

# Chapter 1

## 'Now a discussion arose': a review of the literature

There is now a well-established scholarly consensus that the Old Testament forms a significant part of the background to the thought and theology of the Fourth Gospel.<sup>1</sup> This chapter will offer a brief and certainly not exhaustive survey of literature which seeks to trace the development of this common understanding in the past few decades, before leading into the main area of concern of this study: the theme of creation in the Fourth Gospel and the relationship between the author(s)/redactor(s)' narrative and the first chapter, as it is received, of the book of Genesis.

### Other Old Testament influences in the Fourth Gospel

The Evangelist does not, of course, draw exclusively upon the book of Genesis. Other influences from the Hebrew Scriptures are clearly discernible. The scriptural background to the Prologue is complex, and it is not within the scope of this book to offer a full discussion of these influences; it will suffice to recognise and comment very briefly on the presence of material from the Wisdom literature, from Isaiah and the Moses/Exodus traditions which serve as examples. The influence of the Psalms will also be considered.

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1. Paul M. Hoskins is fair to note 'the lack of enthusiasm for the OT background of the Fourth Gospel evident in D. Moody Smith's treatment of "the history-of-religions problem" in Johannine studies'. *Jesus as the Fulfilment of the Temple in the Gospel of John*, 1, citing D. Moody Smith, 'Johannine Studies' in Eldon J. Epp and George W. MacRae (eds.), *The New Testament and Its Modern Interpreters* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989), 276-9. However, twenty intervening years of scholarship have strengthened the view that is outlined in the main discussion of this chapter.

The presence of material from the Wisdom corpus (including references from Proverbs, Wisdom, Sirach and Enoch) in John's Prologue is tabulated by C.H. Dodd:<sup>1</sup>

[The] list of parallels [ . . . ] is sufficient to show that in composing the Prologue the author's mind was moving along lines similar to those followed by Jewish writers of the 'Wisdom' school. It is difficult to resist the conclusion that, while the Logos of the Prologue has many traits of the Word of God in the Old Testament, it is on the other side a concept closely similar to that of Wisdom, that is to say, the hypostatized thought of God projected in creation, and remaining as an immanent power within the world and in man.<sup>2</sup>

The main body of the Fourth Gospel and the foregoing Prologue are thematically and fundamentally linked by Wisdom imagery<sup>3</sup> and, in particular, the *Logos* ('Word') motif which may be associated with *Sophia*, or woman Wisdom.<sup>4</sup> 'While other Old Testament reminiscences may well have been included by the Fourth Evangelist in the final compilation [ . . . ], we nevertheless saw [ . . . ] a determinative influence from material previously dedicated to *Sophia*.'<sup>5</sup>

1. C.H. Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel* (Cambridge University Press, 1953), 274-5.

2. *ibid.*, 275.

3. 'From the prologue's praise of the pre-existent one who "pitched a tent" with us and "became flesh" as the one sent from God, through all the encounters of the Gospel where Jesus invites others to "Come and see", we see Jesus as the great revealer of the glory and the things of God.' Barbara E. Bowe, 'The Divine "I Am": Wisdom Motifs in the Gospel of John' in Edward Foley and Robert Schreiter (eds.), *The Wisdom of Creation* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2004), 47.

4. 'Since the incarnation of the Word in Jesus is in view, the masculine noun ὁ λόγος is likely to have been seen as more appropriate than the feminine ἡ σοφία and its association with the figure of Lady Wisdom'. Lincoln, *The Gospel According to St John*, 96. The revelation of the divine through *Sophia/Logos* is a major theme of the Fourth Gospel; the way that Jesus, the incarnate *Logos* works in creation and, more so, as the life-giving Creator is the focus of this book.

5. Martin Scott, 'Sophia and the Johannine Jesus', *Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series* 71. (Sheffield Academic Press, 1992), 243. Katharine J. Dell highlights the relationship between the female figure of Wisdom and the created order: 'The main texts that treat creation in any cosmic sense in Proverbs are 3:19-20 and 8:22-

Challenging 'recent Johannine scholarship which has so strongly emphasized the Jewish wisdom tradition that so easily ignored the context in which the Genesis creation account is the focus', Masanobu Endo offers a comprehensive survey of Old Testament creation influences on the Fourth Evangelist.<sup>1</sup> His thesis argues that 'the Johannine prologue claims that the right place for Christ (the Son) should be found in the unique identity of God (within the context of Jewish monotheism), which was revealed in his work of creation and in the eschatological hope'.<sup>2</sup> The Prologue clearly sets up themes that are developed in the main body of the Fourth Gospel<sup>3</sup> and so the motif of the *Logos*, and its associated theological understanding, continues throughout John's narrative. 'In the prologue, the Logos was depicted as the Creator and the one who possessed life in himself'.<sup>4</sup> This book will suggest that the theme of Jesus, the *Logos*, as Creator is present throughout the Fourth Gospel.

Deutero-Isaiah reiterates in more confident and unwavering language even than the earlier prophets, the sovereignty of Yahweh over Nature and human history, while it is the general view that he makes far more explicit the implied monotheism of the earlier prophets.<sup>5</sup>

The opening verses of the Prologue (Jn 1:1-4) reflect the Isaianic image of the sovereign Creator God (cf. Is. 40-55) and make the claim that Jesus, the incarnate Word (Jn 1:14) is one with the Father in that role.

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31, which form part of the longer passages about woman Wisdom. These point out the divine element of the wisdom enterprise and introduce the revelation of the divine through wisdom and through the acts of creation'. *The Book of Proverbs in Social and Theological Context* (Cambridge University Press, 2006), 139.

1. Masanobu Endo, *Creation and Christology: A Study on the Johannine Prologue in the Light of Early Jewish Creation Accounts* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002), 253.

2. *ibid.*, 253.

