

THE ROLE OF JESUS' SPECIAL KNOWLEDGE IN THE PLOT OF THE FOURTH GOSPEL

by

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(Under the Direction of Wayne Coppins)

ABSTRACT

The Gospel of John portrays Jesus as specially informed through his relationship with the Father, leading most commentators to refer to Jesus as the Revealer in this gospel. Jesus does not reveal uniformly throughout the gospel, strategically choosing who receives more or less information about him and his mission. This choice is guided by the dual-aspect of his mission: to be crucified and to establish a small group of disciples who will spread the understanding that will come with the completion of Jesus' earthly mission.

INDEX: Gospel of John, Fourth Gospel, knowledge, predictions, prophecy

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

No canonical gospel seems so concerned with protecting and amplifying the cognitive awareness of Jesus as does the Gospel of John. The prologue's identification of Jesus and the Word who participates in the creation with God in the beginning places Jesus in a position to have unique knowledge of the past. His many predictions demonstrate that he has knowledge of the future so refined as to underline his intimate link, if not identity, with the Father. Furthermore, both Jesus and the narrator frequently declare Jesus' awareness of present events, while often questioning the understanding of others. The outcome of this characterization places the potential controversies of his betrayal and crucifixion within a divine plan of which Jesus has perfect knowledge. This augments the portrayal of Jesus' sovereignty even during his ministry, blurring the lines between the earthly Jesus and the exalted Christ.¹

The passion narrative of chapters 18-19 provides the interpretive key to Jesus' teaching in John, and the numerous references to Jesus' death keep it constantly in view for the reader. Yet the secondary characters rarely understand what Jesus is talking about. They never understand his predictions until they are fulfilled; they often misunderstand his direct teaching about himself; and much of Jesus' extraordinary knowledge is hidden from them. It is clear that most of the story-world characters do not benefit from his teaching at least until after the timeframe of the narrative, but is this teaching only for the benefit of the reader (cf. 20:30)?²

¹ See, e.g., Childs 1984, 135

² This statement could easily be re-worded in terms of historicity. By referring to the disciples, Jews, and other figures in the gospel as "characters", we leave the question of their connection to historic figures left open and rather refer to their function within the narrative.

Along with informing the reader about Jesus as the Messiah, it may be argued that Jesus' earthly ministry serves to educate the reader about the proper response to Jesus. By revealing the belief (or lack thereof) of those he encounters, Jesus provides models of response. This is certainly valid. However, this serves little immediate purpose within the plot of the gospel, other than perhaps to foreshadow the unbelief that will lead to his crucifixion and the belief of the community that will continue after the resurrection.

The following study will explore whether this device has a more direct impact on the action of the narrative. To do this, the impact of four separate but related cognitive devices on the reader and the secondary characters will be examined.³ First, Jesus' predictions display his extraordinary knowledge of future events, including his crucifixion. Because his story-world audience cannot understand them until they are fulfilled, the choices Jesus makes in what predictions he shares with his audience will determine whether or not (and when) they will come to believe in him. Furthermore, an informed reader is in a position to recognize the device, and to believe that his crucifixion and betrayal do not imply failure of his mission. Next, Jesus' special knowledge of the present and past are explored. Some of these instances are shared with other characters in a way that they are able to confirm, while others are only asserted to the reader through narration. The impact of this choice to either share or hide Jesus' special knowledge from the characters has consistently different effects on the characters who share the scene with him, while having a consistently positive effect on the reader. Finally, the direct claims to knowledge that Jesus makes are explored within their narrative context – not as informative speech, because they are generally only informative to the reader. Rather, we note the contribution these statements make to furthering Jesus' dual goals in John: to be crucified at his hour, and to establish a group of disciples who will fulfill the cognitive aspect of his mission.

³ Questions of the historical development of the gospel are also left open except in those cases where it directly impacts the interpretations given below. Instead, the final text as it has been received is examined.

CHAPTER 2

PREDICTIVE MATERIAL APPLIED TO JESUS

Dt. 18:22 defines a true prophet by stating: “If his oracle is not fulfilled or verified, it is an oracle which YHWH did not speak.” The logical contra-positive is that if the oracle did come from YHWH, it must be fulfilled/verified. So the criterion for recognizing a prophet is that his or her oracles will come true. However, this means a prophet can only be recognized after-the-fact. As will be shown, the Fourth Gospel “makes a point of presenting Jesus as quite the reverse of a false prophet, as one whose predictions are fulfilled to the letter.”⁴

The Song of Moses, also contained in Deuteronomy, is presented to Moses by God in direct speech uncharacteristic of the book. Moses is told he will soon die - a prediction fulfilled in the next chapter. YHWH then predicts that after Moses’ death the people will begin to break His commandments and offer worship to other gods. When this happens, God will become angry and hide His face from them (31:16-17). The song He gives to Moses expands on these prophecies. While the song may of course be taken as a warning, this aspect is not explored in any depth. Rather, the events are presented as what *will* happen without any hint of contingency. The Song is meant to be a witness against Israel after the prediction inevitably comes true (31:19, 21). Moses gathers the whole assembly of Israel (31:30) to hear the song which will call “heaven and earth to witness against them” (31:28). Not only are those present to recite the Song (31:19), but their descendants are to as well (31:21). Whatever the historical circumstances under which Deuteronomy was actually written, the text presents itself as having been written by Moses. It therefore envisions periodic recitation of the Song throughout Israel’s history, enough that the descendants who suffer what is described in it are familiar with it. There is no

⁴ Lincoln 2000, 143.

reason to believe the author of John understood it any other way. Because the people of Israel will go on to commit the violations and suffer the consequences described in the Song, it seems they will not understand it in a way that will change their behavior until after its predictions come true.

Several elements of the Song bear this out. While the Song contains instruction (32:2), it is not addressed to Israel but to heaven and earth which will act as witnesses against Israel (31:28). When Moses turns to Israel, he asks them to remember back on the days of old (32:7), yet quickly refers to how they “offered sacrifice to demons, to ‘no-gods’, to gods whom they had not known before” (32:17). The Song presents no hope of this being avoided. Despite the assumption that Israel is familiar with these predictions, they will not change Israel’s behavior because Israel is “a people devoid of reason, having no understanding. If they had insight they would realize what happened; they would understand their future” (32:28-29).⁵

The verbal similarities between the Song of Moses and Isaiah 40-55 are well-noted. This could be because they were written under the same historical circumstances;⁶ Thomas A. Keiser argues for literary dependence.⁷ Deutero-Isaiah picks up and expands on the theme of prediction as witness. “In Isa[iah] 40-55... the evidence adduced for Yahweh’s being the one true God, is the correspondence, the fit between Yahweh’s predictive word and what happens in history.”⁸ In fact, because of the verbal links between the two, it is possible to read the events in Isaiah as the fulfillment of the predictions in the Song – that is, the point at which Israel’s (foretold) suffering ends and when Israel comes to recognize that YHWH alone is God.

Isaiah 40-48 can be read as a *rîb* or lawsuit against the nations and Israel for believing that Babylon’s dominance over Israel implies the dominance of foreign gods over YHWH.⁹ To counter this

⁵ Note the cognitive nature of this failure.

⁶ Rogerson 2003, 172

⁷ Keiser 2005, 4

⁸ Lincoln 2000, 147

⁹ Lincoln 2000, 38-43

controversy, these passages assert that the Exile was predicted by God; so it should be no surprise that these predictions are coming true:

Remember this and be firm,
bear it well in mind, you rebels;
remember the former things, those long ago:
I am God, there is no other;
I am God, there is none like me.
At the beginning I foretell the outcome
in advance, things not yet done.
I say that my plan will stand,
I accomplish my every purpose. (Is. 46:8-10)

It is not only that other gods fail to predict as God does: God *confounds* the predictions of others (44:25) while making sure to confirm the words of his “servants” and “messengers” (44:26). Even oracles delivered through intermediaries (including this passage?) must come true if from God. True predictions *only* come from God.

The words “I am God/YHWH, there is no other” form a refrain throughout this section. They are frequently linked with proof. Sometimes this proof is related to God’s role in Israel’s history (e.g. 43:15) or as creator (e.g. 44:24; 45:6-7). Often, though, the proof is that God has foretold “these things” from the beginning (42:8; 43:11; 44:6, 24; 45:18, 22; 46:7). God repeatedly offers the chance to other gods to come forward and present a prediction of theirs which has come true. “There is no reply to the question and no witnesses are produced... The claim is made that, unlike other gods, Yahweh has existed from the beginning and is the only God and Savior Israel has known.”¹⁰ God’s ability to foretell the future is inherently linked with his identity *as* God. Since no other gods can present a genuine oracle that has come true, none other may be acknowledged as God.¹¹

Only now that they have been fulfilled does God remind Israel he made these predictions. He asks them almost mockingly how they cannot understand. Was it not foretold “from the beginning” (e.g. 40:21; cf. Jn. 3:10; 8:43)? If this is a reference to the Song of Moses, then they have been told (from a

¹⁰ Lincoln 2000, 40

¹¹ Goldingay 2005, 137

textual standpoint) from the beginning of their covenant with God.¹² God accuses them of being blind and deaf for not understanding beforehand what was happening to them (see especially 42:18-25), though there are hints that God has purposefully refused to give them guidance and point back to his oracles *before* they were fulfilled (42:14). God's predictions do not present a possible or intended outcome (in contrast, for example, to Jonah's); God *knows* the outcome and makes certain it will occur. The people must be deaf to prophecies which might serve as a warning and therefore change the outcome. Why make them at all, then? Isaiah 48 provides an answer:

Things of the past I foretold long ago;
They went forth from my mouth; I let you hear them:
Then suddenly *I took action and they came to be:*
Because I know that you are stubborn
And that your neck is an iron sinew
And your forehead bronze,
I foretold them to you of old;
Before they took place I let you hear them,
That you might not say, "My idol did them,
My statue, my molten image commanded them."
Now that you have heard, look at all this;
Must you not admit it? (48:3-6)

The predictions act as a witness against Israel, just as God told Moses they would in presenting him with the Song. God's foreknowledge in these chapters is again not contingent – He has perfect knowledge of what will happen, so much so that He can "call it" beforehand knowing that His words will not alter the outcome. He *knew* they were a stubborn people and would act as they eventually did. Now He can refer back to his previous words to demonstrate that everything was foreseen by Him and within His power – that is, *not* the power of other gods despite appearances.

The author of John uses predictions in a similar manner. True predictions come from or through God. John in part uses the fulfillment of predictive statements as a way of linking Jesus' identity with this divine aspect. These statements are not understood until after their fulfillment at which time the whole sequence creates belief. Before developing this argument, it might prove useful to examine how

¹² The references to creation, e.g. Is. 40:28, could mean the entire Torah testifies to what has happened.

Matthew, working with similar material, uses predictive statements. In providing this contrast, the claim is not that Matthew's and John's uses of predictions never overlap. It is merely that John puts more emphasis on the functions described above than others did who had similar aims. Meanwhile those others use predictions in ways that are contradictory to the above criteria.

Matthew's uses predictive statements as external prolepses (e.g. the Beatitudes), as instructional statements (e.g. 1:20-24), and as warnings (e.g. 12:38-52) which often say something Christological rather than demonstrating it.¹³ Matthew's use fails to meet the criteria listed above for Isaiah's use of prophecy. For example, in Mt. 9:18 the official declares that when Jesus lays his hands on the official's daughter, she will live. This certainly could be read as a conditional statement (cf. 9:21), but it is not presented as such explicitly. Nor does the narrator go to any pains to make certain the reader understands it this way. The miracle story that follows (9:23-26) does add some ambiguity, but the fact remains that the official makes a prediction, *Jesus follows him* (9:19), and the prediction comes true. As will be shown, this story would be shockingly out of place in John.

In John, true predictions come through God alone. There are many predictive statements, though only those made by Jesus, John the Baptist, the narrator, and Caiaphas the high priest actually come true. The text makes it clear that both Jesus and John have been sent by God (1:33) and that Caiaphas benefits from his office as high priest (despite himself - 11:51).¹⁴ The narrator has the benefit of writing from a future perspective (and perhaps under the guidance of the Paraclete), so it is not surprising that this voice can make accurate predictions. There are only two statements in the future tense made by someone other than these four that come true in a straightforward manner. Of these

¹³ Culpepper 1983, 64; Culpepper defines external prolepses as "references to events which will occur following the end of the narrative." Apocalyptic external prolepses about the Son of Man are used by both evangelists. While the Beatitudes may be eschatological, they are not given a particularly apocalyptic bent, nor is it clear when and how they will be fulfilled if they are meant as predictions. This casual use of futures is simply out of place in John.

¹⁴ Caiaphas' prediction might be taken as ironically true, but the narrator goes on to explain why Caiaphas is capable of a true prediction – a precaution Matthew's narrator does not take with the chief priests and scribes when they correctly interpret Micah 5:1 (cf. Mt. 2:1-6).

two, one is a conditional (20:25), and one a simple statement of intention (21:3). Even these simple statements, however, occur after the resurrection.

Compared to the density of predictive material given to the reliable witnesses, there is relatively little given to the other characters. What material there exists is either false or only ironically true. Two examples of false predictions are phrased as questions, adding an element of reluctance to even form an opinion on the future. In 8:22, the Jews ask whether Jesus will kill himself when he means they will kill him.¹⁵ The emphatic negative of 11:56 can be read as a future expecting that no, Jesus will not be coming to this particular feast (when in fact he must). Peter makes an inaccurate prediction when he says that Jesus will never wash his feet in one verse, and begs Jesus to wash his feet, hands, and head in the next (13:8-9). 21:22-24 also seems relevant here because it goes to some lengths to exclude Jesus from this group when it seems a prediction of his about the BD has turned out to be false. The narrator claims that no prediction was made at all, that Jesus only asked a rhetorical question.

A complex of ironic predictions fits in well with John's broader use of irony. In 7:27, some Jerusalemites predict that when the Christ comes no one will know where he is from. They mean to discount Jesus because they know he is from Galilee (not knowing he is "from above"). 7:41-42 heightens the irony by having the crowd doubt whether the Christ could come from Galilee since he is meant to come from Bethlehem. While John could be ignorant of the synoptic traditions that Jesus was born in Bethlehem, the question in 7:41 and its expected negative answer still play out as an inside joke between the text and the informed reader, exposing the ignorance of the crowd.¹⁶ Notably, both Jesus (8:14) and the Pharisees (9:29) go on to assert that the Jews indeed do not know where Jesus is from.

John contains one character other than Jesus who is allowed to make accurate predictions: John the Baptist. John *understands himself* as the fulfillment of Isaiah 40:3 (against the Synoptics where he is

¹⁵ John's portrayal of Jesus as totally in control blurs the lines between a false and ironic prediction here. E.g., Brown sees this question as ironic because Jesus will voluntarily lay down his life – Brown 1988, 53

¹⁶ Culpepper 1983, 170-71; of course the position of the gospel is that Jesus is ultimately "from above".

interpreted as such by the narrator), though the questions which provoke this identification indicate the priests and Levites do not know to interpret the verse this way (again, cf. Mt. 2:1-6). He then predicts someone coming whom they do not know (1:26-27). Absent in the Synoptics, John is told beforehand how to identify the one who is coming because, before the fulfillment of the prediction given to him by the one who sent him, he did not know him (1:31, 33). That is, John represents the fulfillment of prophecy from Scripture and the recipient of a direct prediction from God, both of which even he understands only after they have been fulfilled. After a brief appearance in chapter 3, only the truth of John's testimony is referred to (3:28; 5:33; and 10:41). From the first chapter on, the only sources of true predictions in the gospel – predictions which will be mostly misunderstood until after the resurrection – will be Jesus, the Scriptures, and the narrator.

John establishes a different narrative pattern with Jesus. The story of Lazarus puts this pattern into sharp focus. Jesus makes no less than three predictions of the miracle he will perform in 11:43 before it occurs.¹⁷ The first occurs at 11:4, "This illness is not to end in death." This is plainly stated, and the reader may expect another 'long-distance' healing as in chapter 4. Yet Jesus also draws a connection between the illness and the glory of God. While Jesus' life-giving miracle helps to bring glory to God, this also links the act with Jesus' crucifixion – which is to say Jesus is aware prior to the miracle that it will in some way contribute to the plot against him. Simply *preventing* the death would not draw this kind of negative attention, yet Jesus does not do this. Rather he waits two days before traveling to Judea. It could be argued that Lazarus is already dead when word reaches Jesus, but that misses the point. Jesus' prediction is not meant to imply that Lazarus' fate will change – he has to die (and be resurrected) for the Son to be glorified. Jesus merely makes it clear that he knows ahead of time what will happen.

¹⁷ 5:25 has several thematic and lexical affinities with the miracle story in chapter 11 and may serve as a fourth, but rather obscure, prediction: Truly, truly, I say to you, the hour is coming and now is when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live.

In 11:11, Jesus notes his intention to “awaken” Lazarus. As will be explored more fully below, instead of stating the fact in direct language Jesus chooses a euphemism that the disciples typically misunderstand. Here they (ironically) express confidence (“he will be saved”) *because* of their misunderstanding. After clarifying what he meant (11:14-15), Jesus explains that he is glad he was not there *so that they may believe*. After 4:43-54, it is clear Jesus could heal from a distance if that would in itself create belief. If he were to do that here, his disciples would not see the miracle, and those present at the grave would not understand it. Instead, he calls his shot, and is typically misunderstood, only to fulfill the predictions with his disciples (and many others) present. His use of predictions here is precisely what allows him to engender belief because it makes both his foreknowledge of the event, and his ability to enact the event, obvious. Even now, Thomas misunderstands Jesus’ clarification, perhaps sarcastically suggesting they “go die with him” at the wrong end of a thrown rock.¹⁸

Martha greets Jesus by telling him that had he been there her brother would still be alive. This is both a vote of confidence in Jesus’ healing ability and perhaps a subtle complaint about his delay in arriving. If we take this as a complaint, it may remind the reader of passages such as Dt. 31:17 (At that time they will indeed say, “Is it not because our God is not among us that these evils have befallen us?”) and similar themes in Deutero-Isaiah which suggest a perception of God’s absence.¹⁹ If this is the case, it would strongly link Jesus with the God of these passages by having Jesus take the place of the absent savior. When Jesus reassures her in 11:23 with his final prediction, Martha misunderstands him by assuming he means Lazarus will rise on the last day. From her perspective, Martha is not unjustified in her belief. Since Lazarus has already “seen death” (cf. 8:51), she may deduce that Jesus is referring to being raised on the last day (cf. 5:28-29; 6:39-40, 44; etc.). But in John, only certain characters can make true predictions and understand them. So while she is partly right, she is still missing Jesus’ meaning.

¹⁸ Lincoln 2005, 321-22; μετ’ αὐτοῦ is ambiguous and may refer to either Jesus or Lazarus. If taken to be Jesus, Thomas demonstrates considerable bravery and devotion; if Lazarus, Thomas seems keenly aware of the danger they have just warned Jesus of.

¹⁹ E.g. Is. 41:27; 42:14; 44:21; 47:10; 49:14; 54:8; 57:17

This is clearer when Martha complains of the likely stench from opening the tomb (11:39). Jesus' response is an important one in understanding John's use of testimony and prediction:

Jesus said to her, *"Did I not tell you that if you believe you will see the glory of God?"* So they took away the stone. And Jesus raised his eyes and said, "Father, I thank you for hearing me. I knew that you always hear me; *but because of the crowd here I have said this, that they may believe that you sent me.*" And *when he said this*, he cried out in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" The dead man came out... (11:40-43)

Jesus either refers back to a somewhat obscure conditional statement that is not quoted, or provides Martha with the proper understanding of his explanation in 11:25-26 (or 11:4 if this statement was brought back to Martha). Whatever the case, he highlights that he has already made authoritative statements regarding Lazarus which were linked with belief and which may now (in part) be understood. When he prays to the Father, he explicitly notes that it is for their benefit only, and that he is putting himself on record that what is about to happen comes from the Father. The end goal of this series of actions is belief.

Jesus predicts what will happen multiple times to ostensible believers who either do not understand him or indicate somehow that they do not believe him. Jesus' use of imprecise language allows the reader to believe the characters' misapprehension while the narrator helps the reader make the right interpretation. Before performing the miracle, Jesus points back to his predictions and links himself with God, the only source of true prediction. He does not simply perform the miracle – he orchestrates the miracle specifically to provoke a response from his audience – ideally, that they might believe. The story concludes by noting exactly this result (11:45; cf. 11:48; 12:11).

Interestingly, the intervening passage records one of the few accurate predictions from a character other than Jesus. The Pharisees declare that if they do not do something about Jesus, all will believe in him and the Romans will come. Yet Caiaphas the high priest tells them they know nothing, but then seemingly agrees with them by suggesting the rationale that "it is better for you that one man should die instead of the people, so that the whole nation may not perish" (11:50). In an example of

Johannine irony, Caiaphas unwittingly describes Jesus' mission. The narrator could have left this as an ironic prediction, but perhaps because it is not phrased conditionally or interrogatively is eager to explain that it is a by-product of Caiaphas' office as high priest and therefore comes from God. Perhaps John also wished to underline the direct contribution this miracle makes to provoking Jesus' arrest.²⁰ Keeping with John's use of prophecy as witness, when later Caiaphas is obliquely referred to as the son-in-law of Annas in the midst of Jesus' trials, John makes certain to refer back to this statement (18:14).

John is relatively dense with predictions from Jesus in the discourse material as well. In Mark's Gospel, which John may have been familiar with,²¹ Jesus makes three passion predictions. On the one hand they are fairly straightforward and specific, referring openly to the details of his death. On the other hand, Mark's dramatization of Jesus' death does not precisely parallel these predictions, something John would be unlikely to do. Yet John does have Jesus make numerous references to his death, although in more obscure language. For brevity's sake, we will concentrate on this strand of predictions which, it should be noted, make up only part of the catalog of predictions Jesus makes in John.

John has three major signifiers of passion predictions which are littered throughout the text. The first is Jesus' "hour".²² This is the least precise term, but some of Jesus' references make it clear (particularly 12:27 and 16:32) that he sometimes has his crucifixion in mind. Another set begins with 7:33-34 and continues with references to "a little while longer" and "you will look". These predictions are frequent, but not very clear to his audience. It is understandable that they are often followed by questions – is Jesus going to the Diaspora (7:35)? Does he intend to kill himself (8:22)? In 13:33, Jesus

²⁰ Voorwinde, e.g., cites several scholars' support of this connection, adding that the source of Jesus' emotions is not the death of a friend, as the Jews mistake them (11:36), but his own execution which this miracle will lead to: "More unequivocally, the account reports Jesus' foreknowledge of events that are yet to happen. He knows what he will do and what the response of the disciples will be... Jesus is therefore portrayed as being omniscient." This would strengthen Jesus' divine connection since God is often portrayed as emotional about future events in Hebrew Scripture despite His foreknowledge – Voorwinde 2005, 158-68

²¹ For a summary of arguments for and against this position, see Keener 2003, 1:40-42

²² 2:4; 5:25-28; 7:30; 8:20; 12:23; 13:1; 16:32; 17:1

significantly uses both catch-phrases and refers back to his previous statements, highlighting that this is familiar territory. Yet two verses later Peter asks where he is going (cf. 14:5). 14:19, 22 add to this pattern, and it is brought to fruition in 16:16-19. Here a spotlight is thrown on the disciples' lack of understanding:

So some of the disciples said to one another, "*What does this mean* that he is saying to us, 'A little while and you will not see me, and again a little while and you will see me,' and 'Because I go to the Father'?" So they said, "*What is this 'little while'?* *We do not know what he means.*" Jesus knew what they wanted to ask him, so he said to them, "*Are you discussing with one another what I said, 'A little while and you will not see me, and again a little while and you will see me'?*"

In case the reader missed it, the disciples don't get it. Jesus admits that he is speaking in figures of speech, only promising an hour is coming when he will speak plainly.²³

There are also three points where Jesus refers to being lifted up (3:14; 8:28; 12:32-34) which are comparable to Mark's passion predictions, though of course with less specific detail and relying on the double-entendre of ὑψόω. This can refer to both Jesus' crucifixion and exaltation on the cross.²⁴ Taken together, these are the most Christological of the passion predictions yet, unlike Mark's, they are "deliberately riddling."²⁵ In the first two, Jesus uses the third person designation "Son of Man". The second contains an "I am" without a predicate in a discourse with six "I am" statements (8:12-9:5). 8:28 suggests that when they lift up the Son of Man [on the cross], which is simultaneously his exaltation, then they will realize the claims inherent in "I am".²⁶ That is, they will understand *after* these predictions come true. On the one hand, this is similar to Mark's messianic secret motif. However, in Mark Jesus arguably makes clear statements, including predictions, yet the disciples seem incapable of understanding him until after the resurrection. If this is so, John makes use of a similar device, but has

²³ Resseguie does not see a chronological distinction between Jesus' pre- and post-resurrection "modes of discourse", agreeing with O'Day that they are "simultaneously operative" – Resseguie 2001, 36. The distinction is not linguistic but cognitive – the disciples' understanding of the words will acquire new aspects with the resurrection; for the disciples, only after this point can the two meanings be said to be simultaneous.

²⁴ Lincoln 2000, 69

²⁵ Bauckham 1999, 65

²⁶ Bauckham 1999, 55

his Jesus participate in it by making ambiguous predictions, in this case reliant on double-entendre.²⁷ That is, John lends plausibility to the disciples' misunderstanding while still using a device of prediction-misunderstanding-fulfillment-understanding previously associated with divine communication.

John 12:20-36 contains the final "lifting up" passage and brings all three strings together in one discourse. Jesus states that he has come for this hour (12:27) and that the light (an oblique reference to himself) will be among them only a little while (12:35). In 12:32, Jesus simply uses the first person in reference to being lifted up instead of the Son of Man, but again the statement is vague enough that the narrator clarifies for the reader that Jesus is predicting the way he will die (12:33). Just as the voice predicts that He will glorify His name and Jesus claims this prediction was made for their benefit, Jesus says that he will be lifted up and the narrator claims this prediction was made about the crucifixion (for the reader's benefit). Of course, those present understand neither of these predictions.²⁸ Jesus will be glorified through crucifixion, but this scene is not meant to warn against this. As will be argued below, it may be quite the opposite. We can also guess from the reaction of the disciples at his crucifixion that these words do not comfort or instill confidence in them at the time. Rather, after their fulfillment they will either inspire belief or act as witnesses against those who reject him.

The pattern should be coming into focus. In the Song of Moses, God had made a series of predictions to act as a witness against His people when they break the covenant - just as God knows they will. While one may suppose God would be happy if it were otherwise, the Song is not meant to be understood in a way that will prevent its fulfillment. As Deutero-Isaiah picks up on this theme, the Song is meant to comfort Israel in exile. It assures that God has always been in control and *will* be vindicated. Likewise, Jesus repeatedly and publicly predicts his crucifixion but his predictions are not meant to be understood in a way that will prevent his execution. Rather, they are made for the benefit of the

²⁷ The use of words or phrases with multiple meanings is a common Johannine device; e.g., see also discussions of 3:10; 4:10; 5:42; and 16:23 (below); and 11:11 (above). This list is far from exhaustive.

²⁸ Moreover, they mistake the voice for that of an angel or thunder, and respond to Jesus' prediction with a request for clarification.

disciples after the event (as well as the reader) to assure them that Jesus and the Father were always in control, and that Jesus *was* vindicated through his crucifixion.

