

## Summary and Key Terms

Title: A Socio-Rhetorical Investigation of the Johannine Understanding of “the Works of the Devil” in 1 John 3:8

by

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### Summary

Using the methodological approach of Socio-rhetorical Analysis, this study focuses on understanding the phrase in 1 John 3:8, “the works of the devil,” from the standpoint of the original audience. A comprehensive investigation of this phrase contributes toward theological discourse about the Johannine understanding of the devil/evil and cosmic conflict. By juxtaposing the results of a number of temporarily bounded studies, the meaning of the phrase, “the works of the devil,” is seen in its historical, cultural, and literary context.

The literary context of the phrase under investigation involves two pericopes at the center of 1 John: 3:4-10, and 3:11-18, where the author’s cosmic eschatological theology is presented in a chiasmic climax. Inner texture analysis of these pericopes reveals complex rhetorical transitions that focus attention on the destruction of the works of the devil. Repetitive-progressive texture charts and discourse analysis of these pericopes uncover the key terms and relationships of these terms, contributing toward an understanding of the meaning of the phrase, “the works of the devil.”

Scribal inter-texture analysis compares the use of these terms in other biblical and extra-biblical literature, including an original analysis of 1QS 4:15-25. In short, the works of the devil, according to 1 John and the Gospel of John, supplemented by historical evidence of ancient culture and writings, would have been seen by early Johannine believers as equated with that which leads to death. Examples show that this could be physical death, as in the example of Cain, or of disease, or spiritual death, as in the example of idols which represent unbelief, evil work, false approaches to God, and disobedience to God’s commands.

While the devil’s works can be summarized as bringing death—both physical (disease and deformity, social chaos, mental chaos) and spiritual (unbelief, hatred),

the Son of God appeared to give life (1 John 4:9). The appearing of the Son of God is seen to result in works and characteristics that are the opposite of those associated with the sin of the devil, thus nullifying or destroying them.

**Key Terms:** New Testament; First John; works of the devil; socio-rhetorical analysis; chiasmic structure; rhetorical transitions; chain-link interlock; status degradation ritual; repetitive-progressive texture; grid and group model; discourse analysis

A SOCIO-RHETORICAL INVESTIGATION OF THE JOHANNINE  
UNDERSTANDING OF “THE WORKS OF THE DEVIL” IN 1 JOHN 3:8

by

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## **CHAPTER 1. GENERAL INTRODUCTION AND HISTORICAL SURVEY**

At the center of the First Epistle of John stands the phrase, εἰς τοῦτο ἐφανερώθη ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ ἵνα λύσῃ τὰ ἔργα τοῦ διαβόλου (“for this purpose the Son of God was revealed, in order to destroy the works of the devil”). What would the original audience have understood this phrase to mean? How might a comprehensive investigation of this phrase contribute toward theological discourse about the Johannine understanding of the devil/evil and cosmic conflict? A recent methodological approach in New Testament studies holds the potential for new research to result in new answers to questions about the First Epistle of John in general and verse 3:8 in particular. Socio-Rhetorical Analysis draws a number of temporary boundaries around a text for the purpose of close examination from one point of view at a time.<sup>1</sup> This approach presupposes that what is discovered within one bounded area will be put in dialog with discoveries in other bounded areas. This process can be compared to piecing together patterned squares, which have been knitted, crocheted or hand-sewn separately. Only when the squares are placed in right relation to each other does the overall design emerge. Similarly, when the results of a variety of approaches to studying a text are compared and related, a more complete and aesthetically pleasing interpretation of the text emerges. This ideological assumption from a woman’s perspective may enable the present writer to make a unique contribution to Johannine studies, with a focus on 1 John, particularly on the phrase in 1 John 3:8, “the works of the devil.”

### **1.1. GENERAL STATEMENT OF AREA OF INTEREST**

This thesis will investigate the meaning of “the works of the devil” from a variety of perspectives under the title, “A Socio-Rhetorical Investigation of the Johannine Understanding of ‘the Works of the Devil’ in 1 John 3:8.” It is hoped that by juxtaposing the results of a number of temporarily bounded studies that the meaning of this phrase will be seen in its historical, cultural, and literary context.

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<sup>1</sup> Vernon Robbins, *The Tapestry of Early Christian Discourse: Rhetoric, Society and Ideology* (London: Routledge, 1996), 20.

The literary context to be examined involves two pericopes at the center of 1 John: 3:4-10, and 3:11-18, where the author's cosmic eschatological theology is presented in a chiasmic climax. These pericopes are simultaneously part of a complex rhetorical transition that focuses attention on the destruction of the works of the devil. In discussions in chapter four about inner texture, the chiasmic structure and rhetorical transitions will be explained in detail. Later in this chapter a more complete explanation for the textual boundaries will be given.

## **1.2. OVERVIEW OF THE THESIS CHAPTERS**

### **1.2.1. Chapter 1: General Introduction and Historical Survey**

After a brief overview of the other chapters of the thesis, this first chapter will present the results of an historical survey of Johannine literature focused on two specific questions:

- A. To what extent has the method of Socio-Rhetorical Analysis been applied to a study of 1 John?
- B. What has been said in the Johannine literature about "the works of the devil," as referred to in 1 John 3:8?

This review will point to the need for the research that has been undertaken in this thesis: its purpose, the research problems, the choice of textual boundaries for in-depth research (the pericopes), and potential academic contributions. Each of these aspects will be discussed briefly in this chapter following the historical survey.

### **1.2.2. Chapter 2: Methodology**

The second chapter describes the methodology of Socio-Rhetorical Analysis that the historical survey demonstrates has rarely been used in the study of 1 John. This chapter will explain the different textures of Socio-Rhetorical Analysis and the adaptations that will be made in this study. This methodology will be compared to the construction of a quilt by piecing together individual squares that are later stitched together into an integrated pattern. The sum of the separate "quilt squares," or bounded research projects, will yield fresh insights into the research problems from a variety of perspectives.

### 1.2.3. Chapter 3: Epistemological Questions of 1 John

The third chapter examines several of the standard epistemological questions of 1 John as they relate to the research problems of the thesis. The epistemological topics that will be addressed include the occasion for writing (brief discussions of author, recipients, date, location, and identity of the opponents), genre, and structure. The focus in the review of the occasion for the writing of 1 John will be on the contribution each aspect can make toward understanding the meaning of the phrase, “the works of the devil.” In the discussion of the genre of 1 John, a new proposal will be given, namely, that 1 John is a liturgy that is the result of the combination of two separate rituals that label the believers as “children of God” and the opponents as “children of the devil.” This proposed solution to a perennial problem points toward a fuller understanding of the phrase at the heart of 1 John, “the Son of God was revealed ... to destroy the works of the devil.” Inductive examination of the structure of 1 John will reveal an overall chiasmic structure with its climax in the pericopes being investigated in this thesis (3:4-10; 3:11-18). Further examination of the structure will reveal complex transitions similar to examples found in Greco-Roman handbooks of rhetoric. One of these transitions, termed, “chain-link interlock” by Bruce Longenecker,<sup>2</sup> will be shown to function in the central pericopes of 1 John to highlight the climactic and cosmic theme of the destruction of the works of the devil. These aspects of the book’s structure will be discussed in detail in chapter four.

### 1.2.4. Chapter 4: Exegesis: A Socio-Rhetorical Reading of 1 John 3:4-18

The fourth chapter is the heart of the thesis, the examination of the text from various angles, with research based on each of five textures of Socio-Rhetorical Analysis. Vernon Robbins describes the multiple textures in a text:<sup>3</sup>

Inner Texture: literary and rhetorical techniques are used to analyze aspects of words and meanings in the text.

Inter-texture: the way a text uses phenomena that lie outside the text, often other texts.

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<sup>2</sup> Bruce Longenecker, *Rhetoric at the Boundaries* (Waco, Tex.: Baylor University Press, 2005), 9.

<sup>3</sup> Vernon Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts: A Guide to Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation*. (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 1996), 3-4.

Social-Cultural Texture: evidence in the text, or known through historical and anthropological research, of cultural and social practices that are not readily apparent to interpreters in contemporary cultures.

Ideological Texture: concerns the way the text itself and interpreters of the text see themselves in relation to other individuals and groups.

Theological Texture: addresses the relationship between humans and the divine.

Following one or more separate research projects within each of these textures (the construction of the “quilt squares”), the results of the research will be synthesized and pieced together at the conclusion of chapter four to see what has been learned through a Socio-Rhetorical reading of 1 John 3:4-18 (with emphasis on 3:8) about the cosmic battle and the purposes of the book of 1 John related to the theme, “the works of the devil.”

### **1.2.5. Chapter 5: Conclusions**

The fifth chapter will present a synthesis of the exegetical findings and original inductive research of the preceding chapters. This will include insights related to the occasion for the writing of 1 John, application of social-science group theory, and insights from inner and inter-texture analysis. The hypotheses presented in this research will be summarized along with contributions that have been made to Johannine literature and suggestions for future studies.

### **1.3. ANALYTICAL HISTORICAL SURVEY OF RELEVANT LITERATURE**

Now that an overview of the rest of the thesis has been given, this chapter will turn to a survey and critique of the historical and current discussions of two questions: To what extent has the method of Socio-Rhetorical Analysis been applied to a study 1 John? What has been said in the Johannine literature about “the works of the devil,” as referred to in 1 John 3:8? This review will find that the integrated approach of Socio-Rhetorical Analysis has not been used intentionally to interpret the book of 1 John other than by Duane Watson in one recent chapter. Nor has the phrase in focus in this thesis, “the works of the devil,” been intentionally researched and written about in depth, other than as part of Brown’s four pages of commentary on the verse, 1 John 3:8.<sup>4</sup> Following a representative survey and critique of the

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<sup>4</sup> Raymond Brown, *The Epistles of John*. Vol. 30 of *The Anchor Bible Commentary* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1982), 404-407.

work that has been done in these two areas, additional sections of this chapter will go on to explain the purpose of the thesis, the research problems to be addressed, the rationale for the pericopes chosen for in-depth research, and the potential academic contributions of the present research. A summary of the need for further research will lead to the second chapter in which the methodology of that research will be explained and illustrated.

### **1.3.1. Review of Literature that Applies the Method of Socio-Rhetorical Analysis to 1 John**

To what extent has the method of Socio-Rhetorical Analysis been applied to a study of 1 John? The short answer to this question is that this methodology is so recent that it has been used very rarely in the literature of the Johannine epistles. Socio-Rhetorical Analysis draws temporary boundaries around the text for the purpose of close examination from one point of view, followed by the intentional integration of several approaches to exploring the text through inner texture, inter-texture, social-cultural texture, ideological texture and theological texture.<sup>5</sup> As a relatively new phenomenon in biblical studies, the method of Socio-Rhetorical Analysis has not been widely applied to Johannine studies.<sup>6</sup> Jerome Neyrey's recent commentary, *The Gospel of John* (2006), comes closest to the methodology in the standard Johannine literature, but this is a social science commentary, not the intentional use of Socio-Rhetorical Analysis. In the literature on the Johannine Epistles, Duane Watson has emphasized the application of the rhetorical aspect of Socio-Rhetorical Analysis in several studies of the Johannine Epistles.<sup>7</sup> Dirk van der Merwe has written about "sin" in 1 John from the social-cultural texture point of view, or as he calls it, a "socio-religious" perspective.<sup>8</sup> David A. deSilva, in his *Introduction to the New Testament*, explains Robbins'

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<sup>5</sup> Robbins, *Tapestry*, 20. Socio-Rhetorical Analysis uses the language of "the texture of texts" and uses data from the fields of linguistics, rhetoric, discourse analysis and hermeneutics (inner texture), comparative literature, (inter-texture), social sciences (social-cultural texture), as well as investigating ideological texture (the author's and readers' points of view) and integrating the whole to arrive at a description of the theological texture of the text.

<sup>6</sup> A relevant Master's dissertation is on file at the University of South Africa, "An Assessment of Vernon Robbins' Socio-Rhetorical Method: John 4:1-42 as a Test Case," by Margaret Mollett. Unisa: 2005.