3. 'Several key Christological motifs which appear in the Johannine prologue are expanded in the rest of the Fourth Gospel', *ibid.*, 231. 'The Prologue fits its present context admirably, and heralds major themes to be developed in the Gospel'. Edwards, *Discovering John*, 87.

4. Endo, *ibid.*, 251.

5. David R. Griffiths, 'Deutero-Isaiah and the Fourth Gospel: Some Points of Comparison', *Expository Times* 65, No. 12 (1954), 355-60, 355.

Catrin H. Williams helpfully lists and discusses the occurrences of direct quotations from Isaiah in the Fourth Gospel and comments that in these events John names his source either as being 'Isaiah' or 'the prophets' (in the case of Jn 6:43).

In a gospel that clearly favours allusional reference to scripture over an extensive collection of quotations, the four Isaianic passages selected for citation by John do provide some valuable clues about the reception of Isaiah in John's gospel.<sup>1</sup>

Occasionally John alludes to the prophecy of Isaiah without identifying the source; Jn 6:27-71, for example, has literary and thematic correspondences with Is. 55:1-11.<sup>2</sup>

'In the Fourth Gospel's narrative, the two lawsuits of Deutero-Isaiah have been brought together. [ . . . ] God is now represented by Jesus, God's authorized agent and chief witness'.<sup>3</sup> The Isaianic identification of the sovereign God as Creator<sup>4</sup> is an important influence on John who seeks to represent Jesus in the same role. Since the question of monotheism is in view in the Fourth Gospel, 'the narrative frequently reinforces the idea that questions about belief in Jesus are at the same time questions about belief in God'.<sup>5</sup>

It is clear that Isaiah is a significant influence on John and it is therefore unsurprising that the opening to the Fourth Gospel is crowned with the theology of the prophet (cf. Jn 1:1-4).

The Johannine traditions were shaped, at least in part, by interaction between a Christian community and a hostile Jewish community whose piety accorded very great importance to Moses and the Sinai theophany,

1. Catrin H. Williams, 'Isaiah in John's Gospel' in Steve Moyise and Maarten J.J. Menken, *Isaiah in the New Testament* (London: T&T Clark, 2005), 115. Jn 1:23 = Is. 40:3; Jn 6:45 = Is. 54:13; Jn 12:28 = Is. 53:1; Jn 12:29 = Is. 6:10; Jn 12:41 = also Is. 6:10.

2. See D. Burkett's list in Endo, *Creation and Christology*, 241, with reference to D. Burkett, 'The Son of Man in the Gospel of John', *Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement* 56 (Sheffield Academic Press, 1991), 131-2.

3. Andrew T. Lincoln, *Truth on Trial: the Lawsuit Motif in John's Gospel* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2000), 46.

4. For a comprehensive survey, see 'Isaiah' in Stefan Paas, *Creation and Judgement: Creation Texts in Some Eighth Century Prophets* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), Chapter 7.

5. Lincoln, *Truth on Trial*, 49.

probably understood as Moses' ascent to heaven and his enthronement there. [...] The depiction of Jesus as prophet and king in the Fourth Gospel owes much to traditions which the church inherited from the Moses piety.<sup>1</sup>

The Prologue mentions Moses (Jn 1:17) and this reference betrays another powerful influence on John. The Evangelist is presenting Jesus as the Prophet like Moses 'who is to come into the world' (Jn 6:14; cf. Jn 3:2; Deut. 18:15). 'The essential characteristic of the true prophet like Moses is that he speaks Yahweh's words, not his own'.<sup>2</sup> John makes the theological claim that Jesus, surpassing the role of the Prophet, is one with the Father (Jn 10:30) and that he speaks the Father's words (Jn 8:28). Indeed, he *is* the Word of God (Jn 1:1, 14) and is therefore not a 'new Moses' but the one to whom Moses witnesses.<sup>3</sup>

Further connection with the Moses/Exodus tradition<sup>4</sup> is described by John F. McHugh in his commentary:

The term Logos [in Jn 1] stands for the Memra considered as the Holy, Ineffable, Name of God. That is, to speak of the Logos-Memra is to refer to the Deity revealed in the phrase 'I AM WHAT I AM' at Exod 3.14; and the meaning of the phrase is that the God of Moses does not merely exist in an ontological sense (*Sein*), but is also ever-present at the side of his creatures, ever ready to have mercy and to supply whatever help they may need in any situation (*Dasein*). The foundation of Israel's faith is that its God does actively intervene in the world, that is, the exact opposite of what is now termed deism. The Logos, the Memra, is 'He Who is There'.<sup>5</sup>

Jesus, the incarnate Word, is for John the same God who appeared to Moses on Mount Sinai (cf. Jn 8:58; 18:6; 20:28).

1. Wayne A. Meeks, *The Prophet-King: Moses Traditions and the Johannine Christology* (Leiden: Brill, 1967), 318-9.

2. Meeks, *The Prophet-King*, 45.

3. *ibid.*, 319.

4. For a full discussion on this topic, see 'From the Expectation of the Prophet-Messiah like Moses' in J. Louis Martyn, *History and Theology in the Fourth Gospel* (3<sup>rd</sup> edn, Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003), Chapter 6.

5. John F. McHugh, *John 1-4* (The International Critical Commentary, London: T&T Clark, 2009), 8-9.

Much more could be said about each of the Wisdom, Isaiah and Moses/Exodus traditions and the Creator/creation theology with which they are associated. While recognising these among significant influences on John, and noting that they have been discussed widely by scholars, the purpose of this study is to pursue and elucidate in particular the influence of Gen. 1:1-2:4a on the Fourth Gospel in its entirety.