Is. 45:21 asks, “Who announced this from the beginning and foretold it from of old?” Jn. 1:1 answers that question by asserting it was God’s Word. Bauckham asserts that the Word must participate in creation to be included in God’s identity.²⁹ The Gospel of John takes this further by claiming the Word came into the world so that “the Logos become flesh provides the instance *par excellence* of the reliable connection, the precise correlation, between God’s word and its realization in history.”³⁰ Deutero-Isaiah argues that God’s identity is wrapped up in this correlation and can be tested through His predictions. John’s use of this particular predictive device contributes to the goal of including Jesus in that identity (for the reader).³¹ The author links the authority of Scripture with Jesus’ authority by “depicting the mission of Jesus as involving events predicted in Scripture, [while] the narrative has also frequently set out the correspondence between Jesus’ own predictions and their fulfillment.”³²

Yet, as the narrator’s interjections make clear (e.g. 2:17, 22), neither can be understood until they are fulfilled. This in turn contributes to a temporal epistemological dualism between the dramatic perspective of the characters (other than Jesus) and the post-resurrection perspective of the narrator and the readers. Only after predictions have been fulfilled can they be understood, including those about the Messiah and Jesus’ passion, from Jesus and from Scripture, which require the keys of crucifixion and resurrection to be comprehensible. This explains why no one understands Jesus as the fulfillment of prophecies to which they have access. That is, the author is keen to not only show Jesus as fulfilling Scriptural prophecies despite the appearance to outsiders that he failed as the Messiah, but also to have Jesus participate in making his own predictions which, when they come true, confirm his status as sent-from-God.

²⁹ Bauckham 1999, 36

³⁰ Lincoln 2000, 147

³¹ Bauckham 1999, 26

³² Lincoln 2000, 157

CHAPTER 3

SPECIAL KNOWLEDGE FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE READER

For the purpose of this study, it is important to note that the author has chosen a cognitive aspect of God – that God knows and controls the future – to serve as a marker of Jesus’ divine mission. Jesus’ special knowledge, however, is not limited to future events. He is frequently portrayed as having access to knowledge in an atypical, even supernatural way.³³ Even more so than the predictions, this special knowledge is imperceptible to the characters in the story world. In these cases, Jesus’ special knowledge is asserted solely by the narrator for the benefit of the reader. Often the behaviors that Jesus exhibits in scenes involving this type of special knowledge for the benefit of the reader (hereon SKR) would naturally lead them to radically different conclusions about Jesus’ intent and meaning. Meanwhile, SKR prevents the reader from misinterpreting Jesus’ actions or underestimating the level of Jesus’ awareness and control in a given situation. The scenes in John where Jesus’ special knowledge is asserted by the narrator but not displayed to the characters are 2:13-25, 6:1-15, 6:60-71, 13:1-11, 18:1-14, and 19:23-30. While some contain conflict, they are also important scenes for understanding Jesus’ relationship with his disciples. Below we will explore how these scenes contribute to the reader’s understanding of the character of Jesus, and how the characters in the story-world misunderstand his character without the benefit of recognizing this special knowledge.

Scene 1: John 2:13-25

The first scene takes place in Jerusalem, just before the Passover (2:13). This is John’s cleansing of the temple scene, and it diverges from the Synoptic versions in several regards other than its

³³ This statement runs the risk of anachronistically imposing a later system of thought on the 1st Century author. It is simply meant to say that the process by which Jesus comes to have this knowledge does not seem to follow normal modes of causality.

placement at the beginning of Jesus' ministry.³⁴ Instead of Jesus performing healings as in Matthew (21:14), the Jews must ask him for a sign which he does not provide in the way they mean.³⁵ Instead, Jesus responds rather obscurely with the prediction, "Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up" (2:19).³⁶ Characteristically in John, the Jews misunderstand the command, not only because of its predictive nature but since they are currently *in the temple*. The narrator apparently perceives a danger that the reader may also misunderstand and provides the proper interpretation (2:21) and draws attention to the perspective that allows this interpretation (2:22). Thus the narrator highlights cognitive issues twice in the narration (2:17, 22), but while indicating that Jesus is aware of the deeper meaning of his command when he speaks it.

In 2:24-25, the narrator asserts that "Jesus would not trust himself to them because he knew them all, and did not need anyone to testify about humanity. He himself understood it well." None of the characters present are in a position to perceive this quality of Jesus. Only those with the post-resurrection perspective of the narrator could understand this about him. Even the disciples, who are in a better position to, probably would not know this yet. This has multiple effects on the reader. First, because Jesus does not trust the crowd's belief, the reader is discouraged from doing so.³⁷ Second, these verses establish that "Jesus' omniscience includes knowing what goes on inside a person, and therefore being able to discern whether their outward profession comes from an authentic or inauthentic faith."³⁸

The scene in question, in John, establishes a relationship of antagonism between Jesus and the Jerusalem Jews. They ask him for clarification of a statement, and Jesus refuses to answer. A close

³⁴ Cf. Lincoln 2005, 136-44 and Tovey 1997, 239-55 for detailed discussions.

³⁵ Lincoln 2005, 139

³⁶ Note the imperatival force of "destroy" here. In the Synoptic versions, witnesses claim that Jesus said he can destroy it (Mt. 26:61), does destroy it (Mt. 27:40; Mk. 15:29), or will destroy it (Mk. 14:58; Acts 6:14). While John's version may have a conditional force (if you destroy it, I will...), the narrator's identification of the temple with Jesus' body allows a reading wherein Jesus commands his audience to destroy his body at the outset of his career – a command they will eventually obey, emphasizing his control.

³⁷ Neyrey 2007, 74

³⁸ Lincoln 2005, 145

variant of 2:19 is used *against* him in the Synoptic trial scenes.³⁹ The Jews may not understand the intent of his command/prediction, but they do not hide it. While their question may imply doubt, it nonetheless provides Jesus with an opportunity to explain. Jesus could simply have said, “Kill me and I will rise up shortly thereafter,” had he wanted to be understood more literally. The conversation would certainly have gone differently. Viewed in the context of predictions, the author has Jesus participate in the epistemological dualism of the gospel, phrasing the prediction in a way that is likely to be misunderstood until its fulfillment. Viewing the scene on its own, 2:24-25 establishes that Jesus knows how his audience will react to him, so he knows that his behavior will provoke his listeners. He does not avoid this. Instead, Jesus chooses a tactic that will draw attention to him in a potentially negative light. Though he knows the Jews do not understand, Jesus does not clarify his statements either by the sign they request or through discourse.⁴⁰

Scene 2: John 6:1-15

The next scene is also one common to all four gospels – John’s version of the multiplication of the loaves. The narrator notes that the feast of Passover is near (6:4). In 6:5, Jesus asks Philip the seemingly innocent question of where they can buy enough food for the crowd to eat. The narrator, however, adds: “He said this to test him, because he himself knew what he was going to do.” As Culpepper says, “Because he knows all things, Jesus never needs to ask for information and is never told anything he does not know.”⁴¹ Lincoln likewise states that “the question to Philip about food is thus not so much a response to need as a pre-emptive move made on the basis of his special knowledge that he

³⁹ This is presented as false testimony in Mark 14:57, and possibly in Matthew 26:59-61.

⁴⁰ Von Wahlde notes all the clear instances of SKR, correctly adding that 2:24-25 and others are secondary additions that are “intended for the reader to illustrate the superiority of Jesus and his supreme control of what is going on around him” (von Wahlde 1989, 79). Because he views them as secondary, von Wahlde only notes this to justify excising them from his reconstructed Signs Gospel. As the present study explores the structure and effect of the completed text, questions of the stages of composition are largely left open.

⁴¹ Culpepper 1983, 109

will provide hospitality for those who have come to him. The narrator underlines this.”⁴² The narrator does not underline this point - he *creates* it. This aspect is not explicit in any other account of this miracle (cf. Mk. 6:38). One presumes if Jesus is able to multiply loaves to feed 5,000 people, he knows that. What the narrator’s statement does is rob the scene of any hint of improvisation. This aspect underlines Jesus’ sovereignty and foreknowledge – the miracle is a part of a plan of which Jesus is fully aware.

Yet by 6:15 the crowd tries to assert control. They (rightly) see Jesus as the Prophet (6:14) and King (6:15). However, they (wrongly) intend to assert kingship on Jesus in a way they understand. This creates another possible link with Jerusalem: where else would they “take” (ἀρπάζειν) him to for coronation? Jesus, the reader is informed, knows their intentions and departs. The reactions of neither Philip nor the crowd are recorded, so it is difficult to understand what immediate effect Jesus’ knowledge has other than allowing him to retain control of the scene. Rather, Jesus acquires a great deal of attention by feeding such a large crowd, but refuses the support they intend to show for him. Nor does he redirect this support in a more constructive or appropriate manner. Instead, over the course of chapter 6, he redefines his role, not by acknowledging the title of “king” or “the prophet”, but by calling himself Son of Man (6:27) and the bread of life (6:35). The title Son of Man evokes a demand for a sign (6:30; cf. 2:18). The second identification, meanwhile, invites murmuring and an attempt to re-assimilate Jesus’ identity (6:41-42). Jesus resists this, repeating his claim twice (6:48, 51) and escalating the cannibalistic imagery. This leads to the next SKR scene.

Scene 3: John 6:60-71

This scene requires substantial narrative support. Jesus has just alienated some of his disciples (6:60). He “knows” they are murmuring about what he has said (6:61). This comment not only alerts the reader to Jesus’ control over the situation, but to the faults of the disciples as well. “The narrator’s

⁴² Lincoln 2005, 211

comment, with its ‘inside view’ of Jesus – inwardly aware that his disciples were murmuring about this – already associates the response of these disciples with that of the unbelieving Jews by repeating the verb ‘to murmur,’ which has overtones of rebellion against God (cf. vv. 41, 43).⁴³ Jesus calls them out on this, claiming that some of them do not believe. The narrator backs him up, stating that he not only knew this from the beginning but he also knew the one who would betray him (6:64). This is the first the reader has heard of this. Jesus asks the remaining twelve if they want to leave, but by now the reader has been conditioned to expect that he knows the answer. Peter answers in cognitive language: they have come to believe and *to know* Jesus is the Holy One of God (6:69). Typically, Jesus does not acknowledge this title. Rather he asks two questions: one reasserts his sovereignty, the other returns to the idea that one of them is particularly bad, a devil (6:70).⁴⁴ In case the reader missed it, the narrator clarifies that this is Judas (6:71).

This passage reads very differently without the narrator’s help:

Disciples: “This saying is hard; who can hear it?”

Jesus: “Does this shock you? What if you were to see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before? It is the spirit that makes alive; the flesh profits nothing. The words I have spoken to you are spirit and life. But there are some of you who do not believe. For this reason I have told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted him by my Father.

[Disciples depart, leaving twelve behind.]

Jesus: “Do you also want to leave?”

Simon Peter: “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe and have known that you are the Holy One of God.”

Jesus: “Did I not choose you twelve? Yet is not one of you a devil?”

One first notices the preponderance of questions. Without the narrative bolstering in 6:61, Jesus seems to be simply responding to a question posed by his disciples. Neither is there a reason in the actual text to believe the “many” disciples are murmuring inaudibly when they complain about what he has said. Furthermore, his questions in response, while rhetorical, blunt the impact of his insight. Jesus’ statement that some do not believe seems obvious – why else are they murmuring? Is Jesus dejected

⁴³ Lincoln 2005, 236

⁴⁴ Or “the Devil”; see Wallace 2000, 111

and worried that the rest will depart when he asks them if they also want to leave? Finally, without the narrator directing the reader's eye where it needs to be, i.e. at Judas, Jesus' final question might indicate that he is not happy with Peter's response instead.

This reading is not the one intended by the author and can only be achieved by excising the narrator's voice. It is perhaps a *misreading* like this that the author uses the narrator to guard against. Jesus is not losing control of his disciples. He has known all along that many would leave him. In the first chapter, Jesus does not call the disciples – they come to him. There it is also their choice to remain, even if Jesus knows who they are before they come to him (1:42, 47-48) and knows who will stay from the beginning (6:64; cf. 1:1). As will be shown below, Jesus does have techniques that would have persuaded more to stay, but does not use them here. In fact, it may be the case that Jesus has acted here with the intention of diminishing his retinue (see below on cognitive statements). Judas' betrayal loses its sense of contingency. He is only known as one who will betray Jesus, and the reader must simply wait for it to happen.

Scene 4: John 13:1-11

In this scene, the action returns to Jerusalem shortly before the Passover (13:1). The narrator begins by claiming "Jesus knew his hour had come to pass from this world to the Father." In 13:3, the narrator continues that Jesus "knew that the Father had put everything into his power and that he had come from God and was returning to God." Sandwiching the note that Judas has already been induced by the Devil to hand him over implies that Jesus is aware of this as well. Nonetheless:

Jesus knows both the sovereign authority he has been granted by the Father and his own divine origins and destiny... Here Jesus' knowledge of his divine power and status serves to highlight what is involved in the act that he now performs. Somebody described in this fashion might have been expected to continue to demonstrate his divine qualities, as he had done in his signs, but certainly not to wash feet.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ Lincoln 2005, 366

Knowing Jesus has this authority the reader may be tempted to make a similar mistake to Peter in believing Jesus' origins with God and authority from God preclude washing his disciples' feet, as it might also his crucifixion. Yet by framing this scene within two narrative assertions of both Jesus' authority and special awareness of his impending death (see 13:11), the scene reveals that it is in the foot washing that his special status is demonstrated. The action and dialogue of the scene do not accomplish this on their own. In fact, the narrator's note in 13:11 is not obvious (or exclusive) from the dialogue and returns the focus to Jesus' betrayal while re-asserting his awareness of the coming act.

Scene 5: John 18:1-11

As in 6:60-71, no note is made that it is just before the Passover because it is assumed by the chronology, as is the location in Jerusalem. In a rare instance of a secondary character being said to know anything in a straightforward manner, the narrator says that Judas also knew the place (18:2). Did Jesus prepare Judas for this moment by frequenting this garden? As Judas and the guards approach, Jesus knows everything (εἰδὼς πάντα) that will happen to him (so the narrator assures the reader – 18:4). Jesus' behavior correlates with this – he does not flee or act surprised. “As he has been portrayed in the course of his mission, so here and throughout the passion Jesus has sovereign knowledge and therefore is in control of events.”⁴⁶ Yet again, however, instead of communicating this understanding he begins with a question: “Whom do you seek?”

When they reply with his proper name, Jesus' response is both an acceptance and a rejection of this identity. By his simple answer (ἐγώ εἰμι – 18:5, 6), one would expect the guards to hear “I am he”, as when the formerly blind man uses the phrase in 9:9.⁴⁷ Up to this point, when Jesus has made “I am” statements to non-disciples, he has caused murmuring (6:41), quarreling (6:52), accusations of possession (10:20-21), attempted arrest (8:20; 10:39), and attempted execution (8:59). Now, of all

⁴⁶ Lincoln 2005, 444

⁴⁷ Cf. 13:19 – Now I tell you before it happens so that when it happens you may believe that I am he (ἐγώ εἰμι).

times, the statement causes them to fall to the ground in language that suggests theophany!⁴⁸ But at this point, there is no turning back. Jesus will face his hour, so he snaps them out of it by repeating his questions and reminding them of why they are there (18:7).

The effect of the SKR here is similar to other cases. Jesus does not go to the garden to pray and struggle with his mission as in the Synoptic accounts.⁴⁹ The narrator simply says that he went to this garden which Judas also happens to know about. Jesus knows they are coming, facilitates his own arrest, and even keeps the guards on task. When he asks them whom they are seeking, the reader should not be misled into believing Jesus actually needs this information. He uses the question to move the scene forward and to remind the guards of their mission. Together with 18:11, in which Jesus poses the rhetorical question, “the cup the Father has given me, will I not drink from it?”, these verses contribute to the thesis that John had access to Mark, and that in this passage he is actually correcting Mark, which portrays Jesus as asking for his cup to pass from him (14:36) and seemingly unaware of Judas’ ulterior motive in kissing him (14:45).⁵⁰ If he is not correcting Mark specifically, the author is correcting any suggestion in the tradition that Jesus was not aware of his betrayal and not in full control at all times leading to his crucifixion.

Scene 6: John 19:25-30

The final scene of SKR also takes place in Jerusalem. Interestingly in this case and in the previous one, these events happen before the Passover. This is against the Synoptic timetable where Jesus is crucified *after* the Passover.⁵¹ In this scene, Jesus is already on the cross. As this scene is a fulfillment of

⁴⁸ Lincoln 2005, 445

⁴⁹ See also Jn. 12:27 (cf. Mk. 14:34-35) which uses relevant language in a different setting. While the elements in John are also present in Mark (e.g. the cup of the Father, obedience to His will, Jn. 18:11; cf. Mk. 14:36), John does not include the prayer of struggle which seems to go on for at least an hour (Mk. 14:37); Jesus is discovered immediately upon entering the garden (Jn. 18:1-4), mentioning his hour and the cup only to dismiss the suggestion that they be taken away (Jn. 12:27; 18:11). Luke also accelerates the narrative, downplaying Jesus’ struggle.

⁵⁰ This is also “corrected” in Luke and Matthew, though in a different manner from John.

⁵¹ We leave open the question of which chronology is correct or whether a synthesis is possible. While it is doubtful that the pattern in SKR scenes determined John’s chronology, it is merely notable that these scenes continue to precede the Passover, even when a reader of the Synoptics might expect otherwise.

Scripture and Jesus' word throughout the gospel, it is not surprising the passage is framed in relevant language. The narrator asserts that Jesus is fully aware (εἰδὼς) that everything is now finished (τετέλεσται), saying he thirsts in order that Scripture might be fulfilled (19:28). Instead of Mark and Matthew's lament, John's Jesus simply says, "It is finished (τετέλεσται)" (19:30). The use of the same word in 19:28 by the narrator and Jesus in 19:30 confirms they share the proper perspective on this event. The hour has finally come and the divine timetable comes to its completion. The SKR reassures the reader that Jesus knew at the time what the author and his contemporaries perceive from their post-resurrection vantage point.

All six of these scenes are narratives set "before the Passover" (2:13; 6:4; 13:1). Four of them happen in Jerusalem (1, 4, 5, 6); and four of them have direct parallels in the Synoptics with the portrayal of Jesus' cognizance heightened in John (1, 2, 5, 6). There are other, slightly ambiguous examples of this device. In 4:1, Jesus is said to know what the Pharisees have heard about him, prompting him to leave Judea. In 5:6, Jesus "knew" the man has been sick for a long time. As in other SKR scenes, this takes place in Jerusalem and Jesus hides his knowledge from the characters with a question. Yet it is unclear whether Jesus' special ability is actually in play here due to the lack of precision in the narrator's comment – does Jesus know it has been 38 years? Could he have inferred the man's desire to be healed from his location at the pool?⁵² SKR, if present, almost seems superfluous. It does not erase any ambiguity (in fact introducing some), and does not underline Jesus' control over the situation; and as Lincoln states, it is information Jesus could easily have guessed at. Likewise 16:19, which Lincoln also cites as an instance of Jesus' special knowledge.⁵³ While these comments might be simple narrative statements providing an inside view into Jesus' motivations, the fact that the narrator

⁵² Lincoln raises these questions even while accepting the special nature of this information; Lincoln 2005, 193-94

⁵³ Lincoln 2005, 427 - if this is the case it is also ambiguous whether Jesus then *demonstrates* his special knowledge to the characters. See below.

so infrequently comments on what a character knew – and then almost exclusively with Jesus – may argue for these scenes as less-developed instances of SKR.

In the six clear SKR scenes above, the narrator is careful to assert that Jesus is in control of the action, appearances to the contrary. In this way, they reassure a reader who may find certain facts of Jesus' life troubling (his betrayal, his arrest, and his crucifixion). This does not imply that the author created these ideas from whole cloth or that they were not already in the tradition (cf. Mk. 2:8). Rather, John expands on this motif, using it to complement other cognitive aspects of the gospel to emphasize that events in Jesus' life were not improvised or surprising to him. Jesus does not fall into traps. The narrator makes it clear that Jesus knows everything he needs to know in any situation, in the present as well as the future. Whereas Jesus demonstrates his knowledge of the future to the characters in the story world through predictions – predictions which often will only be understood after his resurrection – he also demonstrates his present and future knowledge to other characters on rare occasions. These scenes will be explored in the following section.

CHAPTER 4

SPECIAL KNOWLEDGE FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE CHARACTERS

In some cases, as in Genesis 17 (with Abraham) and 18 (with Sarah), God is depicted as knowing what is going on inside a person's mind. Elsewhere, as in Genesis 22, God tests in order to discover how someone will behave.⁵⁴ Thus, while there is some diversity in how various writers understand God's omniscience, it is a common feature in the literature.⁵⁵ As shown above, Jesus tests one of his disciples with a misleading question in 6:6. While the narrator assures the reader that Jesus knew what he was going to do, the reader must infer whether Jesus also knew how Philip would answer. Within the cognitive framework SKR scenes form, it is fairly certain Jesus does. But, as was noted above as well, the character of Philip may or may not conclude that Jesus knew these things prior to asking him because Jesus' apparent behavior is ambiguous.

God's omniscience is not limited to psychic powers. In 1 Sam. 9-10, Saul is looking for two of his father's donkeys and decides to ask a local seer. This seer is Samuel, who tells him they have been found (1 Sam. 9:20). Samuel has no other way of knowing this information other than receiving it from God, who has prepared him for this meeting (9:15-17). Samuel does not do this just to show off – he wishes to meet with Saul the next day, so he needs to alleviate Saul's concern for the lost asses. The next morning, Samuel tells Saul that he will meet two women who will confirm what Samuel has said about the asses (10:2-8). Samuel shares this knowledge with Saul, he says, because "this will be the sign for you that the Lord has anointed you commander (LXX - ἔχρισέν σε κύριος) over his heritage" (10:1). Samuel has made some unprecedented claims about Saul, some which Saul clearly doubts (9:21). By sharing the special knowledge he has received from God with Saul, both of the present (the donkeys)

⁵⁴ Carasik 2000, 222-228

⁵⁵ Carasik cites examples from 13 of the 39 books of the Old Testament in his brief study.

and the future (Saul's journey), Samuel ensures the divine origin of what he says will be recognized and be trusted.

John uses this device several times in his gospel. The closest parallel to the Samuel material is in the first chapter where, like Samuel, John the Baptist is alerted in advance by God to look for the Spirit coming down and remaining on a man. This will be the one who will baptize in Spirit (1:32-33). This is perhaps not coincidental. As Saul initiates kingship in Israel, Jesus initiates a new kingdom in John. Of course, the Baptist does not share his special knowledge with Jesus because Jesus never lacks knowledge and hence needs no convincing. It is possible that by sharing this information with his followers, John inspires Jesus' first two disciples to join him. That element of the sharing of special knowledge, to confirm and validate the claims of the one who shares it, plays a significant role in the gospel. In this first case, the author is careful to have John describe the extraordinary circumstances by which he acquired his special knowledge. From this point on, however, it is Jesus who will have it and who will share it.

Commentators often see the conflict in John in the interpretation secondary characters give to Jesus when confronted with him: either they believe (understand) or do not believe (do not understand) – this is to an extent what Jesus reveals.⁵⁶ This seems to be the essence of Eslinger's comment that "the characters are presented as believing or knowing something, or as failing to believe or know something. The reader, who usually knows the truth of the matter thanks to the narrator, is consequently led to evaluate the characters."⁵⁷ Such assessments assume that Jesus behaves the same in all cases. While Jesus' behavior may not reveal any growth in his character, this does not imply that his behavior is uniform throughout the gospel. The changes in his behavior can be linked with his use of special knowledge – an attribute which, unlike Samuel, Jesus is portrayed as having direct access to.

⁵⁶ Hallback 1999, 45

⁵⁷ Eslinger 1993, 166

In the above cases, the narrator asserts that Jesus always knows even if that is not evident to the characters. However, there are scenes wherein Jesus displays this knowledge in a way that is comprehensible to the other characters in the gospel, and this display affects the outcome of their meeting with Jesus. This special knowledge shown for the benefit of the characters (hereon SKC), like SKR, is knowledge that would require a complex set of background events that are neither detailed nor even implied in the text to provide a naturalistic explanation for them. Moreover, the reactions of the characters within the narrative demonstrate that *they* at least believe it is remarkable that Jesus knows what he does. While SKC sometimes takes the forms of predictions and hence will overlap with material examined above, all SKC can be confirmed by the recipient before the crucifixion if not immediately. The fact that it can be confirmed has consistent pragmatic and cognitive effects on the secondary characters. The scenes which will be examined are 1:35-51; 4:4-42; 4:43-54; 11:1-53; and 13:21-30.

Scene 1: John 1:35-51

Significantly, the first scene in which Jesus demonstrates special knowledge is his first scene in the gospel. Though the Baptist has given Jesus several lofty titles, his disciples initially only concede the title of Rabbi (1:38) – a title transliterated and translated for the reader. Notably, the narrator translates the term as “teacher” (διδάσκαλε), i.e. one who shares knowledge. By 1:41, Andrew calls Jesus the Messiah. Lincoln is likely correct in saying that by stating this from the outset, Jesus’ Messiahship is taken for granted and the purpose of the gospel is to define the meaning of titles such as Messiah and Son of God as they are applied to Jesus.⁵⁸ The only statement overheard between Jesus and Simon is Jesus renaming him as Peter. If taken as a declarative statement, Jesus is presuming an authority previously exercised by God.⁵⁹ The statement can also be taken as predictive or at least an insightful observation. “This is in line with the narrator’s portrayal of Jesus as possessing special knowledge and indicates that his seeing of people is the sort of perception that knows them through and through (cf.

⁵⁸ Lincoln 2005, 118-121

⁵⁹ Cf. Gn. 17:5, 15; 32:39; though Dn. 1:7 warns against over-emphasizing this point.

2:24-25). In regard to his followers in particular, Jesus shows himself to be the good shepherd who knows his own (10:14).⁶⁰ Since it seems likely the implied reader of the gospel would have known of Simon Peter,⁶¹ John may be relying on the informed reader's awareness of traditions such as Mt. 16:18 to confirm the truth of 1:42. While Lincoln does not believe that John is developing this significance here,⁶² such a device could only enhance the reader's perception of Jesus as possessing special knowledge.⁶³

In 1:43, Philip tries to continue the train of witness to Nathanael, but his testimony is rejected. Nathanael may be curious but he is clearly doubtful as 1:46 - "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" – implies (cf. 1 Sam. 9:21). When he is brought to Jesus, Jesus greets him by claiming he is a true Israelite with no deceit in him (1:47), a statement which some commentators view as genuinely insightful rather than merely complimentary.⁶⁴ Yet Nathanael's terse "Where do you know me from?" could also suggest that he does not believe Jesus is in a position to make such a claim about him. Of course, within its narrative context it is a fundamental question of the gospel, which argues that Jesus does know Nathanael – in fact, he knows all things *because* of where he is from. Instead of revealing this special self-knowledge directly, Jesus reveals special knowledge he has about Nathanael, i.e. his location prior to meeting with Jesus (1:48).

There is some debate about this response. While Neyrey believes being "under the fig tree" clearly implies study of the Torah and not physically sitting under a tree,⁶⁵ others take the statement at its word,⁶⁶ even calling it a miracle.⁶⁷ Whether it refers to Nathanael's physical or academic position

⁶⁰ Lincoln 2005, 120

⁶¹ See 21:18-19 where Jesus seems to allude to his death.

⁶² Lincoln 2005, 119

⁶³ Von Wahlde adds, "It may even be true that Jesus' knowledge that Peter was the 'son of John' may also be intended to be of this sort (1:42) although this is less clear" – von Wahlde 1989, 60.

⁶⁴ E.g. Scott 2003, 1166; Scott's assertion that "Nathanael is astonished by Jesus' remarkable insight (1:48)," while supportive of our claim that Jesus demonstrates special knowledge in order to illicit specific responses from the other characters, assumes a certain lack of humility on Nathanael's part.