<sup>7</sup> Duane F. Watson, "Amplification Techniques in 1 John: The Interaction of Rhetorical Style and Invention," *JSNT* 51 (1993): 99-123; "1 John 2:12-14 as *Distributio*, *Conduplicatio*, and *Expolitio*: A Rhetorical Understanding," *JSNT* 35 (1989): 97-110; "A Rhetorical Analysis of 2 John According to Greco-Roman Convention," *NTS* 35 (1989): 104-30; "A Rhetorical Analysis of 3 John: A Study in Epistolary Rhetoric," *CBQ* 51 (1989): 479-501.

<sup>8</sup> Dirk van der Merwe, "Understanding 'Sin' in the Johannine Epistles." *Verbum et Ecclesia* 26 (2005): 543-70.

Socio-Rhetorical Analysis model, giving examples of at least one of the textures for each book of the New Testament. He explores ideological texture in his chapter on 1 John, in relation to the author's purpose for writing.<sup>9</sup> Each of these articles focuses on only one texture. The only example in the literature of the Johannine Epistles that intentionally incorporates several textures using the distinctives of Socio-Rhetorical Analysis is Watson's chapter in a volume of essays in honor of Robbins, the originator of this methodology.<sup>10</sup>

Continuity of the new methodology with past New Testament research can be seen in the fact that all commentators on 1 John utilize one or more aspects of the textures featured in Socio-Rhetorical Analysis in their discussions of the book, although not with the terminology and distinctives of Robbins' approach in mind. All discuss the content and structure of the text (aspects of inner texture), all make comparisons to the Gospel of John and often to other biblical or extra-biblical literature (scribal inter-texture) and all give historical background information, which relates to historical inter-texture. Fewer talk about the literary/rhetorical style or discuss specific relevant cultural factors of the ancient Mediterranean world. Ideological criticism is such a new field that it has not often been applied, using that terminology, to 1 John, although a number of examples can be found of scholars approaching the text with clearly stated presuppositions. Loosely speaking, theological texture could be said to be present in any commentary that attempts to describe implications of the text for the lives of believers. However, again, the distinctives of this texture in Robbins' approach are not followed.

Following is a summary of commentators' approaches to the text of 1 John using the categories of the five textures of Socio-Rhetorical Analysis. This is only for the purpose of comparison of old and new approaches. Other than Watson, van der Merwe, and deSilva, these scholars were not intentionally engaging in Socio-Rhetorical Analysis.

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<sup>9</sup> David deSilva, *An Introduction to the New Testament: Contexts, Methods, and Ministry Formation* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 463-71.

<sup>10</sup> Duane Watson, "Keep Yourselves from Idols': A Socio-Rhetorical Analysis of the Exordium and Peroratio of 1 John," in *Fabrics of Discourse: Essays in Honor of Vernon K. Robbins* (ed. David B. Gowler, L. Gregory Bloomquist, and Duane F. Watson; Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 2003), 281-302. Watson is slated to produce a commentary on 1 John in an upcoming series he is editing with Vernon Robbins that will feature the method of Socio-Rhetorical Analysis.

### 1.3.1.1. *Inner Texture*

This texture has traditionally been known as exegesis, approached by scholars from a variety of points of view:

- Discourse analysis: Du Rand, Longacre, Louw, Nida, Olsson.
- Structure of the Epistle examined in detail: Brown, Burdick, de Dietrich, Feuillet, Grayston, Jones, Kruse, Law, Maletesta, O'Neill, Rensberger, Schnackenburg, Smalley, Sibinga, Snodderly (in Master's dissertation), Strecker, Thomas, Tollefson, Von Wahlde.
- Use of antithetical expressions and dualistic language: Boismard, Brown, Bultmann, de la Potterie, Edwards, Neufeld, O'Neill, Olsson, Painter, Piper, Schnackenburg, Tollefson
- Rhetorical devices at work in the arrangement of the discourse: Longenecker, Parunak, Porter and Olbricht, editors, Thomas, Watson.
- Progression or development of thought: de la Potterie and Lyonnet, Schnackenburg.

### 1.3.1.2. *Inter-texture*

The following scholars incorporate extra-biblical literature in their commentaries on 1 John:

- Comparison to the Qumran Scrolls: Boismard, Brown, Charlesworth, Coetzee, Fensham, Hoffman, Houlden, Kruse, Marshall, Price, Schnackenburg, Sproston.
- Non-canonical Christian literature: Brown, Strecker.
- Second Temple Jewish literature, including the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*: Brown, de la Potterie, Fensham, Kysar, Lieu, O'Neill, Von Wahlde.
- Gospel of John used to understand or accompany 1 John: Brown, Cullmann, Grayston, Hengel, Kruse, Marshall, Perkins, Schnackenburg, Sproston, Strecker, Thomas, Von Wahlde, Westcott.
- Synoptic Gospels: Brown.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> It is disappointing that while Brown's exegesis of 1 John 3:8 includes a comparison of the description of Jesus' ministry in the Gospel of John and in the Synoptics, in relation to the devil's or demonic activity, he does not make a direct connection between the way Jesus related to the evil entities in the Synoptics and the statement in 1 John 3:8, that the Son of God was revealed to destroy the works of the devil. Instead he stays with the traditional interpretation, derived from inner texture exegetical studies, equating human sin with the works of the devil.

- Hebrew Bible: Most commentators comment on the one reference to the Hebrew Bible (Cain). Only Watson points out echos of Genesis, Psalms, Proverbs and Jeremiah in the Prologue of 1 John.<sup>12</sup>

### 1.3.1.3. *Social-Cultural Texture*

Due to the findings of archaeology, such as the Dead Sea Scrolls, Perkins points out, “we know more now about how people lived and related to one another at this time.”<sup>13</sup> Esler, Malina, Neyrey, Pilch, Meeks, and Rohrbaugh are key scholars in the field of social-science research in New Testament interpretation. Their work is useful for understanding the social-cultural features of the ancient Mediterranean world such as the core values of honor-shame, patronage, group embeddedness, etc. Other cultural features include orality (Perkins, Piper, Thomas, Tollefson), antilanguage (Tollefson), and family and group orientation (Brown’s *The Community of the Beloved Disciple*, Hoffman, Malina, Neufeld, Van der Merwe, Van der Watt).

### 1.3.1.4. *Ideological Texture*

The point of view of the author and interpreters of the text and how they see themselves interacting and changing as a result of the text are features of ideological texture.

As mentioned earlier, David A. deSilva, in his *Introduction to the New Testament*, explores ideological texture in his chapter on 1 John, in relation to the author’s purpose for writing.<sup>14</sup>

Van der Watt, in his article, “My Reading of First John in Africa,” specifically relates his cultural point of view from his home in South Africa to the ideology of the text of 1 John.<sup>15</sup>

Dammers comments on the application of 1 John to non-western as well as western cultures. His stated presupposition demonstrates ideological analysis: “The Son of God alone

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<sup>12</sup> Watson, “Idols,” in *Fabrics*, 281-302.

<sup>13</sup> PHEME PERKINS, *The Johannine Epistles* (Wilmington, Del.: Michael Glazier, 1979), xv.

<sup>14</sup> deSilva, *Introduction*, 463-71.

<sup>15</sup> J. G. van der Watt, “My Reading of 1 John in Africa,” in *The Personal Voice in Biblical Interpretation* (ed. Ingrid. R. Kitzberger; London: Routledge, 1999), 142-55.

can release men from demonic powers not only in witch-ridden African homesteads or idol-haunted Indian villages, but in the more sophisticated industrial society of the West.”<sup>16</sup>

While not using the terminology of Socio-Rhetorical Analysis, Neufeld’s analysis of 1 John from the standpoint of speech-act theory contains much that could be described as ideological texture.

At the heart of this approach [speech-act theory] is ... the view that language is a form of action and power. Discourse becomes responsible for creating reality and not merely reflecting it. ... Such a use of language leaves neither the author nor the audience unchanged or uninvolved. ... The author of 1 John expects that both he and his audience will act in accordance with these words.<sup>17</sup>

Scholarly opinion as to the presence or absence of a polemic purpose in the book is another example of ideological texture. Those who refer to a polemic tone include Brown, Cullmann, Grayston, Hengel, Houlden, Kruse, O’Neill, Schnackenburg, and Swadling. Swadling claims the author is using an “Asianic rhetorical style,” quoting the well-known sayings of his opponents, and then immediately contradicting them.<sup>18</sup> Three commentators,

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<sup>16</sup> A. H. Dammers, *God Is Light, God Is Love: A Running Commentary on the First Letter of John*. (London: United Society for Christian Literature, 1963), 48.

<sup>17</sup> Dietmar Neufeld, *Reconceiving Texts as Speech Acts: An Analysis of 1 John* (Leiden and New York: Brill, 1994), vii-viii.

<sup>18</sup> Harry C. Swadling, “Sin and Sinlessness in 1 John,” *SJT* 35 (1982): 205-11. His proposed interpretation of 1 John 3:6, 9 is thought-provoking and contrary to that of nearly all other commentators. His interpretation depends on recognizing quotations of the opponents in slogans that are normally taken as statements of the true beliefs of the author. Swadling’s insights in relation to the polemic nature of 1 John are worth reviewing here, as an example of challenging status quo thinking. He points out that it is possible to read 1 John 3:6 as a mocking quotation by the opponents to disparage the believers. He arranges the lines of the Greek text in a way that shows the semi-poetic nature of the verse, thus lending support to the theory that this verse was a slogan well known to the community. Each pair of lines begins and ends with the same or similar word or phrase (πᾶς ὁ, ἁμαρτάνει/ἁμαρτάνων) and (οὐχ/οὐδε, αὐτού):

πᾶς ὁ ἐν αὐτῷ μένων οὐ ἁμαρτάνει·  
 πᾶς ὁ ἁμαρτάνων  
 οὐχ ἑώρακεν αὐτού  
 οὐδὲ ἔγνωκεν αὐτού.

“It is quite acceptable practice and sound polemic technique to quote one’s opponent scornfully and then refute him in the following sentence.” (Swadling, “Sin,” 9) And that is exactly what the author of 1 John does in the following verse: “Dear children, do not let anyone deceive you ...”(3:7). This reading makes it possible to see that the opponents may have been mocking the Johannine Christians: “Children of God do not sin [regardless of how they act] because they have God’s seed in them (3:9). They are not able to sin. If anyone sins it means they are ignorant and have never seen or known God.” This attribution of a pre-gnostic viewpoint to the secessionists is similar to a report by Irenaeus who describes the Gnostics as despising those who guard against sinning even in thought or word as “utterly contemptible and ignorant persons, while they highly exalt themselves, and claim to be perfect, and the elect seed.” (*Adv. Haer.* 1.6.4) From this perspective the opponents

Edwards, Lieu, Perkins, and Trebilco, specifically refute that 1 John has a polemic purpose.<sup>19</sup>

### 1.3.1.5. *Theological Texture*

Finally, theological texture is found in texts “that address the relation of humans to the divine.”<sup>20</sup> This texture involves what is said about God, holy people, holy living, sacred things, and the opposite of each of these.

Lieu states that in “1 John we see the author confronted by the consequences of his own tradition of thought and seeking to show the invalidity of those consequences while upholding the theology which gave birth to them.”<sup>21</sup> Her book, *The Theology of the Johannine Epistles*, is an example of theological texture.

Von Waldhe gives another example of this texture by tracing the theology of “commandment” through the Johannine Gospel and Epistles.<sup>22</sup> As mentioned earlier, theological texture could be said to be present in any commentary that attempts to describe implications of the text for the lives of believers in their relationships with God, with each other, and to anything considered sacred.

### 1.3.1.6. *Summary and Evaluation of the Use of Socio-Rhetorical Analysis in Interpreting 1 John*

This survey demonstrates that although elements of all of Robbins’ textures can be found in the published scholarly literature of the Johannine Epistles, there is only one example of the

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were as polemic in their aggressive attack against the believers as the author of 1 John is usually perceived to be in refuting them.

<sup>19</sup> Edwards summarizes this ideological point of view: “Pheme Perkins similarly [to Judith Lieu] advocates a ‘less polemicized reading’ of 1–3 John, arguing that critics have misread the situation when they see the Johannine community as violently torn apart. Our author’s educational climate encouraged a rhetorical style which fostered antithetical and hostile language ‘quite unlike anything we are used to. Personal attack, boasting, and challenges were all part of the on-going fabric of life’ (1979: xxi-xxii).” (Ruth B. Edwards, *The Johannine Epistles* [Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996], 65.)