## Recent trends in the study of the use of the Old Testament in the New

### *Influences*

It is a well-known fact that early Christians used quotations, allusions and other kinds of reception of the Jewish Scriptures as tools to persuade people within and outside the group's social boundaries to accept their claims. [ . . . ] Reference to an ancient written text with established authority and meaning added force to the Christian understanding of the present time.<sup>1</sup>

The Hellenistic elements which were once believed to have been the primary influences behind the Fourth Gospel<sup>2</sup> have now, on the whole, been relegated to 'a secondary phase of interpretation'.<sup>3</sup> Theories about the influence of Gnosticism on the Fourth Evangelist, and especially Rudolf Bultmann's Gnostic 'redeemer myth'<sup>4</sup> have also lost support since the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls and the subsequent work of scholars who have elucidated the way in which John quotes directly from, or, more frequently, alludes to the Old Testament.

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1. Michael Labahn, 'Scripture Talks because Jesus Talks: The Narrative Rhetoric of Persuading and Creativity in John's Use of Scripture' in Anthony Le Donne & Tom Thatcher (eds.), *The Fourth Gospel in First-Century Media Culture* (London: T&T Clark, 2011), 135.

2. C.H. Dodd, for example, stressed the significance of the influence of Hermetic literature on the Fourth Gospel, while acknowledging at the same time that 'the Fourth Evangelist expected to find readers among open-minded Jews [such as Philo of Alexandria] who participated in the intellectual life of Hellenism' and would therefore have been in contact with rabbinic Judaism. *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, 53; 54 ff.

3. Stephen Neill in Stephen Neill and Tom Wright, *The Interpretation of the New Testament 1861–1986* (2<sup>nd</sup> edn., New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 346.

4. Bultmann, *The Gospel of John*, 7-9.

C.H. Dodd modestly 'hinted' at the significance for Christian theology of a right understanding of the treatment of the Old Testament in the New<sup>1</sup> and suggested that 'we need a study which shall be based upon verifiable evidence that *this* NT writer did in fact refer his readers to *that* passage of the OT in connection with this or that particular theme of the Gospel or of Christian theology'.<sup>2</sup> Dodd made the important observation that where a New Testament writer quoted or alluded to a passage from the Old Testament (especially from Isaiah, Jeremiah, certain of the minor prophets, and the Psalms), the sections echoed 'were understood as *wholes*, and particular verses or sentences were quoted from them rather as pointers to the whole context than as constituting testimonies in or for themselves'.<sup>3</sup> An example was found in the words of Jesus from the Cross: 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' (Mk 15:34; Mt. 27:46). According to Dodd's convincing supposition, this is not simply a quotation of the Hebrew Ps. 22:1 but an allusion to the *whole* of Ps. 22, a hymnic prayer of deliverance from suffering and hostility.<sup>4</sup>

Commenting specifically on the miracles of Jesus, R.H. Gundry made the suggestion that they are 'to be interpreted with an Old Testament and Jewish background alone. "Jesus' miracles look more like salvific miracles such as we meet in the O.T."'<sup>5</sup> An argument was developing for recognising that an author such as John might shape his style of writing to create intentional resonances with the theological language of earlier material and, in so doing, evoke strong reminiscences of particular themes as well as words, the latter connections achieved through quotation and allusion.

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1. C.H. Dodd, *The Old Testament in the New* (London: Athlone Press, 1952), 21.

2. C.H. Dodd, *According to the Scriptures* (London: Nisbet & Co., 1952), 28.

3. *ibid.*, 126.

4. This tradition of understanding has long been incorporated in the Holy Week liturgies of the Church.

5. George R. Beasley-Murray, *John Word Biblical Commentary* (2<sup>nd</sup> edn., Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1999), Vol. 36, cxxii, citing R.H. Gundry, 'Recent Investigations into the Literary Gattung Gospel' in R.N. Longenecker and M.C. Tenney (eds.), *New Dimensions in New Testament Study* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1974), 116.

The 1988 *Festschrift*, in honour of Barnabas Lindars, included D.A. Carson's compilation of lists of direct quotations by John from the Old Testament<sup>1</sup> as well as apparent quotations, allusions<sup>2</sup> (the 'pointers' of which Dodd wrote), and themes with which the Fourth Gospel is 'replete' and have called for 'voluminous discussion'.<sup>3</sup>

Further support came from Johannes Beutler S.J. in an article on the Johannine use of 'scripture' (γραφή, γραφαί) or 'writings' (γράφειν) and the question of the fulfilment of certain passages in the words and actions of Jesus, or in the events of his life, such as the further reference to Ps. 22 and the division of Jesus' garments by the soldiers: 'This was to fulfill what the scripture (ἡ γραφή) says, "They divided my clothes among themselves, and for my clothing they cast lots." ' (Jn 19:24; cf. Ps. 22:18). Beutler argued that, again, for the Fourth Evangelist it was not enough to merely quote from the Old Testament. 'Scripture, as such, had to be fulfilled, and not only this or that individual text. The narrowing of "Scripture" to [an] individual verse seems to be secondary'.<sup>4</sup> The whole of the Psalm was being fulfilled, not only the detail mentioned in one verse.

Further weight behind the argument for an Old Testament foundation for the Fourth Gospel was offered by Thomas L. Brodie in his exploration of the origins and sources of John's narrative (which included the 'systematic use' by the Fourth Evangelist of Mark, Matthew, part of Luke-Acts, and Ephesians).<sup>5</sup> A short chapter of Brodie's book is devoted to John's 'systematic use of the Pentateuch' which, he argues,

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1. Carson, 'John and the Johannine Epistles', 246 ff.

2. *ibid.*, 251 ff.

3. 'One thinks of such themes as the vine and the branches, sheep and shepherd, the serpent in the wilderness, the lamb of God, the Jewish feasts, the Sabbath, Abraham and his sons, repeated references to the law and to the Spirit, mention of the temple, Christological titles grounded in the OT (however shaped by intervening tradition), and more'. Carson, *ibid.*, 253.