⁶⁵ Neyrey 2007, 57

⁶⁶ E.g., Scott 2003, 1166

previous to meeting Jesus or both, “Nathanael recognizes Jesus when realizing that Jesus... is able to identify Nathanael on the basis of extraordinary knowledge... Judging from Nathanael’s reaction, however, he is soon convinced that Jesus by knowing that he was ‘under the fig tree’ possesses knowledge that is not accessible to any man.”⁶⁸ Only after SKC does Nathanael call him Rabbi, Son of God, and King of Israel (1:49). However Nathanael understands Jesus’ statement, only he is in a position to confirm it – and this is his response. The net result of this is that Nathanael, along with the others, remain with Jesus and testify to these events when they have come to properly understand them after the resurrection. Moreover, the SKC here allows Jesus the opportunity to testify to his own role as Son of Man to an audience that is now possibly more open to the idea than they might have been at the outset.

Scene 2: John 4:4-42

The scene that Jesus shares with the Samaritan woman is much lengthier and more complex than the previous scene with his disciples. Yet it follows a similar pattern. Jesus initiates the conversation (4:7) and makes claims about his identity. The woman can be excused for not immediately understanding them. First of all, Jesus chooses a term, “living water”, which has a perfectly appropriate and non-Christological interpretation given the context in the sense of flowing water. Moreover, the scene involving a man and a woman at a well is commonly associated with betrothal scenes, and the language used here can also carry the sense of sexual euphemism.⁶⁹ Read this way, Jesus’ request for the woman to call her husband, and her response that she has none, only seems to continue pushing the conversation in the wrong direction. Because the conversation is not progressing the way he would like, and since the woman cannot understand his claims much less confirm their truth, Jesus enlists the pedagogical tool of SKC.

⁶⁷ Eslinger 1993, 172

⁶⁸ Larsen 2008, 108

⁶⁹ Eslinger 1993, 169

In 4:17-18, Jesus demonstrates his special knowledge of the woman's past and present marital status. Contrary to many commentators, Jesus does not do this to shame her or judge her for her sexual history,⁷⁰ but to enlist the woman in belief. She herself can testify that what Jesus claims is true, and her reaction (as well as her reticent introduction) suggests there is no logical reason for Jesus to have access to this knowledge by typical means. Just as the well setting is conventionally one of betrothal, special knowledge is conventionally associated with prophecy.⁷¹ So it is not surprising that the woman begins by calling Jesus a prophet (4:19). If Nathanael's claims for Jesus were higher it is because he had preconceived information about him, whereas the woman only knows he has access to divine foreknowledge.⁷² Jesus' identity/status is thus elevated (if not completely understood), and the woman shifts the conversation to matters more fitting to a prophet.⁷³

Yet again, Jesus' first comment draws attention to the validation he has just provided ("Believe me, woman," 4:21) before making a prediction that points beyond the resurrection (4:21-24). Now the woman can test the title of Messiah which prompts the first of the "I am" statements of the gospel (4:26). Importantly, the woman defines the Messiah as one who "will tell us all things (πάντα)" (4:25). Thus while the prediction acts as a confirmation of her first claim (that he is a prophet), it is still the SKC in 4:17-18 that seems to allow that he might be the Messiah.⁷⁴ When she goes on to the people of the village, she does not tell them to come see a man who talks about living water or the proper venue for worship. Rather, she says that he has told her everything (πάντα) she has done (4:29) – a claim repeated in 4:39. Her tentative question of whether he could be the Messiah throws the extent of her belief into some doubt, yet "her lack of certitude does not prevent her from being an effective

⁷⁰ Rightly noted by Lincoln 2005, 175; see also Schneiders 1999, 138

⁷¹ Saul meets girls at a well who direct him to the prophet Samuel (1 Sam. 9:11-13) shortly before that special knowledge scene, and, perhaps more relevantly to a Samaritan, Moses encounters a similar scene in Exodus 2.

⁷² Larsen 2008, 134-35

⁷³ See Thatcher 2006, 220 for a less favorable reading of 4:20.

⁷⁴ Van Unnik 1979, 212-13

witness.”⁷⁵ At this point, Jesus only needs to incite enough belief/curiosity to get her to *go* and bring them to him so that he too can confirm her claims (4:41-42).

Considering how conscious of their religious and ethnic differences the woman is at the beginning of the exchange, one can imagine how the conversation would have gone had Jesus started off by claiming “You people worship what you do not understand” or that he is the Messiah. The SKC prepares the woman to accept these claims with the result that she brings more people to Jesus. After the Samaritans spend two days with him (4:40), they come to believe because of his word and know he is the savior of the world (4:41-42).⁷⁶ The turning point in this progression that leads to belief and at least partial understanding is the SKC in 4:17-18.

Scene 3: John 4:43-54

After a long, complicated scene, John provides a short miracle story more typical of the Synoptics. It is debatable whether the statement in 4:50 that the royal official’s son lives should be considered as enacting a miracle,⁷⁷ sharing special knowledge of a miracle that has already occurred due to his first request, or simply sharing special knowledge the royal official does not have access to. It is likely the first; but informing the official of the miracle is not intrinsic to performing the miracle. Telling the man of the miracle at this point must serve its own purpose. The man is said to believe Jesus’ word (4:50b), at least enough for him to obey Jesus and *go*. His request for the time when the boy began to recover (4:52), however, suggests that he wishes to eliminate the possibility of coincidence. That the healing and Jesus’ statement happen at the same hour seems to accomplish this. In other words, when he leaves for Capernaum he still lacks confirmation. Compare this to Nathanael, who *goes* with Philip to receive confirmation of what Philip has claimed about Jesus, or the Samaritans who *go* to Jesus to confirm the claims of the Samaritan woman.

⁷⁵ Lincoln 2005, 179

⁷⁶ This title would have been available in pre-Christian usage, so it is unlikely they understand in what precise way Jesus is the savior of the world; Koester 1995, 667

⁷⁷ So Lincoln 2005, 187

The servants (οἱ δοῦλοι) play an important role in this story.⁷⁸ Unlike in the case of Nathanael or the Samaritan woman, the royal official cannot confirm the truth of Jesus' claim himself because the special knowledge in question is not about him specifically. By asking them when the miracle occurred, he compels his servants to provide independent witness to the correlation of word and event. Because of this, the father comes to believe (4:53). The role of the royal official to his household is the same as the role of the evangelist to his readers. Fevers break, and the household may simply have seen the event as fortunate. They note nothing unusual or particularly miraculous about it. What the royal official provides is the correct interpretation of the event – that it is a sign (4:54) performed by Jesus.

Before moving to the next scene with SKC, one further function of this scene in its context should be noted. As in the previous two instances of SKC, 4:43-54 takes place outside of Jerusalem. While Culpepper can claim that Jesus “laments the necessity of ‘signs and wonders’” in an example of the request-rebuff-response motif also found in the previous Cana story, he nonetheless goes on to say that the official “exemplifies those who believe because of the signs but show themselves ready to believe the words of Jesus. Theirs is an authentic faith.”⁷⁹ The royal official as a character can be contrasted with the lame man in chapter 5 because he is said to believe while no such claim is made for the lame man (and his actions suggest otherwise). However, this comparison puts the focus on the secondary characters' reaction to Jesus. If focus is put on Jesus, two very different courses of action become apparent.

Jesus waits for the official to initiate the request for a healing whereas *he* initiates the discussion with the lame man who is clearly unprepared for the type of healing Jesus will perform (5:7, 13). Jesus essentially commands the official to do as he intended to do: return to Capernaum. Meanwhile, Jesus

⁷⁸ Note the servants (οἱ δῶκονοι) in 2:9 are also credited with important knowledge in a rare narrative comment, providing another link between these two miracles apart from their common location in Cana (2:1; 4:46). They are perhaps responsible for spreading the word about that miracle (in the absence of Synoptic miracle stories). This may also be suggestive about the demographics or self-perception of John's community.

⁷⁹ Culpepper 1983, 137; see also 7:1-10 and 11:1-7 for a similar pattern.

puts the lame man in a legally compromising position by commanding him to specifically “take up his mat,” knowing it is the Sabbath (why not just “Rise, and walk”?).⁸⁰ Moreover, where Jesus engineers the scene with the official to include SKC by staying in Cana, here SKC is notably lacking. As noted above, Jesus knows the man has been ill a long time (5:6), yet Jesus does not demonstrate this knowledge to the man. Rather, Jesus opens with a question implying doubt about how well-informed he is (at least for the man). Though the man is hardly likely to think the command by Jesus and his healing are coincidental, Jesus does not mention belief as he has in previous scenes (5:14). The outcomes of these two courses of action are consequently different. The royal official believes, along with his entire household. The lame man rats on Jesus,⁸¹ and for the first time the narrator informs the reader that the Jews have begun to persecute Jesus (5:16) and even try to kill him (5:18).

Scene 4: John 11:1-53

This scene has already been examined in the context of predictions; but as several of the predictions are fulfilled within the scene itself it is worth examining the scene as SKC. As in the previous cases, this scene does not take place in Jerusalem (10:40; 11:1, 18). The mention of Bethany forms a link to the first cognitive miracle scene in chapter 1. The three new characters introduced are the siblings Mary, Martha, and Lazarus. While these three will benefit from SKC in this scene, the belief of the disciples is also reinforced.

It is possible the disciples hear Jesus’ statement in 11:4 that this illness is not to end in death, though whether they do or not does not seem to affect the plot. Instead, as in the case of the Samaritan woman, a scene involving the limited understanding of the disciples is interjected into a story that properly involves Jesus and the sisters Martha and Mary. In Jn. 4, the disciples misunderstand why Jesus is speaking with a woman and why he refuses to eat. Jesus responds with proverbial sayings about

⁸⁰ The wording is the same as Mark’s in a Sabbath healing pericope, so that it may have been traditional or may indicate literary dependence.

⁸¹ Not all accept this position; see Lincoln 2005, 196 for discussion.

sowing and harvesting.⁸² As Jesus uses them, these sayings carry a double meaning. On the narrative level, they indicate the work he has done in bringing the town to him. On the other hand, by using language characteristic of the early church's missionary work, they point beyond the present scene to the future missionary work of the disciples.⁸³ At the story level, the disciples probably have no clue what he is talking about. The point is introduced as instruction to the disciples but the text does not follow up on it. Whether they figure it out immediately or only later in remembering his words is left unclear.

In Jn. 11, the disciples are introduced briefly again to express their misunderstanding before leaving the scene abruptly. First, they do not understand why Jesus would want to go near Jerusalem when his life is in danger (11:8). He responds with a piece of conventional wisdom (11:9a) about the proper timing of actions. In Jn. 4, the narrative-level meaning of the parable referred to the Samaritans he knew would soon arrive; here, the parable refers to the crucifixion he knows is coming shortly. As in chapter 4, the disciples are unlikely to immediately understand the parable about walking in the light despite Jesus' identifications with the light and previous passion predictions.

In 11:11, Jesus tells the disciples that Lazarus is asleep and he is going to awaken him. Ostensibly, this answers the question from 11:8, and the disciples take him at his word, arguing that if Lazarus is only asleep he will be saved.⁸⁴ Lincoln is perhaps too harsh when he says, "The disciples are portrayed here as so dense as not to be able to understand the most obvious metaphor."⁸⁵ Jesus has characteristically chosen a multivalent way of saying what he could have said "plainly" (11:14), choosing a euphemism that is plausible on a literal level. They do not doubt that Lazarus *is* asleep - perhaps they too eagerly believe this implies they do not have to go into harm's way. Jesus clarifies that he means Lazarus has died and that his absence will contribute to their belief (11:15). This is not only a clear

⁸² Keener 2003, 1:625

⁸³ Lincoln 2005, 180

⁸⁴ Thatcher views Jesus' wording as a deliberate riddle, indicated by the two acknowledgements of its ambiguity in 11:13 by the narrator and 11:14 by Jesus – Thatcher 2006, 214-15. Both he and Sanders interpret the disciples to mean that if this is the case they do not have to return to Judea – Sanders 1968, 266

⁸⁵ Lincoln 2005, 320

statement of John's prediction theory, but points back to the healing in Jn. 4 where Jesus' absence also contributed to the royal official's belief. It is only remarkable that Jesus knows Lazarus is dead because of his absence. Despite their misunderstanding, the disciples trust Jesus enough to *go* where directed, as Nathanael, the Samaritan woman, and the royal official have before them.

By 11:23, Jesus has already shared his special knowledge directly with Martha, though at this point it cannot be confirmed by her. Martha asserts that she knows Lazarus will rise on the last day. As will be discussed below, the reader may be suspicious about a claim to knowledge that is not made by Jesus. Jesus responds by revealing a new Christological understanding: "I am the resurrection and the life" (11:25). Martha's response does not recognize this new revelation, but rather relies on the established titles of Lord/sir, Messiah, Son of God, and the one who is coming into the world (cf. 6:14; 1:27 (?); 3:2 (?)). David Ball, in a study of the "I am" sayings in John, calls Martha's response one of "ideal belief, in which she bestows on Jesus several titles common to the Gospel... Her reaction to Jesus' 'I am' saying thus draws out his identity."⁸⁶ Ball does not see any contradiction in Martha's protest in 11:39, calling the miracle rather a "remarkable visual-aid to what [Jesus] had claimed." Likewise, Bultmann asserts Martha's response "shows the genuine attitude of faith... She cannot see the promised ζωή; but she can recognize that in Jesus the eschatological invasion of God into the world has come to pass. The names which her confession attributes to him are eschatological titles."⁸⁷ Yet it is precisely this eschatological understanding that categorizes Martha's *mis*understanding in this story. She believes that Jesus appropriately fits the titles she has given him, but is not adequately prepared for the revelation of this new special (self-) knowledge by Jesus yet. Martha cannot confirm the special knowledge Jesus has said about her brother until 11:44 when it and Jesus' self-revelation are illustrated in the miracle. The text does not record whether the connection is made and she comes to believe. However, it would be difficult to imagine she has not given that Martha is serving Jesus in 12:2.

⁸⁶ Ball 1996, 106

⁸⁷ Bultmann 1971, 404

Scene 5: John 13:21-30

The final scene involving SKC takes place in Jerusalem. The piece of special knowledge Jesus shares has to do with who will betray him. The narrator has already asserted several times that Jesus has this knowledge. But at this point, no other character but Judas (presumably) has any reason to believe he in particular will betray Jesus. With 13:18a, the disciples might infer that one of them has not been chosen by Jesus and that this person does or will in some way “raise their heel against Jesus” (13:18b – cf. Ps. 41:9-10). This is not necessarily betrayal, and may only imply an insult.⁸⁸ The author most likely does not intend the disciples to understand the verse as it is presented because no denial is recorded at this point as in the Synoptics (cf. Mk. 14:19 and paras.) and because of John’s use of predictions. In fact, John has Jesus confirm this in 13:19 in an explicit statement of the function of predictions in this gospel – only after the betrayal happens (that leads to the crucifixion and resurrection) will the disciples believe – in part *because* Jesus predicted it here.

As in Jn. 11, Jesus shares special knowledge ambiguously (13:18; cf. 11:11) followed by a more blunt clarification (13:21; cf. 11:14). In both cases, the narrator notes the disciples’ confusion (13:22; cf. 11:13). Except for possibly Judas, the disciples cannot confirm that one of them will betray Jesus until one of them does. Of course they are curious as to who Jesus means. Peter asks the disciple reclining with Jesus to get further information, but does not find out until chapter 18 with everyone else. Rather it is the unnamed disciple (the so-called Beloved Disciple or BD) who is given a clear sign of who Jesus means by his prediction (13:26). Even without the inside knowledge of the narrator in 13:27 that Satan entered Judas the BD could not help but deduce that Jesus meant Judas. Yet in 13:28 the narrator asserts that “none of those reclining at table realized (ἐγνώ)” why Jesus sent Judas out. Tovey considers this intentional, throwing doubt on how much the Beloved Disciple perceived at the time.⁸⁹ Lincoln meanwhile considers the BD perfectly aware of the meaning of Jesus’ actions; rather “he represents

⁸⁸ Lincoln 2005, 373

⁸⁹ Tovey 1997, 66

post-resurrection Johannine insights back among the pre-resurrection disciples and thereby serves to legitimate the evangelist's perspective... His knowledge of what is happening is ignored."⁹⁰ A third suggestion might simply be that while the BD knows Judas is who Jesus meant, that does not imply that Judas is going to betray Jesus *right now* or that Jesus will *be seemingly complicit in this*. While it would certainly have dawned on him what Judas was doing in chapter 18, there is actually little reason to doubt the narrator's assertion that none of them, including the BD, knew what Judas was going to do at that time.⁹¹

Jesus' sovereignty over the situation is strengthened over the Synoptic accounts through the use of this device. The narrator has interpreted Jesus' words to portray him as aware of who would betray him as early as chapter 6. Here, Jesus is shown as explicitly aware of what Judas will do in full sight of his disciples. Yet, instead of condemnation (cf. Mt. 26:24), Jesus encourages Judas to act quickly (Jn. 13:27). Jesus chooses a disciple to inform whom, given his knowledge of the future and of humanity, he knows will not act on the information while it might prevent Judas' betrayal (as opposed to, say, Peter). Given the way the BD and the implied author merge in Jn. 21:24, it is possible to read the scene with Jesus choosing him knowing he would record the information here later.

These previous five scenes were chosen because they unambiguously show Jesus demonstrating special knowledge about other characters in the gospel. Two other scenes contain less clearly defined SKC. In 7:19 (cf. 8:37, 40), Jesus asks the Jews why they are trying to kill him. This is potential SKC because up to this point, the only mention of a plot to kill Jesus has been through narration (5:18 and 7:1, which is potentially SKR) and it is not until 8:59 that anyone takes any action toward this. No character has declared this openly by 7:19. Another case occurs in 16:19. Aided by the narrator who assures the reader that Jesus knew what the disciples wanted to ask him, Jesus asks them if they are discussing his previous statement (they are). Since Jesus' response does not employ strikingly different

⁹⁰ Lincoln 2005, 379

⁹¹ It is interesting to note that in this case Judas "goes" when Jesus tells him, not the BD.

language than he has used before, perhaps the SKC of 16:19 is meant to facilitate their understanding so that when he is done the disciples state that Jesus knows everything and has come from God (16:30). As in previous SKC scenes, Jesus questions the effect of his knowledge (16:31 – “Do you believe now?” – cf. 1:50; 4:21, 48; 11:15, 26b) and follows with a prediction (16:33; cf. 1:50-51; 4:21-23; 11:26a). These formal aspects lend some support to 16:19 as SKC.

However, difficulties are present in these passages. Both cases are phrased as questions. Of course, “Why are you trying to kill me?” assumes that he thinks they are in fact trying to kill him. Yet the crowd seems genuinely surprised by the accusation (7:20) and the inhabitants of Jerusalem distance themselves from the plot by asking if he is not the one “they” (that is, not “we”) are trying to kill (7:25). The function of the SKC – that the characters or subsequent events will be able to confirm what Jesus says – is somewhat undermined until months (chapters) later when he is actually executed. The only real beneficiary of this display is the reader. In 16:19, Jesus uses a question where he could have used a statement, more in line with SKR. As noted above, he could easily have overheard their discussion and responded accordingly. However, the question does facilitate belief in his disciples, so the scene may carry some of the themes of SKC without developing them as fully as in previous examples. Even while these scenes are ambiguous, they at least contribute to the portrayal of Jesus as insightful and perceptive.

Before concluding this section on special knowledge, two scenes wherein special knowledge is conspicuously absent should be briefly noted. 9:1-41 is notable because it is the only scene in which a character comes to believe in Jesus who is never involved in a scene including special knowledge.⁹² Yet it is dense with cognitive language. Οἶδα is used ten times from 9:12-31. What the investigation seems to do for the blind man is allow the miracle, followed by Jesus’ words, to act as a witness to Jesus’

⁹² 9:3 may be read as SKC, but for the benefit of the disciples, not the blind man. However, it is difficult to discern whether Jesus is describing how this particular blind man fits within Jesus and the Father’s mission, or if Jesus is stating a general principle about why anyone might be born blind.

identity.⁹³ This prepares him for the revelation of Jesus' self-knowledge in 9:35-37 (and possibly the "I am" sayings in chapter 10) in the same way SKC has done in other cases.

Another scene is worth noting because the informed reader would otherwise expect it to include SKC: 12:12-19. This scene has parallels in Mk. 11:1-10 and Mt. 21:1-9 from which SKC is easily inferred. At the very least, Jesus has prepared for this scene in the Synoptics. Here, Jesus simply finds a donkey, fulfilling Scripture (12:14-15). Keener argues that Jesus finding the donkey himself emphasizes Jesus' sovereignty,⁹⁴ perhaps in a move similar to having Jesus distribute the loaves himself or having him carry his own cross. Lincoln comments, "In the Synoptics a crowd materializes on the way from the Mount of Olives and accompanies Jesus into the city, whereas in John the crowd that had gathered for the Passover festival goes out from Jerusalem to greet him."⁹⁵ It is possible this detail carried imperial overtones for the current rulers of Jerusalem in the Johannine story-world, who use this to their advantage in Jesus' trial with Pilate (19:12). If so, it may be significant that previous to his hour, and outside of Jerusalem, Jesus refuses public recognition of his kingship (6:15); but here, at his hour, in Jerusalem, and in a way that might provoke the Roman leadership, Jesus does not resist this public display. The author might have used SKC to draw out the significance of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem, but this has been acknowledged from early on (1:49) and anyway seems to have occurred to the disciples without it (12:16). It is possible that in the SKC scenes of John's gospel, the author has expanded on the implications of these Synoptic motifs throughout the narrative.⁹⁶

No one with whom Jesus shares special knowledge reacts negatively to him. Nathanael, the Samaritan woman, the royal official, the disciples, the Bethany family, and the BD all leave their respective scenes believing in Jesus. Thus SKC is a much stronger pedagogical tool than, say, the signs -

⁹³ Lincoln 2005, 131

⁹⁴ Keener 2003, 1:870

⁹⁵ Lincoln 2005, 346

⁹⁶ If this were the case, it would be comparable to the suggestion that John does not include the transfiguration, but rather includes elements of the transfiguration throughout his gospel; see Ashton 2007, 475

which have mixed results. By sharing special knowledge that his audience can confirm, Jesus prepares them for special knowledge about himself that they are *not* in a position to confirm. They may not understand all that Jesus reveals (arguably they cannot), but neither do they reject his claims outright. Often, this tentative belief provides the opportunity to remain with Jesus – as the disciples, the Samaritans, and the Bethany family do – which ensures deeper belief and understanding.⁹⁷ The effect of SKC becomes clearest when contrasted to the figures/groups who receive none – Jesus’ family, the Jews, Nicodemus, Pilate, the lame man. While their reactions to Jesus vary, none of them are said to believe the way recipients of SKC are. Only the blind man comes to believe in Jesus without SKC, and this is through a densely cognitive trial scene which highlights the unique nature of Jesus’ miracle (9:32). So, while SKC is not Jesus’ only tool for inspiring belief, it is his most consistently effective one.

The text gives no reason to believe that Jesus only sometimes has access to special knowledge. In fact, scenes with SKR demonstrate that Jesus often has access to special knowledge when appearances would argue against it. If his goal is to inspire belief, why does Jesus not use this tool more often? Looking at the five scenes, the first four take place outside of Jerusalem despite intervening trips there, and the fifth (in Jerusalem) has only one observer. The recipients are “safe” in the sense that they will not pose a threat to Jesus’ journey toward glorification on the cross. Jesus avoids using cognitive miracles in Jerusalem in situations where those in power – Nicodemus, Annas, and Pilate among them – might come to believe in him and prevent his crucifixion. Whether this series of choices originates in Jesus or the Father is unclear, but its trajectory is clear. Jesus may wish that others come to believe in him, but he cannot risk any belief that threatens his mission.

⁹⁷ Note that Judas, who does not receive explicit SKC in chapter 13, immediately leaves Jesus while the BD, who receives SKC directly here and may have witnessed previous instances, remains with Jesus until he dies.

CHAPTER 5

DIRECT COGNITIVE CLAIMS MADE BY JESUS

Below, each of the cognitive statements Jesus makes is analyzed.⁹⁸ The dramatic context of the statement contributes greatly to an understanding of the implied intent behind the statement. Therefore scenes dense with cognitive statements will be examined as a whole to see how these statements contribute to an understanding of Jesus' actions within the scene. However, the form of these statements also contributes to their rhetorical effect, so statements of similar form within various contexts will be included in the analysis of each verse. In this way, it can be shown that while the reader, as voyeur, benefits from Jesus' claims the other characters do not receive the pedagogical benefit of these statements. In fact, they cannot do so prior to the resurrection. Instead, these statements maneuver the characters into the roles he intends for them – disciple, betrayer, or persecutor, as the need may be.

Scene 1: John 3:1-21

The conversation between Jesus and Nicodemus is densely cognitive in content until the scene loses its focus on these two characters and Jesus' voice blends with the voice of the narrator somewhere around 3:16.⁹⁹ Nicodemus introduces "knowing" into the conversation with 3:2. Jesus does not initially question his intelligence but "parodies Nicodemus' 'unless' by turning the expression into a criterion for true disciples. Nicodemus does not comprehend Jesus' two 'unless' statements, which suggests that he

⁹⁸ The criteria for selecting these verses are that they are dialogue spoken by or about Jesus, and contain one or both of John's two principal words for knowing - οἶδα and γινώσκω. For a detailed discussion of John's distinction of these two terms, see Appendix B.

⁹⁹ So Culpepper 1983, 42; there is considerable disagreement over where or whether the voice of the narrator enters into the scene. Most commentators agree that the scene loses its dialogic flavor around 3:16, even if Nicodemus is still the story-world audience. The scene only retains its cognitive nature so long as the dialogue with Nicodemus is unambiguously in view.

does not know much of anything and so readers may regard his initial ‘unless’ remark as an empty claim.”¹⁰⁰

3:8 – *The wind blows where it wills, and you can hear the sound it makes, but you do not know (οἶδας) where it comes from or where it goes; so it is with everyone who is born of the spirit.*

Jesus questions Nicodemus’ knowledge in 3:8 by drawing an allegory between the wind (Spirit) and all born of the Spirit (cf. 3:5). Although Nicodemus’ claim that Jesus has come from God may be ironically true, Jesus’ point is that he *does not know* the origins or destination of one born of the Spirit. “There is a parallel to how the narrative depicts Jesus himself. Where he has come from and where he is going have to be revealed, since they *cannot be perceived* by those who remain on the level of the flesh.”¹⁰¹ Note that Jesus does not simply refer to himself in the first person here. Rather, he draws an analogy through wordplay on the double meaning of πνεῦμα.¹⁰² The tendency here among commentators is to classify this dialogue as statement-misunderstanding-clarification.¹⁰³ But while these misunderstandings may “teach readers how to read the gospel”,¹⁰⁴ this clarification, veiled behind a metaphor built on a double-entendre, risks portraying Jesus as unwilling or unable to address his “student” in terms that are accessible to him. Before taking the majority view that Nicodemus simply represents “all who remain on the level that knows only a fleshly birth”¹⁰⁵ despite Jesus’ best efforts, Jesus’ behavior here might be clarified by examining other metaphorical or allegorical statements where Jesus specifically calls attention to what people know.

4:10 and 4:32 are two examples of this which follow shortly after. In 4:10, Jesus uses the metaphor of “living water” for eternal life in the presence of a well, and must use SKC to receive a

¹⁰⁰ Neyrey 2007, 77

¹⁰¹ Lincoln 2005, 151 – emphasis mine

¹⁰² Barrett 1978, 210-11; πνεῖ and φωνήν can also be read as double-entendre – Resseguie offers the alternate reading: “The Spirit breathes where he wills and you hear his voice, but...” – Resseguie 2001, 53

¹⁰³ E.g. Neyrey 2007, 78-79, who also uses the model of ‘challenge and riposte’ for this scene.