However, the purpose, proposed genre, and intended audience of this book, as proposed in this thesis, lead the present author to disagree with this perspective. A primary intention of the author of 1 John is to persuade his audience of the necessity of the divorce between two groups of people: the children of God and the children of the devil. This is clearly a polemical purpose. Brown’s comment is typical of most scholars’ perspective on the author’s purpose in 1 John: “His dominant concern is to reinforce the readers against a group that is doing the work of the devil and the antichrist (2:18; 4:1-6), a group that has seceded from the community (2:19) but is still trying to win over more adherents.” (Raymond Brown, *The Community of the Beloved Disciple: The Life, Loves, and Hates of an Individual Church in New Testament Times* [New York: Paulist Press, 1979], 94.)

<sup>20</sup> Robbins, *Texture*, 4.

<sup>21</sup> Judith M. Lieu, “Authority to become Children of God.” *NT* 23 (1981): 225.

intentional integration of two or more textures that is characteristic of Socio-Rhetorical Analysis. This review demonstrates the need for additional research using this approach to the interpretation of the Johannine Epistles.

### **1.3.2. Review of the Johannine Literature that Addresses the Nature of the “Works of the Devil,” as Referred to in 1 John 3:8**

A survey of commentary on 1 John 3:8 shows that the meaning of the phrase, “the works of the devil” is not being seriously addressed by scholars either historically or in current debate.<sup>23</sup> In general, commentators have assumed that “the works of the devil” is synonymous with human “sin,” taking the parallelism between 1 John 3:5 and 3:8 as their cue, and generally allowing their own theology to inform their definition of “sin.”

As is typical of his thorough commentary, Raymond Brown gives the most detailed discussion of this verse, and also typically, more recent commentators depend on his analysis and build on it, although very little building is done in terms of analysis of the meaning of the phrase, “the works of the devil.” As mentioned earlier in footnote 11, Brown’s treatment of this phrase is disappointing. He brings in relevant passages from the Synoptic Gospels without connecting the implications for 1 John 3:8. (This could be due to ideological presuppositions about the nature of demonic or devilish activity.) It is clear from Mark 1:24 that the demons expected to be “destroyed” (ἀπολλύμι) by Jesus. Whatever activity such unclean spirits were engaged in surely constitutes a “work of the devil” and deserves to be part of the discussion of 1 John 3:8. Brown’s own comments need to be integrated into an interpretation of what the audience of 1 John would have understood “the works of the devil” to have included: “Jesus’ ministry is taken up with driving out demons who recognize that he is the Son of God and has come to annihilate them (Mark 1:24; 3:11). In Matt. 12:38 Jesus says, ‘If it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come

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<sup>22</sup> Urban C. Von Wahlde, *The Johannine Commandments: 1 John and the Struggle for the Johannine Tradition* (New York: Paulist Press, 1990).

<sup>23</sup> There is no discussion of the “works of the devil” in the article “Ἔργον” in the *TDNT*, although the works of God and works of humans are covered in detail. Similarly, the entry for “Ἔργον” in *BDAG* does not refer to the works of the devil even though a detailed list of other types of deeds and accomplishments are given, including evil deeds, dead works, unfruitful actions, lawless actions, impious deeds, deeds of darkness, deeds of the flesh, and even “deeds such as your father (the devil) commits” (*BDAG*, 390-91). Somehow the editors overlooked 1 John 3:8, the “works of the devil,” indicating the lack of attention to this phrase in scholarly dialog.

upon you'; and in Luke 10:18 he says ... he saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven."<sup>24</sup> However, Brown sets aside all this description of the activity of Satan and his cohorts, and resorts to relying only on the immediate context when he says, "if one asks more specifically what are the works of the devil which the Son of God was revealed to destroy, there can be no doubt that they are sins. This is clear from the first line of this verse, 'The person who does sins belongs to the Devil' and from the parallel statement in 3:5, 'Christ was revealed to take away sins.'"<sup>25</sup> What are those sins, of humans and of the devil (who "has been sinning from the beginning")? Brown and most other commentators come with an anthropocentric perspective, seeing human sin as the only achievement of the devil.<sup>26</sup>

However a few commentators take seriously the devil's sin beyond the achievement of corrupting humans. Haas, DeJonge, and Swellengrebel, in their *Translator's Handbook on the Letters of John*, explain that the works of the devil "refers both to the Devil's own sinful deeds and to his instigating others to sin."<sup>27</sup> Unfortunately they do not give any hints as to what the devil's own sinful deeds might be apart from instigating humans to sin.

Hobbs is a little more specific, and unique among contemporary Johannine scholars, when he says, "we may also see the devil's works as any evil force at work in the universe (see Eph 6:10-13)."<sup>28</sup> Origen, writing about 200 C.E., attributed natural disasters to the devil and his cohorts<sup>29</sup> and Hobbs may have this in mind, although he does not explore the implications of his statement.

Westcott furthers the dialog about the works of the devil in his discussion of the parallel passages that Augustine, Brown and most other commentators compare (1 John 3:5, 8) in which there are two purposes stated for Christ's "manifestation," normally taken to mean the same thing: "to take away sins," and "to destroy the works of the devil." He leaves

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<sup>24</sup> Brown, *Epistles*, 407.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> It is possible that Brown and other Roman Catholic scholars are following a tradition received from Augustine who wrote in his *Homily on the First Epistle of John*: "To this end came Christ as Man, to undo the sins of men. 'Unto this end was the Son of God manifested, that He may undo the works of the devil'" (*Homily* 4.11).

<sup>27</sup> M. Haas, C. DeJonge, and J. L. Swellengrebel, *A Translator's Handbook on The Letters of John*. Helps for Translators Series (London: United Bible Societies, 1972), 84.

<sup>28</sup> Herschel H. Hobbs, *The Epistles of John* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1983), 87.

<sup>29</sup> "To [demons] belong famine, blasting of the vine and fruit trees, pestilence among men and beasts: all these are the proper occupations of demons, who in the capacity of public executioners receive power at certain times to carry out the divine judgments" (Origen, *Contra Celsus* 8.31).

room, as do Hobbs and Origen, for the devil's evil deeds in the world as an additional activity beyond leading humans to sin:

In this connexion [sic] "the works of the devil" are gathered up in "sin" which is their spring. This, the devil has wrought in men and *in the world* [emphasis added] and men make his works their own. Compare John 8:41 ["You are doing the deeds of your father."]. These works ... are spoken of as "works of darkness" (Rom 8:12; Eph 5:11) and "of the flesh" (Gal. 5:19). They stand opposed to "the works of God" (John 9:3) and "the works of the Christ" (Matt. 11:2).<sup>30</sup>

Westcott brings into the dialog about "the works of the devil," the fact that these works are opposed to "the works of God." This is an important step toward defining "the works of the devil." A related question is the means by which the Son of God destroys the devil's works. Is it purely through the atoning death on the cross, or do believers participate with the Son of God in some way? Urban Von Wahlde gives a helpful and detailed discussion of the works of God, in which believers participate to some extent.<sup>31</sup> He refers to the *Testament of Levi* in which the patriarch gives his children the choice of following the law of God or doing the works of Beliar, another term for Satan or the devil (*T. Levi* 19:1).<sup>32</sup> Von Wahlde stops short of saying believers are intended to participate with the Son of God in destroying the works of the devil and he does not explain his view of what those works are.

From Von Wahlde's discussion and Westcott's comments noted above, it is possible to arrive at the following syllogism, although this has not been acknowledged or developed by Von Wahlde or any other New Testament scholar:

Major premise: God's work on earth is to defeat the devil's work, which is opposing God's will or law for the earth.

Minor premise: Jesus' followers are meant to join him in doing God's works.

Conclusion: Therefore Jesus' followers are meant to participate in defeating or destroying the works of the devil and restoring God's will on earth.

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<sup>30</sup> Brooke Foss Westcott, *The Epistles of St. John: The Greek Text with Notes and Essays*. (Cambridge: Macmillan & Co., 1886), 107.

<sup>31</sup> Von Wahlde, *Commandments*, 39-48.

<sup>32</sup> Von Wahlde, *Commandments*, 230.

The participation of believers in destroying the works of the devil, however that phrase may be defined, is found in Ignatius' letter to the Ephesians, written within about 10 years of the writing of 1 John, (Ignatius' martyrdom is generally acknowledged to be around 98–117 C.E.).<sup>33</sup> In writing to believers in the city of Ephesus where scholars believe the Johannine Community had a strong presence,<sup>34</sup> Ignatius said that when believers “meet together frequently, the powers of Satan are overthrown and his destructiveness is nullified [λύσειν] by the unanimity of your faith” (Ignatius to the Ephesians 13:1).<sup>35</sup> This is very relevant to this study, showing that early believers considered that collectively they had the ability to do what 1 John 3:8 says the Son of God came to do: to destroy (overthrow) the works (powers) of the devil (Satan). This passage in Ignatius might be thought of as a paraphrase of 1 John 3:8, applied to the followers of Jesus as they continued His work. (This comparison will be discussed in more detail in chapter four in the scribal inter-texture section.)

Robert Candlish, writing in 1869, agrees that God's people participate in destroying the works of the devil, which he principally sees as human sin:

Root and branch, the works of the devil must be destroyed. The seed, the germ, the principle of all his works must be eradicated. ... Suspicion, dislike, servile dread, criminal sullenness, self-justifying pride, must all be scotched and killed. These are the devil's works. They must be all destroyed. Let me look to the Son of God as he has been and is manifested; and are they not, through my so looking, destroyed?<sup>36</sup>

It appears that Westcott might also have agreed that believers are meant to join the Son of God in destroying the works of the devil, variously defined. If, as Westcott says, the work of the Church is to reveal God's intended order in the midst of disorder, it would follow that by some means the disorder has to be overcome, dissolved, destroyed, etc. “The life of Christ and the life of the Church, as presented by St. John, thus become revelations of a

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<sup>33</sup> Early Christian Writings. <http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/ignatius.html>. Accessed April 8, 2007. Brown dates the epistles of Ignatius “to ca. 110–115 and thus within about a decade of the composition of the Johannine epistles and about two decades of the writing of GJohn.” (Brown, *Epistles*, 6.)

<sup>34</sup> Brown, *Epistles*, 6.

<sup>35</sup> Translation by Michael W. Holmes, *The Apostolic Fathers in English*. 3d ed. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006.

<sup>36</sup> Robert Candlish, *The First Epistle of John* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1869), 289.

perfect order even in the disorder of the world lying beneath the surface of things, and veiled by suffering and by the workings of evil.”<sup>37</sup>

A summary of scholarly opinion about the meaning of the phrase “the works of the devil” is given in the following list:

The work of the devil is equivalent to human sin caused by the devil, including evil at the societal level: Akin, Augustine, Barclay, Black, Boismard, Brooke, Brown, Bruce, Bultmann, Burdick, Calvin, Candlish, Culpepper, Dammers, de la Potterie, Dodd, Findlay, Grayston, Haas, Hiebert, Hobbs, Houlden, Kruse, Kysar, Law, Maletesta, Marshall, Neufeld, Perkins, Plummer, Rensberger, Schnackenberg, Smalley, Stott, Strecker, Thomas, Thompson, Vine, Westcott.

The devil’s works can also refer to his own sin and/or anything evil in the world: Brooke, Haas et al, Hobbs, Westcott.

Believers can be participants in an ongoing battle against the works of the devil: Candlish, Ignatius, Schnackenberg, Strecker, Westcott.

### 1.3.3. Summary of the Need for Further Research

This review demonstrates that Johannine scholarship has not seriously considered the wide range of possible implications of the phrase, “the works of the devil.” Inter-textual evidence and socio-cultural understandings need to be taken into account to supplement inner texture approaches to explaining the phrase, “the works of the devil.” A major gap in the scholarship of the Johannine Epistles has been the failure to consider the worldview of Jewish believers in a Hellenistic environment. As far back as 1912, Brooke had pointed out the importance of finding the “intended meaning which the words could have suggested to the original readers,”<sup>38</sup> but in most cases his guideline has not been applied in much depth to the phrase under consideration in this thesis. Within a worldview that sees reality as an integrated whole, what would the concepts of “sin” and “the works of the devil” have implied?<sup>39</sup> This will be explored in chapter four in the inter-texture and theological texture sections.