4. Johannes Beutler, S.J., 'The Use of "Scripture" in the Gospel of John' in R. Alan Culpepper and C. Clifton Black (eds.), *Exploring the Gospel of John: in Honor of D. Moody Smith* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996), 147-62, 149.

5. Thomas L. Brodie, *The Quest for the Origin of John's Gospel: A Source-Oriented Approach* (Oxford University Press, 1993).

is entirely distilled and integrated in the Fourth Gospel. Brodie notes the occasions when John is quoting directly or intending a more general allusion to an earlier text:

. . . at times some of the connections are fairly clear, particularly at the beginning, middle and end – in the references to ‘the beginning’ (Gen. 1:1, John 1:1); in the account of feeding the people, especially with manna (Exod 16; John 6); and in the long closing discourse(s) (Deut 1-30, John 13-17). But having thus given out some signals of its thorough engagement with these other texts, the fourth gospel then proceeds to use them in such a way that, generally speaking, the relationship is not immediately clear.<sup>1</sup>

A conference paper given by Kirsten Nielsen in 1997 discussed the use of Old Testament imagery in the Fourth Gospel.<sup>2</sup> In a study of the image of the vine and the vineyard in Isaiah, Nielsen suggests that the Old Testament stories are used as ‘intertexts’ by John who may be drawing themes together for his own theological purposes.

The [vine] image is clearly a reuse of the Isaiah tradition, but we must further consider whether the combination of the vine image in Jn. 15:1-8 and the commandment to love in Jn. 15:9-17 do not also refer back to Isaiah 5. For while Isa. 5:1-7 is followed by a succession of denunciations that interpret in colourful fashion what it means to bear wild grapes and denounce those who exploit the weak in society and live in luxury without giving a thought to Yahweh, so Jn. 15:1-8 is followed by a defining explication of what it means to bear good fruit.<sup>3</sup>

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1. *ibid.*, 126.

2. Kirsten Nielsen, ‘Old Testament Imagery in John’ in Johannes Nissen and Sigfred Pedersen (eds.), ‘New Readings in John: Literary and Theological Perspectives. Essays from the Scandinavian Conference on the Fourth Gospel in Århus 1997’, *Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series* 182 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 66-82. Nielsen observes that ‘in John’s Gospel it is [ . . . ] characteristic that it is the speeches, and in particular the dialogues, that play the major role, just as it is the conversation that is the preferred form in the Old Testament’, 72.

3. *ibid.*, 75.

Nielsen goes on to make a similar study of the 'shepherd' imagery in Jn 10:1-18 which draws on both Ps. 23 and Ezek. 34, observing that in the Old Testament a sheep can be sacrificed, and in the New Testament the good shepherd becomes the sacrificial lamb: 'thus in John 10 we see a combination of ideas from Ezekiel and Second Isaiah but with the new slant that the shepherd sacrifices himself out of *love for his flock* – because he knows them'.<sup>1</sup>

Another useful contribution to the conversation about the use of the Old Testament in the New, particularly in John, was made by Gary T. Manning Jr, who, like Nielsen, noted the tendency of John to combine allusions, and the fact that this was a common literary device of the Second Temple period. Also commenting on the shepherd imagery in John 10, Manning discussed the way in which John combines material from Num. 27 and Ezek. 34 to shape the 'common image' of the shepherd, using the 'catchwords' ἐξάγω ('to lead out'), εισάγω ('to lead in'), πρόβατα ('sheep') and ποιμήν ('shepherd'), each common to the Old Testament texts, to create the link. The image of the vine in Jn 15 combines allusions to Isa. 5, Jer. 2, Ezek. 15, 17, 19 and the 'catchwords' that serve to effect the allusion relate to bearing fruit, pruning and withering.<sup>2</sup> Manning continued by discussing another 'common tendency' of John to modify the language that he uses in creating his theological connections to Old Testament texts:

In many cases, John modifies the wording from the OT passage in accordance with changes in the language (both lexical and grammatical). In other cases, John modifies the language of his allusions in accord with his own style of writing. Conversely, in some cases, John leaves allusion in septuagintal language, perhaps to draw attention to the source of his allusion.<sup>3</sup>

A significant earlier study of Old Testament quotations in the Fourth Gospel was conducted by E.D. Freed, who emphasised the Greek Septuagintal background to John's narrative,

1. *ibid.*, 79.

2. Gary T. Manning Jr, 'Echoes of a Prophet: the Use of Ezekiel in the Gospel of John and in Literature of the Second Temple Period', *Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series 270* (London: T&T Clark, 2004), 149.

3. *ibid.*, 198.

although this did not exclude the use of Hebrew text.<sup>1</sup> He went so far as to say that 'where [John] agrees exactly with an OT text it is always with the LXX' and that 'in most places a stronger case can be made for the use of the [Greek] rather than for the [Hebrew]'.<sup>2</sup> Freed was also clear in acknowledging the freedom John exercised with relation to Old Testament texts; that 'he was bound by no rule or fixed text, testimony or other' and most especially 'theological motives and ideas were his primary concern. John was only secondarily concerned with the actual quotation as such'.<sup>3</sup> This understanding will play a significant part in the development of this study, particularly in Chapter 4, where it will be argued that John's choice and placement of vocabulary create allusions to the text of Gen. 1:1-2:4a and so serve to highlight the broad theological theme of creation within and throughout the gospel narrative.