¹⁰⁴ Culpepper 1983, 164 – emphasis mine

¹⁰⁵ Lincoln 2005, 151

positive response from the woman.¹⁰⁶ A more direct parallel to the scene in chapter 3 is 4:32, where Jesus tells his disciples he has food they do not know about (after they ask him to eat). The disciples misunderstand him, as Nicodemus and the woman have. Jesus explains what he means by “food” with a metaphor (4:34), and follows with a parabolic prediction (4:35-38). As with Nicodemus, the reader never discovers the disciples’ reaction to this teaching nor whether they learned anything from it.

In 10:1-5, Jesus tells a parable about sheep and shepherds. The sheep know the voice of the gate-keeper (10:4), but not the voice of strangers (10:5). The misunderstanding of the Pharisees is noted in narration (10:6). Lincoln rightly points out that the Pharisees do not understand what Jesus is saying “not because they did not understand the words but because they missed the point.”¹⁰⁷ The same could be argued for the three previous examples. All three audiences react with comprehension of the denotative meaning of what Jesus has said. Yet the incongruities of what he says with what he might have meant do not spark deeper reflection (if this is the intent). The word the narrator uses to describe 10:1-5, *παροιμία*, suggests that the meaning “does not lie simply on the surface and *it can conceal as much as reveal*, depending on the receptivity of the hearers.”¹⁰⁸ Since these statements so rarely succeed in communicating the meaning Jesus intends to his story-world audience, are they only meant to test receptivity? Are they only for the benefit of the reader, who has ability to ponder them, re-read them, and check them against other parts of the text? Jesus revisits similar cognitive language in 10:14-15 and 10:27. While these verses may be edifying to Jesus’ followers, they also reinforce a barrier between him and his audience. By claiming that his “own” know him, he risks endorsing the conclusion that, to the Jews who do not “hear” his voice, he is the stranger. In that case, why listen?¹⁰⁹

In 12:35, Jesus uses a metaphor of light, adding, “Whoever walks in the dark does not know where he is going.” Previous to this, the crowd has demonstrated a partial insight when in 12:33 they

¹⁰⁶ Lincoln 2005, 173; see above

¹⁰⁷ Lincoln 2005, 294

¹⁰⁸ Lincoln 2005, 294 – emphasis mine

¹⁰⁹ See n. 2 on the open question of the connection between historical figures and characters in the text.

unexpectedly introduce the term “Son of Man”. The crowd is not rewarded for its movement toward understanding (or narrative slip on the part of the author). Rather, Jesus changes metaphors in response to their question, shifting wording away from the direct “I” of 12:32 to the more obscure “the light” in 12:35. Does Jesus expect this crowd to identify him as the light because of statements made months prior, possibly to other people?¹¹⁰ Why not begin with the terminology they seem to acknowledge in 12:33 and expand on this theme? Instead Jesus leaves and hides from the crowd; and the reader is left wondering not only what effect Jesus’ words had on the crowd but also why he waits until he is hidden away to clarify that *he* came into the world as light (12:46)!

3:8; 4:10, 32; 10:1-5; and 12:35 are all responses to questions. Jesus has the opportunity to respond in a way that is understandable to his audience, but instead of using parables to “provoke further reflection and appropriate action,”¹¹¹ he seems to use παροιμία to draw attention to his audience’s lack of understanding. Just as the crowd in chapter 12 does not benefit from Jesus’ later self-identification with the light, Nicodemus is not shown benefiting from the explanation about the light given in 3:16-21 (if this should even be taken as dialogue), and almost certainly does not benefit from its continuation in 3:31-36. Instead, Jesus has purposefully spoken in multivalent language, knowing the effect it would have on his guest (2:24-25).

Jesus has a stake in who understands him and who does not. He will go on to use other pedagogical tools with the Samaritan woman and the disciples (“remaining” and SKC). But Jesus needs to maintain the “earthly” perspective of Nicodemus, the Pharisees, and even to an extent the crowd if he does not wish to complicate his mission in Jerusalem. Nicodemus’ understanding (or lack thereof) is immaterial, and the reader loses sight of him in favor of Jesus’ teaching. The teaching is what is important, not the other characters’ learning. Jesus may be the Revealer, but these uses of

¹¹⁰ Two ‘I am’ statements in chapter 8 include the Light (8:12) and the Son of Man (8:28 – not predicated). These were likely spoken some months before the events in chapter 12. John may treat the Jews in Jerusalem as one character and expect that they remember, but the reader may still sympathize with the confused audience.

¹¹¹ Stanton 1989, 219

parabolic/metaphorical speech demonstrate he is selective in who receives comprehensible revelation during his lifetime.

3:10– “You are the teacher of Israel and you do not understand (γινώσκετε) this?”

Jesus does not answer Nicodemus’ question in 3:9. Instead, he asks his own. Few commentators believe Jesus shows genuine surprise here. Instead, Culpepper’s comment that the question is a “dig” at Nicodemus is a typical if less judicious comment.¹¹² Neyrey gives brief attention to the question of whether Nicodemus is failing as a student or Jesus as a teacher, yet ultimately decides that Jesus “mocks” Nicodemus here for the “minimalist” title he gives Jesus in 3:2.¹¹³ This seems inconsistent with his positive assessment of the Samaritan woman who initially honors Jesus with the title: “a Jew” (4:9).¹¹⁴ Again, it might be profitable to glance at other instances where Jesus questions other people’s knowledge.

In chapter 8, Jesus is in a dispute about his own origins and his opponents’ when he asks them in 8:43, “Why do you not understand what I am saying?” This question marks a shift in the tone of the conversation. What is at stake is Jesus’ claim to be from the Father, and the Jews’ counter-claim that both Abraham (as a progenitor) and God (as creator) are each their father. Jesus seems to tolerate their claims that Abraham is their father, even ceding the point (8:37). In the following verse Jesus may already imply their father is the devil, but it is ambiguous in the context.¹¹⁵ When the Jews claim God as their father in a qualitatively different way than Jesus uses the term – and perhaps miss the insult in 8:38 – Jesus asks them this question. Jesus could be asking either why they do not understand what he

¹¹² Culpepper 1983, 110

¹¹³ Neyrey 2007, 76

¹¹⁴ Neyrey 2007, 95

¹¹⁵ The verb Jesus uses here, ποιείτε, can be read as an indicative or imperative. If imperative, Jesus either commands them to do the works of Abraham or God – that is, behave better – or to do the works of the devil – that is, he escalates the hostility against him. Cf. 2:19. Commentators generally base their decision of which mood is intended in correlation with which father is meant. For Brown, since the Father is meant, it is imperative; for Lindars, since the Devil is meant, it is indicative (Lindars 1972, 327; see also Barrett 1978, 347). Since Jesus’ death at the insistence, if not the hands, of these people demonstrates his Sonship to the Father, we leave open the possibility that the Devil is meant by τοῦ πατρὸς (τῷ πατρὶ ὑμῶν in some witnesses) and the verb is imperative.

is saying about the Father or that he is insulting them – most likely the former, but again unclear. Lincoln claims the question is rhetorical – note that Jesus answers it himself - and “makes clear that... those whom he addresses continue in their failure to comprehend his claims.”¹¹⁶ If Jesus made subtle digs at the crowd prior to the question, following it he tells them they are liars (8:44b), unable to hear his word (8:43b), and children of the devil (8:44a).

In 13:12, after washing his disciples’ feet, Jesus asks them if they know what he has done for them. This again marks a shift in the direction of the narrative, as many commentators note.¹¹⁷ “The interpretation of the act of Jesus seems now to change. In the preceding verses it was a symbolical action... Here it becomes an example of humility.”¹¹⁸ There is also a change in interpreter from the narrator in 13:1-11 to Jesus in 13:12-17. The symbolic nature of the act may reflect a post-resurrection understanding (cf. 13:7), which may explain why it remains hidden in narration. The (simultaneously) exemplary nature of the act is exploitable as somewhat non-Christological instruction, and may be plausibly voiced in this context. The question allows the interpretative shift. When Jesus asks in 14:9, “Have you been with me so long and still do not know me, Philip?” the construction expects that yes, he does. Still, that does not prevent the kind of comment Barrett makes: “Philip’s question is otiose and rests upon *failure to understand the person and work of Jesus*, which are declared as early as the Prologue to be directed towards the revelation of God (1.18).”¹¹⁹ This may reflect the view of the author and the informed reader, but unfortunately Philip (in the story-world at least) has not read the prologue. He may be asking for a theophany in the vein of God’s revelation of His glory to Moses,¹²⁰ that is, one of

¹¹⁶ Lincoln 2005, 272

¹¹⁷ Lincoln 2005, 371

¹¹⁸ Barrett 1978, 443

¹¹⁹ Barrett 1978, 459 - emphasis mine

¹²⁰ Keener 2003, 2:944

a different type than Jesus offers through the incarnation when, as Lincoln says, “Philip, with his dull-witted request... *now becomes the foil for the expansion of this theme.*”¹²¹

This last comment highlights an important pattern in these cognitive questions. In each of these cases, Jesus has allowed the dialogue to continue in an unproductive if not combative manner. His conversation partners ask all the wrong questions (3:4, 9; 8:33; 13:6; 14:5), and Jesus introduces a rhetorical question of his own. What follows is an expansion on a theme highlighted by the question – seeing the Father in Jesus (14:9b), following the example of what he has done (13:13-17), the inability of the Jews to understand him because of their true origins (8:43b-47), and who the true teacher of Israel is and will be (3:11-12). With the disciples, it seems Jesus draws attention to their ignorance for pedagogical effect. In 3:10 the question is meant to undermine Nicodemus’ confidence in his own knowledge (3:2) and authority (3:1, 10). The theme of Nicodemus’ ignorance is expanded on in 3:11.

3:11 – We speak of what we know (οἶδαμεν) and testify to what we have seen, but you people do not accept our testimony.

On the one hand, this verse seems to be a clear place where the perspective of the author is projected back into the story-world.¹²² Tovey attacks it from a slightly different angle when he says:

Through ‘an act of self-involvement’ the narrator merges with (the character) Jesus so that the dialogue with Nicodemus is also a statement of the implied author’s confessional stance... Hence the οἶδαμεν of 3.11 stands against the οἶδαμεν of 3.2. Jesus and Nicodemus are representative spokesmen of two groups and two perspectives upon the meaning of the historical Jesus. One is the confessing, believing, ‘knowing’ community of disciples, the other, those who do not receive the testimony or who yet remain to be convinced.¹²³

It is possible that Jesus, whom John portrays as knowing about future events throughout the gospel, specifically means John’s Christian community. If so, he is speaking way over Nicodemus’ head. Nicodemus has not approached an individual whose disciples have done any public “testifying” at this

¹²¹ Lincoln 2005, 391 - emphasis mine

¹²² Lincoln 2005, 152

¹²³ Tovey 1997, 163

point; nor has Nicodemus demonstrated the ability to make the cognitive leap this would require. Why would the character bother saying it if Nicodemus is so unlikely to understand it?

Contrary to his use here, Jesus uses “we” in a less ambiguous way in 4:22. While some commentators may claim otherwise,¹²⁴ the statement is at least understandable at the story level by the Samaritan woman. Jesus merely identifies himself as a Jew, just as the woman has at the outset (4:9; cf. 4:22c). While it is unlikely the woman understands the statement at its deepest level, it is possible for her to penetrate its meaning correctly at least to some depth. Keener suggests that “we” in 3:11 denotes Jesus and the Father.¹²⁵ Bultmann takes it to mean “the group of messengers from God,” noting that the prophets, the Baptist, and Jesus may all be in view.¹²⁶ Yet for the informed reader, Bultmann says, the author “wants the discourse to retain its air of mystery, and he does not yet wish to state clearly that Jesus is the Revealer – witness the fact that in vv. 13-21, 31-36 Jesus *uses only the third person* to refer to the ‘Son of Man’, the ‘Son’, and him ‘who has come from above’.”¹²⁷ If the author wants to preserve a sense of mystery for the reader at this point in the *narrative*, all the more so would Jesus wish to keep Nicodemus mystified at this point in the *story*. He may speak of what he knows (cf. 2:24-25) and what he has seen (cf. 1:18), but Jesus has done so consistently in language replete with double-entendres and referents inaccessible to Nicodemus.¹²⁸ Jesus’ different uses of “we” – one that is reasonably understandable to his audience, and one that is obscure and may even mock his audience – highlights Jesus’ different approaches to these two characters.

This analysis almost certainly does not represent the response of the implied reader. The reader who has the proper vocabulary to at least have a glimpse of Jesus’ meaning congratulates himself for understanding Jesus where a “teacher of Israel” does not. This reader certainly benefits from the

¹²⁴ Lindars 1972, 189; the question is at least misleading if it refers exclusively to the future Christian community.

¹²⁵ Keener 2003, 1:560

¹²⁶ Bultmann 1971, 146

¹²⁷ Bultmann 1971, 146

¹²⁸ See ὁψωσεν in 3:14 for a continuation of this trend; Thatcher 2006, 253

prologue and 3:16-21, 31-36 and understands the true sense in which Jesus is from God. This sense of superiority would increase as the reader became better informed with repeated readings of the gospel.¹²⁹ Rather, the previous reading takes seriously Nicodemus and Jesus as characters in a story. Jesus receives a guest whose greeting, if insufficiently deferential, can also be read as at least courteous.¹³⁰ Yet Jesus plays the trickster, veiling his responses behind riddles and coded language. While he may not understand what Jesus tells him, Nicodemus does not respond by attacking him but by asking honest questions. Jesus' reaction may be due to Nicodemus' high position and his need to keep true and open believers off the bench when his trial proper begins. *Perhaps* Jesus perceives the inadequacy of Nicodemus' potential for belief and does not wish to waste his own time, but this is not stated and relies just as heavily on inference from 2:24-25. What is clear is that Jesus controls this conversation, leading it where he wants it go – and that is not Nicodemus' understanding. This conversation does serve a pedagogical purpose for those believers who would decades later read the account.¹³¹ They come to believe because these things have been recorded here (20:31).

Scene 2: John 7:14-52

The next scene dense with cognitive claims voiced by Jesus details a public debate. Nicodemus reappears in this chapter, mounting a very weak defence of Jesus (7:51) that nonetheless establishes that the law is on Jesus' side, and that the Pharisees are side-stepping those aspects of the law that are inconvenient. The particular dispute on which the Pharisees comment began with a question about Jesus' teaching (7:15). Although Jesus brings so much attention to his understanding in these public discourses, this is one of the few times characters actually question it. His opponents may question *him*

¹²⁹ Meeks 1972, 53

¹³⁰ Lee 1994, 39; even though the narrator has prepared the reader to suspect Nicodemus through several devices (cf. 2:25 – "...for he knew what was in man" with 3:1 – "Now, there was a man..."; the night-time visit, etc.), when viewed through the gospel as a whole his character can at worst be described as one of inadequate belief and weak-willed, never malicious.

¹³¹ O'Brien 2005, 288

(e.g. 8:19, 53), accuse him of being possessed (8:48, 52; 10:20), and even try to stone him (8:59; 10:31), but no one thinks to simply counter one of his many “I know” statements with, “No you don’t.”

7:15 – How does he know (οἶδεν) scripture without having studied?

The wording could question Jesus’ ability to read, but more likely expresses surprise at Jesus’ mastery of the law without having formally studied.¹³² Lincoln understands the question positively, claiming, “It refers to the mastery of the law his teaching reflects despite his not having studied under teachers of the law in such a way as to pass on *their* traditions and cite *their* authority.”¹³³ Neyrey meanwhile understands the question to be mocking Jesus for his lack of training, an accusation that his teaching is from himself and lacks weight.¹³⁴ Jesus’ response would seem to support this, giving his teaching higher authority than any teacher could impart on it. The phrasing of the question, “How (πῶς) does he know...,” associates it with other “how” questions in cases of clear misunderstanding¹³⁵ and may tarnish the reader’s perception of those asking the question at the outset of this dialogue.

There are two other places where Jesus’ knowledge is questioned – 1:48 and 19:10. In the first instance, Nathanael asks Jesus, “From where (πόθεν) do you know me?” Nathanael is clearly dubious about the Messiah coming from Nazareth, and for all the reader knows he retains his negative view. But he has arguably (and inadvertently) asked the right question by associating Jesus’ knowledge with his origins. Later, Pilate asks him, “Do you not know that I have authority to release you, and I have authority to crucify you?”¹³⁶ (19:10) John makes several points with this question and Jesus’ response. First, “Pilate’s authority over Jesus comes from the same place as Jesus himself. It does not derive from

¹³² Barrett 1978, 317

¹³³ Lincoln 2005, 248 – emphasis mine

¹³⁴ Neyrey 2007, 541

¹³⁵ Culpepper 1983, 92; the Samaritan woman’s move from πῶς to πόθεν may contribute to her progression toward understanding – note Nathanael’s question in the following paragraph.

¹³⁶ Note the construction anticipates a positive response. Pilate believes Jesus is aware of the privileges of his office, and the reader might take him to be cuing Jesus to start acting accordingly.

Pilate or from the emperor; it comes from above, from God.”¹³⁷ Second, Pilate is subject to the power of the crowd, which is firmly against Jesus being released.¹³⁸ Jesus knows this. In fact, he knows that everything has been arranged so that his crucifixion will take place no matter what (cf. 18:4). Pilate “seems simply exasperated that Jesus fails to recognize both his office and his attempts to act on Jesus’ behalf... He is plainly irritated by Jesus’ unwillingness to cooperate with the one person who might pose a barrier to his crucifixion.”¹³⁹ Jesus has no real interest in raising this barrier.

Although Jesus’ knowledge is questioned on three occasions, it is never actually in doubt. Nathanael’s question directs the reader to one of the central questions of the gospel. The demonstration of special knowledge that follows hints at the extent of Jesus’ knowledge and suggests that ‘Nazareth’ is an insufficient description of Jesus’ origins. The question in 7:15, like the scene in Luke 2, disassociates Jesus’ teaching from the traditional authorities of the time, imparting it with ultimate authority. Pilate’s question highlights Jesus’ control in the face of execution. Even when a potential (and powerful) defender presents himself, Jesus is not tempted. If Brown is correct when he claims Pilate would take Jesus’ silence to mean that Jesus is looking down on him,¹⁴⁰ Jesus may actively work to alienate this defender. John turns the questions of anyone who doubts Jesus’ understanding on their heads to draw his knowledge into sharper focus.

7:17 – If anyone desires to do His will he shall know (γνώσεται) whether my teaching is from God or whether I speak on my own.

Barrett’s comment that the only condition for understanding the claims of Jesus is faith is not quite an accurate characterization of this particular verse.¹⁴¹ Jesus assures his listeners that they *can* discern the origins of his teaching by choosing to do the will of the one who sent him. If 7:15 expresses doubt in his teaching because he has not studied under an expert in the law, this is an apt response. Yet

¹³⁷ Lincoln 2005, 468

¹³⁸ Neyrey 2007, 304

¹³⁹ Keener 2003, 2:1125

¹⁴⁰ Quoted in Keener 2003, 2:1125

¹⁴¹ Barrett 1978, 318

while Jesus has criticized others for not knowing, at least in some statements he provides the conditions for coming to know.

8:31-32 claims that by remaining in Jesus' word his audience will be his true disciples and they will know the truth, and the truth will make them free. With regards to the Jews who respond, the protasis almost immediately fails (8:37c; cf. 5:38).¹⁴² In fact the statement is, as Graham Stanton puts it, "argumentative" and "in its context... is not, as it is often taken to be, an aphorism of universal validity for people of goodwill."¹⁴³ The argument that follows seems deterministic but "should not be read as an ontological dualism, referring to a person's essential nature or the origin of his or her being. Instead, this dualism is an *epistemological* and ethical one... with each side representing a different set of values that leads to different criteria for *knowing*."¹⁴⁴ Commentators wrestle with who is meant by "the Jews who believed in him" (8:31).¹⁴⁵ Hunn's comment in the conclusion of her survey of these issues is important: "John 8:30-59 has nettled commentators over the years because it begins with the many who believed in Jesus in 8:30, ends with people trying to stone him in 8:59, and gives no clear indication of when or even whether the subject changes between these two verses."¹⁴⁶ That is, commentators (including Hunn) either look for a change in audience or question the extent of the belief in 8:30-31, rather than consider the possibility that Jesus achieves exactly what he wants in alienating his audience.

Believing Jews in Jerusalem are potentially dangerous to Jesus' goals here. In other cases, Jesus accommodates characters that are presented with less initial belief (e.g., Nathanael, the Samaritan woman). He does not accuse them of being children of the Devil. Jesus may alienate these tentatively believing Jews to ensure that they will not create an obstacle to the plot against him later, or hasten his hour now. Note that the four cases where a group is said to believe and Jesus does *not* undermine this

¹⁴² Neyrey 2007, 158-59

¹⁴³ Stanton 1989, 99

¹⁴⁴ Lincoln 2005, 273 - emphasis mine

¹⁴⁵ For a survey of various solutions, see Hunn 2004, 387-97

¹⁴⁶ Hunn 2004, 398

belief happen outside of Jerusalem – 4:41, 53; 10:42; 11:45. In two cases, “the crowd” does seem to react favorably to Jesus (7:31; 12:17). In neither case does Jesus antagonize them, perhaps because in both cases this reaction aggravates the Pharisees (7:32; 12:18). Here in chapter 8 Jesus immediately calls their belief into question. By the end of the conversation they try to execute him. By focusing on Jesus’ behavior rather than the Jews’, this scene fits a pattern of Jesus maximizing the opportunities for belief presented to him *outside of Jerusalem* but not taking advantage of the opportunities presented *in the city*. In fact, he seems to actively work against them.

In 10:37, Jesus tells the Jews that if he does the works of his Father, they should believe the works – even if they do not believe him (10:38). Jesus confirms that the result of believing the works will be to realize and (continue) to understand (γινώσκητε)¹⁴⁷ the mutual in-dwelling of him and the Father. While this statement provides a condition for knowing, the Jews’ reaction is negative and violent. Helen C. Orchard’s comment is relevant here:

Jesus engages in victimal behavior in the Fourth Gospel. He provokes, incites, frustrates and confronts the Jews on several occasions, exposing himself to severe risk of physical danger (Jn. 7, 8, 10). At the Feast of Dedication he succeeds in distracting the Jews from stoning him in one breath (10.32), only to make a statement that is designed to antagonize them further in the next (10.38).... The real implication of Jesus’ behavior is that he *is in some way an active participant in his own victimization*.¹⁴⁸

Orchard’s hermeneutic relies on reading John against the voices of Jesus and the narrator who repeatedly assure us of Jesus’ sovereignty, as in her comment on chapter 8, “It is difficult to deny, however, that the narrative portrays Jesus as having *lost* control of the proceedings and consequently being forced to flee to avoid instant death at the hands of the mob.”¹⁴⁹ In fact, this is an understanding of the events the author goes out of his way to avoid by using various tools, including cognitive devices and Jesus’ own testimony. However, even if one disagrees with Orchard that a voluntary, sacrificial

¹⁴⁷ Some witnesses read πιστεύσητε here.

¹⁴⁸ Orchard 1998, 99 – note the correlation between densely cognitive scenes and scenes where Orchard argues Jesus intentionally exposes himself to danger.

¹⁴⁹ Orchard 1998, 88

death-as-glorification can be classified as victimization, her study is useful in highlighting how Jesus participates in the circumstances within John's plot that will lead to his crucifixion. This would seem to contribute to the picture of Jesus' sovereignty, not undermine it. On the one hand, Jesus deflects the Jews from stoning him because it is not his hour. On the other hand, a by-product of John's assertions of Jesus' sovereignty is that it becomes difficult to view the aggravation and violence of the mobs in Jerusalem that result from his visits there as accidental or unintentional. Knowing what is in humanity's heart, or simply knowing how the Jews have reacted to statements similar to 10:38 in the past, it is difficult to understand Lincoln's comment that the Jews are "invited to believe" here by Jesus.¹⁵⁰ John may understand Jesus' opponents to be in the wrong – children of the Devil and unable to hear God's word - but does he portray Jesus as naively attempting to win a debate with such people when he has gone to great lengths to convince the reader that Jesus knows the outcome of the argument before it begins, knowing the future and what is in their hearts?

While the conditionals are applicable to the disciples after the resurrection, Jesus satisfies all the preconditions to knowing within the narrative. He desires to do the will of the one who sent him (4:34; 5:30; 6:38-40) and knows his teaching is from the same (7:16). He *is* the Word (1:1; cf. 8:55) and the Truth (14:6). Jesus knows he does the works of his Father (4:34; 5:36; 9:3; 10:32; 14:11) and understands the unity between him and the Father (14:10-11, 20). 13:35 provides another condition for knowledge, already satisfied by Jesus in 13:34, and fits within a broader complex of statements. 14:15, 21 equate loving Jesus with keeping his commandments. According to 15:12, 17, and 13:34 Jesus' commandment is that the disciples love one another as he has loved them. 13:35 logically concludes this chain by stating, "By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." Jesus' repeated commands to satisfy the pre-condition of this statement marks the cognitive conclusion as a clear priority of the discourses. Compare 14:31 ("...but so that the world may know that I

¹⁵⁰ Lincoln 2005, 309-10

love the Father...”) and 17:23 (“...so that the world may know that you sent me and you loved them just as you loved me”).¹⁵¹ Although Jesus has been shown on occasion to be reticent in communicating knowledge to those of “the world”, an ultimate goal of collecting the disciples together is that knowledge of the proper relationships with (and within) God and with other people may be spread. This is not *Jesus’* immediate task; he simply establishes the group that will accomplish these things after he has returned to the Father.

Jesus also describes some of the consequences of knowledge through conditional statements with knowledge in the protasis, as in 4:10. In a scene with the disciples, it may be going too far to rely on the structure of 13:17 to give it its meaning,¹⁵² but it is suggestive:

If [let’s assume for the sake of argument] you know these things, then *if* you do them [it logically follows that] you are blessed.

Washing each other’s feet will not cause the blessing in itself. The disciples must understand why they are doing it and where it originates. This verse may contribute to Neyrey’s suggestion that “‘knowledge’ is currency in this Gospel,” so it is important that “Jesus knows the most important knowledge... He knows, moreover, of God’s extraordinary benefaction of ‘putting all things in his hands.’ *His knowledge, then, binds him most closely to God.*”¹⁵³ It is notable that Jesus has just done and said “these things” and presumably understands them. Within John’s framework, it logically it follows that he is blessed.

8:19 and 14:7 are perhaps the most important conditional statements of the gospel, spoken in wildly different circumstances. 8:19 occurs within a context of dispute. Jesus is defending his privilege to testify about himself. Thatcher sees his appeal to “the Father who sent me” (8:18) as a riddle that the Jews play into by asking where his Father is in 8:19a.¹⁵⁴ When Jesus states, “If you knew me, you would

¹⁵¹ If Segovia is right in arguing that 13:35 is a late addition (Segovia 1985, 491), it is an apt one. It forms an *inclusio* with 14:31, marking the boundaries of the first discourse, and with 17:23 at the beginning and end of the farewell discourses.