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<sup>37</sup> Westcott, *Epistles*, 91.

<sup>38</sup> A. E. Brooke, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Johannine Epistles*. The International Critical Commentary (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1912), 88, speaking of 1 John 3:8.

<sup>39</sup> Westcott showed an understanding of the integrated nature of reality when he spoke of Jesus’ appearing to “take away sins” (1 John 3:5) as not simply a reference to “the self-sacrifice of Christ, but of His utter hostility to sin in every shape.” (Westcott, *Epistles*, 103.) What shape sin has taken or will take needs to be culturally defined within the first century Mediterranean worldview before it can be interpreted within 21<sup>st</sup>

#### **1.4. PURPOSES OF THE THESIS**

As this historical survey shows, there is a need within Johannine scholarship for Socio-Rhetorical Analysis of a neglected phrase located at the heart of 1 John, εἰς τοῦτο ἐφανερώθη ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ, ἵνα λύσῃ τὰ ἔργα τοῦ διαβόλου (3:8). It is inevitable that the present investigation will start with particular ideological presuppositions, but nevertheless the intention is to analyze the text systematically and critically, expecting to integrate the results of exegetical studies to arrive at a biblically legitimate interpretation of 1 John 3:8, focusing on the phrase, “the works of the devil.” The conclusions of this study can then be applied at a later time to evaluate popular interpretations, in a variety of cultures and subcultures, of “the works of the devil.”

##### **1.4.1. Methodological Purpose**

The method of Socio-Rhetorical Analysis is a relatively new paradigm within the field of New Testament criticism, introduced in 1996 by Vernon K. Robbins. The historical survey above shows scholars have not used this approach systematically in the study of 1 John. In particular the pericopes this thesis will investigate, 1 John 3:4-10 and 3:11-18, have not been thoroughly analyzed using this method. Socio-Rhetorical Analysis enables the interpreter to approach the text from multiple perspectives. Because the reasoning and themes of 1 John are so interwoven, this comprehensive methodology will be helpful to investigate the social, cultural and biblical context of the author’s message and purposes, and his rhetorical means of convincing his audience to think as he does.

##### **1.4.2. Sociological Purpose**

As mentioned above, the worldview of the 1<sup>st</sup> century Mediterranean world needs to be taken into consideration in interpreting 1 John. This thesis will critically evaluate the life-situation of the Johannine community from the standpoint of group theory, as one means of clarifying the purpose for which the warnings and statements in 1 John 3:8 were given. In addition, ritual theory will shed light on a possible purpose (and genre) for the text of 1 John.

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century ideological categories. The point of view of the present writer and that of contemporary scholars needs to be incorporated into the scholarly dialog about the meaning of the phrase, “the works of the devil.” Varying points of view will make a difference in how the phrase is understood within a theological framework.

### **1.4.3. Theological Purpose**

There is a need to critically evaluate the contrast between the works of God or of Jesus and “the works of the devil” as a means of arriving at an understanding of how the original audience would have perceived the purpose of the manifestation of the Son of God (“to destroy the works of the devil”).

### **1.4.4. Linguistic Purpose**

This thesis will analyze the discourse and determine the rhetorical approach used by the author to convince his readers to continue on in the tradition they had received, namely, choosing to do what is right in demonstration that they are children of God, rather than choosing to follow the evil ways of those who are “of the devil.”

## **1.5. RESEARCH PROBLEMS TO BE ADDRESSED**

### **1.5.1. Textual Problem**

The textual problem to be addressed is the intended meaning of the author of 1 John when he wrote, εἰς τοῦτο ἐφανερώθη ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ, ἵνα λύσῃ τὰ ἔργα τοῦ διαβόλου (“for this purpose the Son of God was revealed, in order to destroy the works of the devil” [1 John 3:8]). What does it mean to “destroy the works of the devil”:

- a. By the Son of God
- b. By the children of God
- c. In the 1<sup>st</sup> Century Judeo-Hellenistic World

### **1.5.2. Methodological Problem**

The method of Socio-Rhetorical Analysis has not been applied to a study of the context of the phrase, “the works of the devil” in 1 John 3:8. This is demonstrated in the results of the Historical Review as presented above. This thesis explores the context of 1 John 3:8 using a modification of Vernon K. Robbins’ approach to the layers of texture, using discourse analysis as part of the inner texture approach and social-science models as part of the social-cultural texture.

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### **1.5.3. Theological Problems**

As the historical review also demonstrates, there has been only a conventional consideration by New Testament scholars of the nature of Jesus' work in destroying the works of the devil, mainly assuming this refers to Jesus' atoning death and "taking away sins." Johannine scholars have not generally given consideration to the broad scope of other writings related to this phrase (both biblical and extra-biblical), the wider cultural background of the times, or to the particular life situation of the Johannine Community in their interpretations of 1 John 3:8. There is very little discourse on what role the other sons ("children") of God might have in destroying the works of the devil. Addressing this problem will be a major focus of this thesis. A related theological problem to address will be the contribution 1 John 3:8 makes to a Johannine theology of cosmic conflict.

### **1.6. PERICOPES TO BE STUDIED**

The parameters within which to study the research problems will be the pericopes of 1 John 3:4-10 and 3:11-18. These pericopes occur at the center of a chiasmic structure of 1 John that will be explained in detail in chapter four in the section on inner texture. The chiasmically paired phrases within these two sections shed light on relationships and definitions of key terms in the text. Although the direct chiasmic parallels involve verses 4-15, the study is extended to 3:16-18 since it is not until these verses that the author of 1 John gives a specific description of the opposite of the works of the devil, which is directly relevant to the main focus of this thesis.

Briefly, the chiasmic structure of the two pericopes at the center of 1 John can be outlined this way:

A (3:4-8a) Sin is lawlessness; practice of righteousness; being of the devil

B (3:8b) Focus: What was manifested and why: the Son of God to destroy the works of the devil;

B' (3:10a) Focus: What was manifested and how: who are the children of God and the children of the devil, known by whether or not they practice righteousness and love

A' (3:10b-15) Sin of the evil one is murder; practice of righteousness; being of the evil one

Amplification (3:16-18) following Jesus' example to love in works and truth.

## **1.7. ACADEMIC CONTRIBUTIONS**

Several contributions of this research to the Johannine field of studies will be summarized in the fifth chapter. These include the following topics.

1. Investigation of 1 John 3:8, a verse not featured in the literature on the Epistles, will be a step toward filling a gap in the literature of 1 John. Articles have appeared in scholarly journals on other individual verses in 1 John, such as 3:9 and 1:8-10, or 2:12-14, but the historical review of the literature on the Johannine Epistles, discussed above, shows a lack of attention to this particular verse and the phrase, “the works of the devil.”

2. A full Socio-Rhetorical exploration of the pericopes that constitute the context of the phrase, “the works of the devil,” will make a unique contribution to Johannine scholarship. The Historical Survey showed that the method of Socio-Rhetorical Analysis has not been widely applied to the Johannine Epistles.

3. Application of the rhetorical technique described by Longenecker as “chain link interlock” to transitions in 1 John will also be a unique contribution to Johannine scholarship, with helpful results for theological discourse.

4. Insights from the chiasmic structure of 1 John, with 3:8 at the center, containing the climactic statement about the Son of God destroying the works of the devil, may contribute toward academic discourse on the Johannine theology of the devil (or evil) when compared to a similar statement at the center of the Gospel, in John 12:31: “now the ruler of this world will be driven out.”

5. The proposal that the genre of 1 John may be viewed as a liturgy composed of two rituals will be a tentative contribution to the Johannine literature, arrived at indirectly while experimenting with social science models of ritual and the text of 1 John in its historical context.

## **1.8. CONCLUSION AND SUMMARY OF THE NEED FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

The research presented in this thesis will show that application of the method of Socio-Rhetorical Analysis can yield numerous new insights into the text of 1 John. It will show, among other things, that the author’s purpose is to confirm in his hearers their status as children of God and the need for a divorce from their opponents, labeled, “children of the devil.” Through discourse analysis, inductive analysis of structural features, and comparisons to other biblical texts and extra-biblical literature, the meaning for 1<sup>st</sup> century Mediterranean

Judeo-Christian believers of the phrase, “the works of the devil,” will be illuminated. It is not within the scope of this thesis to apply this meaning to the 21<sup>st</sup> century, although insights gained from this study could be a resource to develop theology and practice for the contemporary church.

## CHAPTER 2: METHODOLOGY

In order to uncover the meaning for the original audience of the phrase in 1 John 3:8, “the works of the devil,” the relatively new method of Socio-Rhetorical Analysis will be used and adapted, as explained in this chapter. Understanding the relationship between the meaning to the original audience and readers today is a key question that is addressed by Robbins who asks,

What is the relation of our reading of a New Testament text to the way in which a first-century person might have written or read a text? The answer is that all people choose ways to write and to read a text. For this reason, socio-rhetorical criticism interprets not only the text under consideration but ways people read texts in late antiquity and ways people have interpreted New Testament texts both in the past and in different contexts in our modern world.<sup>40</sup>

Dirk van der Merwe explains how this method relates to the history of exegetical approaches:

Historical critical method: what did the original receivers understand, the world behind the text.

Text immanent approach: includes discourse analysis, structural or narrative analysis, the meaning within the text.

Speech-Act Theory: what was the intention of the author, psychological method, the world in front of the text.

Socio-Rhetorical Analysis: merges these methodologies in a multi-faceted exploration of the text.<sup>41</sup>

In other words, this is an approach “which is simultaneously new and old.”<sup>42</sup> David deSilva summarizes the essence of this method: “Exegesis is not fully engaged simply by performing one or two methods, rather the fruits of the application of a good number of these

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<sup>40</sup> Robbins, *Tapestry*, 39.

<sup>41</sup> Dirk van der Merwe, interview with author, 20 March 2008.

<sup>42</sup> Vernon K. Robbins, “Picking Up the Fragments: from Crossan’s Analysis to Rhetorical Analysis,” *Foundations & Facets Forum* 1 (1986): 32.

skills must be combined and integrated before the interpreter can truly claim to have mined the text and unearthed its message and significance.”<sup>43</sup>

This integrated approach is particularly suited to mining the text of 1 John in which the author interweaves his themes in a complex manner to arrive at the climax of his writing, at the center of the book, in which he announces the destruction of the “works of the devil.” To explore the author’s interwoven reasoning, a comprehensive, integrative research method is needed. Socio-Rhetorical Analysis has been chosen as the research model because it allows the interpreter to explore the text in multiple ways: analysis of biblical and extra-biblical texts (inner texture and inter-texture) as well as synthesis of insights from 1st century Mediterranean culture and worldview (social-cultural texture). In addition this method allows room for acknowledgment and evaluation of the presuppositions and values of the author and those brought by the interpreter and others to the study of the text (ideological texture). Finally, scholars engaged in Socio-Rhetorical Analysis have as a goal the discovery and articulation of what the text has to say about relationships between the divine and human or among humans (theological texture). This is the texture in which the research question may be addressed after integration of findings from the other textures: what is the meaning of the phrase, “the works of the devil,” which the Son of God coming to destroy, and what are the implications for believers?

Robbins’ approach to Socio-Rhetorical Analysis is detailed and specific. This chapter will give a brief explanation of how Robbins describes each texture, along with an introduction to the specific ways in which this study will be applying and adapting his approach. In the fourth chapter, the exegesis of the text, the application of each texture will be described more fully. As mentioned earlier, discrete studies from these separate approaches will be brought into dialog with one another in the discussion of theological texture and in the concluding chapter. This synthesis will be analogous to stitching together variously-patterned quilt squares to form a unique product—in this case, a comprehensive interpretation of what it means for the Son of God to destroy “the works of the devil.”

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<sup>43</sup> deSilva, *Introduction*, 23.