More recently, Maarten J.J. Menken has further developed Freed's ideas, claiming that 'it is evident that the LXX is the Bible of the fourth evangelist' but acknowledging that 'the brevity of the quotations and the consequent limitation of the available material make it impossible to connect John's quotations to a definite type of the LXX text'.<sup>4</sup> Like Freed, Menken is careful to note the other linguistic sources available to and used by John: 'he has a command not only of Greek but also of Hebrew (and Aramaic)'.<sup>5</sup> Most significant for the current purpose of this study is Menken's observation that 'the treatment of OT quotations in the Fourth Gospel suggests that this gospel has been written by a Jewish Christian within and for a group that was able to understand his use of Scripture'.<sup>6</sup> John's selection of Old Testament passages is as notable as his quoting from

1. 'The evidence for the use of the [Hebrew] text along with the [Greek] is strong, as well as, in several clear cases, the tradition of the Targums'. E.D. Freed, *Old Testament Quotations in the Gospel of John* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1965), 129.

2. *ibid.*, 126.

3. *ibid.*, 129.

4. Maarten J.J. Menken, *Old Testament Quotations in the Fourth Gospel* (Kampen: Kok Pharos Publishing House, 1996), 205. For a comprehensive recent study of the origins, forms, language and use of the Septuagint, see Jennifer M. Dines, *The Septuagint* (London: T&T Clark, 2004). This book, following Dines, uses 'LXX' as 'an all-embracing term' to describe the Greek Old Testament. *ibid.*, 3.

5. Menken, *ibid.*, 206.

6. *ibid.*, 208.

the LXX.<sup>1</sup> This book is concerned to show that the Fourth Evangelist's use of the first chapter of Genesis goes far beyond the mere quotation of the earlier text's 'In the beginning' (Jn 1:1; Gen. 1:1) and other events of quotation or allusion which have been observed at the beginning and end of the gospel narrative.

### *Style*

'Probably the most noticeable trend in contemporary Johannine studies is the focus on literary-critical approaches'.<sup>2</sup> Paul M. Hoskins, writing in 2006, offers a survey of the literary-critical approaches to the Fourth Gospel taken by R. Alan Culpepper and others.<sup>3</sup> Hoskins cites John Ashton's concern that earlier and subsequent attempts at source criticism depended 'upon evidence that supports the disunity of the Fourth Gospel',<sup>4</sup> going on to comment that 'literary-critical studies would benefit from establishing that the basic unity and coherence of the Fourth Gospel are evident in its canonical form'.<sup>5</sup>

Earlier, James L. Bailey and Lyle D. van der Broek had observed that the Fourth Gospel is not a biography, but a narrative account which includes exchanges, dialogues and monologues. The dramatic irony contained within John's narrative, together with the use of ambiguous symbols, figures and metaphors, the choice of diction and the arrangement of words mark out John's account from those of the three Synoptists. Bailey and van der Broek perceived a common narrative pattern that 'culminates' in Jesus' passion and resurrection.<sup>6</sup>

1. *ibid.*, 209.

2. Hoskins, *Jesus as the Fulfilment of the Temple in the Gospel of John*, 3.

3. See especially R. Alan Culpepper, *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel: A Study in Literary Design* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983) which was the first sustained study to apply literary-critical methodology to the Fourth Gospel.

4. Hoskins, *ibid.*, 4, citing John Ashton, *Studying John: Approaches to the Fourth Gospel* (Oxford University Press, 1994), 144-8.

5. Hoskins, *ibid.*, 4. For a broad and yet concise survey of the various approaches to the text of the Fourth Gospel see Edwards, *Discovering John* which traces the development of the reception of the gospel from New Testament times through the Church Fathers and the Reformation, the rise of historical-critical analysis to more recent literary approaches, including narrative, reader-response, feminist and liberationist readings.

6. James L. Bailey and Lyle D. Van der Broek, *Literary Forms in the*

Other literary-critical studies have also teased out John's use of rhetoric<sup>1</sup> and irony<sup>2</sup>, while the application of reader-response theory<sup>3</sup> moved the conversation from 'the New Critical emphasis on "the text itself" towards "a recognition (or a re-recognition) of the relevance of the context". But here this is not the context of the author and the author's situation; it is the context of the reader or the audience'.<sup>4</sup> The weakness in such approaches is that 'historical and theological issues tend too easily to be brushed aside'.<sup>5</sup>

### *Structure*

The recent focus on the aesthetic, or literary, dimension directs attention to the structure, style, and themes of the Fourth Gospel [ . . . and . . . ] 'source and composition theorists have not been able to agree on any rearrangement of the canonical form of the Fourth Gospel that would improve upon the current state of the text without creating further problems'.<sup>6</sup>

Paul M. Hoskins' study is concerned to investigate previous work on 'the portrayal of Jesus as the fulfilment or replacement of the Temple in the Fourth Gospel and building upon such

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*New Testament* (London: SPCK, 1992), 96.

1. For example, see J.L. Staley, *The Print's First Kiss: A Rhetorical Investigation of the Implied Reader in the Fourth Gospel* (Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series 82, Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988).

2. For example, see Paul. D. Duke, *Irony in the Fourth Gospel: the Shape and Function of a Literary Device* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1985).

3. For example, see P.B. Harner, *Relation Analysis of the Fourth Gospel: A Study in Reader-Response Criticism* (Lampeter: Mellen Biblical Press, 1993).

4. Anthony C. Thisleton, *New Horizons in Hermeneutics: the Theory and Practice of Transforming Biblical Reading* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1992), 60, citing Susan R. Suleiman in Susan R. Suleiman and Inge Crosman (eds.), *The Reader in the Text: Essays on Audience and Interpretation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), 5.

5. Paul N. Anderson, *The Christology of the Fourth Gospel: Its Unity and Disunity in the Light of John 6*, *Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament: Reihe 2*; 78 (Tübingen: Mohr, 1996), 13.