¹⁵² Note in particular Barrett’s suggestion that the clause about ‘doing’ is a later addition; Barrett 1978, 444

¹⁵³ Neyrey 2007, 232 – emphasis mine

¹⁵⁴ Thatcher 2006, 196

know my Father also,” the Jews understand this as an appeal to the testimony of a human father.¹⁵⁵ It seems to be a common mistake because 14:7-8 demonstrates similar confusion. In 14:7, Jesus says, “If you had known me, you would have also known my Father. From now on you know him and have seen him.”¹⁵⁶ Philip then asks Jesus to show them his Father (14:8). Earlier it was suggested that Philip might be requesting a traditional theophany. Thatcher, in an attempt to read the passage from Philip’s point of view, suggests that Philip may believe Jesus is talking about a human father, just as the Jews did in 8:18:

Commentators have generally failed to recognize the *dual rhetorical levels of Jesus’ words in the Farewell* and have consequently assumed that Philip is speaking from the perspective of FG’s audience... At the same time, most commentators acknowledge that Philip is still ignorant of Jesus’ true identity... But if Philip does not yet understand Jesus’ mission and identity, it is hard to understand his statement as a request for a theophany.¹⁵⁷

There are actually plenty of instances from which Philip could have drawn the proper conclusion.¹⁵⁸ However, what Philip *ought* to have understood and what the character has are two different things (cf. 6:7). All of this evidence *could* be taken as metaphorical, and Philip may be trying not to make the same “mistake” the Jews have made in 5:18 and 10:33. Either view highlights the difficulty Jesus’ language presents even to believers.

In 8:55, Jesus claims that while the Jews do not know the Father, he does. He adds, “If I say that I do not know him, I would be like you, a liar.” There is absolutely no doubt for him that he knows the Father. This statement is one of the few times in John where Jesus may be seen as feeling saddled with the burden of his knowledge. The Jews have never openly questioned Jesus’ knowledge of the Father. Why does Jesus introduce the possibility of lying even in a hypothetical? If he has ever been tempted to say this, John does not show it. Still, Jesus uses the cognitive statement to directly insult his opponents while accusing them of not knowing God by not recognizing God’s agent, and in that sense breaking the

¹⁵⁵ Lincoln 2005, 267; see also Keener 2003, 1:742 for the possibility that the Jews may believe his father is dead, and that Jesus appeals to a ghost or spirit-guide.

¹⁵⁶ There is quite a bit of textual confusion in this verse. Some of it seems due to incorporating elements of 8:19. See Barrett 1978, 458-59 for a discussion of the various readings.

¹⁵⁷ Thatcher 2006, 261 – emphasis mine

¹⁵⁸ Thatcher’s claim that the prologue, 5:18, and 8:27 are the only times this connection is made is questionable.

covenant.¹⁵⁹ Whereas Jesus prepares the Samaritan woman for his (predicated) ‘I am’ statement by demonstrating his special knowledge, he prepares this hostile audience by calling them liars and children of the Devil. Unsurprisingly, this audience does not react well (8:59).

7:28-29 - You both know (οἶδατε) me and know (οἶδατε) where I am from; and I have not come of myself, but He who sent me is true, whom you do not know (οἶδατε). I know (οἶδα) Him, because I am from Him, and He sent me.

What is noteworthy here is how Jesus contrasts his own knowledge with the Jerusalemites’. Initially, he seems to affirm that they know him and his origins. “Jesus admits... the truth of the claim made by the Jerusalemites, in their own sense, though there is another sense in which his origin is quite unknown to them.”¹⁶⁰ Knowing Jesus of Nazareth is not the point. They do not recognize his ultimate origins from the Father. Even if they did, recognizing Jesus comes from the Father does not imply actually knowing the Father. Jesus *does* know him *because* of where he is from.

The contrast of knowledge in 3:10-11 regarded the origins and destination of the Spirit (3:8).¹⁶¹ In 8:14, Jesus will take up the issue of origin and destination again in another contrast – “I know where I came from and where I am going; but you do not know where I come from or where I am going.” According to Lincoln:

His statement about his identity is *in terms of knowing* where he has come from and where he is going. His origin and destiny are key elements in the narrative’s depiction of Jesus’ distinctive identity. He has come from and is going to God, the Father, heaven, above, glory – these terms are all functional equivalents in underlining his divine origin and destiny.¹⁶²

The tone of the contrast is less defensive in 14:17 when Jesus tells the disciples they know the Spirit of truth while the world does not. Whereas with the Jews the point of contention was where he came from, here Jesus understands that soon the disciples will be thrown into turmoil because of where he is going. In 3:8, Jesus told Nicodemus he does not know where the Spirit comes from or where it goes. In

¹⁵⁹ Keener 2003, 1:767

¹⁶⁰ Barrett 1978, 322

¹⁶¹ 4:22 also presents a contrasting pair but seems to be used to different rhetorical ends.

¹⁶² Lincoln 2005, 265 - emphasis mine

contrast, he tells the disciples that the Spirit, like him, will be sent from the Father (14:16) and will be in them.¹⁶³

Lastly, in 17:25 Jesus ends his prayer to the Father by continuing the world theme: "...the world also does not know You, but I know You, and they know You sent me." As above with the Jerusalemites in 8:55, Jesus contrasts his knowledge of the Father with the world's ignorance. But this time he adds that the disciples know his origins. These contrasts act as criticism of those who do not know for their ignorance. Yet here, Jesus includes the disciples at least partially in his special knowledge of and relationship with the Father. These statements create distance – first, between Jesus and his audience, and later between the disciples and the world. Of course, the disciples will be sent into the world – a world to which they "do not belong" (17:14) – and they will encounter dangers similar to those Jesus exposes himself to in coming into the world. But if the disciples were to return to their lives and belong again to the world, the cognitive aspect of Jesus' mission – that the world may know God sent him through the disciples – would fail.

Scene 3 – John 8:12-59

8:28 – When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will realize (γνώσεσθε) that I am, and that I do nothing on my own, but I say only what the Father taught me.

On its face, Jesus makes one of three passion predictions using the double entendre of ὑψώω. "Jesus announces to his hearers that there will come a time when they will understand the intimate relationship he has with the Father," which is when he will be glorified through crucifixion.¹⁶⁴ Moreover, by using an active form of the verb, he credits his audience with responsibility for the act.¹⁶⁵ However, the prediction has its difficulties. Consider how Barrett attempts to understand Jesus here:

John can hardly mean that they, after the crucifixion, will accept the heavenly status of Jesus, for he knew well that most of them had not done so... Either John changes the subject awkwardly

¹⁶³ Barrett 1978, 463 – Barrett claims the presents should logically be read with future force.

¹⁶⁴ Lincoln 2005, 269

¹⁶⁵ Lincoln 2005, 269

and addresses his readers – ‘You men will know’; or he means that the Jews will learn the truth too late.¹⁶⁶

The awkward change of subject is unlikely. More likely this represents (as well as exemplifies – see above) the temporal epistemological dualism of John – that no one will *be able to* understand this Christological fact until after Jesus is crucified. In 14:20, Jesus restates this prediction exclusively for his disciples using the language of mutual indwelling: “you will know that I am in the Father and you are in me and I in you.” Jesus includes the disciples in that relationship.¹⁶⁷ The timing of this realization points to the manifestations that follow the crucifixion through the use of “on that day”.¹⁶⁸

In 15:18-20, Jesus tells the disciples that the world hates them and will persecute them because of this. In 15:21 when Jesus tells the disciples “they” will do this “because they do not know the one who sent me.” Does this mean that knowing that ‘I am’ does not imply knowing the one who sent him, or are two groups implied? Along with those who persecuted Jesus, he mentions those who kept his word (15:20c). Were both of these present in 8:28? Hunn, in surveying the various problems with chapter 8, concludes that a certain portion of the Jews around him begin to believe as a result of 8:28-29 (8:30-31a). It is these Jews whom Jesus *addresses* in 8:31b-32, Hunn says, but is *answered* by another subset of Jews in 8:33, those who have no room for his word.¹⁶⁹ This allows for the possibility that the Jews Jesus is addressing (not the ones who respond) will know that ‘I am’ (8:28). *They* will keep the word of the disciples as well (15:20c). In 16:3, there is less confusion. The ones who will expel the disciples from the synagogues and kill them will do so because these did not know the Father or Jesus. Because these predictions refer to events after the crucifixion, the pattern remains consistent that knowledge will only come *after the crucifixion*. If Jesus is merely alienating a subset of the Jews in chapter 8, they are the Jews with the loudest voices – the ones who may well cry out “Crucify!” before Pilate (19:6).

¹⁶⁶ Barrett 1978, 344

¹⁶⁷ Lincoln 2005, 395

¹⁶⁸ Barrett connects this through 14:18 (Barrett 1978, 464), while Lincoln connects the two through parallel phrasing in 16:23, 26 (Lincoln 2005, 395).

¹⁶⁹ Hunn 2004, 397-98

8:37 – *I know (οἶδα) that you are descendants of Abraham.*

Whoever responds in 8:33 instigates this statement from Jesus. On one level, Jesus is stating a simple, genetic fact that perhaps calls out the “mistake” they have made in denying ever having been enslaved considering the state of Abraham’s descendants in Egypt.¹⁷⁰ On another, this might amount to calling them children of Ishmael instead of Isaac, which would be an insult.¹⁷¹ Thatcher understands 8:37-38 as a riddle meant to entice the Jews to state explicitly that Abraham is their father, allowing Jesus to hold them to the standard this statement sets.¹⁷² In any event, Jesus seems to be doing more than simply admitting the truth of this premise.

During an earlier dispute Jesus claimed there was another who testified on his behalf, adding, “I know that the testimony he gives on my behalf is true” (5:32). Ultimately, Jesus presents the Scriptures as the only legitimate witness truly accessible to his audience (5:39-40), but of all the Jews Jesus encounters in this gospel only Nathanael seems to have made any connection between what he has read in the Law and Jesus.¹⁷³ It would be a tall order for Jesus to convince a hostile audience that they had all just been reading them wrong all these years – even if that is John’s position. Jesus knows, but his audience does not and little effort is made to rectify that.

It is at this point that he says, “I knew that you do not have the love of God in you” (5:42). There is some ambiguity in the construction of this sentence – do they not love God, or does God not love them?¹⁷⁴ There is little reason to doubt this is intentional. Whichever way the commentator takes Jesus’ meaning, the focus is often on *what* Jesus knows, not *that* he knows. Keener proves to be an exception when he says, “That Jesus ‘knew’ their character (5:42) testifies to his divine omniscience in this

¹⁷⁰ Keener 2003, 1:758

¹⁷¹ Keener 2003, 1:753; Keener suggests a contrast between Ishmael and Isaac is implicit in 8:35.

¹⁷² Thatcher 2006, 190

¹⁷³ In that case, Jesus’ demonstration of special knowledge about Nathanael seems to be an important factor. John the Baptist is “accessible” but discounted by Jesus (5:34); the Father is inaccessible (5:37-38); and the works Jesus has performed (5:36) are not personal witness, nor have they been necessarily unique up to this point (cf. ch. 9).

¹⁷⁴ Barrett 1978, 269

Gospel... Not having God's love in them (5:42) is tantamount in Johannine terms to declaring that they are not his children."¹⁷⁵ If this verse testifies only to his omniscience, it is qualitatively different from 8:37, which states an agreed-on premise before using it against Jesus' opponents. However, if Keener has not read too much into this verse,¹⁷⁶ the denial of their parentage in God does form a thematic link with the argument in chapter 8. In 8:37, Jesus admits to a fact and turns it against the opposition. In 5:42, he is confessing knowledge about the relationship (or lack thereof) between his opponents and God in such a way that insults them.

The present force in 8:37 is apt in that he is criticizing their current behavior. In 5:42, Jesus uses an aorist form. In this chapter, Jesus performs a miracle in Jerusalem on a Sabbath (5:9) in a manner that specifically violates the Jews' understanding of the Sabbath (5:10, 16) on someone who does not initially know who performed the miracle (5:13). *Jesus* then finds *him*, after which the man reports Jesus to the authorities. Considering Jesus' understanding of his present and future, he *knows* the man will do this, *knows* the Jews will persecute him for doing it *as* he has done it, and *knows* how they will react to his statement in 5:17.¹⁷⁷ Perhaps in 5:42, Jesus admits as much.¹⁷⁸ It is possible no specific moment in time is referred to even though the aorist is used, or that John simply chose this form for stylistic reasons. Yet crediting Jesus with this level of foreknowledge does not seem out of place in John. The Fourth Gospel shows his only two healings in Jerusalem on a Sabbath (cf. 9:14) in a manner that would antagonize the

¹⁷⁵ Keener 2003, 1:660

¹⁷⁶ Keener quotes 1 John for support, and this does not seem to be the focus of the argument in John 5.

¹⁷⁷ While the connection between 2:24 – "...ἐγίνωσκεν τί ἦν ἐν τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ," and 3:1 – "Ὁν δὲ ἄνθρωπος..." is often noted, there may also be such a connection with 5:5 – "ἦν δέ τις ἄνθρωπος..." and even 9:1 – "...εἶδεν ἄνθρωπον," both of whose reactions draw negative attention to Jesus from the Jerusalem leadership.

¹⁷⁸ If the past force of the verb is felt, we may look to some previous event to correlate this to. 2:24-25 (which uses γινώσκω twice) is a strong possibility. The verses immediately preceding Jesus' monologue use the term God (θεός) which is used twice here. If this is in view, it might suggest Jesus knew what their reaction would be and performed the miracle anyway (or accordingly).

religious leadership.¹⁷⁹ The Jews are ready to kill him after the first healing (5:18). Considering Jesus' intimate knowledge of how others will react to him and the lengths to which John goes to show him in control of the action, this does not seem coincidental. In 5:42 then, Jesus may testify to his sovereignty and foreknowledge even while provoking those who would attack him in their zeal.¹⁸⁰

12:50 should also be noted within this discussion of simple cognitive statements. As mentioned above, Jesus refers to himself as the light with the Jews instead of clarifying his role as Son of Man. It is only when he is hidden away that he clarifies that he is the light in 12:46. However, he continues:

I have come into the world a light so that everyone who believes in me should not remain in darkness. And if anyone hears my words and does not keep them, I do not judge him because I did not come into the world to judge but in order to save the world. He who rejects me and does not receive my words has one who judges him: the word which I have spoken, that will judge him in the last day. For I did not speak from myself, but the Father who sent me gave me a commandment what I should say and what I should speak. *And I know His commandment is eternal life. Therefore whatever I speak, I speak just as the Father told me.* (12:46-50)

According to Barrett, the commandment is that he should lay down his life.¹⁸¹ Coming just before his final trip to Jerusalem and just after the narrator's comment that "he hardened their heart so that... they would not perceive with their heart and be converted" (12:40), this verse reminds us that Jesus' earthly mission, including his ministry and crucifixion, originates in the Father who sent him. If he speaks in obscure language that provokes and contributes to the plot against him, it is because he has been sent to do so. Yet he knows the positive outcome this will achieve. Moreover, while Jesus may use confusing speech to further his goals, that does not mean for John that the reader should empathize with the secondary characters who persecute him. Jesus' words do test the receptivity of his hearers, even if that is not their only function in the narrative.

¹⁷⁹ The claim could be made that these miracles are the only two John knew of in Jerusalem and the structure of his plot reflects his historical understanding, but this would not undermine the argument being made here.

¹⁸⁰ Jesus may also be confessing his contribution to the hostility against him in 8:37 since arguably only Jews, descendants of Abraham, would be offended by Sabbath healings and Jesus' Johannine message.

¹⁸¹ Barrett 1978, 435

Scene 4 – John 13

Chapter 13 is so replete with cognitive elements that it has already frequently appeared in this analysis. Still, re-examining this chapter in its entirety will demonstrate how John uses his various devices to show Jesus in total control, and totally aware, even while circumstances risk portraying him otherwise. This would be particularly important in this chapter. The foot washing demonstrates Jesus' extreme humility, but also "represents an assault on the usual notions of social hierarchy, a subversion of the normal categories of honour and shame."¹⁸² The predictions of his betrayal along with the prediction of Peter's denial highlight potential sources of controversy. The foot washing also foreshadows Jesus' crucifixion¹⁸³ so that his "impending death dominates this scene."¹⁸⁴ At this key juncture John must be particularly careful to prevent any impression that this is not exactly what Jesus anticipated.

The chapter begins with two verses of SKR (13:1, 3). These verses return to the theme that Jesus knows his origins and destination, both with God. It is due to this awareness that Jesus rises to wash the disciples' feet (13:4). When he is questioned on this, Jesus tells Peter, "What I am doing, you do not understand now, but you will understand later" (13:7). On the one hand, this is a contrasting pair. Like previous contrasting pairs, this verse criticises Peter for not understanding while working in concert with 13:1-3 to assert that Jesus *does* understand what he is doing. On the other hand, it is a prediction about knowing consistent with John's temporal epistemological dualism. It may also be meant to highlight the difference between the disciples and Judas, who will leave before the Farewell Discourses and never benefit from the post-resurrection experience.

In 13:11, the narrator states explicitly that Jesus knew who would betray him. With 6:60-71 (and 12:4), the reader is convinced that Jesus knows this, but the disciples have not benefited from these

¹⁸² Lincoln 2005, 367

¹⁸³ Lincoln 2005, 364

¹⁸⁴ Keener 2003, 2:899

interpretations. Jesus asks them whether they know what he has done for them in 13:12, allowing an interpretive shift away from a symbolic act to an exemplary one. After explaining why they should follow his example, Jesus uses a conditional statement to explain the rewards for doing as he has described with understanding (13:17). Yet in 13:18, he tells them, “I know whom I have chosen.” This should remind the reader of 6:70 when he rhetorically asked them if he did not choose them, providing another anticipation of his betrayal. Like 5:42, this simple cognitive statement underlines Jesus’ control, assuring the reader (and Judas) that Jesus does not put himself in harm’s way without full intent.

Following this is Jesus’ declaration of the prediction theory of this gospel (13:20) which leads to the principal prediction of this chapter, that one of them will betray him (13:21). Finally this is made clear to the disciples, but it is not clear who is meant. Peter and the BD conspire to discover who this is, and Jesus shares this special knowledge with the BD (13:22-26). Orchard notes how few commentators are comfortable with the act Jesus takes in giving Judas the bread, inferring any number of noble aspects in the gesture to avoid the conclusion that Jesus has something to do with Judas’ possession by Satan.¹⁸⁵ While the reader may doubt whether Jesus *caused* Satan to enter into Judas, it is doubtful Jesus is unaware of it. Yet he does nothing to *prevent* it. Jesus may tell the BD about Judas knowing he will not tell Peter, which is wise given how reactive Peter is if he still needs Judas to do what he intends to do.¹⁸⁶ By this point in the gospel, with all the cognitive supports, the reader is certain that Judas has not deceived Jesus in plotting to hand him over. If the author has only implied that Jesus cooperates in the conspiracy against him up until now, here it is obvious. Jesus is not trying to avoid the cross. He is facilitating his delivery to it.

After Judas has left, Jesus shares special knowledge about himself which the disciples are prepared to accept if not to understand (13:31-32). Only now does he share with the disciples in the

¹⁸⁵ Orchard 1998, 175

¹⁸⁶ And apparently armed, cf. 18:10. Orchard also believes the later “shaming” of Peter is meant to tame him in preparation for the later events of that evening – Orchard 1998, 179

form of a prediction what the narrator has asserted since the beginning of the chapter. Jesus will only be with them a little while, and where he is going they cannot come (13:33). He gives them a new commandment (13:34), and explains how following this commandment will mark them as his disciples to all people (13:35). Note the cognitive element in these verses. As he did in 13:6, Peter asks a question which demonstrates that Peter does not have access to one of the most important pieces of information in the gospel – where Jesus is going. After a brief confrontation with Peter, Jesus re-asserts control through cognitive means by predicting Peter’s denial.

John has used almost every cognitive trick in his bag in this one chapter. Consistently the disciples are shown as uncomprehending – even the BD who is given privileged information (which he may not understand – see above).¹⁸⁷ By not sharing more detail about his prediction with Peter, Peter is robbed of the opportunity to act on this information when it might actually prevent Judas from succeeding.¹⁸⁸ But then, that is the point. Jesus knows the Jerusalem elite have wanted to arrest him for some time¹⁸⁹ and so far they have failed to accomplish this in broad daylight. Judas will provide the means to make a night-time attempt (cf. 18:3, 20). Jesus makes it clear to the disciples that he knows what is happening, but not because it is useful *now*. Rather, he needs them to understand *later* (13:7, 36), after these things have occurred when they might begin to doubt his mission and understanding. When Jesus speaks, it is not to inform in the present. This is not only because their understanding might undermine his mission but also because they will not *be able* to understand what he says without the hermeneutical key of Jesus’ complete mission, including the crucifixion, resurrection, and return to the Father. John, however, always seems to have one eye on the reader who has access to this understanding.

¹⁸⁷ It is possible that the BD is not included in 13:28, introducing a narrative slip up on the part of the author – a similar dilemma arises out of 20:8-9. The text as it stands, however, implicitly includes the BD.

¹⁸⁸ Although due to the conflation of the BD and the implied author, sharing this knowledge with the BD serves a pedagogical purpose for the *reader*.

¹⁸⁹ See 7:1 for the first clear indication that he knows.

Scene 5 – The Farewell Discourses

Jesus begins his Farewell by telling the disciples, “You know the way where I am going” (14:4). Jesus has only made a positive statement about his audience’s knowledge once before in 7:28, though with very different rhetorical force (see above). Notably, that verse had to do with his origins (the point of misunderstanding for the Jews) while this has to do with where he is going (the point of misunderstanding for the disciples; cf. 13:36; 14:5). Thomas takes the bait, denying they have this information (14:5). At the story level, “when Jesus tells the disciples they ‘know’ the way he is going, he alludes to previous announcements of his impending death (12:23-25, 32-33), announcements that, however, they have not understood and hence *do not now understand*.”¹⁹⁰

Thatcher adopts Segovia’s structure of escalating expositions of Christological statements (14:4-6, 7-9, 10-14),¹⁹¹ but reads the scene as a riddling session between Jesus and the disciples. 14:6 provides the answer to the riddle – they know the way because they know Jesus, who *is* the way.¹⁹² 14:7 is a second riddle. The phrasing is similar to 8:19,¹⁹³ but whereas that statement was prefaced with an assertion that the Jews knew neither Jesus nor the Father, this is followed by the claim that “from now on” the disciples know the Father. This addition “places the disciples in a different and privileged position.”¹⁹⁴ Philip steps forward to express the misunderstanding of the group in 14:8 and Jesus’ question gently highlights his misunderstanding before expanding on what is meant in the latter part of 14:7 (14:9). For the third round cognitive language is left behind because “emphasis now shifts from their failure to understand to a delineation of the proper grounds for belief;”¹⁹⁵ similar shifts have accompanied other cognitive questions.

¹⁹⁰ Keener 2003, 2:939 – emphasis mine; also note that if his death is implicit here, this simple cognitive statement again portrays Jesus as fully aware of the violence being directed against him.

¹⁹¹ Segovia 1985, 483-84

¹⁹² Thatcher 2006, 202

¹⁹³ With γινώσκω substituted in 14:7 for οἶδα in 8:19.

¹⁹⁴ Lincoln 2005, 391

¹⁹⁵ Segovia 1985, 484

This cognitive language returns briefly when the focus turns to the Paraclete and Jesus' return. In contrast to the world, the disciples know the Spirit of truth (14:17). Jesus also predicts the post-resurrection understanding the disciples will have in 14:20. The Spirit of Truth will come to teach them and to remind them of what he has said to them (14:26). Commenting on this verse, Lincoln says:

[The Spirit mediates] between the past and the present, between the pre-resurrection deeds and words of Jesus and the ongoing post-resurrection situation of the believing community. The Advocate's linking of the witness of Jesus with the witness of his followers provides this Gospel's own explanation for its overlapping temporal perspectives and for the way its narrative is frequently played out simultaneously on two levels.¹⁹⁶

John tends to portray Jesus as "talking past" the disciples in a confusing manner because the event is filtered through and directed at the experiences of the post-resurrection community who have come to understand "these things" (14:25; cf. 20:31). Jesus concludes this section by assigning a cognitive goal to his mission: "the ruler of the world... has no power over me; but *in order that the world may know* that I love the Father and I do just as the Father commanded me" (14:30-31).

There is an important affirmation of Jesus' special knowledge in the latter half of this chapter (16:17-33) that will be addressed below. For the time being, it is enough to note that Jesus continues to expand on "these things" (16:25, 33) in what he admits are figures of speech, promising a time will come in the future when he will speak to them plainly (16:25). Here Jesus has used predictions (16:20, 22bc-23), a metaphor (16:21), and double entendre (16:23a),¹⁹⁷ none of which have a good track record of being understood in this gospel. Even then, Jesus does not promise to speak "plainly" immediately. Instead, he promises only that the "hour is coming" when this will happen (16:25), the eschatological character of which the disciples seem to miss (16:29).¹⁹⁸

The prayer in chapter 17 begins with cognitive language. The prayer in chapter 11 likewise begins with Jesus asserting that he knew the Father always hears him (11:42). As discussed above, this

¹⁹⁶ Lincoln 2005, 397

¹⁹⁷ Keener 2003, 2:1047

¹⁹⁸ Lincoln 2005, 427

prayer is spoken aloud for the benefit of his audience so that they might believe. This purpose is satisfied immediately (11:45), threatening the Jerusalem elite (11:48). In that case, it seems one effect of saying the prayer aloud is to antagonize the chief priests and Pharisees, who now “conspire” to kill him (11:53).¹⁹⁹ Jesus’ use of a past-tense form of οἶδα in 11:42 eliminates any hint of doubt that God would hear his prayer (cf. 9:31) while also suggesting that he is aware that the belief this miracle will engender will likewise endanger his life. The “many” who believe in Jesus are those who have come out to Bethany. Reports of these people to the Pharisees (and chief priests) in Jerusalem, presumably by those who do not believe, instigate the conspiracy to kill him. In 11:55, “many” go up *from* the country to Jerusalem to look for Jesus, but do not find him. Yet when the “many” learn that Jesus is in Bethany, they *leave* Jerusalem to see Jesus and Lazarus. As the narrator notes specifically here, the chief priests “conspired” (ἐβουλεύσαντο – 12:10; cf. 11:53) to kill Lazarus because of the belief his resuscitation inspires.²⁰⁰ As is the pattern in John, Jesus fails to undermine this belief outside of Jerusalem – a belief which in part contributes to his arrest at the proper hour. Meanwhile, when the “crowd” still in Jerusalem (no longer the “many” – 12:12, 17) goes out to meet him it is because they have heard of the sign Jesus had done in Bethany. No belief is noted here, only a crowd who comes to watch a spectacle. It was suggested above that Jesus allows this because it aggravates the Pharisees (12:19). It seems doubtful Jesus was unaware of the effect his actions would have on the Jerusalem leadership. If it is not his goal to create this hostility against himself, he cannot be indifferent to it. Without it he will not be crucified.

The prayer in 17:1-26 is private and serves to strengthen the disciples’ bond with Jesus through inclusive cognitive language. 17:3 defines eternal life cognitively.²⁰¹ This is not quite the same as the

¹⁹⁹ Cf. “seeking” to kill him in 5:18; 7:1, 19, 20, 25; 8:37, 40. Also, cf. 12:10.

²⁰⁰ The same term, πολλοί, is used in 11:45, 55 and 12:11.