## 2.1. INNER TEXTURE DEFINED AND ADAPTED

Inner texture is the basis for the rest of the research. It is the means of getting “inside a text”<sup>44</sup> for purposes of interpretation. Historically this texture has been called “exegesis.” Studies within this texture could potentially include textual criticism, word studies, lexical analysis, and literary analysis, including the older source and form criticism. In addition inner texture may encompass the newer forms of literary criticism such as rhetorical analysis, narrative analysis, linguistic and discourse analysis, and specific genre studies such as analysis of parables or epistles.<sup>45</sup>

Robbins promotes his own unique set of six ways to explore inner texture in a text: “(a) repetitive; (b) progressive; (c) narrational; (d) opening-middle-closing; (e) argumentative; and (f) sensory-aesthetic texture.”<sup>46</sup>

The research model followed in this research for inner texture is eclectic, chosen from among the options mentioned above for maximum contribution to mining the layers of meaning in the text of 1 John. Analysis will begin with the chiasmatic structure of the whole book, followed by a whole-book look at distinctive transitions between sections, including chain-link interlock.<sup>47</sup> Robbins’ repetitive-progressive texture approach will be followed in a final whole-book overview before focusing on a detailed discourse analysis of the immediate context (specifically 2:28–3:18). The approach to discourse analysis will be informed by the work of Du Rand, Louw, Nida, and van der Merwe and will bring out semantic relations, leading to an understanding of how the author is arguing his position and his rhetorical emphasis.

An understanding of these and other rhetorical techniques will assist in the interpretation of the text by highlighting those themes the author considered most important for his audience to remember and act on.

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<sup>44</sup> Robbins, *Texture*, 7.

<sup>45</sup> Pontifical Biblical Commission, “The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church” (March 1994): n.p. Cited 11 April 2008. Online: <http://www.ewtn.com/library/CURIA/PBCINTER.htm#3>. Also see deSilva, *Introduction*, 24.

<sup>46</sup> Robbins, *Texture*, 7.

<sup>47</sup> So called by Longenecker, *Rhetoric*, 4. Also see H. van Dyke Parunak, “Transitional Techniques in the Bible.” *JBL* 102 (1983): 546.

## 2.2. INTER-TEXTURE DEFINED AND LIMITATIONS STATED

Through analysis of inner texture the interpreter is led to select what to explore and focus on in the other textures. With each texture the current investigation will narrow the field of exploration to those aspects of the texture that are relevant to the specific research question. In this section, using inter-texture as an approach to the text, specific focus will be on key words in the text and historical and cultural assumptions outside of the text of 1 John that assist the interpreter in understanding what 1<sup>st</sup> century Mediterranean Jewish-Christian believers might have understood by “the works of the devil” that Jesus came to destroy.

With inter-texture the interpreter looks at how the text interacts with the world around it, primarily through other texts. Robbins terms this “oral-scribal inter-texture.”<sup>48</sup> Other types of inter-texture relate to cultural assumptions (worldview), social traditions, and historical events that take place outside of the text but that affect how the author and audience would have understood the text differently from a 21<sup>st</sup> century audience with a different set of cultural assumptions and without direct knowledge of key historical events.

In the category of oral-scribal inter-texture, some of the questions to be answered include: What can be learned about the issues in the text from the other Johannine literature? What can be learned from the rest of the New Testament? From the Hebrew Bible? From Second Temple literature and Jewish literature of the first century C.E., including the Qumran literature? From early non-canonical Christian writings which may have influenced the author of 1 John, or which may have been influenced by this Epistle? A rich exploration of such texts as the Gospel of John, the Synoptic Gospels, the Hebrew Bible, the Qumran Literature, the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, Polycarp’s Letter to the Philippians and Ignatius’ Letter to the Ephesians will bring helpful insights to the study of the passage and its context.

In the category of historical inter-texture, awareness of the variety of religious cults in Ephesus, and of Artemis in particular will give insights into the meaning for 1<sup>st</sup> century believers of the phrase, “the works of the devil.”

Cultural inter-texture involves “insider” knowledge of values, scripts, myths, codes.<sup>49</sup> A relevant example of this texture appears in 1 John through possible echoes in 2:13, 14 of

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<sup>48</sup> Robbins, *Texture*, 3.

<sup>49</sup> Robbins, *Texture*, 58.

the ancient well-known Heracles myths, in speaking of the young men who were strong and had overcome the evil one.

### **2.3. SOCIAL-CULTURAL TEXTURE DEFINED, SUPPLEMENTED BY SOCIAL-SCIENCE METHODOLOGY**

Keeping in mind the results of the studies in inter-texture, and guided by previous discoveries in inner texture analysis, the researcher is next led by the model of Socio-Rhetorical Analysis into social-cultural texture which includes sociological and anthropological theory.<sup>50</sup> The priority the text places on what is right or wrong, acceptable or unacceptable “produces a particular social location”<sup>51</sup> for the community being addressed. DeSilva paraphrases Robbins’ explanation by asking, “what kind of community does a text seek to nurture?” He further asks, “what role do rituals and religious symbols play in shaping relationships within the group and relationships with (or boundaries against) those outside.”<sup>52</sup>

These are important questions to be addressed in the pericopes under investigation in this study. The Johannine community was a recognizable social entity with distinctive beliefs and practices that felt itself threatened by the activities of former group members. By applying social-science models of grid/group theory and ritual theory, this section will investigate the nature of the problem being addressed in 1 John and the way in which the author of 1 John chose to handle that problem.

### **2.4. IDEOLOGICAL TEXTURE DEFINED AND LIMITATIONS STATED**

The biblical author’s choices in handling community problems reflect ideological texture. “Ideological texture concerns particular alliances and conflicts the language in a text and the language in an interpretation evoke and nurture.”<sup>53</sup> DeSilva asks, “What goal or goals drive the author? How does the author use the text to achieve this goal?”<sup>54</sup> In this section, the motives and purposes of the author of 1 John will become clear. What were the author’s intentions in writing 1 John? What was his perspective on the reason the Son of God was revealed to the world? How might the text have been viewed by the intended audience?

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<sup>50</sup> Robbins, *Texture*, 71.

<sup>51</sup> Robbins, *Texture*, 3.

<sup>52</sup> deSilva, *Introduction*, 25.

<sup>53</sup> Robbins, *Texture*, 4.

<sup>54</sup> deSilva, *Introduction*, 25.

But beyond the author of the text and his purposes, ideological texture, as defined by Robbins, includes the “interpretive conversation” being held between the present interpreter and the text and between the present interpreter and other interpreters of the text.<sup>55</sup> An interpretive conversation will be the main focus of this section. A brief analysis will be made of what other interpreters throughout history said about “the works of the devil”? What points of agreement or disagreement can be found between these ideological perspectives and that of the present author in relation to the issues of 1 John 3:8 and the wider context?

The majority of this section will feature the present author’s ideological perspective in dialog with her perception of the Johannine worldview of salvation history. The present author’s ideological starting point is from a recent movement of thought led by Ralph D. Winter, founder of the Frontier Mission Fellowship. This perspective sees natural evil, such as disease, falling in the category of “the works of the devil.” The implication of this perspective is that the statement in John 3:8a, that devil has been sinning “from the beginning,” means more than the typical, limited anthropocentric conclusion that the devil’s work consists of instigating humans to sin. In an exegetical spiral, this hypothesis will be kept in view throughout the various texture studies, revised in light of each separate study, with fresh hypotheses as needed, until an exegetically legitimate conclusion is reached.

## **2.5. THEOLOGICAL TEXTURE DEFINED**

As the results of the various textual layers are integrated, the theology that is an integral part of the text will be clarified. Taking into account the studies within the preceding textures, in this section insights will be woven together to come to conclusions (within an ideological framework) as to what the text is saying about how believers are intended to relate to the divine, to each other, to their opponents, and how to live holy lives. This study will show that the author’s theological purpose is to confirm in his hearers their status as children of God (their relationship to the divine) and the need for a divorce from their opponents, labeled, “children of the devil” (one aspect of their relationship with other humans). At the same time, the theological theme of love will be seen to demand that the “children of God” join the Son of God in destroying the works of the devil as one aspect of holy living, in relating well to

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<sup>55</sup> Robbins, *Texture*, 95.

each other and to the world. Drawing all these themes together, this section will propose a theology of “the works of the devil.”

## **2.6. SUMMARY AND REASONS FOR CHOICES OF METHODOLOGY**

As can be seen from the descriptions above, Socio-Rhetorical Analysis provides wide scope for exploring the complex inter-relationships of themes and structures in 1 John. As an interdisciplinary approach to the text, this methodology involves investigating “multiple textures of the text with fuller resources from various intellectual disciplines. This in turn can lead to fuller exploration of the textures of the text the interpreter has decided to explore.”<sup>56</sup> Discourse analysis and social-science models complement the Socio-Rhetorical approach and will be used within the inner texture and social-cultural texture areas of research respectively. This combination of methods will prove more fruitful than traditional approaches to the text, in part because each study within a given texture and discipline is not bound by presuppositions that may be present in an approach to the text from other textures and disciplines. As the results of one study, with specialized ways of looking at the text, are put in conversation with other studies, a thicker texture or interpretation becomes possible.<sup>57</sup>

This approach to 1 John will represent a new contribution to Johannine studies. Since Socio-Rhetorical Analysis was introduced in 1996, only a limited number of scholars have used this approach, and a commentary series featuring Socio-Rhetorical Analysis is only now in the planning stages.

In the next chapter the consensus of scholarly opinion regarding fundamental questions about 1 John will be surveyed, with indications of how the methodology chosen for this research will be able to enrich the dialog.

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<sup>56</sup> Robbins, *Tapestry*, 232-33.

<sup>57</sup> Robbins, *Tapestry*, 232.

## **CHAPTER 3: EPISTEMOLOGICAL QUESTIONS OF 1 JOHN**

This chapter will engage in a dialog with past commentators about the epistemological questions of 1 John: occasion for writing (date, author, location, recipients, opponents, purpose, and relationship to the Gospel of John), genre, and structure. An evaluation of the history of scholarly opinion will relate each aspect to the title and purpose of the thesis. In several cases this evaluation will show that further research in the various textures will be able to bring new proposals to the scholarly dialog related to the epistemological questions of 1 John. Proposed solutions will be developed more fully in chapter four.

An historical word picture begins the dialog by introducing a possible scenario for the occasion of the writing of 1 John. This is followed by an extended narrational hypothesis to introduce many of the points that will be discussed throughout this chapter related to the occasion for writing. Following this suggested description of the occasion for the writing of 1 John, an interactive summary will compare the hypotheses presented here to the views of representative Johannine scholars. These hypotheses and evaluations are based on the research that will be described in detail in the sections of chapter four relating to inner texture, oral-scribal inter-texture, historical inter-texture, and cultural inter-texture.

Once the occasion for the writing of 1 John has been thoroughly examined, with the purpose in mind of the contribution each aspect makes toward understanding the meaning of the phrase, “the works of the devil,” the genre and structure will also be discussed through a comparison of commentators’ opinions, with findings from inner texture and social-cultural texture research. The details for the conclusions relating to genre and structure will be given in chapter four.

### **3.1. OCCASION FOR THE WRITING OF 1 JOHN**

#### **3.1.1. Narrative Hypotheses of the Occasion for the Writing of 1 John**

Picture a person named John, reputedly the author of the Gospel<sup>58</sup> and a disciple of Jesus, now a man of about 80, running out of a public bath-house in Ephesus, towel flying, crying

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<sup>58</sup> Because of the lack of agreement among scholars regarding the authorship of the Gospel and Epistles of John, in the discussion of this proposed narrative the author will be referred to as simply, “John.” In section 3.1.3. the subject of the authorship of 1 John will be discussed briefly.

out, “Fly, lest even the bath-house fall down, because Cerinthus, the enemy of the truth, is within.” Further imagine a young boy named Polycarp (70–155 C.E.), who would later become one of the bishops of the Early Church, standing by with open mouth as this scene impresses itself on his mind.<sup>59</sup> The moral of this humorous story is found at the end of 1 John: “Little children, keep yourselves from idols” (5:21).<sup>60</sup>

John was not the only one who felt strongly about not associating with “enemies of truth” or “idols,” in the sense of false beliefs.<sup>61</sup> The members of the Qumran community (interchangeably referred to here as Essenes<sup>62</sup>) regularly heard a ritual as new members were sworn in: “Cursed be the man who enters this Covenant while walking among the idols of his heart ... God’s wrath ... shall consume him in everlasting destruction. He shall be cut off from the midst of all the sons of light” (1QS II, 11, 15, 16). If the John in Polycarp’s story knew about these curses, it is no wonder he ran out of the bathhouse—in case the curses might happen to fall on the enemy of truth while John himself was inside! (Compare 1 John 3:8: “the Son of God came to destroy the works of the devil.” To some extent the enemies of truth may have been seen as a “work of the devil” by the author of 1 John. This possibility will be explored in later sections.)