6. Hoskins, *Jesus as the Fulfilment of the Temple in the Gospel of John*, 6.

work'.<sup>1</sup> In this book I demonstrate that I share Hoskins' approach, and the following study rests lightly on questions of source and redaction, focussing rather on the text of the Fourth Gospel in its present canonical form. Taking the unity of the text (as presented by the author or, at least, the final redactor) as a given, the discussion will seek to elucidate the theme of creation in the Fourth Gospel and suggest that it forms the underlying theological basis to the whole narrative.

Hoskins and others claim that the Temple is a central focus of John's theology.<sup>2</sup> The creation theme, this study will argue, also runs through the whole gospel and serves as a theological *Ursatz*. It would be unwise to isolate 'creation' from other Johannine themes, but there is no room in this study to examine the question of the relationship between the fundamental theme of creation and the theme of the Temple; further discussion on this subject might bear fruit.<sup>3</sup>

Other work which has assumed the unity of the Fourth Gospel has been conducted by, for example, Maarten J.J. Menken, Paul N. Anderson, Gunnar Østenstad, and Saeed Hamid-Khani.

In 1985, Menken approached John's narrative from a numerical-literary point of view, closely examining the meaning that might be found in his use of certain numbers of words and syllables. He described the movement in the latter part of the twentieth century from literary and form criticism towards methods of structural analysis (which may be associated with redaction criticism). The 'final redaction'<sup>4</sup> of the Fourth Gospel

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1. *ibid.*, 9.

2. While the Jerusalem Temple is certainly a dominant image in the narrative it is worth noting that it is not mentioned in the second half of the Fourth Gospel (except at Jn 18:20, where Jesus claims that he has never taught in secret). Hoskins argues that Jesus replaces the Temple and that, in the second half of the Fourth Gospel, Jesus emerges as the 'antitype' to (and thus the fulfilment of) the Jerusalem Temple. *ibid.*, 197.

3. See Robert Murray, *The Cosmic Covenant: Biblical Themes of Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation* (London: Sheed & Ward, 1992), especially Chapter 5. Margaret Barker has also made attempts in this direction; see especially *Temple Theology* (London: SPCK, 2004).

4. Hand-in-hand with the question of authorship walks the issue of the dating of the text. This study assumes that the Fourth Gospel was composed over a long period, making use both of oral tradition and new material. The theme of Jesus as the fulfilment of

was to be seen as 'a meaningful and coherent unit', and it was on this understanding that he based his study.<sup>1</sup> Menken concluded that 'numerical analysis helps to show the radical character of the final redaction' and that 'we know nothing about the author outside his literary work, let alone that we know something about the mental processes operative in the making of his literary work. The only thing we know is the final product of these processes'.<sup>2</sup>

Paul N. Anderson, in a detailed study published in 1996, examined the relationship between the literary unity of the text of the Fourth Gospel and the Christology of the author. He considered the narrative as a whole but chose to focus on one part of the gospel, Jn 6, and was thus able to make a case study, an investigation within a narrow sample of the broad field of the text. In seeking to address the disunity that was argued for by some scholars (such as Rudolf Bultmann and Robert T. Fortna<sup>3</sup>), Anderson was able to show that the Christology of the Fourth Gospel was the thread by which single authorship, rather than the compilation of multiple sources, and therefore textual unity, could be established.

After considering thoroughly Bultmann's treatment of John 6, one must conclude that there is insufficient stylistic, contextual and ideological evidence to suggest more than one author. In fact, John 6 should be considered a basic authorial unity, although it was probably composed over several decades of oral and written development.<sup>4</sup>

Two years later, Gunnar Østenstad published a complex

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the Temple suggests a date after the fall of the Jerusalem Temple in 70 C.E., while the separation from the synagogue, mentioned in Jn 9:22; 12:42 and 16:2 would point to a date after 85 C.E. There is no reason to disagree with the view that 'c.75-c.95 C.E. seems the most plausible time for John's publication in something close to its present form'. Edwards, *Discovering John*, 48. For a full survey see *ibid.*, 46-48.

1. Maarten J.J. Menken, *Numerical Literary Techniques in John: the Fourth Evangelist's Use of Numbers of Words and Syllables* (Novum Testamentum Supplement LV, Leiden: Brill, 1985), 1.

2. *ibid.*, 274.

3. Comment on Fortna's work on the 'signs source' which may have influenced John is made in Chapter 4 of this book.

4. Anderson, *The Christology of the Fourth Gospel*, 166.

study of the chiasmic structure of the narrative.<sup>1</sup> Østenstad's analysis, based on the Greek text, resulted in the tracing of twenty-one large-scale consecutive concentric textual units that serve to shape the overall structure.

The concentric or symmetrical textual structures call for a spatial or panoramic reading technique which enables us to understand the contents more clearly and to perceive the special way in which this narrative can be seen to achieve unity.<sup>2</sup>

Østenstad states that the (literally)<sup>3</sup> central theme of the Fourth Gospel is the presentation of Jesus as the New Temple. The 'highly unified'<sup>4</sup> composition of what he terms the 'epic narrative'<sup>5</sup> reveals strong links between the beginning and the end of the text and he concludes that,

through the Son God offers and makes accessible to all men a perfect life in communion with the Creator; such a fullness of life was manifested in the Son who from eternity was the perfect instrument for the implementation of God's good will concerning His creation. As God's Workman in the act of creation, the Son also implements God's providential plan for man.<sup>6</sup>

'The Fourth Gospel as we have it in the canon is the work of one hand'.<sup>7</sup> In the year following, Saeed Hamid-Khan joined his voice to those who were seeking to move towards a 'traditional' understanding of the Fourth Gospel as 'the seamless robe of which [the Gospel] tells us, about which one may draw lots but which one may not divide'.<sup>8</sup> Hamid-Khan's introductory

