community for exegeting the Epistles.

1. Christians are in a Fellowship Relationship

The first implication of this new understanding of the community of believers relates to understanding the relationship between the author and the recipients of his letters. As we have seen the author thought that the Christian communities created by believers gathering together reflected something more than the normal Graeco-Roman friendships familiar in so many areas of civic life; they exhibited the more intimate relationships associated with families and fellowships. One way in which this is evident between the author and his recipients is his description of believers as ἀγαπητοί, παιδία, τεκνία, and ἀδελφοί, with the first of these being his favoured term; such terms were considered more appropriate than the more secular term φίλοι. In addition, much is made of the believers being τέκνα θεοῦ and bearing the image and character of God, as well as the special love which was lavished upon them, both by God and their brothers and sisters. This must be understood, however, as per the best examples of Graeco-Roman family life, for children were not always wanted in the society of that time and sometimes were 'exposed', something that would have been anathema to the family of God. Also in contrast to the prevailing views of the time, which argued that the ability to do good came from within a person, those who were 'born of God' had received the Holy Spirit and he enabled them to do what they could not do before, namely, do what was right and not sin. Furthermore, while it may appear that the relationship between the author and recipients was like a patron-client, master-servant, or rabbi-disciple relationship, this is not how the Johannine author appears to think of the

relationship; he seems to think of being social equals with his recipients, even calling both them and the people in his own local community, φίλοι ('friends) (3 Jn. 15). The fact that the author also appeals, in the First Epistle, to the shared knowledge, traditions, understanding, and anointing they all have, shows the egalitarian nature of the community. It is important to note that the author is arguing that both he and his recipients share a common, personal, and intimate relationship with God, something not considered attainable with the numerous Graeco-Roman gods. They share a knowledge of God, traditions, understanding, and an anointing which makes them a community of equals, a fellowship of people with the same foundation and standing. Little wonder than that the author seems to expect his teaching, warnings, and instruction to be received well.

2. The Importance of Truth

The second implication for exegesis of the Johannine Epistles is the need to understand the importance of 'truth'. Half of all the ἀληθ- words in the NT occur in the Johannine writings and refer both to a body of facts to be believed about Jesus and the ethical behaviour which is consistent with the knowledge of those facts. The author seems to focus on this issue because the recipients were left wondering what was 'true' in light of the teaching of those who had departed from their group. His use of stark dualistic language to contrast truth and falsehood, and the frequent criticisms he makes of the things which are untrue, along with his descriptors of those who propagate such untruths, show the importance of truth for him. Such untruths break the bond of fellowship and are thus destructive to the Christian community; this is what those who had departed had done. Untruths and those who peddle them must be avoided at all costs. Instead, truth was to characterise every aspect of a believer's life as a reflection of the character of God; they were to be people of truth – people who loved the truth, held to the truth, had the truth in them, did (or lived out) the truth, spoke the truth, and worked together for the truth.

3. The Significance of the Call to Love

The third implication of this new view of community is the need to appreciate the significance of the call to love. While this seems to be limited to showing love for the Christian community, and there may be good reasons for this given the threat to its continued existence as a result of the divisions and uncertainties cause by those who had departed, it is quite possible that love of one's 'brother' really meant love of one's fellow human being as per the Synoptic Gospels. However, a love for the world (by which the author means the things of the world, not the people of the world) is antithetical to a love for God. This is one area where the author's dualistic mode of expression has caused some problems for interpreters. The language of love and hate and the equation of lovelessness with hatred

and murder seems extreme, but it simply reflects the significance which the Johannine author attaches to this issue. One just cannot love God and his people if their affections are set on the values and things of the world. Furthermore, the key to understanding 'love' is the self-sacrifice of Jesus, and this is something quite contrary to normal human inclination and experience. The Johannine Epistles highlight that love has a very active dimension – love is shown by one's actions, and this flows from one's relationship with God. Inherently, human beings are self-interested; it is the relationship with God which changes this, and fellowship with God leads to a fellowship with other believers – "since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another" (1 Jn. 4:11). While love therefore, may find its primary expression in the fellowship of believers, an extension beyond this is not out of the question (as we noted above), though it does not appear to be the primary focus of the Johannine author.

4. The Inter-Relationship of Fellowship, Truth, and Love

The three issues – fellowship, truth, and love – are in fact closely woven together throughout the Johannine Epistles and this is the fourth area of importance for correctly exegeting these Epistles. While some have argued that 1 John is about knowing God in a pistic, ethical, and agapic way, It has been argued that what the Johannine author is doing is presenting the Christian community with a correct understanding of Christian nature, belief, and action – who they are as children of God, as beloved brothers and sisters, and as a fellowship rather than a friendship group (an ontological dimension ≡ nature); what they need to know about God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit, and what they are to believe (a pistic dimension ≡ belief); and the required obedience to God's commands, the need for good works, and the need for love towards God and their fellow believers (an ethical dimension ≡ action). These three key ideas relate to what we have seen about fellowship, truth, and love.

All of what has been said in relation to fellowship, truth, and love bring us to the essential issue of the argument of this thesis – that the Johannine author is reframing the Graeco-Roman concept of friendship. Troels Engberg-Pedersen has noted that the early Christians were not afraid to make use of concepts from the Graeco-Roman world and the Christian message had elements which were partly about these concepts but also partly about counter-values. Some of the early church writers chose to use words like ἀγάπη/*caritas* to distinguish Christian love from the Graeco-Roman idea of φιλία/*amicitia*, and some preferred to use the metaphorical language of 'brotherhood' to describe the Christian community. It has been argued similarly that the Johannine author deliberately chooses to use a different set of words to describe the idea of Christian relationships. While he does use familial language, he also introduces the idea of the Christian community as a κοινωνία rather than a group practising φιλία, a term that he considered too limited and ambiguous.