²⁰¹ The construction of this sentence allows a reading (depending on the force of εἶνα) that eternal life is a result of knowing God, adding a possible (but doubtful) proto-Gnostic tinge to the sentence; see Keener 2003, 2:1055

knowledge the world will have access to through the disciples' unity (17:23), yet both verses contribute to the cognitive aspect of Jesus' agenda. With 17:6, 17:3 supports 8:51 where Jesus claimed that anyone who kept his word would never taste death, rephrased in terms of knowing. 17:7-8 states that the disciples know everything the Father has given to Jesus came from Him just as Jesus came from Him. Compare this with 17:25 where Jesus says the world did not know the Father. This is contrasted with Jesus (who does know Him) and the disciples (which repeats the claim of 17:8c substituting ἔγνων for ἐπίστευσαν). The prayer in chapter 17 celebrates Jesus' relationship with the Father while including the disciples in that relationship through their relationship with Jesus.²⁰²

Scene 6: John 18:19-24

In 18:21, when asked about his teaching, Jesus appeals to the witness of the Jews because "they know what I said." On one level, Jesus is questioning the propriety of this interrogation because they have not produced witnesses against him.²⁰³ Jesus is not found guilty on the basis of false witness, as in the Synoptics (cf. Mk. 14:56). On another level, as with other simple cognitive statements, Jesus highlights his contribution to getting himself placed in this position. "Cleansing" the temple and performing two miracles on the Sabbath contributed as well, but it is Jesus' speech that was decisive. While the Jews persecute Jesus for healing the lame man on a Sabbath (5:16), they seek to kill him for what he says in 5:17. Stating this relationship with the Father has provoked the Jews to attempted arrests (7:29-30; 8:19-20; 10:38-39) and on two occasions nearly instigates a stoning (8:58-59; 10:30-31). Yet Jesus is not so loquacious from here on. Perhaps Jesus is simply saying, "What I've already said will be enough to convict me." In fact, he is right. A guard strikes him in response to this statement. Jesus again points their attention to what he has said: "If I have spoken wrongly, testify to the wrong; but if I have spoken rightly, why do you strike me?" Either he refers to his preceding comment or to his public

²⁰² Keener 2003, 2:1050

²⁰³ Lincoln 2005, 454

discourses. Jesus highlights the impropriety of the scene, perhaps even mocking their need to put on this show trial. He is rewarded with a trip to Caiaphas (18:24) who immediately (narratively speaking) sends him to Pilate. Jesus is found guilty without ever addressing the Jews again.

Scene 7: John 21:15-19

With Jesus repeatedly claiming what he knows and what others do (and do not) know, no character has made any direct claims about Jesus' knowledge except in chapter 16. The disciples are typically baffled by Jesus' prediction about leaving and returning (16:17-18). Jesus goes on to explain in admittedly unclear speech. When he is finished the disciples declare, "Now we know (οἶδαμεν) that you know everything (οἶδας πάντα)... Because of this we believe that you came from God (ἀπὸ θεοῦ ἐξηλθες)" (16:30). In 16:29, Jesus states clearly his origins and destination – both with the Father. Do the disciples think they have finally attained this elusive understanding? The reader should be cautious. Neyrey warns that the disciples are boasting of their own knowledge as well (we know that you know...); but by pointing to Peter in chapter 13²⁰⁴ he misses the parallel in the first such claim to knowledge by a character in John. This is 3:2, where Nicodemus declares, "We know (οἶδαμεν) that you are a teacher come from God (ἀπὸ θεοῦ ἐλήλυθας)." As close as the disciples are to Jesus and to the crucifixion, they do not yet have the perspective to make such a declaration.

Jesus does not accept an endorsement of his knowledge until chapter 21. Here Jesus twice asks Peter if he loves him "more than these," to which Peter responds, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you" (21:15, 16). Finally, when asked a third time, Peter answers, "Lord, you know everything (πάντα σὺ οἶδας); you know that I love you" (21:17). "His appeal to Jesus' sovereign knowledge throughout the conversation is poignant, since Peter now has experienced for himself that knowledge. His threefold

²⁰⁴ Neyrey 2007, 275

denial had been predicted by the Jesus who knows all things.”²⁰⁵ The prediction of his betrayal therefore acts as an extended form of SKC. Contrary to 16:30, however, Peter’s assertion in 21:17 that Jesus knows all things is not questioned, nor is it followed by a prediction of failure as his boasting in chapter 13 (and the disciples’ in chapter 16) was. Peter is now in the proper temporal position to make such a remark.

Isolating these pieces of dialogue merely on the presence of two words, risks taking them out of context and distorting their meaning. Yet viewed together they contribute to the character of Jesus and push the story to its necessary conclusion. A primary effect of these verses is that the reader agrees with Peter’s final claim that Jesus knows all things. The benefit of this understanding is that Jesus appears to be in control throughout the gospel, even when by all appearances he would not be. Jesus also knows how people will react to what he does and he says. That is, he does not lose arguments with the Jews because, knowing they will not be convinced, he is not trying to convince them. Why bother with a public ministry then? Even with the disciples, whom the Paraclete will help to remember and interpret Jesus’ words, one wonders why he could not just cut out the middle man and educate them when they are in a position to understand. Repeatedly Jesus’ discourses are shown to fail as informative speech within the story-world. Yet for the reader, Jesus’ discourses are transformative *and* informative speech.

In Jerusalem, Jesus undermines his own “success” at every turn. His actions are provocative if not antagonistic. This includes the many cognitive statements which occur most densely in Jerusalem.²⁰⁶ Jesus makes claims about his own knowledge that he refuses to substantiate in a way that is comprehensible to his audience in order to create, maintain, and escalate the alienation he experiences in Jerusalem. Without this, he endangers a principal goal of his mission – his execution. Jesus must be crucified to complete the will of the Father - an unlikely outcome if he were to successfully convince his Jerusalem audience that he is not only the Messiah but can be uniquely identified with the will of the

²⁰⁵ Lincoln 2005, 517

²⁰⁶ Note the lack of cognitive language in the dispute in chapter 6, outside of Jerusalem.

Father. These statements also serve a strategic purpose with his disciples. Some are promises of what can be known to disciples.²⁰⁷ Some use inclusive language, which may function to more strongly ally the disciples with Jesus.²⁰⁸ Interspersed with these are statements that clearly create distance between the disciples and the “world” through the use of inclusive language coupled with the vilification of “they” and the “world”.²⁰⁹ 15:18 is the most direct example of this: if the world hates you, (you) know that it hated me first. Still, John’s implied readers are the cognitive elite who benefit from their greater understanding of the life of Jesus while suffering the persecutions that come with confessing this knowledge.

²⁰⁷ E.g. 7:17; 8:31-32; 14:20; 17:3 (?); especially 13:7.

²⁰⁸ E.g. 10:4-5, 14-15, 27; 13:17-18; 14:4-9; 15:15; 17:7-8. 3:11 may be another example of this.

²⁰⁹ E.g. 14:17; 15:21; 16:3; and 17:25.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

In John, we are presented with a character who has heightened if not perfect knowledge of the future and the present, and whose analeptic statements suggest of the past as well. The conscious design of the author almost certainly revolves around the controversy that Jesus' betrayal and crucifixion presented to believers, converts, and (most likely Jewish) enemies of the fledgling church. John found an apt defense in the apologies of Deuteronomy and Isaiah, transforming apparent defeats into victories by including them in a divine plan and allowing them to serve as witnesses against those who reject God's – and in this case, Jesus' – word. The author adopts a practice common to the evangelists, mining the words of Jesus and of Scripture for prophecies of these events, and permeates the entire gospel with both subtle and blatant references to Jesus' death. In enhancing Jesus' knowledge of past, present and future events John amplifies the reader's perception of Jesus' control over the events in his life. Yet this presents a paradox: if Jesus had access to such knowledge and exerted such control over the events in his life, why does he seemingly fail in disputes with his many opponents? Why do conversations that begin with promise (chs. 3, 6, 8 especially) turn out so badly?

Commentators offer a span of solutions to this paradox. As noted above, Orchard's solution is to read the story against the narrator, viewing Jesus' claims to knowledge and sovereignty with suspicion. This allows her to view Jesus' apparent failures as a genuine loss of control. Jesus only exerts sovereignty in the sense that he participates in his own victimization. However, a strong objection to this reading rests with the need to ignore the voice of the narrator and the clear intent of the author. On the other end of the spectrum, Lincoln turns the trial motif that runs through the gospel on its head, so that Jesus judges the Jerusalem community through the trial against him. Therefore, while the Jews engage in

disputes with Jesus in order to judge him, he turns these controversies to his advantage by exposing their lack of understanding, belief, and adherence to the true spirit of the law. Lincoln's reading has the advantage of taking much more seriously the intent of the author, uncovering a coherent thematic and verbal structure running throughout the gospel. Yet Lincoln's study glosses over the tactics Jesus uses to bring out the best or worst in the belief of secondary characters, and how this difference in behavior forms a consistent trajectory throughout the plot. Lincoln, like many commentators, assumes that *if* Nicodemus or the Jews who believe in chapter 8 are treated negatively by Jesus, *then* Jesus has reason to question their intentions or belief; on the other hand, *if* the Samaritan woman or Martha receive validation *then* Jesus must likewise have a reason, and the reader must concentrate on the positive aspects of their character rather than potential defects.

From the vantage point of the story-world plot, we suggest a converse yet concurrent reading to Lincoln's: if Jesus has a reason to engender belief in a character, then he will react positively to them; and if he has no reason to engender their belief – often having a reason *not* to – then he will react negatively to them. The key to this distinction is the dual goals of Jesus' earthly mission: his crucifixion, and the establishment of a small group of disciples and followers to share a new understanding of himself and of God that will follow the completion of his mission. The first goal imposes a slightly fluid geographical dimension on his behavior. Those who come to believe in him – his disciples, the Samaritans, the royal official and his household, and the Bethany family – more often than not do so *outside of Jerusalem* and with significant help from Jesus in the form of signs/miracles, SKC, and other pedagogical tools. Those who fail to believe in him in a lasting, significant way – Nicodemus, Pilate, and the Jews, Pharisees, and crowds in chapters containing disputes – are located in Jerusalem and are all in positions to endanger a primary goal of Jesus' mission, which is his execution.

The two unambiguous counter-examples to this pattern – the blind man and the crowds of chapter 6 – nonetheless support the thesis. The healing of the blind man on a Sabbath, and the belief

which the miracle, the Pharisaic trial, and the later meeting with Jesus create in him, serves to heighten the tension in Jerusalem and draw significant negative attention to Jesus. In the case of the crowds in chapter 6, allowing them to force an unwanted form of kingship on Jesus outside of Jerusalem threatens the need for Jesus to be crucified in Jerusalem at his hour. Yet when, in chapter 12, a crowd makes a similar gesture with imperial overtones – a gesture which provokes the Jerusalem elite at the proper moment – Jesus does not resist. To these groups, Jesus makes predictions that are incomprehensible and claims to fulfill scriptural prophecies in a way that dramatically differs from contemporaneous interpretation. He does not display his special knowledge to them in the dramatic fashion he does with believers. Instead he reveals truths about himself they are not ready to accept in ways they are likely to misinterpret in language they consistently react negatively to.

Meanwhile, with those outside of Jerusalem (and) who will contribute to the second goal of his mission, Jesus is free to demonstrate his heightened awareness in a demonstrable way. His predictions are misunderstood prior to their fulfillment, but the select few who remain with him are in a position to understand them once they have been fulfilled. In the case of those predictions which are fulfilled prior to the resurrection and which function as SKC, they help to bind the disciples to Jesus. This is especially important for those predictions which refer to the resurrection. Only the disciples and followers who remain after Jesus' crucifixion experience the epistemological key of his resurrection, his return to the Father, and the sending of the Paraclete. The acts of SKC and the inclusive cognitive statements of the private discourses with his disciples ensure that at least a small group will experience this cognitive benefit. It is they who will remember the events of the gospel through this lens and reinterpret them correctly. It is they who will come to understand after the resurrection, as Peter does, that Jesus' claims to incredible knowledge are valid because he "knows all things."

The effect is even stronger for the reader, and it is almost certain that John intends these devices to have a unified effect on the reader even while having diversified effects on the characters.

The reader receives proper interpretation of predictions through narrative clarification and through the repetition of specific vocabulary (ὕψω, ἔτι μικρόν, etc.).²¹⁰ The reader benefits from the prologue, which contextualizes the gospel, and from a post-resurrection perspective that allows the proper interpretation of events in Jesus' life. He or she observes all occurrences of Jesus' special knowledge – those demonstrated to the characters and those asserted by a trustworthy narrator. The effect of this may be that such knowledge is implied even in cases where it is not asserted. Meanwhile, the mistakes and misunderstandings of Jesus' opponents along with the consistently reliable testimony of Jesus lead the reader to trust the many cognitive statements he makes. These statements are informative for the reader in a way that is only possible for even the disciples after the time period of the story.

There remains a question of authorial intent. If the above analysis stands up to scrutiny, does it reflect a conscious design of the author or is it simply a by-product of other concerns? In the case of Jesus' choice whether to display special knowledge, it seems unlikely this was not consciously done. The cases of SKC are too consistently with characters that come to believe to conclude this is not their intent. The cases of SKR, occurring in familiar scenes and acting consistently to magnify Jesus' sovereignty and foreknowledge without any discernible impact on those around him, seem to serve a clear and intentional function in John's Gospel. Above, in the case of predictive material, it was suggested that John's temporal epistemological dualism functions much as the Messianic Secret motif does in Mark, and that by stating the predictions in vague and multivalent language John has Jesus participate in retaining the secret of his crucifixion until it is accomplished. This may certainly be applied to the cognitive statements as well. The purpose of Jesus' use of wordplay may be to expose the receptivity of the secondary characters. But exposes them to whom? It seems unlikely the characters themselves understand what has happened within the story-time. Such an interpretation has the reader clearly in mind. There is little doubt this is the case, but by focusing on one's own reactions to these

²¹⁰ E.g., see Lincoln 2005, 153, where 12:33 provides the key for the multivalent use of ὑψω.

characters as a reader the dual effect of these statements for the characters within the story-world is overlooked. While having Jesus participate in the cognitive dualism of humanity's pre- and post-resurrection understanding of the Messiah, John also portrays Jesus as using this device strategically, participating in a plot which drives steadily toward the crucifixion of the central character and concludes with the sending out of his disciples.

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APPENDIX A

LIST OF COGNITIVE STATEMENTS

- I. Parables and Metaphors
 - a. 3:8 – *The wind blows where it wills, and you can hear the sound it makes, but you do not know (οἶδαζ) where it comes from or where it goes.*
 - b. 4:10 – If you knew (ᾔδεις) the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.
 - c. 4:32 – I have food to eat that you do not know (οἶδατε) about.
 - d. 10:4-5 – When he puts forth all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know (οἶδασιν) his voice. A stranger they simply will not follow, but will flee from him, because they do not know (οἶδασιν) the voice of strangers.
 - e. 10:14-15 – I am the good shepherd, and I know (γινώσκω) my own and my own know (γινώσκουσιν) me, even as the Father knows (γινώσκει) me and I know (γινώσκω) the Father...
 - f. 10:27 – My sheep hear my voice, and I know (γινώσκω) them, and they follow me.
 - g. 12:35 – Whoever walks in the dark does not know (οἶδεν) where he is going.
 - h. 14:4 – You know (οἶδατε) the way where I am going.
 - i. 15:15 – A slave does not know (οἶδεν) what his master is doing.
- II. Questioning Others' Understanding
 - a. 3:10 – *You are the teacher of Israel and you do not understand (γινώσκεις) this?*
 - b. 8:43 – Why do you not understand (γινώσκετε) what I am saying?
 - c. 13:12 – Do you know (γινώσκετε) what I have done to you?
 - d. 14:9 – Have I been so long with you, and yet you have not come to know (ἔγνωκας) me, Philip?
- III. "We" Statements
 - a. 3:11 – *We speak of what we know (οἶδαμεν) and testify to what we have seen, but you people do not accept our testimony.*
 - b. 4:22 – You worship what you do not know (οἶδατε); we worship what we know (οἶδαμεν), for salvation is from the Jews.
- IV. Others Questioning Jesus' Understanding
 - a. 1:48 – From where do you know (γινώσκεις) me?
 - b. 7:15 – *How does he know (οἶδεν) scripture without having studied?*
 - c. 19:10 – Do you not know (οἶδαζ) that I have authority to release you, and I have authority to crucify you?
- V. Conditional Statements with Knowing in the Apodosis
 - a. 7:17 – *If anyone desires to do His will he shall know (γνώσεται) whether my teaching is from God or whether I speak on my own.*
 - b. 8:31-32 – If you continue in my word, then you are truly my disciples, and you will know (γνώσεσθε) the truth and the truth will make you free.

- c. 10:38 - ...but if I do them, though you do not believe me, believe the works, so that you may know (γνῶτε) and understand (γινώσκητε) that the Father is in Me, and I in the Father.
 - d. 13:35 – By this all will know (γνώσονται) that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.
 - e. 15:18 – If the world hates you, (you) know (γινώσκετε) that it has hated me before you.
- VI. Conditional Statements with Knowing in the Protasis
- a. 4:10 – If you knew (ᾔδεις) the gift of God and who it is who says to you, ‘Give me a drink,’ you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.
 - b. 8:19 – *If you knew (ᾔδειτε) me, you would know (ᾔδειτε) my Father also.*
 - c. 8:55 – If I say I do not know (οἶδα) him, I will be a liar like you.
 - d. 13:17 – If you know (οἶδατε) these things, you are blessed if you do them.
 - e. 14:7 – If you had known/knew (ἐγνώκειτε/ἐγνώκατέ) me, you would have known/will know (ἐγνώκειτε/ᾔδειτε/γνώσεσθε) my Father also.
- VII. Contrasting Pairs
- a. 3:10-11 – Are you the teacher of Israel and you do not understand (γινώσκεις) these things? Truly, truly, I say to you, we speak of what we know (οἶδαμεν) and testify of what we have seen...
 - b. 7:28-29 – *You both know (οἶδατε) me and know (οἶδατε) where I am from; and I have not come of myself, but He who sent me is true, whom you do not know (οἶδατε). I know (οἶδα) Him, because I am from Him and He sent me.*
 - c. 8:55 - ...and you have not known (ἐγνώκατε) Him, but I know (οἶδα) Him.
 - d. 13:7 – What I do you do not understand (οἶδας) now, but you will understand (γνώσῃ) later.
 - e. 14:17 - ...that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see it or know (γινώσκει) it; but you know (γινώσκετε) it because it remains with you and will be in you.
 - f. 17:25 – O righteous Father, although the world did not know (ἔγνω) you, I knew (ἔγνων) you, and these knew (ἔγνωσαν) you sent me.
- VIII. Predictions about Knowing
- a. 8:28 – *When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will realize (γνώσεσθε) that I am...*
 - b. 14:20 – In that day you will know (γνώσεσθε) that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you.
 - c. 14:31 - ...but so the world may know (γνῶ) that I love the Father, I do exactly as the Father commanded me.
 - d. 15:21 – But all these things they will do to you for my name’s sake, because they do not know (οἶδασιν) the one who sent me.
 - e. 16:3 - These things they will do because they have not known (ἔγνωσαν) the Father or me.
 - f. 17:3 – This is eternal life, that they may know (γινώσκωσιν) You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.
 - g. 17:23 – I in them and You in me, that they may be perfected in unity, so that the world may know (γινώσκη) that You sent me and loved them, even as You have loved me.

IX. Simple Cognitive Claims

- a. 5:32 – There is another who testifies about me, and I know (οἶδα) that the testimony which He gives about me is true.
- b. 5:42 – But I knew (ἔγνων) you, that you do not have the love of God in you.
- c. 8:37 – *I know (οἶδα) that you are descendants of Abraham.*
- d. 11:42 – I knew (ᾔδειν) that You always hear me; but because of the people standing around I said it, so they may believe You sent me.
- e. 12:50 – I know (οἶδα) that His commandment is eternal life; therefore the things I speak, I speak just as the Father has told me.
- f. 13:18 – I know (οἶδα) the ones whom I have chosen.
- g. 14:4 – You know (οἶδατε) the way where I am going.
- h. 17:7-8 – Now they have come to know (ἔγνων) that everything You have given me is from You; for the words which You gave me I have given to them; and they received them and truly understood (ἔγνωσαν) that I came from you, and they believed that You sent me.
- i. 18:21 – They know (οἶδασιν) what I said.

X. The Disciples' Claims for Jesus

- a. 16:30 – Now we know (οἶδαμεν) that you know (οἶδας) all things...
- b. 21:15 – You know (οἶδας) that I love you.
- c. 21:16 – You know (οἶδας) that I love you.
- d. 21:17 – Lord, you know (οἶδας) all things. You know (γινώσκεις) that I love you.

APPENDIX B

PATTERNS IN JOHN'S USE OF οἶδα AND γινώσκω

Whereas Mark uses perhaps six different words for knowing,²¹¹ John uses only two – γινώσκω and οἶδα.²¹² Yet these two terms are prevalent in the Fourth Gospel, occurring over 100 times and leading Craig S. Keener to call them “the most common by far” of the theologically loaded terms in John.²¹³ A common assertion in Johannine commentary is that the author of the gospel uses both γινώσκω and οἶδα with little distinction except, perhaps, when they are paired.²¹⁴ Barnabas Lindars acknowledges that γινώσκω is “capable of a deeper meaning, though John tends to use the two verbs almost interchangeably.”²¹⁵ C.K. Barrett notes the etymological link between seeing (in εἰδέναι) and knowing, especially in Greek conceptions of knowledge; while OT conceptions of knowing are “more comprehensive,” including not only humanity’s *awareness* of God’s existence but of its *relationship* with God. Yet Barrett does not let this understanding develop into a theory of John’s use of the two distinct terms. He states simply that they seem to be used synonymously.²¹⁶

Keener gives a detailed examination of the two terms. While acknowledging that “some have attributed slightly different nuances to John’s two terms”, he asserts, “their semantic ranges overlap”

²¹¹ Mark uses οἶδα and γινώσκω, along with συνίημι (e.g. 6:52), νοιέω (e.g. 7:18), ἐπίσταμαι (14:68), and μανθάνω (e.g. 13:28) which is used only once in a verbal sense in John (6:45). Mark also uses modified forms of γινώσκω, such as ἐπιγινώσκω (2:8; 5:30) and a participle form of ἀναγινώσκω for “reader” (13:14). John also uses cognitive terms more than twice as often as Mark, averaging about 1 use for every 6 verses, as opposed to Mark’s 1 use for every 14 verses.

²¹² John also uses νοιέω once when quoting Isaiah (John 12:40), against the Synoptic quotations and the LXX which use συνίημι.

²¹³ Keener 2003, 1:243

²¹⁴ Tenney 1948, 308-9

²¹⁵ Lindars 1972, 118

²¹⁶ Barrett 1978, 162

and John “uses them basically interchangeably.”²¹⁷ In determining their semantic range, he classifies them by the type of knowledge that they are used to express (Pharisaic assertions, ignorance of Jesus’ enemies, relational knowledge, etc.). Keener concludes:

In most cases the varied distribution of the two terms is not statistically significant, reflecting if anything location in the book. (John sometimes seems to prefer the term more fresh on his mind at the time, e.g., οἶδα in ch. 9 but both terms in ch. 10 where he develops the issue further.) The only exception related to topic and hence difference in semantic range might be John’s preference for οἶδα with regard to knowledge of origin or destination, and this may have become simply a matter of habit. Even placement in the book usually is not significant.²¹⁸

Keener’s analysis does have some minor problems. Interestingly, while he acknowledges the prevalence of οἶδα with reference to origin or destination (11 or 12 verses for οἶδα, one for γινώσκω), he overlooks the fact that three of his own categories – *What Jesus knows*, *Jesus’ omniscience concerning his hour*, and *Jesus’ omniscience concerning “all things”* – contain no uses of γινώσκω.²¹⁹ These seem notable, consisting of 10 of his 77 noted uses of οἶδα.²²⁰ Keener gives a reason for excluding 7:51 from the count,²²¹ but other uses are noticeably absent from his tally. The adjective form of γινώσκω in 18:15 is understandably dismissed but why, for example, has Keener excluded Peter’s use of γινώσκω in 21:17, even though others use this particular verse to support the theory that John uses the verbs interchangeably?²²² Which use of γινώσκω has been excluded from chapter 17?²²³

Aside from these issues, these three commentators have effectively defined the semantic range of “knowing” on only one of its aspects: object. A quick glance at Keener’s list shows that he has categorized most uses by what is known, ignoring who knows and in what context. Moreover, when

²¹⁷ Keener 2003, 1:244

²¹⁸ Keener 2003, 1:245

²¹⁹ Keener 2003, 1:244-45

²²⁰ My count is 10 of 84.

²²¹ Though it is unclear why γινώσκω’s single use in the sense of “investigate or find out” must be excluded from the count – Keener 2003, 1:244.

²²² E.g. Lindars 1972, 634-35; Lindars states that “John’s characteristic liking for pairs of synonyms, which he tends to use without any apparent discrimination” is the “obvious reason” for their use here.

²²³ Keener 2003, 1:245; Keener counts 6, but I count 7 (17:3, 7, 8, 23, 25 (3 times))

Keener does tabulate the uses of these two verbs, he categorizes them by placement in the gospel by chapter. Since the chapter divisions are not intrinsic to the author's design, this would only be informative if the words were clustered early or late in the narrative (though Keener contends this could indicate "which terms were fresh on the author's mind").²²⁴ Using the division of the narrative at 12:50, which Keener seems to agree with, it is the case that there is no statistical significance in the spread ($p = 44.4\%$) between halves.²²⁵ As will be argued below, opposing tendencies between dialogue and narration blur two statistically significant trends when left un-segregated.

Other informative questions might be: does the use of οἶδα or γινώσκω depend on the subject of the verb? Do certain narrative contexts guide the usage? Does the presence of other terms influence the choice? If this can be shown to be the case, do these correlations add nuance if not distinction to the author's usage of the two terms? It will become clear upon examination of the text's uses that the answer to each of these questions is yes. While certain lexical restrictions/tendencies add noise to the data and the author may not have felt an extreme urgency to distinguish the two in every case where their semantic range overlaps, the thematic tendencies are strong enough to suggest that οἶδα represents (or can be understood as) factual knowledge in most cases while γινώσκω represents (or can be understood as) relational understanding.

Mitigating Factors

There are certain lexical tendencies and restrictions that tied the evangelist's hands a bit. These warn against over-emphasizing the choice of word in every instance. For example, the construction οἶδαμεν ὅτι is commonly used to express conventional wisdom or an accepted premise.²²⁶ This is perhaps the case in 3:2 and 9:24, 29, 31. John 4:42; 16:30; and 21:24 may also reflect common *Christian*

²²⁴ Keener 2003, 1:245

²²⁵ Using a chi-square analysis based on 54 uses of οἶδα and 33 uses of γινώσκω in the first half, 30 uses of οἶδα and 24 uses of γινώσκω in the second half.

²²⁶ Bauer 1957, 558

understandings which developed in the years following Jesus' death and which have been projected back into the time of the story.²²⁷ Yet even without the ὅτι attached, the NT's clear preference is for οἶδαμεν over first person plural forms of γινώσκω.²²⁸ This carries through in John, which uses ἐγνώκαμεν (ὅτι) twice (6:69; 8:52) and οἶδαμεν 18 times. This may explain why, even though γινώσκω is introduced in 7:26 and picked up in 7:27b, John still uses οἶδαμεν in 7:27a (ἀλλὰ τοῦτον οἶδαμεν πόθεν ἐστίν). Many English translations emphasize the present force of the perfects in 6:69 and 8:52, in the sense of "we have come to know" or simply "we know."²²⁹ If this is the sense meant here, it is tempting to view the use of γινώσκω as significant – otherwise, why not use the typical term? If, however, a past force is felt – "we have known that you are the Holy One of God" or "we have known (and still do) that you have a demon" – then the choice of γινώσκω is more understandable.²³⁰ A first person plural, pluperfect form of οἶδα is *never* used in the New Testament. Like οἶδαμεν ὅτι, οἶδα ὅτι can introduce an agreed upon premise. This is probably the case in 4:25 and 8:37. The uses in 5:32, 42; 11:22, 24; and 12:50 can plausibly be seen as conventional Christian statements (19:35 may also be relevant to this discussion in the third person).

Similarly, there is no future form of οἶδα (being a perfect form itself). Anytime the author might want to make a prediction about knowing, as he does in 7:17; 8:28, 32; 13:7, 35; 14:7, 20, he is more or

²²⁷ In the case of 21:24, the tradition may have been exclusive but important to the Johannine community.