How likely is it that John the purported writer of the Gospel (the “Evangelist”), an important member of the Johannine community if not its founder and lead writer, would have known about the beliefs of the Qumran community? Brown postulates a connection between John the Evangelist, traditionally considered to be the unnamed disciple of John the Baptist in John 1:40, and the Essenes. “An hypothesis might be constructed that John the Baptist was familiar with the Qumran Essenes and their thought, and that through him certain of these ideas passed on to his disciples, including John the Evangelist”<sup>63</sup> The hypothesis pictured

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<sup>59</sup> Irenaeus (120–202 C.E.) recorded Polycarp’s story in *Against Heresies* 3.3.4.

<sup>60</sup> The author is warning his beloved children in the last verse of the book to stay away from deviants, those who represent a false way to God, summarized by the persuasive imagery of the term, “idols.”

<sup>61</sup> Trebilco comments on 1 John 5:21, “The reference [to idols] is metaphorical. The metaphorical “idol” would then be a reference to a different understanding of God, and thus to a false God, and would probably be a reference to the secessionists who by their teaching have propounded what to John was an idol” (Paul Trebilco, *The Early Christians in Ephesus from Paul to Ignatius* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004], 388).

<sup>62</sup> Raymond E. Brown, “The Qumran Scrolls and the Johannine Gospel and Epistles,” *CBQ* 17 (1955): 405.

<sup>63</sup> Brown, “Scrolls,” 573. Further aspects of this hypothesis could include the speculation that John the Baptist may have grown up in a desert community (see Luke 1:80), raised by a group of Essenes after the death of his elderly parents. Josephus, *War*, II, viii, 2 says of the Essenes: “They neglect wedlock, but choose out other person’s children, while they are pliable, and fit for learning, and esteem them to be of their kindred, and form them according to their own manners.” If John the Baptist had been adopted by an Essene community, that

here about the occasion for the writing of 1 John is that a group of Essenes, who were displaced in 68–70 C.E. by the Roman destruction of the land,<sup>64</sup> were attracted through missionary activity to the Johannine community in Ephesus, whose members were originally followers of John the Baptist.<sup>65</sup>

Like the disciples of John the Baptist in Acts 19:1, 3-5, the displaced Essenes were persuaded to consider following Jesus. But, based on their own religious background, their initial concept of Jesus would likely have been that he was simply a great teacher of righteousness. Perhaps they “only knew” (as with disciples of John the Baptist who “only knew” the baptism of John) some of Jesus’ teachings. The hymn recorded in the Prologue to John’s Gospel (1:1-18) would have resonated with some of their Qumran writings,<sup>66</sup> as would Jesus’ teaching about the “Spirit of Truth” in John 15:26; 16:13. While their knowledge was still incomplete, according to this hypothesis, they decided to become followers of Jesus while remaining part of their original (displaced) community and retaining their Essene distinctives.<sup>67</sup> (Contemporary missiologists call this an “insider movement.”<sup>68</sup>)

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would explain why he did not recognize his own cousin, Jesus, at first—see John 1:31. He would have been familiar, from the Qumran literature and customs, with initiation rites, repentance from sin, and water for purification. Living in a community that emphasized the Sons of Light and the Angel of Light, John the Baptist may have come to realize that he was “sent from God ... as a witness to testify about the Light” (John 1:6, 7). Immersed in the writings of the Hebrew prophets, John the Baptist came to see himself as “the voice of one shouting in the wilderness, ‘Make straight the way for the Lord’ as Isaiah the prophet said” (John 1:23, *Net Bible*), which is parallel to 1QS IV, 2: “... make straight before him all the ways of righteousness.”

<sup>64</sup> Josephus, *War*, II, viii, 4 says about the Essenes that “many of them dwell in every city.”

<sup>65</sup> Oscar Cullmann, *The Johannine Circle* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1975), 60. Cullmann lends support to this theory when he notes, “the Johannine group in part (especially those of its members who are relevant for the composition of the Gospel of John) emerged from the community of John the Baptist. Jesus himself and the first to follow him were former disciples of the Baptist.” Cullmann further suggests that one explanation for “... the almost astonishing affinity between Qumran and the heretical Jewish Christianity of the Pseudo-Clementine *Kerygmata Petrou* was that the survivors of the Qumran sect, of whom we have no certain news after the Jewish war, moved to Transjordan and there were swallowed up in the Jewish-Christian heretical movements, which they in turn influenced strongly. In this way, the Johannine circle may once again have come into contact with Qumran ideas.” What Cullmann suggests here could equally apply to Qumran survivors who relocated in Ephesus and participated in the Johannine Jewish-Christian movement. As the “opponents” of 1 John, they would have had a strong influence on this movement just as Cullmann postulates other Essenes may have had in other “heretical” movements.

<sup>66</sup> See, for instance, 1QS III, 13-26 which emphasizes the themes of light and darkness, knowledge of God through a righteous teacher, creation, earth, truth, and the concept of cosmic hostility, all of which are themes found in John 1:1-18. (1QS III, 13-26 was selected for comparison as representative of the Qumran literature that most closely resonates with the Johannine writings and because it is of similar length to the prologue of the Gospel of John. Since the Qumran literature was written in Hebrew and the Johannine writings were in Greek, only approximate comparisons can be made.)

<sup>67</sup> Harland quotes Paul R. Trebilco’s 1991 study of Jews in Asia Minor that finds “the Hellenistic polis accommodated considerable diversity of population without demanding uniformity” (Philip A. Harland, *Associations, Synagogues, and Congregations: Claiming a Place in Ancient Mediterranean Society*

The two groups had much in common: a commitment to the teachings of the Hebrew Bible; a worldview that spiritual reality consists of polar opposites (something is either true or false, light or dark, righteous or evil); practical demonstrations of love for fellow community members. (See Appendix 1 for numerous other concepts the two groups held in common. This chart will be referred to again in the inter-texture discussion of echoes in 1 John of Qumran literature.)

But apparently these new followers of Jesus never fully accepted Jesus as the Christ. Assuming them to have become the “opponents” of 1 John, Johannine texts indicate they did not acknowledge that Jesus came in the flesh to take away the sin of the world (John 1: 29; 1 John 3:5) and to destroy the works of the devil (1 John 3:8, also see John 12:31). Perhaps one of the surviving Qumran community leaders may have eventually visited the city and convinced the Essenes that their new beliefs were not compatible with the community’s core teachings.

Then the tables were turned and the Essene would-be followers of Jesus themselves became “missionaries” trying to convince the others to return to what they perceived to be the truth, as described in the Qumran literature, resulting in much confusion. To those who resisted their “evangelism,” The Essenes may have applied what they had learned from the Qumran *Manual of Discipline* (1QS), treating them as outsiders to be shunned and condemned to eternal damnation. Instead of showing love for the “brothers”<sup>69</sup> (a strong value for both the Johannine and Qumran communities), they began demonstrating rejection and hatred for those who had formerly considered them to be close community members.

In this conflict situation, a leader in the Johannine community wrote 1 John as a combination of rituals, according to the hypothesis of this narrative,—one to denounce the “children of the devil” and the other to label believers as “children of God.”<sup>70</sup> The resulting

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[Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003], 200). This finding lends support to the theory that Essenes living in Ephesus could have expected to become part of another group without fully accepting all the new teachings.

<sup>68</sup> Rebecca Lewis, “Insider Movements, the Conversation Continues: Promoting Movements to Christ within Natural Communities,” *IJFM* 24 (2007), 75-76. According to contemporary missiological theory, a natural community may decide to follow Christ together without discarding its cultural distinctives.

<sup>69</sup> While the Qumran literature and 1 John use the masculine term, “brother,” this can be taken as a generic way to refer to “people,” including both women and men, within a close-knit family-like community.

<sup>70</sup> A detailed explanation for this proposal will be given in chapter four in the social-cultural inter-texture section. The second proposed ritual would have been used for a positive purpose such as induction into the community (perhaps as a confirmation or catechism). Only the first, negative, ritual will be explored in detail in this thesis.

combination of rituals could be viewed as a liturgy to confirm Johannine believers in the truth and to prevent them from being deceived by the contentious Qumran-Essene believers. Perhaps this liturgy was compiled in response to a request from one of the local Johannine communities for relevant teachings of John the Evangelist. (A precedent exists for this in Polycarp's letter to the Philippians [13:2], in which he mentions that a church had asked him to send Ignatius' letters.)

In addressing the conflicting perspectives of the Johannine community and the opponents from the Essene community, the author of 1 John reinterpreted a variety of concepts found in the first Qumran Scroll in light of the Johannine concept of Jesus. The antithetical statements throughout 1 John showcase the difference the author sees in the behavior and beliefs of those following Jesus ("walking in the light as he is in the light," 1 John 1:7), and those who do not acknowledge the authority and example of Jesus in their lives ("walking in the dark and not knowing where he is going" 1 John 2:11).

The author or editor of this liturgy saw no hope for reconciliation between the two groups, so he gave a final indirect rebuke to the combative Essenes in 5:21 by telling his "little children" to "keep themselves from idols." The audience would have known very well what he meant. Their opponents were being accused of being in the same category with idols, false representations of God, enemies of the truth. The Essene and Johannine believers, each had to choose who to follow. The full text of 1 John was written to confirm believers in making the right choice; to separate themselves from the teachings of Qumran or any of the false religions and heresies rampant in Ephesus and the Mediterranean world at that time.<sup>71</sup> Living in Ephesus, the author of 1 John must have been familiar with Paul's writings, including his second letter to the Corinthians that contains significant echoes of Johannine and Qumran themes (underlined): "Do not become partners with those who do not believe, for what partnership is there between righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship does light have with darkness? And what agreement does Christ have with Belial?"

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<sup>71</sup> The biblical text gives evidence that Ephesus was the home of the temple of the goddess Artemis (Acts 19:35), a place where magic was practiced (Acts 19:19), and the location where the evil works of the Nicolaitans were practiced (Revelation 2:6, 14, 15). The works and teachings of the Nicolaitans could legitimately be classified as a "work of the devil," given God's hatred of their works described in Revelation chapter 2. In commentators' speculations about the heresy being combated by the text of 1 John, the city of Ephesus is mentioned in connection with Cerinthus, the "enemy of the truth" in Polycarp's story. Ephesus was part of Asia Minor where Ignatius combated heresies a decade or two later.

Or what does a believer share in common with an unbeliever? And what mutual agreement does the temple of God have with idols?” (2 Corinthians 6:14-16).

So once again, envision the elderly John flying from the bathhouse to escape the fate of those whose false beliefs associate them with “idols,” an image preserved at the end of 1 John in the hope of confirming the believers’ decision to remain connected to true teaching and eternal life: “Little children, keep yourselves from idols” (1 John 5:21).

### **3.1.2. Basis for Comparison of Hypotheses to Views of Johannine Scholars**

This scenario has incorporated a number of choices among the options discussed by commentators related to the occasion for the writing of 1 John. In the following discussion, the choices and assumptions made above about the each of the various aspects of the occasion for writing will be stated and reasons given. The views of the following representative commentators will be referenced and critiqued in light of their relevance for arriving at an understanding of the phrase, “the works of the devil”:<sup>72</sup>

Raymond Brown, an American Roman Catholic, provides the most comprehensive and respected work since Schnackenburg on the Johannine Epistles.

Ruth B. Edwards brings a woman’s perspective from the British academic world.

Martin Hengel is an older German scholar who has written extensively on the Hellenistic period of Judaism and early Christianity.

Colin Kruse, of Australia, represents the scholarly Protestant evangelical world.