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Partly because the Christian community was not only in a relationship with each other but also in a relationship with God (something that the ancient philosophers had said was not actually possible), and partly because the classical idea of friendship and the ideals of equality and mutual virtue seemed somewhat incompatible with Christian humility, and partly because the idea of a friendship based on virtue, usefulness, or pleasure seemed contrary to the Christian idea of loving others irrespective of who they were or what they could provide, the Johannine author believed that a new terminology was needed to describe the Christian community. Although it might appear that the relationships between Jesus and his disciples, and the Johannine author and his recipients, were relationships of inequality (i.e. a teacher-disciple or elder-congregant relationship), and thus might be seen as political friendships based on utility and usefulness, this was not the way that the biblical writers present the relationships. The 'lesser' parties may have seen themselves as recipients of benefits and services from the one who was over them, but the 'greater' parties saw themselves as motivated by love and affection for those they considered family or friends. It has been shown that this is particularly evident in the Johannine literature (see the summary in sections 6.6.2 [*The Johannine Gospel*] and 6.6.3 [*The Johannine Epistles*]).

7.2. A Proven Hypothesis

Many scholars have shown that the early Christians did not seek to overthrow long-established social and cultural mores, but instead, in a variety of ways, transformed them in light of the revelation of God's kingdom announced by Jesus. This has been ably demonstrated, for example, in the areas of social practices in cities, and in letter writing. This thesis has argued that such a transformation has also occurred in the domain of friendships.

The predominant view in the Graeco-Roman world was that friendships were relationships formed on the basis of virtue, utility, or pleasure, with ideal friendships only able to be formed between equals, and the dominant form being friendships based on utility in which people received benefits from one another. One of the most common forms of these was the patron-client relationship and much debate has taken place regarding whether this form of relationship was a purely political or commercial 'friendship' and whether it contained any level of affection. Irrespective of this, most friendships in the Graeco-Roman world were characterised by frank speaking, reciprocity, obligation, civic duty, loyalty, and gratitude.

This thesis has argued and proved that the Johannine author saw relationships differently and in fact had a broader concept of 'friendship'. In his view, relationships in the Christian community were actually more like the Platonic ideal of a friendship between equals. While maintaining the characteristics of Graeco-Roman friendships, he reshaped the purpose, basis, and goals of friendship, and redefined the 'politics' of friendship. In addition, he also needed to find different language to show that these relationships were

different to the 'normal' Graeco-Roman friendships. Thus, the Johannine author transformed the Graeco-Roman concept of friendship (φιλία) into a fellowship (κοινωνία) of truth (ἀλήθεια) and love (ἀγάπη). This was a relationship which broadened the Greek concept of friendship and gave it a new constituting force – the truth they shared with each other, and the love they had for each other.

7.3. Identification of Potential Further Study

This thesis has argued for a transformation of the Greek concept of φιλία and has done so with a focus on the Johannine literature. While it has briefly surveyed the language of truth and love in the wider NT literature, a fuller examination of the reframing of friendship in the non-Johannine Epistles writings is needed to establish that this broadening of 'friendship' into 'fellowship' is more than simply a Johannine idea. Is it in fact, an idea also advocated, advanced, or perhaps even first raised by other NT writers, and is it represented across all the NT writers?[716] It would also be worth considering the implications of social identity approaches and the Friesen/Longenecker poverty/economic scales on the relative positions of the NT writers and their audiences and how this might have shaped the relationships between them and the language used by the writers. This work is especially needed in light of the strong familial language, especially the language of 'brotherhood', and the 'in Christ' language, that is evident in many of the other NT writings, on the lips of Jesus and others.[717] A further profitable line of enquiry, would be to also look at the relationship between fellowship, truth, and love in the non-Johannine literature to see if they make the same kind of linkages made by the Johannine author.

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[716] Fitzgerald would seem to think so given his argument that, while the specific language of friendship is not found in the Pauline and Deutero-Pauline literature, the concept is present, with Paul and the Paulinist writers, instead, preferring kinship language and drawing quite heavily on other words like, *koinonia*, which are part of friendship's 'linkage group' ("the terms and ideas with which a word is conceptually and traditionally linked"). See Fitzgerald, "Christian Friendship": 287-289.

[717] For some examples of the use of ἀδελφοί see: Jesus' use of the term ἀδελφόι in his Sermon on the Mount/Plain (Mt. 5-7; Lk. 6:17-49), and his redefining of familial relationships (Mt. 12:49f. ‖ Mk. 3:33-35 ‖ Lk. 8:21; Mt. 23:8f.; 25:40; 28:10), a practice continued by other NT speakers and writers – e.g. Luke (Acts 1:16; 6:3; 9:17; 11:29), Paul (Rom. 1:13; 7:1, 4; 14:10-21; 1 Cor. 1:10; 16:20; 2 Cor. 1:8; Gal. 1:2; Phil. 1:12; 1 Thess. 1:4; Phm. 7, 16), deutero-Paul (Eph. 6:23; Col. 1:2; 2 Thess. 1:3; 1 Tim. 4:6; 5:1-2; 2 Tim. 4:21), Peter (2 Pet. 1:10), James (Jam. 1:2, 16, 19), and others (Heb. 2:11; 3:1, 12; 13:22).

For examples of the ἐν Χριστῷ language see: Rom. 16:7; 1 Cor. 1:2, 30; 2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 1:22; Eph. 1:1, 13; 2:10; Phil. 1:1; 4:21; Col. 1:2; 2:10; 1 Thess. 2:14; 2 Tim. 3:12; Phm. 23; Heb. 3:14; 1 Pet. 5:14.

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