²²⁸ 43 uses of οἶδαμεν as opposed to 15 uses of γινώσκομεν, ἐγνώκαμεν, γνωσόμεθα (which may have been unavoidable, see below) combined. Oddly, the author of 1 John seems much more comfortable using these forms, accounting for 10 of the uses (2:3 (twice), 5, 18; 3:19, 24; 4:6, 13; 5:2, 20). The Fourth Gospel seems more in line with typical NT usage.

²²⁹ For 6:69, the NIV has simply "know" and the KJV has "are sure", while the NAB and NRSV have "have come to know". 8:52 reads "we know" in all these versions.

²³⁰ Dodd suggests influence from LXX Is. 43:10-11, ἵνα γνῶτε καὶ πιστεύσητε... ὅτι ἐγὼ εἰμι, with ἐγὼ εἰμι becoming σὺ εἶ ὁ ἅγιος τοῦ θεοῦ on the lips of Peter (Dodd 1953, 168). This confession may also "one up" the confession of the Samaritans in 4:42 who also use a singular title for Jesus. There they say they have heard (ἀκηκόαμεν) for themselves and know (οἶδαμεν) that he is the Savior of the World. Here, Peter says the Twelve have believed (πεπιστεύκαμεν) and have known (ἐγνώκαμεν) that he is the Holy One of God. While Jesus remains with the Samaritans for a couple days (4:40), the Twelve are those who have remained with Jesus and will remain with him until his arrest.

less forced to use γινώσκω. This is especially noticeable in 13:7, “What I do now you do not understand (οὐκ οἶδας), but you will understand (γνώσῃ) later” (cf. Mk. 4:13).²³¹ It should also be noted that, even though John never uses συνίημι or ἐπίσταμαι and only uses νοιέω once in quotation (12:40), these alternatives would not have provided likely future forms either. No future forms of ἐπίσταμαι or νοιέω occur in the NT, and a future of συνίημι is used only once in Romans 15:21.

The World

Another issue which should be noted is the influence of the subject on the verb choice. Although the term “the world” (ὁ κόσμος) is used almost 80 times in John, it takes knowing as a verb only five:

Table 1: The World

1:10	He was in the world, and the world was made through him, and the world did not <u>know</u> (ἐγνώ) him.
14:17	...that is the Spirit of Truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see him or <u>know</u> (γινώσκει) him, but you <i>know</i> (γινώσκετε) him because he abides with you and will be in you.
14:31	...but so that the world may <i>know</i> (γνῶ) that I love the Father, I do exactly as the Father commanded me.
17:23	... so that the world may <i>know</i> (γινώσκῃ) that You sent me, and loved them, even as You have loved me.
17:25	O righteous Father, although the world has not <u>known</u> (ἐγνώ) You, yet I have <u>known</u> (ἐγνων) You; and these have <u>known</u> (ἐγνώσαν) that You sent me.

It is immediately clear that γινώσκω is the preferred verb when discussing what the world knows. This is also true of 1 John 2:1 and 1 Cor. 1:21, the only NT cases outside of John where “the world” takes a cognitive verb. Since five of the seven cases come from John (six from the Johannine corpus), it is unclear whether the verb choice was dictated by the subject – that is, a common lexical choice – or if other factors influenced John’s word choice.

²³¹ Although γινώσκει in 7:27 seems to have future force (see Wallace 2000, 229), there is no lexical restriction here and one might expect οἶδεν instead, especially considering the common association of οἶδα and origins/destination (2:9; 3:2, 8; 7:27a, 28-29; 8:14; 9:12, 30; 11:57; 12:35; 13:3; 14:4-5; 20:2, 13). While this may be a singular exception, it is also possible the future force of γινώσκει translated into a rare use of γινώσκω in this context.

One may notice the pattern of relational knowledge in these five verses. 1:10 assumes by the term “world” something that can recognize the Light in it, and its origins in the Word, and thus seems to consist of the *human* world. “The reference is to the world of humanity that by its response reveals its devastating plight of having become alienated from and hostile to the Light/Word that sustains it.”²³² Or as Barrett puts it: “In general the κόσμος is not the totality of creation (11.9; 17.5, 24; 21.25 are exceptions) but the world of men and human affairs. Even in 1.10 the world made through the Word is a world capable of knowing, or of reprehensibly not knowing, its Maker.”²³³

14:17 and 31 come at the middle and the end of the first farewell discourse. The disciples are to have a similar relationship with the Spirit of Truth that he has had with them, and even that he has had with the Spirit: they know him (cf. 14:9 - ἔγνωνκάς); he abides in them (cf. 15:4; 1:33); and he will be in them (cf. 1:4-9 and 9:5 with 11:10). The knowing here seems to go beyond awareness of the fact that the Spirit of Truth exists, but engaging in the same kind of relationship with it as they have with Jesus. This relational aspect obviously carries through in 14:31 since what Jesus does is so the world may know that he loves the Father – i.e. that it understands the relationship he has with the Father. “The obedience and love of the Son find their supreme demonstration in his willing acceptance of the commandment that he lay down his life (10.17f.).”²³⁴ However, this verse includes the disciples (and other believers) in this relationship because it “provides the means for the necessary consolidations of the readers’ faith and for encouragement for their distinctive mission within the world”²³⁵ after Jesus has been crucified.

17:23 and 25 cap off the discourse material in a final prayer to the Father. Again in 17:23, the relational aspect is strong, focusing on the unity of Father and Son as well as the unity of Son and

²³² Lincoln 2005, 102

²³³ Barrett 1978, 161

²³⁴ Barrett 1978, 469

²³⁵ Lincoln 2005, 400

believers and the unity of the believers themselves (17:22-23). This is because through the unity of the believers the world may understand these relationships:

Since the truth established in the cosmic trial is the unity between the one who is sent and the one who has sent him, it is not surprising that the testimony to that truth is displayed in the oneness of the witnesses... The goal of its mission is not only that the world come to know that his followers are loved by God just as Jesus is loved by God (v. 23c). From the perspective of this prayer, the world comes to know the God of love not only through hearing the witness that Jesus' death is God's loving gift to the world but also through seeing and experiencing the enacted witness of believers united through God's loving acceptance of them and their loving acceptance of each other.²³⁶

That is, the world must not only have factual awareness of the relationship, which it might gain from preaching ("...not only through hearing the witness"), but must have the opportunity to engage in a relationship with believers that in some sense brings it to understand its relationship with the Son and his relationship with the Father. 17:25 ends on a somewhat negative note. Ultimately, as Jesus faces the cross, the world has not come to know him (1:10), the Spirit (14:17), or the Father (17:25).²³⁷ Nor are the disciples said to know the Father, but rather they understand the relationship between the Father and Son ("that you sent me"). Yet the disciples must know the Father has sent the Son if the world is to know that (17:23). Regarding 17:26, Lindars says:

To John it not only refers to the giving and receiving of a revelation, but also to the establishing of a personal relationship. Jesus has known the Father (verse 25), because there has always been a loving relationship between them (verse 24). The disciples have known, i.e. recognized, that he alone can reveal God, and on this basis he has made known to them thy name – God's revealed character, which will be shown later in the verse to be love.²³⁸

Whether or not this pattern can be carried to other subjects of knowing, it is clear that "the world" knows (or fails to know) the Father in a relational manner, and that John consistently uses γινώσκω to denote that understanding. What is not clear, because the majority of NT cases come from John, is whether John's usage reflects common Christian tendencies, or creates them.

²³⁶ Lincoln 2005, 439

²³⁷ Barrett 1978, 162

²³⁸ Lindars 1972, 533

Sight and Recognition

Meanwhile, in οἶδα there is an etymological link to seeing, though this hardly dictates its usage.

In certain verses, however, this may translate into a verbal link. One example might be 12:35:

For a little while longer the Light is among you. Walk while you have the Light, so that darkness will not overtake you; he who walks in the darkness does not know (οἶδεν) where he goes.

An even clearer example occurs in 19:35:

*And **he who has seen** has testified, and his testimony is true; and he knows (οἶδεν) that he is telling the truth, so that you also may believe.*

On their own these would have to be considered coincidental (note the ὅτι, and see below on each verse). However, in scenes where seeing is a dominant motif, οἶδα is always the word chosen. The scenes considered are 1:26-35 (John's vision of the Spirit), 9:1-41 (the healing of the blind man), 20:1-18 (Jesus' first appearance), and 21:1-14 (Jesus' third and final appearance).

Scene I: John 1:19-35

This scene describes the only true prophetic vision in the gospel (though other such visions are alluded to or promised). It is also the first and one of the most important recognition scenes in the gospel, wherein Jesus is pointed out to the public for the first time by John the Baptist. The following verses have been selected to draw out the relevant data:

Table 2: John 1:19-35 (Selected Verses)

1:26	John answered them saying, "I baptize in water, but among you stands one whom <u>you do not know</u> (οἶδατε)."
1:29	The next day he saw (βλέπει) Jesus coming to him and said, " Behold (ἵδε), the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"
1:31	" <u>I did not recognize</u> (ᾔδειν) him, but so that he might be manifested (φανερωθῇ) to Israel, I came baptizing in water."
1:32	John testified saying, " I have seen (τεθέαμαι) the Spirit descending as a dove out of heaven, and He remained upon him."
1:33	" <u>I did not recognize</u> (ᾔδειν) Him, but He who sent me to baptize in water said to me, 'He upon whom you see (ἵδεις) the Spirit descending and remaining upon him, this is the One who baptizes in the Holy Spirit.'"
1:34	"I myself have seen (έώρακα), and have testified that this is the Son of God."

Within this one scene, John refers to sight no less than five times, and knowing/recognizing three times. In all three cases οἶδα is used; γινώσκω is not. It is also clear that in 1:26, knowledge is not relational in the sense of union with God, but “something simpler: they do not recognize for what he is the Messiah who is standing among them.”²³⁹

Unlike in Luke, for example, John has very little relationship with Jesus. It is at best implied that Jesus was baptized by John, and perhaps not even that.²⁴⁰ John’s only purpose is to expose or proclaim Jesus; he quickly fades from the scene. In fact, while John observes Jesus (1:29, 35) and comments on his role (cf. 3:22-30), the reader never actually sees them interact. Instead, whatever knowledge John has of Jesus is *factual*, not *relational*. He knows Jesus is the Lamb and Son of God, that Jesus ranks before him, and that he is not worthy to untie Jesus’ sandal – none of which smacks of intimacy (particularly when compared to the disciples). John never hears Jesus, never remains with him, never is said to believe in him. In fact, because his only role is as a prophetic witness (not a disciple), he need not even understand the nature of his vision or proclamation fully.²⁴¹

Scene 2: John 9:1-41

A story that centers on a trial to determine how and through whom a man recovered his sight will obviously contain much language related to vision. As will become clear from the selection of passages, cognitive language is also prevalent throughout.

²³⁹ Dodd 1965, 267; although I disagree with Dodd’s use of 8:19 as a counter-example, which uses οἶδα; 14:7 seems a more apt counter-example. See below.

²⁴⁰ Schnackenburg assumes so from Synoptic evidence, although he admits that the statement in 1:31 “serves to stress the difference between [John and Jesus]” (Schnackenburg 1980, 1:303). Meanwhile, Lincoln notes, “That Jesus was baptized by John is suppressed... and only if readers were familiar with this event through other accounts would they find here an allusion to it through John’s testimony” (Lincoln 2005, 114). “According to i.31 it is the purpose of the Baptist’s mission to disclose the *identity* of the Unknown Messiah” (Dodd 1965, 268) – emphasis added.

²⁴¹ Ashton hints at this when, commenting on Martyn’s two-level understanding of John the Baptist as also representing a Christian preacher pointing the way to Jesus, he adds the caveat that “the preacher is unlikely to have had any clear idea of the christological trajectory ahead of him” (Ashton 2007, 110).

Table 3: John 9:1-41 (Selected Verses)

9:1	As he passed by, he saw (εἶδεν) a man blind from birth.
9:3	"It was neither that this man sinned, nor his parents; but it was so that the works of God might be displayed (φανερωθῇ) in him."
9:5	"While I am in the world, I am the Light of the world." "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which is translated, Sent). So he went away and washed, and
9:7-8	came back seeing (βλέπων). Therefore the neighbors, and those who previously saw (θεωροῦντες) him as a beggar, were saying, "Is not this the one who used to sit and beg?"
9:11-12	..."so I went away and washed, and I received sight (ἀνέβλεψα)." They said to him, "Where is he?" He said, " <u>I do not know</u> (οἶδα)."
9:15	Then the Pharisees also were asking him again how he received his sight (ἀνέβλεψεν). And he said to them, "He applied clay to my eyes, and I washed, and I see (βλέπω)."
9:18	The Jews then did not believe it of him, that he had been blind and had received sight (ἀνέβλεψεν), until they called the parents of the very one who had received his sight (ἀναβλέψαντος),
9:19	...and questioned them, saying, "Is this your son, who you say was born blind? Then how does he now see (βλέπει)?"
9:20-21	His parents answered them and said, " <u>We know</u> (οἶδαμεν) that this is our son, and that he was born blind; but how he now sees (βλέπει), <u>we do not know</u> (οἶδαμεν); or who opened his eyes, <u>we do not know</u> (οἶδαμεν). Ask him; he is of age, he will speak for himself."
9:24	"Give glory to God; <u>we know</u> (οἶδαμεν) that this man is a sinner."
9:25	He then answered, "Whether he is a sinner, <u>I do not know</u> (οἶδα); one thing <u>I do know</u> (οἶδα), that though I was blind, now I see (βλέπω)."
9:29	" <u>We know</u> (οἶδαμεν) that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, <u>we do not know</u> (οἶδαμεν) where he is from."
9:30-31	"Well, here is an amazing thing: that <u>you do not know</u> (οἶδατε) where he is from, and yet he opened my eyes. <u>We know</u> (οἶδαμεν) that God does not hear sinners; but if anyone is God-fearing and does His will, He hears him.
9:36-37	He answered, "Who is he, Lord, that I may believe in him?" Jesus said to him, " You have both seen (έώρακας) him, and he is the one who is talking with you."
9:39	And Jesus said, "For judgment I came into this world, so that those who do not see (βλέποντες) may see (βλέπωσιν), and that those who see (βλέποντες) may become blind."
9:41	"If you were blind, you would have no sin; but since you say, ' We see (βλέπομεν),' your sin remains."

The references to seeing are numerous, as well as to knowing. In all cases (11 times), the verb choice is οἶδα. Some of the cautions noted above are warranted here. Seven of these cases use οἶδαμεν, making γινώσκω unlikely. Moreover, 9:29a and 9:31 seem to be conventional knowledge. Even so, the forensic nature of the scene means that what is at stake is how to understand the *facts* of the situation. Keener

recognizes this when he says, “The formerly blind man had debated with the Pharisees not only about Jesus’ identity but about epistemology, as evidenced by the frequent repetition of οἶδα.”²⁴²

When in 9:12 the man says that he does not know where the person who healed him is, this is in answer to a factual question. In almost every combination of ποῦ or πόθεν and knowing in John, οἶδα is chosen (cf. 9:29-30).²⁴³ They do not ask him *who* Jesus is, only his location. He does not know that datum. The trial is built around establishing the facts: is it possible that a man can heal a blind man on a Sabbath (itself a possible violation) in a way that requires him to violate the Pharisees’ understanding of Sabbath rules? Those involved never discuss knowing Jesus in any personal way. A quick glance at most of the statements about what is known or not known demonstrates this: where Jesus is, how the man sees, that he sees, that God spoke to Moses, where Jesus is from, that God does not hear sinners.

The only complication is the parents’ statement in 9:21 that they do not know who opened their son’s eyes. On its own this can be taken as a simple factual statement, but it is followed by the odd note in 9:22. The use of both Christ and ἀποσυνάγωγος seem anachronistic but are nonetheless unavoidable in understanding the text.²⁴⁴ It seems that they *do* know who healed their son, but that they are trying not to appear as if they are confessing him as the Christ. It could easily be argued that the first person plural (and the prevalence of οἶδα in the context) dictated the word choice. Yet is that all that would contribute to the choice here? To know *who someone is* is not the same as knowing someone. The first sense is factual, the second relational. Moreover, if the intent is to distance

²⁴² Keener 2003, 1:805

²⁴³ 1:48 and 7:27b are exceptions in dialogue; in all other cases of knowing origins and destinations, οἶδα is used (see above). 11:57 is an exception in narration, and 12:9 also has associations with location but uses γινώσκω. See below.

²⁴⁴ Martyn’s famous two-level reading assumes this (Martyn 2003, 46-66), though Bauckham argues against this on literary grounds (Bauckham 2007, 116-17) and the argument remains that a local, temporary measure was taken in Jesus’ lifetime, and the term “the Christ” has already been in use in the gospel, however anachronistic one might view its use (1:19-28; 3:28; 4:25; 7:26-42).

themselves from any implication of confession out of fear, saying not only that they do not know him *personally* but they do not even know *who he is* seems like a smart move.

Scene 3: John 20:1-18

This scene narrates the first appearance of the risen Lord. Though here this happens exclusively to Mary Magdalene, seeing is important throughout the passage, especially with regard to the empty tomb and the neat grave clothes.

Table 4: John 20:1-18 (Selected Verses)

20:1	Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene came early to the tomb, while it was still dark , and saw (βλέπει) the stone already taken away from the tomb.
20:2	So she ran and came to Simon Peter and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and <u>we do not know</u> (οἶδαμεν) where they have laid Him."
20:5	and stooping and looking in, he saw (βλέπει) the linen wrappings lying there; but he did not go in.
20:6	And so Simon Peter also came, following him, and entered the tomb; and he saw (θεωρεῖ) the linen wrappings lying there,
20:8	So the other disciple who had first come to the tomb then also entered, and he saw (εἶδεν) and believed.
20:9	For <u>they did not yet know</u> (ἤδεισαν) the scripture that he had to rise from the dead.
20:12	...and she saw (θεωρεῖ) two angels in white sitting, one at the head and one at the feet, where the body of Jesus had been lying.
20:13	And they said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "Because they have taken away my Lord, and <u>I do not know</u> (οἶδα) where they have laid him."
20:14	When she had said this, she turned around and saw (θεωρεῖ) Jesus standing there, and <u>did not know</u> (ἤδει) that it was Jesus.
20:18	Mary Magdalene came, announcing to the disciples, " I have seen (έώρακα) the Lord," and that He had said these things to her.

While Barrett may claim that this passage "is permeated with theological themes of a Johannine kind: seeing and believing, and the ascent of Jesus to the Father",²⁴⁵ "believing" is only mentioned once by the narrator in 20:8. "Knowing" is mentioned four times, each time using οἶδα. Again, the use of οἶδαμεν in 20:2 must be noted cautiously, but it is yet again associated with "where" (cf. 20:13 without the plural). 20:9 is famously awkward, with varying explanations of who "they" are and what "they" do not

²⁴⁵ Barrett 1978, 561

understand.²⁴⁶ Still, if we assume this is not simply a glitch on the part of the author, the scene is consistent with the characterization of the BD. In 13:28, the BD may have already come to know who would hand Jesus over, but that does not mean that when Judas leaves he is going to do so *right now*. Similarly, 20:9 may more aptly explain 20:10 than 20:8. That is, although the BD believes in Jesus' resurrection (as opposed to Peter?), he only knows that Jesus has said he will return "in a little while" (16:16). He may not be familiar with the scripture (which the later community already is) that would explain that Jesus is coming *right now*. As it turns out, the BD is essentially right as Jesus will find the disciples where they are (cf. 20:19, 26; 21:1-4).

Scene 4: John 21:1-14

This scene constitutes the third and final appearance scene of the risen Lord. The second, in 20:19-31, fits much better with Barrett's description just quoted above because while references to seeing and believing are frequent in that passage, there are no references to anyone "knowing". Of course, it could be argued that Thomas' need to touch the Lord reflects a preference for empirical knowledge. But the working thesis here concentrates on verbal links within the text, and there are simply no data to draw from in the second manifestation. There are, however, in the third.

²⁴⁶ Lincoln views the awkwardness as arising from a later insertion of BD material similar to 13:28 (Lincoln 2005, 491); Barrett likewise sees 20:8 as reflecting the primitive understanding of the BD without the support gleaned from the OT by the later community (Barrett 1978, 564); O'Brien views these and other solutions with suspicion, arguing that the verse highlights that the BD fails as a true witness – he believes but does not testify (O'Brien 2005, 299-302). This view is compelling on an exegetical level, but is less convincing at the level of authorial intent. Still, it would support the general thesis of this paper; see below on testimony.

Table 5: John 21:1-14 (Selected Verses)

21:1	After these things Jesus manifested (ἐφανερώσεν) himself again to the disciples at the Sea of Tiberias, and He manifested (ἐφανερώσεν) Himself in this way.
21:3	They went out and got into the boat; and that night they caught nothing.
21:4	But when the day was now breaking , Jesus stood on the beach; yet <u>the disciples did not know</u> (ἢ δεισαν) that it was Jesus.
21:9	So when they got out on the land, they saw (βλέπουσιν) a charcoal fire already laid and fish placed on it, and bread.
21:12	Jesus said to them, "Come and have breakfast." None of the disciples ventured to question him, "Who are you?" <u>knowing</u> (εἰδότες) that it was the Lord.
21:14	This is now the third time that Jesus was manifested (ἐφανερώθη) to the disciples, after he was raised from the dead.

Lincoln sees an *inclusio* in the use of “manifest” in 21:1 and 14.²⁴⁷ There is also an *inclusio* with 1:31, where Jesus is “shown” (φανερώθη) through John the Baptist in his first appearance in the gospel and here, which is Jesus’ last (as well as a link to 9:3). This scene lacks mention of “having seen” Jesus in some way, which is present in the three previous cases (1:34; 9:37; and 20:18). This may be due to the awkwardness of placing this recognition scene after 20:19-31, in which Thomas is said to “have seen” (έώρακάς) Jesus (20:29). Yet the pattern remains that in four very important scenes in which a seeing motif is dominant, there has not been one use of γινώσκω.

Many commentators view this chapter as an epilogue, perhaps written by an editor.²⁴⁸ Yet this conjecture in part originates because the chapter is similarly awkward to 20:9 – how can they not know that the person on the beach is Jesus (21:4) after seeing him risen in Jerusalem (20:19-29)? “After a blessing has been pronounced on those who believe without seeing, it comes as somewhat of a surprise

²⁴⁷ Lincoln 2005, 510

²⁴⁸ Those who argue for a second author/edition include Brown, Westcott, Dodd, Barrett, Lincoln, and others; while Keener, Thyen, Minear, and Frey argue against this (see Ashton 2007, 42-44 for a brief discussion). Fortna views 21:1-14 as a misplaced episode original to the Signs Source (Fortna 1988, 65-78). Moloney views the chapter as secondary while acknowledging its many linguistic links with Jn. 1-20 (Moloney 2008, 242-246). Still, “whether chapter 21 can be sufficiently distinguished from the rest of the Gospel on grounds of style to preclude its coming from the same author as the rest of the Gospel has been debated, and many scholars have commented that the evidence is insufficient to prove or disprove common authorship (Bauckham 2007, 272); Bauckham argues nonetheless for common authorship). It is possible to recognize the chapter’s problems while also taking the stylistic similarities of chapter 21 with the main body seriously (as opposed to 7:53-8:11). It is reasonable to imagine the editor picking up on the verbal sensibilities of the primary author if a second author was involved.

to find that there will be further narrative involving actual seeing of the risen Lord.”²⁴⁹ The disciples, who are still together, have already established their relationship with Jesus.²⁵⁰ It is not that they do not know *Jesus*, but that they do not know *this person is Jesus*. Whether the dim light or the unexpected nature of his arrival or an altered, post-resurrection appearance are to blame, once they establish the fact that it is Jesus, no one questions it (21:12).²⁵¹

One of the main purposes of the epilogue seems to be the restoration of Peter (21:15-19). Just as Peter denied Jesus three times, he is asked three times whether he loves Jesus. While Peter could simply say “yes” or “I do”, he replies in cognitive language – “you know (οἶδας) that I love you” (21:15, 16). Keener’s suggestion that certain verbal choices might be the result of momentum might be relevant here since γινώσκω has not been used since 19:4 (and then only once, although this momentum is undermined somewhat if another author is responsible). But is this not relational knowledge? Would γινώσκω not be more appropriate? When, on the third attempt, Peter first responds by claiming “you know all things (πάντα σὺ οἶδας)”, it reflects a common contemporary phrase²⁵² and echoes the disciples’ claim in 16:30 (οἶδαμεν ὅτι οἶδας πάντα). Yet Peter follows by saying, “you know (γινώσκεις) I love you”. Just as Peter began by confessing that “we... have come to know (ἐγνώκαμεν) that you are the Holy One of God,” he concludes by not only acknowledging the obvious fact of Jesus’ special knowledge (especially given his prediction in chapter 13), but by accepting the relationship that Jesus has with him despite his earlier failures.²⁵³

²⁴⁹ Lincoln 2005, 508

²⁵⁰ 10:14; 14:7, 20; 17:3, 8.

²⁵¹ Note that these scenes, along with others, are studied as “recognition scenes” by Larsen (Larsen 2008). If the selection is expanded to include all of Larsen’s recognition material, the count is 31 uses of οἶδα, only 4 of γινώσκω.

²⁵² Van Unnik 1979, 211-229

²⁵³ John’s odd use of terminology here should be noted. Two terms for love are used for love (φιλέω, ἀγαπάω) and sheep/lambs (προβάτια, ἀρνία), and Peter is alternately told to feed them (βόσκει) and to tend them (ποιμαίνει). According to some commentators, since little distinction is given to these terms, these verses support the thesis that one should not impose such a distinction on οἶδα and γινώσκω, which are likewise used here.

From Factual Knowledge to Relational Knowledge

After using οἶδα 16 times consecutively from 8:55 through 10:5, the narrator suddenly switches to γινώσκω in 10:6. It will stay this way through Jesus' discourse in chapter 10, using γινώσκω at least six more times.²⁵⁴ Why the change? In 10:1-5, Jesus tells a short parable about a shepherd and his sheep. While this is obviously meant to convey a relational message, what the sheep *know* is the shepherd's voice - οἶδασιν τὴν φωνὴν αὐτοῦ. The mini-parable of 3:8²⁵⁵ in which Jesus claims about the wind that "you can hear the sound of it (τὴν φωνὴν αὐτοῦ), but you do not know (οὐκ οἶδας) where it comes from or where it goes" is perhaps related. The association of οἶδα and "where" has been noted, so this may only be coincidence. Yet in both cases there is a switch to γινώσκω (3:10; 10:6). In each case, Jesus' audience's inability to understand what he says is noted. The author makes the same choice in all cases where such a comment is made:

Table 6: Understanding Speech

3:10	"You are the teacher of Israel and you do not <u>understand</u> (γινώσκετε) this?"
8:27	They did not <u>understand</u> (ἔγνωσαν) that he had been speaking to them about the Father.
8:43	"Why do you not <u>understand</u> (γινώσκετε) my speech; it is because you cannot hear my word."
10:6	Jesus spoke this figure of speech to them, but they did not <u>understand</u> (ἔγνωσαν) what he said to them.
13:28	Now none of those reclining <u>understood</u> (ἔγνω) why he said this to him.

16:18, wherein the disciples comment, "we do not know (οὐκ οἶδαμεν) what he says," is a possible exception which may have resulted from the first person plural or from the different speakers. When in 18:21 Jesus tells Annas to "ask the ones who heard what I said to them; they know (οἶδασιν) what I said," we may be reasonably certain he is not claiming they *understood* what he said, or have engaged

Again, see Lindars 1972, 634-35. The coincidence, if it is such, that Peter is only restored after using the relational form should at least be noted.