1. Aspects of this study are included later in this book, in Chapter 2.
2. Gunnar Østenstad, *Patterns of Redemption in the Fourth Gospel: An Experiment in Structural Analysis* (Studies in the Bible and Early Christianity, Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 1998), Vol. 38, xxiv.
3. The centrepiece of the gospel narrative is chapter 10, in which Jesus proclaims, from the Temple, that he and the Father are one (Jn 10:30). This, for Østenstad, who contends that the Fourth Gospel is composed 'concentrically' [italics are the author's], is the point at which Jesus is revealed as the New Temple. *ibid.*, 59.
4. *ibid.*, 272.
5. Østenstad, *Patterns of Redemption in the Fourth Gospel*, 262.
6. *ibid.*, 265.
7. Hamid-Khani, *Revelation and Concealment of Christ*, 22.
8. David Friedrich Strauss, Preface to the conversations of Ulrich von

survey concludes that the diversity of opinion on the question of single authorship, held against the stylistic unity and thematic coherence of the Gospel, 'should be sufficient to militate against any arbitrary, speculative fracture of the document'.<sup>1</sup>

### *Creation*

This book, which assumes the unity of the text of the Fourth Gospel in its present canonical form, will be concerned to show that it is the theme of creation that serves as a structural *Ursatz*. It will demonstrate that the theme runs through the narrative as a whole; Chapter 3 will form a survey of 'creation indicators' which serve as leitmotifs throughout the narrative and which, as signposts, repeatedly point the reader towards the broader fundamental theme. 'Creation' as a theme runs from the beginning of the Prologue to the end of Chapter 21 of the Gospel (which is therefore not an appendix) and is, it will be argued, the theological understanding of one mind which seeks in the gospel account to reveal Jesus Christ, the incarnate Word (Jn 1:14), one with the Father (Jn 10:30), as the Creator.

The preceding survey of material, which has furthered understanding of the use of the Old Testament in the New Testament (and particularly in the Fourth Gospel) as well as recent trends in Johannine scholarship, may now be followed by a representative overview of literature which relates more directly to the theme of creation. The review, which refers to studies other than those of commentators on the Fourth Gospel,<sup>2</sup> will be divided into two areas of interest.

First, there will be an examination of scholarship concerned with the reference to Jesus as the 'gardener' (κηπουρός) in Jn 20:15 and the setting of the Passion/Resurrection Narrative in a 'garden' (κήπος). This work will be developed further in Chapter 2, in a case study of John's literary device of intentional allusion to earlier texts.

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Hutten, *Gesammelte Schriften VII* (Leipzig, 1860), xliv, in Hamid-Khani, *ibid.*, 24.

1. Hamid-Khani, *ibid.*, 26.

2. Creation as a theme in the Fourth Gospel seems not to have been thoroughly explored (if mentioned at all) by commentators. References to commentaries will, of course, be made throughout this book: this review of literature is concerned with scholarship that has sought to elucidate the theme of creation in particular.

Second, a survey will be needed of works which focus more specifically on the theological theme of 'creation' in the Fourth Gospel. Particular attention will be given to literature suggesting that the opening chapter of the book of Genesis was a significant influence on John's composition. Other scholars, as will be shown below, have seen its effect stretching through the first four or five chapters of the gospel. Others still have seen connections between Gen. 2:4b ff. and the Passion/Resurrection Narrative, but none, as far as I can tell, have offered an explanation as to why, if creation is such an important theme for John, it 'disappears' from the main body of the gospel. This book will seek to show that, far from 'disappearing', the creation theme is ever-present, running through the whole work and undergirding the entire narrative construct.

### Review of literature concerned with the theme of creation

*Jesus as the 'gardener' (Jn 20:15) and the setting of the unnamed 'garden' (Jn 18-20)*

The starting point for this study is the 'mistaken' supposition by Mary Magdalene that Jesus was the 'gardener' (κηπουρός) (Jn 20:15). This, coupled with the 'garden' (κήπος) setting of the Passion/Resurrection Narratives of the Fourth Gospel, has prompted the suggestion that there may be some intentional connection on the part of John between the resurrection of Jesus and the restoration of Paradise.

The garden of Gethsemane [ . . . ] on the Mount of Olives functions prominently in the history of Jesus, esp. during his last days on earth (Matt 26:36-46; Mark 14:32-51; John 18:1-14<sup>1</sup>), where he prayed and was arrested. He

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1. John does not name the garden as being 'of Gethsemane': it remains simply 'a garden' which is located 'across the Kidron valley' (Jn 18:1). The concept, rather than the precise location of the garden, is of primary importance to John's theological motive, making the intentional connection with the Genesis narrative more probable. John might have named the garden if he had wanted to create some distance from the mythological landscape of Paradise. 'When we come to the use of the garden motif in John's gospel, it

was buried in a garden tomb as well (John 19:41), from which he eventually rose (John 20). Could this imply a return to paradise after it was lost in Gen 3?<sup>1</sup>

This connection will be the focus of Chapter 2 of this book. That case study will open up the possibility of permitting the academic, and not simply homiletic, interpretation of the garden setting of Jn 18-20 as an intentional *allusion* on the part of the Evangelist to the Garden of Paradise in the second Genesis account of creation (Gen. 2:4 ff).

E.C. Hoskyns, writing in 1940, refers to the risen Jesus as 'the true, life-giving ruler of the Paradise (Garden) of God'<sup>2</sup> and R.H. Lightfoot, in his own work of 1956, concludes that the Risen Lord who encountered Mary Magdalene in the garden is, in fact, 'the Keeper of the garden'<sup>3</sup> (the employment of the capital 'K' being suggestive of the theological reference to Christ as Creator-God). Indeed, Lightfoot later comments on the 'new creation' which is breathed on the disciples in Jn 20:22 (cf. 1 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15), just as God breathed into Adam the breath of life in Gen. 2:7,<sup>4</sup> connecting the creation myth and the activity in the Garden of Paradise. I agree with both interpretations and this work seeks to develop more fully the insights of Hoskyns and Lightfoot.