Celestino G. Lingad, Jr. is a younger Roman Catholic, active in pastoring, from Manila, Philippines.

Rudolf Schnackenburg represents an older German Protestant perspective. His commentary in German on the Johannine Epistles was written in 1963, although not translated into English until 1992.

The views of these scholars on the various aspects of the occasion for the writing of 1 John will next be compared and critiqued.

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<sup>72</sup> In addition to these dialog partners other scholars will be referred to when their insights make specific helpful contributions to this epistemological conversation.

### 3.1.3. Author

Was John, the disciple of Jesus, the author of 1 John? This is a much-debated question, but for the purposes of the present research it is not particularly crucial to determine if the author was the John the son of Zebedee,<sup>73</sup> another disciple named John (the elder) to whom Papias of Hierapolis refers,<sup>74</sup> one or more editors from the Johannine school,<sup>75</sup> or even perhaps Polycarp, a bridge person between the apostles and the early church who knew one or both Johns,<sup>76</sup> and whose Letter to the Philippians (7:1) contains an echo of 1 John 4:3 (and 2 John 7) and possibly other allusions as well.<sup>77</sup> The important aspect

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<sup>73</sup> Edwards points out that “the case for John the son of Zebedee as the author of 1 John has to rest on a threefold identification: (a) the epistolary writers with the author of John’s Gospel; (b) the Gospel author with the beloved disciple; (c) the beloved disciple with the son of Zebedee” (Edwards, *Epistles*, 50). Cullmann gives reasons why “it is impossible to reconcile the picture of the author derived from the content of the Gospel with what we know of John the son of Zebedee” (Cullmann, *Circle*, 76). On the other hand, Schnackenburg seems to assume John the son of Zebedee as the author of the Gospel of John while “postulating a pupil of his or someone else associated with him as the author of 1 John” (Rudolf Schnackenburg, *The Johannine Epistles: Introduction and Commentary* (trans. Reginald and Ilse Fuller; New York: Crossroad, 1992), 41. But Cullmann’s case seems to be unrefutable, including the fact that the sons of Zebedee were fishermen from Galilee, while the author of the Gospel shows an acquaintance with people and places in Judea.

<sup>74</sup> Speaking of his research method, Papias, a church leader in the first half of the second century said, “And if anyone chanced to come who had actually been a follower of the elders, I would enquire as to the discourses of the elders, what Andrew or what Peter said, or what Philip, or what Thomas or James, or what John or Matthew or any other of the Lord’s disciples; and the things which Ariston and John the elder, the disciples of the Lord, say.” (Quoted by Martin Hengel, *The Johannine Question* [London: SCM Press, 1989], 17, emphasis added) This seems to show the existence of at least two “John’s” who were disciples of Jesus. Hengel takes the early church fathers seriously and favors the view that the elder John, of Ephesus, one of the disciples of Jesus but not among the twelve, was the author of all three Epistles and the Gospel (Hengel, *Question*, 30, 32). Kruse agrees, after analyzing the options, that “in the end, it seems better to take with the utmost seriousness the claims of the author to be one of a number of the original eyewitnesses of the incarnate Christ, despite the problems that raises” (Colin G. Kruse, *The Letters of John*, [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000], 11). It would seem possible, though, that Papias’ method could also have been used by someone in the late first century, who had known Jesus’ followers, to compile eyewitness sayings.

<sup>75</sup> Brown summarizes his well-respected opinion: “I develop the thesis of a Johannine school of writers who shared a theological position and style, to which the evangelist, the redactor [of the Gospel], and the author of the Epistles all belonged” (Brown, *Community*, 95). Edwards agrees in her conclusion that to assume that 1 John is the product of “a Johannine community with a distinctive theology and style, and more than one theological writer, remains the best explanation of both the similarities and dissimilarities of the Johannine corpus” (Edwards, *Epistles*, 52). Lingad emphasizes the traditions received from the Paraclete by the beloved disciple, passed on through a Johannine school (Celestino G. Lingad, *The Problems of Jewish Christians in the Johannine Community*, [Rome: Gregorian University Press, 2001], 168). Schnackenburg also aligns himself with the “school” theory: “it would be plausible to envision an anonymous writer who was a member of the Johannine circle” (Schnackenburg, *Epistles*, 41).

<sup>76</sup> Charles Hill speaks of the importance of Polycarp of Smyrna (located in Asia Minor near Ephesus) as one of “the most significant ecclesiastical leaders of the first half of the second century C.E.” (Charles E. Hill, *From the Lost Teaching of Polycarp: Identifying Irenaeus’ Apostolic Presbyter and the Author of Ad Dionetum* [Tubingen, Germany: Mohr Siebeck, 2006], 1.) Hengel discusses Irenaeus’ view that Polycarp was a disciple of the apostles and an interpreter of Scripture (Hengel, *Question*, 2-3, 15).

<sup>77</sup> Polycarp wrote to the Philippians in 7:1, 2: “For everyone who does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is an anti-Christ,” which is similar to 1 John 4:3, “every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God,” and 2 John 7, “... people who do not confess Jesus as Christ coming in the flesh; this person is

of authorship for the purposes of the present research is that an individual or group with knowledge of the original teachings in the Gospel of John wrote or compiled an authoritative document that purports to represent teaching “from the beginning,” and that exhibits a central concern about the work of the devil in the world (1 John 2:13, 14; 3:8, 10; 5:19; John 12:31; 14:30, 16:11, 33). All the theories of authorship meet these conditions.

### 3.1.4. Date

The date of writing was sometime after the destruction of Jerusalem and the Qumran Caves in 60–75 C.E., after there had been time for differences of opinion on how to follow Jesus’ teachings to develop among those who knew the Gospel of John. Scholars are basically in agreement that 1 John was written near the end of the first century C.E.<sup>78</sup> By that date there were plenty of heresies and problems in the church that could be potentially labeled as “works of the devil.”

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the deceiver and the antichrist.” Polycarp further wrote, “whosoever does not confess the testimony of the Cross is of the devil,” which seems to echo 1 John 3:8a, “the one who practices sin is of the devil.” The next phrase of Polycarp 7:1, 2, “whosoever perverts the oracles of the Lord for his own lusts, and says that there is neither resurrection nor judgment, this man is the first-born of Satan,” uses phrasing very similar to “children of the devil” in 1 John 3:10. Polycarp’s phrase, “wherefore, leaving the foolishness of the crowd, and their false teaching,” has counterparts in 1 John 2:26, 27; 4:1, 4-6. The final phrase in Philippians 7:2, “let us turn back to the word which was delivered to us in the beginning,” echoes 1 John 1:1; 2:7, 24, 3:11.

The suggestion that Polycarp could be among those considered as the author or editor of 1 John is not among those offered by Johannine scholars. This is surprising in view of the fact that Polycarp meets many of the conditions discussed for authorship, including being a personal disciple of a John who was a disciple of Jesus, he knew other eyewitnesses of Jesus’ ministry, he was a known compiler of others’ writings (his letter to the Philippians is basically a string of quotations from Scripture such as Paul’s letters, the Gospels, Hebrews, 1 and 2 John), and he lived and taught authoritatively in the vicinity of the Johannine community in Asia Minor. While it is beyond the scope of this research to attempt to make a case for Polycarp as the author/compiler/editor of 1 John, it might also be asked if, since Hill felt he had evidence of a lost writing of Polycarp’s that was written anonymously (Hill, *Lost Teaching*), would it not be reasonable to consider the possibility of other anonymous writings by Polycarp, such as 1, 2, 3, John? This speculation is not essential to the main points of this thesis, but Polycarp’s term for heretics, “the first born of Satan” (Polycarp to the Philippians 7:1) certainly shows that he was thinking along the same lines as the author of 1 John. Polycarp’s terminology supports an important argument later in this thesis that false teachers and their teaching can be viewed as a work of the devil.

<sup>78</sup> Brown bases the date on leaving enough time after the final redaction of the Gospel of John in 90 C.E. for misunderstandings and debates to have arisen about its interpretation, and before Ignatius’ epistles in Asia Minor around 110 C.E. (Brown, *Epistles*, 101). Edwards considers citations of phrases from 1 John in the patristic writings in the second century C.E., and settles for a date in the range of 85-100 C.E. (Edwards, *Epistles*, 53). Hengel, Kruse, Lingad and Schnackenburg refer to general time periods in the late first century. Hengel refers to a “relatively early date” (Hengel, *Question*, x), Kruse to a “trajectory of the development of early Christianity” (Kruse, *Letters*, 5), Lingad to the end of the first century in which church structures with “elders” developed (Lingad, *Problems*, 168), and Schnackenburg speaks of the “apostolic authority from the first generation” behind the author’s witness (Schnackenburg, *Epistles*, 41).

### 3.1.5. Location and Historical Circumstances

It is necessary to rely on historical inter-texture to try to discern the historical circumstances of the writing of 1 John since none are stated in the text. The most likely location from which the author wrote was the city of Ephesus, where Irenaeus' report of the apostle John's encounter with Cerinthus took place.<sup>79</sup> Known circumstances during the 1<sup>st</sup> century C.E. in the vicinity of Ephesus include the prevalence of many false teachings and pagan cults (see Acts 19), the school and common practice of rhetoric in Asia Minor,<sup>80</sup> the ministry and martyrdom of Ignatius whose letter to the Ephesians echoes phrases from 1 John,<sup>81</sup> and Polycarp's writings and ministry in the near-by city of Smyrna.<sup>82</sup> An additional historical circumstance seen in the writings of Ignatius and others was the development of strong leadership (bishops) in the churches, very different from the Johannine community's reliance on the Holy Spirit to teach them "all things" (John 14:26; 1 John 2:20, 27). Brown states, "after the Epistles there is no further trace of a distinct Johannine Community. ... [It is] likely that most of the author's adherents were swallowed up by the 'Great Church.'"<sup>83</sup> As some members of the Johannine community were being urged by the opponents to change their

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<sup>79</sup> Brown summarizes the evidence from early tradition that 1 John was written from the city of Ephesus. "Rev. 2–3 contains letters to seven churches in the Ephesus region beginning with that city. Those churches are marked by false apostles ..., and are divided by conflicting teachings and moral laxity. ... In the situation they envisage, the Johannine Epistles have many affinities to the letters of Ignatius of Antioch, most of which are also addressed to towns in the Ephesus area. A late-second-century story localizes John's hostile encounter with Cerinthus at Ephesus..." (Brown, *Epistles*, 102). Hengel notes the traditions associating the well-known "John, the Lord's disciple" in Ephesus (Hengel, *Question*, 2, 15, 30, 54). Kruse (*Letters*, 2) and Lingard (*Problems*, 90) agree that Ephesus is the likely home of the Johannine community, while Schnackenburg settles for the general designation of Asia Minor, probably with Revelation chapter 2 in mind when he says, "1 John was apparently designed for a group of congregations in a limited area who found themselves in the same situation. This brings Asia Minor to mind" (Schnackenburg, *Epistles*, 5).

<sup>80</sup> Hill reports that "the province of Asia Minor in the second century was the major site of the movement called by Philostratus the 'Second Sophistic,' and Smyrna was one of the three cities specially renowned for rhetoric at this time, along with Athens and Ephesus" (Hill, *Lost Teaching*, 137). In supporting his thesis regarding Polycarp, whose lifetime overlapped with that of the apostles of Jesus, Hill further reports that "the reputation of oratory in Asia Minor was at its height" during Polycarp's adult years (Hill, *Lost Teaching*, 168). This indicates that during the time when 1 John was being written, the city of Ephesus, along with Smyrna, was in the process of developing a reputation for its oratory and rhetoric. The text of 1 John shows evidence of a Jewish believer who was familiar with rhetorical conventions, as will be seen in the discussion of inner texture.

<sup>81</sup> "The letters of Ignatius were written on the bishop's journey to his martyrdom in Rome, at the latest in the early autumn of 113" (Hengel, *Question*, 14). In his letter to the Ephesians, Ignatius said that when believers "meet together frequently, the powers of Satan are overthrown and his destructiveness is nullified [λύσειν] by the unanimity of your faith" (13:1). This passage echoes 1 John 3:8: the Son of God came to destroy [τὰ λῶσιν] the works of the devil. The section on inter-texture will discuss the important contribution this passage makes to knowing what is meant by "the works of the devil."