²⁵⁴ There is some textual confusion in 10:38, with some witnesses reading πιστεύσητε instead of γινώσκητε.

²⁵⁵ Schnackenburg 1980, 1:373

with his message in some meaningful way. Rather, they will know the *content* of the teaching well enough to convict Jesus, if that is what Annas wants.

The collection of evidence, which includes the hearing of testimony, is a fact-finding mission. In every case where testimony is explicitly at issue, οἶδα is used:

Table 7: Verifying Testimony

- 3:11 “Truly, truly, I say to you, we speak of what we know (οἶδαμεν) and **testify** (μαρτυροῦμεν) to what we have seen, but you do not accept our **testimony** (μαρτυρίαν).”
- 5:32 “There is another who **testifies** (ὁ μαρτυρῶν) about me, and I know (οἶδα) that the **testimony** (μαρτυρία) that he **testifies** (μαρτυρεῖ) about me is **true** (ἀληθής).”
- 8:14 “Even if I **testify** (μαρτυρῶ) about myself, my **testimony** is **true** (ἀληθής ἐστίν ἡ μαρτυρία μου) because I know (οἶδα) where I came from and where I go...”
- 19:35 And he who saw it has **testified** (μεμαρτύρηκεν), and his **testimony** is **true** (ἀληθινὴ αὐτοῦ ἐστίν ἡ μαρτυρία), and he knows (οἶδεν) that he speaks the **truth** (ἀληθῆ) so that you might believe.
- 21:24 This is the disciple who **testifies** (ὁ μαρτυρῶν) about these things and has written them, and we know that his **testimony** is **true** (οἶδαμεν ὅτι ἀληθὴς αὐτοῦ ἡ μαρτυρία ἐστίν).

8:19 (about the One who testifies on Jesus’ behalf), 8:55 (“If I say I do not know him, I would be a liar like you”), 12:50 (“I know His commandment is eternal life”) and 18:21 (noted above) seem related to this tendency; and this may include the trial scene in chapter 9 as well. Accepting testimony as valid and understanding the content of the testimony are not equivalent. John’s uses of οἶδα and γινώσκω reflect this consistently.

After Jesus questions Nicodemus’ understanding in 3:10, he only uses cognitive language once (οἶδαμεν, 3:11) before the cognitive nature of the discussion (and probably the discussion itself) is dropped. In Chapter 10, Jesus’ audience does not fade from view (cf. 10:19-21). The discourse that follows deals in detail with the relationship of the sheep and the shepherd, which is paralleled by the relationship of Jesus with the Father:²⁵⁶

²⁵⁶ Bultmann 1971, 375

"I am the good shepherd, and I know (γινώσκω) mine and mine know (γινώσκουσιν) me; even as the Father knows (γινώσκει) me and I know (γινώσκω) the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep." (10:14-15)

Note that although 10:27 mentions hearing his voice, what is declared here is Jesus' knowledge of them:

"My sheep hear my voice, and I know (γινώσκω) them, and they follow me." Finally, though the discourse on the sheep has been left behind, the final cases of γινώσκω in chapter 10 clearly fit this theme: "but if I perform them, even if you do not believe me, believe the works, so that you may understand (γνῶτε) and continue to understand (γινώσκητε) that the Father is in me and I am in the Father" (10:38). The relational aspect of this verb continues throughout the discourse:

The verb γινώσκειν, which is used to describe this relationship, does not of course denote a rational, theoretical knowledge, in which the thing known is separated from the percipient; it denotes rather an inward realisation, in which the knower's whole existence is determined by that which he knows, namely God... Because γινώσκειν denotes a relationship in which the partners are by nature bound together, it is possible to speak of man's knowledge of God.²⁵⁷

I would not go so far as Bultmann in claiming "the knower's whole existence is determined by that which he knows", but he is correct in perceiving this verb not as objective knowledge but subjective understanding.

A similar pattern occurs in chapter 14. Through the first five verses, οἶδα is used:

14:4 "And you know (οἶδατε) the way where I am going."²⁵⁸

14:5 Thomas said to him, "Lord, we don't know (οὐκ οἶδαμεν) where you are going; how do we know (οἶδαμεν) the way?"

The fact that they are discussing where Jesus is going, and the fact that Thomas states his question in the first person plural, helps to explain the uses of οἶδα here. However, it becomes clear in 14:6 that Jesus is not talking about a path or a location but himself when he tells them that *he* is the Way. "The way" in 14:4 is discovered to be a metaphor, and the author has shown himself to favor οἶδα in these

²⁵⁷ Bultmann 1971, 380-81

²⁵⁸ Some witnesses read: καὶ ὅπου ἐγὼ ὑπάγω οἶδατε, καὶ τὴν ὁδὸν οἶδατε. This would still be consistent with other Johannine patterns.

cases. Jesus tells the Samaritan woman that if she knew (ᾔδεις) the gift of God (and who it is speaking with her), then she would ask him for a drink (4:10). At this point, the woman does not know who Jesus is and only later Jesus identifies the gift of God with “living water,” itself a metaphor. Later in that chapter, Jesus assures his disciples that he has food they do not know about (οὐκ οἴδατε, 4:32). The disciples misunderstand him, thinking he means physical nourishment. Only in 4:34 does Jesus redefine his “food” in terms of doing the will of the One who sent him. This tendency, if it is such, may contribute to the choice of οἶδα in 14:4.²⁵⁹

After the revelation of 14:6, the discussion takes a more directly relational turn. When discussing more directly how they know Jesus, the Father, and the Spirit, γινώσκω is used 8 times:

Table 8: Cognitive Verses in Chapter 14

- 14:7 “If you had known (ἐγνώκειτέ) me, you would have known (ἐγνώκειτε) my Father also; from now on you know (γινώσκετε) him, and have seen him.”²⁶⁰
- 14:9 Jesus said to him, “Have I been so long with you, and yet you have not come to know (ἐγνώκας) me, Philip? He who has seen me has seen the Father; how can you say, ‘Show us the Father’?”
- 14:17 “...that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know (γινώσκει) Him, but you know (γινώσκετε) Him because He abides with you and will be in you.”
- 14:20 “In that day you will know (γνώσεσθε) that I am in my Father and you in me, and I in you.”
- 14:31 “...but so that the world may know (γνῶ) that I love the Father, I do exactly as the Father commanded me. Get up, let us go from here.”

Again, it should be cautioned that the future in 14:20 contributes to the choice there; and while it is unclear whether “the world” being the subject in 14:17, 31 influenced the choice, these verses

²⁵⁹ In 8:32, Jesus tells the Jews, “You will know (γνώσεσθε) the truth and the truth will make you free.” Jesus reveals in 14:6 that this too can be read as a metaphor because he *is* the Truth, yet γινώσκω is used. However, at this point his audience can neither be said to know (οἶδα) the factual truth nor have established a relationship with Jesus as the Truth, requiring the predictive nature of the statement. The need for a future form may then explain the choice of γινώσκω.

²⁶⁰ This verse has several textual difficulties. Several witnesses have ἐγνώκατε in 14:7a, and γνώσεσθε (and even ἄν ᾔδειτε) in 14:7b. Lindars takes the above as original - Lindars 1972, 473. The presence of ᾔδειτε may be influenced by the similar statement in 8:19.

nonetheless describe relational understanding. Both chapters 10 and 14 briefly employ a metaphor²⁶¹ for understanding Jesus' role (10:1-5 and 14:1-5). While using the metaphor directly, οἶδα is chosen. Both audiences misunderstand, allowing Jesus to expand on the metaphor in a way that describes the relationship he has with his disciples, which is founded in the relationship he has with the Father. Throughout these interpretations, γινώσκω is used.

In the discourses of chapters 15 and 16, the language bounces a bit between the two terms. 15:15 uses οἶδα in a metaphorical statement wherein the object of knowledge is factual (what the master does). In 15:18, Jesus warns the disciples that if the world hates them, they (should) know²⁶² the world hated him first. The presence of "the world" and the relational nature of the verse make the choice of γινώσκω unsurprising. In 15:21, Jesus claims "they" will persecute the disciples because "they" do not know (οὐκ οἶδασιν) the One who sent him (cf. 7:28). This can be read simply as they do not know who sent Jesus – that is, they do not recognize/realize that Jesus has been sent by God. But if the factual vs. relational aspects of these verbs are taken seriously, it could be taken to mean that the sending of Jesus is integral to understanding *who God is*. By not recognizing that Jesus has been sent by God, they have not only exposed their ignorance of Jesus' identity, but an important element of God's identity as well.

16:3 is similar to 15:21, assuring the disciples that "they will do these things because they did not know (οὐκ ἔγνωσαν) the Father or me."²⁶³ It would be tempting to key in on the use of "Father" over "the One who sent me" as a relational cue were it not for 8:19, 55 which use οἶδα. These verses are addressed below in the context of the larger controversy story of chapters 7-8. Still there is some

²⁶¹ See Bultmann 1971, 375 on 10:1-5 where he claims the interpretation which follows "takes up the images as metaphors."

²⁶² Γινώσκετε may be taken as indicative or imperative.

²⁶³ Brown, for example, includes them in a unit from 15:18-16:4a – Brown 1970, 2:685

nuance between 16:3 and 15:21. 15:18-21 details the “general hatred of the world.”²⁶⁴ 15:22 parallels 9:41 (in a trial scene) and forensic language is picked up in the Jesus’ description of the Paraclete.²⁶⁵ 16:3, meanwhile, “concerns the specific means of persecution that will be adopted to prevent Christians from giving voice to the witness of the Paraclete.”²⁶⁶ In particular, the disciples will be excluded from a community which has had a relationship with them, and which *ought* to have had one with Jesus and the Father – the synagogue (16:2). Furthermore, Jesus clarifies here that he is telling them this specifically to protect his ongoing relationship with them, to keep them from “falling away” (16:1) because they will remember he warned them of it here (16:4). It is apt that this shift from a general, forensic description of their persecution to this specific, personal description should be accompanied by a shift from οἶδα to γινώσκω. 16:18 and 30, meanwhile, use the first person plural in a predictable manner; the use of οἶδα with “all things” is not surprising (cf. 21:17)²⁶⁷ and both pertain to Jesus’ origins and destination. Moreover, Jesus’ following retort implies that while he has factual knowledge of what is about to happen (cf. 18:4) they are clueless about where he is going.²⁶⁸

The language of Jesus’ prayer to the Father in chapter 17 is highly cognitive, highly relational, and contains seven uses of γινώσκω, no uses of οἶδα.²⁶⁹ 17:23 and 25 have been addressed above because the subject of γινώσκω is “the world” in two instances, but should be noted again:

²⁶⁴ Brown 1970, 2:701

²⁶⁵ Brown 1970, 2:698

²⁶⁶ Brown 1970, 2:701

²⁶⁷ See above.

²⁶⁸ Neyrey (Neyrey 2007, 275) comments here: “Jesus knows all... The disciples, however, do not know much. They do not know what Jesus meant in 16:16-18 [on his departure]. Whatever they know from him is now in figures. Although they are promised that when ‘the hour comes’ they will know plainly, this has not yet happened.”

²⁶⁹ There are also two uses of the γινώσκω derivative γνωρίζω in 17:26.

Table 9: Cognitive Verses in Chapter 17

- 17:3 "Now this is eternal life, that they should know (γινώσκωσιν) You, the only true God, and the one whom You sent, Jesus Christ."
- 17:7 "Now they know (ἔγνωσαν) that everything You gave me is from You..."
- 17:8 "...because the words You gave me I have given to them, and they accepted them and truly understood (ἔγνωσαν) that I came from You, and they have believed that You sent me."
- 17:23 "... so that the world may know (γινώσκη) that You sent me, and loved them, even as You have loved me."
- 17:25 "O righteous Father, although the world has not known (ἔγνω) You, yet I have known (ἔγνω) You; and these have known (ἔγνωσαν) that You sent me."

It is not only "the world" which carries this verb. Commenting on the inter-relatedness of the Father, Jesus, the disciples, and the world, the author uses γινώσκω every time. Bultmann, again connecting chapter 10 with the Farewell Discourses, comments:

However there is a further similarity between this final revelation discourse held before the people and the Farewell Discourses, in that the relationship between the Revealer and his own is described as a *reciprocal* relationship. For the fact that they not only "know" him, but that he "knows" them shows both that they are determined by him and he is determined by them.²⁷⁰

Bultmann also compares 10:38; 14:11 and 17:21 with 10:15; 17:25 to illustrate this point. It seems unlikely that γινώσκω always happened to be on the author's mind when addressing these specific themes.

The Absence of a Relationship

Another οἶδα cluster centers on Jesus' betrayal and crucifixion (6:61, 64; 13:1, 3, 11, 18; 18:2, 4 and perhaps 19:28). In 6:60-71, the narrator takes care to note that Jesus knows (εἰδώς) some of his disciples were murmuring (6:61). More to the point, he knew (ᾔδει) who the ones who did not believe in him were as well as who his betrayer was (6:64). When the issue of Jesus' impending betrayal and crucifixion returns in 13:1-3, 11, the narrator again proclaims Jesus' special knowledge of these facts (εἰδώς – 13:1, 3) and who his betrayer is (ᾔδει – 13:11) using οἶδα. Jesus joins the narrator in this pattern by asserting, "I know (οἶδα) the ones I've chosen" (13:18). Judas soon leaves and it is not until

²⁷⁰ Bultmann 1971, 381

18:2 that Judas returns with a cohort to arrest Jesus (because Judas knew (ᾔδει) the place). Jesus meanwhile knows (εἰδώς) all things coming upon him (18:4). Either it is coincidence, or the author takes care never to assert that Jesus knows Judas in a relational manner. This is despite a declaration on the part of Jesus that he knows who they are and ample support in narration to defend against the impression that Jesus might have been deceived by Judas.

The Narrator

As has been seen, the narrator often takes verbal and thematic clues from the context and dialogue. The Judas material provides one example. The appearance scenes of 20-21 provide another. When commenting on an audience that does not understand what Jesus is saying (8:27; 10:6), the narrator uses γινώσκω just as Jesus does. 2:9 is factual and related to origins, making οἶδα expected (cf. 5:13). 2:24-25 describes Jesus' personal understanding of all humanity, making γινώσκω unsurprising. Yet a brief glance at the narrative material gives the impression that it demonstrates a greater deal of overlap in semantic range between the verbs.

If the narrative material is isolated and divided by “halves” of the gospel, the results are as follows:²⁷¹

Chart 1: Verb Section by Narrative “Half”

	Narration 1:1-12:50	Narration 13:1-21:25		Dialogue 1:1-12:50	Dialogue 13:1-21:25
οἶδα	6	12	οἶδα	48	18
γινώσκω	12	2	γινώσκω	21	22

It is clear that narrative support is provided by οἶδα much more often in the second half of the gospel than in the first (especially given the asymmetry of the division). The betrayer complex is partly to blame, accounting for only two cases in the first half but five in the second. 2:9 and 5:13 account for

²⁷¹ A chi-square analysis of these charts indicates 0.3% and 1.1% probabilities (respectively) of this distribution occurring by chance. It is also doubtful that this spread has been determined because of purely stylistic issues.

three more in the first half, leaving only 6:6 to be explained. In the second half, the appearance scenes add four cases, and the two statements about testimony contribute two more, leaving only 19:28 which may be related to the betrayer/crucifixion motif. 6:6 is related to 6:15 and other assertions of Jesus' understanding and control that pervade John. However, on its own, it is entirely factual (he knows what he intends to do) and the least impressive of the bunch. Perhaps, although the author wanted to take care to protect the scene from any hints of improvisation (and Jesus from a non-rhetorical need to ask a question), the mundane nature of the knowledge contributed to the verb choice.

Looking at the narrator's use of γινώσκω, meanwhile, shows a sharp decline in the latter half. There are two assertions that Jesus' audience does not understand what he is saying in the first half (8:27; 10:6). Jesus' (special) knowledge about humanity (2:24-25) allows him also to have knowledge about the Pharisees (4:1), the lame man (5:6), and the crowd's intentions (6:15) which also serves to underline his control. The world does not have this understanding of Jesus (1:10). Otherwise, unless an overriding theme influences the narrator to use οἶδα instead, the narrator generally uses γινώσκω.²⁷² Meanwhile, in the second half the narrator continues to use γινώσκω to note when Jesus' audience does not understand him (13:28; cf. 16:19). These mark the only cognitive comments by the narrator in the Farewell Discourses. Otherwise, themes in the trial, crucifixion, and resurrection appearances dictate the use of οἶδα.

The Controversies of 7-8

The controversy narratives of chapters 7 and 8 have structures that are notoriously difficult to analyze.²⁷³ Yet they are densely cognitive in nature and therefore relevant to this study, even though the

²⁷² See 4:53; 11:57; 12:9, 16.

²⁷³ Even ignoring 7:53-8:11, critics tend to chop up these two chapters. Von Wahlde includes 7:25-27, 31-32, 40-52 in his Signs Gospel, but none of chapter 8 (despite verbal affinities) – Von Wahlde 1989, 102-108. Schnackenburg moves 7:15-24 to the end of chapter 5, leaving 7:1-15, 25-42 loosely flowing into 8:12 – Schnackenburg 1980, 90-171 & 187-224. This study leaves questions of the compositional history of these chapters largely behind, acknowledging that it may account for some of the lexical confusion. The text as received will be examined while noting the somewhat chaotic nature of the argument in chapters 7-8. The absence of a clear progression of

author seems to bounce back and forth indiscriminately between the two verbs under examination. These chapters contain 11 instances of γινώσκω and 15 uses of οἶδα. Certain uses are consistent with other trends in the gospel, though. 7:17²⁷⁴; 8:28 and 8:32 use future forms of γινώσκω and 8:27, 43 comment on the audience's inability to understand what Jesus is saying. 7:28-29 and 8:14 are related to origins/destination, using οἶδα (6 times). 8:37 may be safely described as a traditional and factual premise. The rest, however, needs examination.

The dialogue begins with a factual question (7:15, literally, "How does he know letters...?"). Οἶδα would be expected here. 8:19 seems to be relational, and its similarity to 14:7 strengthens this impression. However, it should be noted that first of all 8:19 takes place within the context of a question about valid testimony which always tends to οἶδα. Furthermore, this is also in a conversation about where Jesus is going and where he is from (8:14) and where his father is (8:19a). Although the Pharisees clearly have the wrong conception of Jesus' father, their goal is to ascertain *who his father is*, not whether they already know him personally. This passage may be paraphrased, "You do not know who I am or who my Father is; if you knew who I was, you would also know who my Father was."²⁷⁵

7:27 contains an odd pairing of both terms, noted above. There it was suggested that the first statement (we know where he is from) is perfectly in character with other οἶδα verses, while the second statement (when the Messiah comes, no one knows where he is from) may have imported γινώσκω because of the future force of the statement, even though it uses a present form. In fact, within these two chapters several "misuses" of γινώσκω are present. In the verse prior, some of the Jerusalemites

thought, as might be seen in the οἶδα narratives of John 4 and 9, or the γινώσκω discourses of John 10, 14, and 17, may also account for some of the back-and-forth between the terms.

²⁷⁴ Dodd's comment (Dodd 1953, 158) that "here we need not seek any special sense for γινώσκειν. It is a matter of understanding, and rightly valuing, that which Jesus teaches" suggests that John's tendency to use γινώσκω to denote understanding the content of speech may also have played a role in the verb selection here.

²⁷⁵ In comparison, 14:7 by the addition of "and have seen Him" speaks more to the unity of Father and Son. The translation, "If you know me, then you will know my Father also. From now on you do know him..." is therefore appropriate. Here the concern is whether the disciples do already know the Father *personally* in some way.

wonder whether the authorities knew (ἐγνώσαν) that Jesus is the Christ. The problematic use of a first-person plural in 8:52 has been noted above (we have known you have a demon), and 8:55 seems to pick this up before switching to οἶδα: “And you have not known (ἐγνώκατε) Him, but I know (οἶδα) Him.” If Jesus does pick up the perfect γινώσκω from 8:52, this passage may have parallels in Mark 3:22-30. Instead of denying he has the Holy Spirit, this audience denies that the Father is with him (rather, a demon). They both accuse him of being possessed (Mark 3:22; John 8:52). In Mark, Jesus accuses them of blasphemy (Mark 3:29-30); here he accuses them of lying (John 8:55). The lie is that they call Him their God (8:54) yet have no relationship with Him (8:55a). “I at least know who he is,” that is, not a demon. They do not even know that (8:19).

There are also two uses in chapter 7 in a scene involving the chief priests and Pharisees. They accuse the crowd of not knowing (γινώσκων) the Law (7:49), in which accusation many hear echoes of elitism over the *‘am ha-aretz*.²⁷⁶ Nicodemus then asks if that Law does not require them to hear him and learn (γνῶ) what he is doing (7:51). One might expect οἶδα in these verses as they regard the factual investigation of what Jesus does²⁷⁷ and knowledge of the Law. Glancing over other “misuses” of γινώσκω, one quickly sees they are clustered around the rulers and chief priests. They are mentioned (though are not the voice) in 7:26; they seek to find Jesus’ location in 11:57; they are shown Jesus so that they may know (γνῶτε) Pilate finds no guilt in him (19:4; cf. 18:35). Whether this reflects the speech patterns of this hostile group, or simply reflects a handful of cases out of hundreds where the author allows the semantic range of the two terms to overlap, is unclear. Less than 10 misuses, clustered around a particular group as they are, would not undermine the vast amount of evidence in

²⁷⁶ E.g., see Schnackenburg 1980, 2:160: “Thus the curse pronounced upon those who do not know the Law is not an exaggeration. In the eyes of the Pharisees they were people upon whom the curse of God had come, because they did not know and carry out the Torah (cf. Deut 27:14-26).”

²⁷⁷ Keener 2003, 1:244

favor of John's distinction of these two terms even if the author does not rigorously enforce this distinction in every case.

Conclusion

John not only adopts connotations of factual, objective knowledge with οἶδα and deeper, interpersonal knowledge with γινώσκω, he develops them in several consistent and interesting ways. John uses οἶδα consistently where information is at stake. This includes sight scenes, which are meant to establish first who the Messiah can be identified with and who the figure of the risen Lord can be identified with (in both cases, Jesus).²⁷⁸ This also includes forensic motifs, such as testimony and the immediate outcome of the trial (his "handing over" and his crucifixion). John details the conflict between what is traditionally known by the Jewish authorities (and therefore impedes their ability to accept a new revelation of God in the person of Jesus) and a new understanding of the identity of God. These motifs clearly overlap in the trial of chapter 9, where οἶδα is used 11 times. When Jesus admits that they know him and where he is from (7:28), what they know is *data*. They know his name. They know he is from Galilee. What they do not understand is his (unprecedented) relationship with the Father, nor certainly the relationship with the Father he offers to them through himself. In not *recognizing* Jesus (both in the sense of 'acknowledging' and 'seeing') as sent-from-God, John claims they are abandoning their relationship with God and may even be said to misunderstand an integral quality of *who God is*.

Meanwhile John uses γινώσκω much more often when identity is less at stake than having a personal relationship with someone is. This verb is chosen when understanding *what Jesus means* rather than accepting what he says as valid or verifiable. The origin of Jesus' teaching may be factual for believers, but its content explains his relationship with the Father (cf. 1:18). Because his opponents

²⁷⁸ Notice also that the concern in the exchange with the Samaritan woman is likewise who Jesus can be identified as (reaching the conclusion that he is the Messiah (4:25, 29) and the savior of the world (4:42)). This section likewise uses οἶδα exclusively (6 times).

cannot understand the relationship described by Jesus (between him and the Father) in his teaching, they cannot accept the validity of his witness. Those who do wish to at least acknowledge this relationship (and later come to understand it) are invited to engage in a parallel and perhaps transitive relationship with Jesus. In the three substantial *cognitive* discourses on the relationships of the disciples with Jesus and Jesus with the Father (10:7-22; 14:6-31; and the prayer to the Father in 17:1-26), γινώσκω is always used. This exclusivity, combined with the number of uses in these verses (1/3 of the 57 total), argues on their own against John using the two terms interchangeably.

Above, 1:48 was mentioned as a possible counter-example to John's tendency to associate "where" with οἶδα. Yet, Jesus has yet to demonstrate his special knowledge of Nathanael's location (1:48b) when he is asked this. Rather, Nathanael is reacting to Jesus' statement about *his character* in 1:47. Jesus makes a claim that typically requires personal knowledge to make, and Nathanael reacts by asking him, πόθεν με γινώσκεις;²⁷⁹ Because the fact of Jesus' crucifixion is never in doubt and in fact known to the reader from the beginning, it is integral to his mission. To accomplish this, the Jerusalem elite must not only fail to know him personally but even to understand *his identity*, the person he is. This they fail to do. The cognitive aspect of his mission, that the world may know that he has been sent by the Father (cf. 14:31; 17:23, 25), will be accomplished by his disciples – those few who have engaged in the proper relationship with him (cf. 13:35; 14:7, 17). They know *him*, and through him understand his relationship with the Father which allows them to actually *know the Father*. The shift in focus, from Jesus' earthly mission leading to his crucifixion dominant in the first half of the gospel (though of course the less-cognitive passion narrative is contained in the second) to the post-resurrection mission of the disciples described in detail in the second half of the gospel (though of course the recognition scenes of

²⁷⁹ Edwin A. Abbott, in 1906, claimed that "In John, when a person is described as 'being known', the present, γινώσκω, always implies sympathetic or moral knowledge, insight, understanding, as in i.48" (Abbott 1906, 357).

chapters 20-21 necessarily precede this mission), correlates to the relative shift in use from οἶδα to γινώσκω.

This is not to say that John's usage of these terms never overlaps. In the same way it is clear that John's use of "I am" has acquired a specific, Johannine meaning; yet few would argue that the blind man's use of the phrase in 9:9 retains this depth of meaning. Sometimes an *I AM* is just an "I am". With regard to οἶδα and γινώσκω there is a relative surplus of data through John's frequent focus on knowing. Yet it seems hardly defensible to claim that the terms are interchangeable and only stylistic concerns influence their selection. It is even more dubious that the author has made consistent choices with regard to speech, testimony, sight/identity, the world, and the disciples by pure chance. It is hardly necessary to conclude that by employing γινώσκω in a different way from οἶδα that John is guilty of all sorts of Gnostic applications, as is perhaps the fear after Bultmann. Instead, this understanding allows the interpreter to understand the temporal epistemological dualism and the dual aspects of Jesus' mission in John more fully.

If God's people (much less the world) knew Him in a relational way – that is, acknowledged His presence and engaged in a relationship of mutual love as John understands it – then Jesus would not need to be sent. That does not mean that it is Jesus' mission to engage in or create this relationship in them. Jesus' immediate mission is to be glorified in crucifixion, obeying the will of the Father. This is not a by-product of his ministry – it is the principal goal, and it will be accomplished through the Jerusalem elite's inability to identify him as the Messiah. By identifying him instead as a false prophet who leads the people astray (John 7-8, 11-12, 18), they ensure his success. Thus Jesus' ministry, dominated as it is by forensic motifs, centers around establishing (or rather, misinterpreting) the facts. The second aspect of his mission is to establish a core group of disciples who will actually enter a relationship of friendship (cf. 15:15) and love (cf. 13:35). Through this relationship they will come to know the Father. Through their relationship, they will spread this understanding of God to others. They will encounter the same

difficulty as Jesus: their testimony will be seen as invalid and unverifiable. Yet even once it is trusted, it cannot be understood – it cannot “bear fruit” – until others are brought into a relationship with the disciples, the Spirit, with Jesus and through him the Father. This can only happen after the completion of Jesus’ earthly mission and return to the Father. It is perhaps appropriate then that γινώσκω is used in all futures. For the disciples in the story world, this knowledge is proleptic. This knowledge is a promise of what will be known – and who will be known – after the defining moment of the Easter event.