Doubt was thrown on such suggestions by Raymond E. Brown in the second volume of his detailed commentary of 1970, *The Gospel according to John*.<sup>5</sup> In a note on the use of the word κηπουρός, a 'not uncommon word in the secular papyri', Brown dismisses as 'tenuous' the theological explanation

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is not only futile but misdirected to attempt to locate it. John has no actual garden in mind. [ . . . ] Rather is John [sic] drawing on the garden tradition, and taking advantage of its ideological and cultic overtones to make a point about the nature of Jesus'. Wyatt, 'Supposing him to the Gardener', 31.

1. I. Cornelius, '*gan/gannā*' in Willem A. van Gemeren (gen. ed.), *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis* (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1997), 874.
2. E.C. Hoskyns, *The Fourth Gospel*, ed. F.N. Davey (London: Faber and Faber, 1940), Vol. 2, 646.
3. Lightfoot, *St John's Gospel*, 322.
4. *ibid.*, 333.
5. Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John XIII-XXI* (The Anchor Bible, New York: Doubleday, 1970).

that 'the garden is the Garden of Eden where God Himself is the gardener'.<sup>1</sup> In his note on Jn 19:41 and the use of the semantically-related term κήπος ('garden') there and in Jn 18:1,<sup>2</sup> Brown writes: 'here as there some would see a symbolic play on the Garden of Eden, even though Gen. 2:15 uses *paradeisos*, not *kēpos*'. As mentioned above, his suggestion is that had John intended his readers to discern the allusion, then he would have used stronger vocabulary links to signal his point.

Again, in *The Death of the Messiah*, published in 1994, Brown continues his rejection by stating that 'if John had such a reference in mind [i.e. between the resurrection garden and the Garden of Paradise], he would have used the *paradeisos* of Gen. 2:8 to indicate it',<sup>3</sup> rather, that is, than the *kēpos* used by John. Further, in the second volume of *The Death of the Messiah*, Brown presses his point: 'Because of the vocabulary dissimilarity I did not find that proposal convincing'.<sup>4</sup> On this matter I take issue with Brown: see Chapter 2.

'It seems to me more than likely that John's allusive writing was not wasted on his contemporaries, whatever his later readers have made of him'. Nicholas Wyatt embraced the possibility of intentional authorial connection between the Passion/Resurrection Narrative of the Fourth Gospel and the earliest chapters of Genesis.<sup>5</sup> In his article ' "Supposing him to the Gardener" (John 20:15): A Study of the Paradise Motif in John', Wyatt submits (further to Raymond E. Brown's suggestion of connection between the tomb of Jesus and the royal tombs of the Old Testament) that the garden in the Fourth Gospel, 'a complex interweaving of ancient royal and more recent messianic themes'<sup>6</sup> and the Man who inhabits it (i.e. the gardener) may indeed be compared respectively with the Garden of Eden and the son of God, the archetypal king:

As I read [John], he fully intends that the cross be in Paradise, as the tree of life from which the first Man had been driven away. As the first Man had been raised from

1. *ibid.*, 990.

2. *ibid.*, 943.

3. Brown, *The Death of the Messiah*, Vol. 1, 149, note 5.

4. Brown, *The Death of the Messiah*, Vol. 2, 1270.

5. Wyatt, 'Supposing him to the Gardener', 38.

6. Wyatt also noted Brown's 'brisk' and 'scathing' dismissal of Hoskyns and Lightfoot. *ibid.*, 37.

the dust as the primordial King, now the second Man, also raised from the dust in resurrection, took up his rightful place in the garden. Indeed, he now resumed the task, as a gardener, of tilling the soil and caring for Eden, from which the first Man had been banished.<sup>1</sup>

In the year following Wyatt's article, Frédéric Manns wrote on the symbol of the garden in the Fourth Gospel as the restoration of the paradise of Gen. 2-3. Manns noted further that the garden was the setting of the marriage of Christ and his bride, the Church (cf. the Song of Songs) and that the powerful symbol of water, so significant to John,<sup>2</sup> was associated with the Temple and formed a spring which rose up in the desert to create a garden of paradise (cf. Gen. 1:11). Manns sees the garden of John's Passion/Resurrection Narrative as a central focus for the Evangelist's theology:

Il est remarquable que Jean évite tout ce qui pourrait détourner l'attention du seul thème qui l'intéresse: le jardin au bord d'un torrent dont les eaux fertilisantes font pousser les arbres.<sup>3</sup>

In his article of 1999, John N. Suggit sought to determine whether the description of Jesus as the gardener is symbolic, and argued that the gospel anticipates the symbolism of the book of Revelation:

Mary turns and sees one whom she thinks to be the gardener (*kēpouros*) (20:15). Indeed he was! Adam was put in the garden of Eden to maintain it and care for it (Gn 2:15). He failed to do so, but Jesus is the second Adam, the true human being, as 19:5 (*idou ho anthrōpos*) ought to be understood . . . As the gardener he opened the way to the tree of life (Rv 2:7; 22:14, 19).<sup>4</sup>

1. *ibid.*, 38.

2. See Chapter 3 (Nouns, etc. 6) of this book for further discussion on water as a creation indicator in the Fourth Gospel.

3. 'It is remarkable that John avoids everything that could detract attention from the only theme that interests him: the garden on the bank of the gushing river whose fertile waters cause trees to grow'. Frédéric Manns, *L'Évangile de Jean à la lumière du Judaïsme. Studium Biblicum Franciscanum* 33 (Jerusalem: Franciscan Printing Press, 1991), 421.

4. John N. Suggit, 'Jesus the Gardener: the Atonement in the Fourth Gospel as Re-creation', *Neotestamentica* 33 (1999), 161-68, 167. Further