<sup>82</sup> We know of the activities of early church fathers through their own writings and also through Irenaeus, writing in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century, as preserved by Eusebius in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century.

<sup>83</sup> Brown, *Epistles*, 103.

beliefs and practices, other believers may have eventually decided to seek out other less troubled and dysfunctional fellowships with which to meet. As implied in the scenario above and in footnote 72, the activities in the city of Ephesus give plenty of scope for exploring what the audience of 1 John could have understood the “works of the devil” to include.<sup>84</sup>

### 3.1.6. Recipients and Opponents

The audience of 1 John is described in 1 John 2:12-14—believers within the Johannine tradition who have known both the message and person which has been from the beginning (also see 1 John 5:13: “These things I have written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God ...”). Brown and Cullmann have each written extensively about the origin and history of the Johannine community or circle that developed around the anonymous “beloved disciple.”<sup>85</sup> The members of this community were the recipients of 1 John who were being urged to recognize and repudiate those who were “children of the devil.”

These “children of the devil,” in the hypothetical scenario above, were depicted as Jewish Essenes who had tried for a time to fit in with the Jewish-Christian Johannine movement. This hypothesis is supported by the strong correlation between the text of 1 John and Qumran literature and also with Lingad’s description of the Ebionite sect: “The sect of the Ebionites ... consisted of Jews who believed in Christ but saw in him only the greatest of the prophets and not the Son of God.”<sup>86</sup> Lingad further adds, “It seems that with Cullmann we may regard the Ebionites as Essenes who rallied to the person of Christ after the fall of the Temple.”<sup>87</sup> The beliefs of this sect are consistent with Brown’s general description, from

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<sup>84</sup> This will be discussed in the historical inter-texture section of chapter 4.

<sup>85</sup> Brown, *Community* and Cullmann, *Circle*.

<sup>86</sup> Lingad, *Problems*, 38. O’Neill also suggests that the opponents were Jews, but his hypothesis that 1 John is a collection of Jewish sources edited by Christians (parallel to the editing of *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*) has to force facts to fit the theory rather than explaining the facts well in some cases (J. D. O’Neill, *The Puzzle of 1 John* [London: SPCK, 1966] 4-6). A better explanation is that the opponents were Jewish/Essene “insider” believers who were attracted by some of the Johannine distinctive teachings that echoed important themes in the Qumran literature. Edwards disagrees with O’Neill that “practicing religious Jews would have been members, or former members, of a fully Christian community, as the opponents must be” (Edwards, *Epistles*, 60). However Edwards, like most New Testament scholars, did not have in mind the cross-disciplinary insight, from the field of missiology, that “insider movements” consist of groups of people who decide to retain their cultural and religious identity and practices (such as Judaism) while adopting beliefs from another religious faith. Lingad’s personal experience in the Philippines is an example of how ideological texture contributes toward biblical interpretation. His familiarity with Catholicism and animism being mixed in religious practice would have prepared him to recognize a group like the Ebionites that mixed Jewish and Christian beliefs but did not fully recognize Jesus as the Christ. Lingad’s description of the Ebionites is an example of an insider movement and a good candidate for a description of the opponents of 1 John.

<sup>87</sup> Lingad, *Problems*, 46.

the text of 1 John, of the nature of the opponents: they refused to acknowledge that Jesus was the “Christ come in the flesh” and they did not love their fellow Christians.<sup>88</sup>

These failures in belief and practice on the part of the opponents were extremely serious in the view of the author of 1 John. The fact that the opponents are described in general terms, rather than being labeled as one specific heresy, makes the text timeless in its applicability to other religious settings when doctrinal and ethical differences cause tension within a community. Hengel’s expertise in the Second-Temple or Hellenistic period of early Judaism enables him to explain why the opponents were not specifically identified in 1 John:

Jewish and early Christian polemic ... hardly ever really names its opponents, but tends to use derogatory paraphrases. This is true of Essene polemic... . Even Paul nearly always conceals the names of his most immediate adversaries... the same is true of Ignatius who writes to the Smyrnaens (7:3): “it is right to refrain from such men and not even to speak about them [the Docetists] in private or in public.”<sup>89</sup>

This cultural reluctance to name an adversary accounts for the derogatory terminology used by the author of 1 John at the center of the book. It is possible to view the author as describing the activity of the trouble-makers (of rejecting God’s Son and God’s children) as “works of the devil” (3:8). This is in a context in which he goes on to label the opponents as “children of the devil” (3:10). The variety of approaches to the textures of the text in chapter four will help to illuminate the implications alluded to here.

### 3.1.7. Purpose

The author’s labeling of the opponents as “children of the devil” is part of one of two purposes: to confirm believers in making right choices in belief and practice and to reinforce their determination to disassociate themselves from the false teachers (“children of the

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<sup>88</sup> Brown, *Epistles*, 47-68. Brown concludes his comprehensive summary of possible adversaries: “While the Johannine adversaries have some points in common with all the proposed candidates, differences militate against a precise identification with any of these groups. ... Yet it remains useful to know that the views attacked in 1 and 2 John were not without parallel in Asia Minor at the beginning of the second century” (Brown, *Epistles*, 67). Kruse and Schnackenburg agree with this position. In Kruse’s words, “Schnackenburg’s conclusion is hard to improve upon: the heresy which occasioned 1 and 2 John cannot be parallel with any other manifestation of heresy known from that era, yet it has affinities with more than one such movement” (Kruse, *Letters*, 26). However Schnackenburg also concludes that “the opponents are to be sought predominantly in a Gentile Christian milieu” (Schnackenburg, *Epistles*, 18), a conclusion with which the present research disagrees due to the parallels with the Qumran literature that Schnackenburg discusses but does not take into account on the question of the identity of the opponents (Schnackenburg, *Epistles*, 15-18).

devil”).<sup>90</sup> In the social-cultural texture section a social science ritual model will be employed to gain additional insight into these purposes of 1 John. This will also be briefly mentioned again below in the discussion of genre.

### 3.1.8. Relationship to the Gospel of John

Within the text of 1 John is a clear statement of the positive purpose of the book that closely matches the purpose statement of the Gospel of John. The two verses are laid out in parallel columns here for comparison:

#### 1 John 5:13

These things  
have I written  
unto you that  
believe  
on the name of the Son of God  
that ye may know  
that you have eternal life  
and that you may believe  
on the name of the Son of God

#### John 20:31

These [signs]  
are written  
that you may  
believe  
that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God  
and that by believing  
you may have life  
in his name.

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<sup>89</sup> Hengel, *Question*, 41.

<sup>90</sup> Schnackenburg calls attention to the two purposes: a polemic against the antagonists as well as a defense of the faith. “The calm tone, sometimes solemn and elevated (1:1-3; 3:1-3; 4:18-20) gives a glimpse of a serious and eager champion of the true faith” (Schnackenburg, *Epistles*, 4). This description fits well with the hypothesis that the genre of 1 John is a liturgy (that is a combination of two rituals), which by its nature contains “teaching” segments or statements of truth.

Kruse focuses on the positive purpose of the author’s “plea to his readers to remain faithful to the values of the community” (Kruse, *Letters*, 26). His detailed summary of Watson’s findings of rhetorical techniques in 1 John, shows Kruse considers 1 John to be an example of epideictic rhetoric, whose purpose was to “increase the audience’s adherence to just and honorable values they already hold” (Kruse, *Letters*, 26). Lingad, on the other hand, sees the purpose of 1 John as that of a “rebuttal of the positions of the secessionists” (Lingad, *Problems*, 12). The proposal in this thesis is that the author of 1 John had both the positive and the negative purposes in mind, each the focus of a separate ritual, later combined.

Edwards points helpfully toward the nature of 1 John as a “summary of the oral teaching of a great master” with Grayston’s suggested purpose in mind, that 1 John may have been intended as a handbook for its recipients (Edwards, *Epistles*, 45). The idea of 1 John as a handbook, like that of a liturgy, suggests the book was intended for ongoing use in the community. Edwards specifically downplays the likelihood of a polemical purpose to the book (Edwards, *Epistles*, 65-67) and focuses instead on a rhetorical purpose within an eschatological “last hour” in which the believers, who are already conquerors (1 John 4:4), are encouraged to live sinless lives, as described in 3:6, 9, 5:18 (Edwards, *Epistles*, 102).

Brown concentrates on a purpose for 1 John of re-explaining the traditions from the Gospel of John to rescue it from Gnostic interpretation. “The ultimate acceptance of GJohn into the church’s canon ... was in no small part due to the fact that 1 John offered an example of how GJohn could be read in a non-gnostic and even an anti-gnostic way” (Brown, *Epistles*, 71).

Numerous echoes of the Gospel of John, such as this example, indicate that the Gospel and 1 John were both written or edited by a person or group loyal to Johannine tradition.<sup>91</sup>

The key relationship that will be highlighted in chapter four in the section on inner texture, and mentioned below briefly in the discussion of structure, is the finding that at the center of both the Gospel of John and 1 John, featured in a similar complex transitional device, is a central emphasis on the cosmic battle between the Son of God and the evil one.<sup>92</sup>

“Now is the prince of this world cast out.” (John 12:31)

“The Son of God came to destroy the works of the devil.” (1 John 3:8)

### 3.1.9. Summary of the Occasion for the Writing of 1 John

This discussion of the occasion for writing has considered authorship, date, location, historical circumstances, recipients, opponents, purpose, and relationship to the Gospel of John. For the purposes of this thesis the following insights have been harvested:

- a. The author shows a central concern about the work of the devil in the world.
- b. Other authors who were writing at around the same time as the author of 1 John were also concerned about the works and followers of Satan.

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<sup>91</sup> The traditional discussions about the relationship of the Gospel to the Epistles of John are not particularly relevant to the title and thesis of this research. Brown addresses in detail the question of whether or not the same author wrote the Fourth Gospel and the Epistles (Brown, *Epistles*, 19-30). He theorizes that 1 John was written to better explain the theology of the Gospel, while Edwards contradicts this, saying, “The idea that 1 John was written to accompany the Gospel or as an explicit refutation of misunderstandings of it seems unlikely in view of the shortage of clear citations from it” (Edwards, *Epistles*, 55). Lingad also calls attention to the lack of quotations in 1 John from the Fourth Gospel (Lingad, *Problems*, 12).

Despite the lack of quotations (although one could point to 1 John 5:13 as a near quotation of John 20:31), scholars usually agree that there is a “close theological relation” between the gospel and the epistle (Schnackenburg, *Epistles*, 38). As Kruse says, “what all this means for interpreters of the letters is that they find themselves referring again and again to the Gospel to seek elucidation concerning words and ideas found in the letters; but when they do so they must be careful, for often there is not a one-to-one equivalence of usage” (Kruse, *Letters*, 7). Where the two writings are most similar, as Hengel points out, is in the farewell discourses in John 13–17 where Jesus is preparing his followers for a “threatening future” (Hengel, *Question*, 34). The circumstances surrounding the writing of 1 John could be considered at least a partial fulfillment of that threatening future for which Jesus prepared his followers. Lingad finds in his comparison of the Gospel and Epistles that “the dualistic language [love-hate; light-darkness; truth-falsehood; of God-of the devil] used by Jesus in his attacks on the world or the Jews has now become the epistolary author’s polemic arsenal against the secessionists” (Lingad, *Problems*, 219). This antithetical language will be a key to understanding the nature of “the works of the devil” in 1 John 3:8.

<sup>92</sup> For a detailed discussion of the role of the evil one in the Gospel and Epistles of John, see J. D. Coetzee, “Christ and the Prince of This World in the Gospel and the Epistles of St. John,” *Neot* 2 (1968): 104-21.

- c. The date of writing, historical circumstances, and location of the Johannine community give plenty of scope for exploring what the audience of 1 John could have understood the “works of the devil” to include.
- d. The recipients of 1 John were expected to recognize and repudiate their opponents as being “children of the devil.”
- e. The activity of the trouble-makers (of rejecting God’s Son and God’s children) may potentially be described as a “work of the devil.”
- f. First John was written to confirm believers in making right choices in belief and practice and to reinforce their determination to disassociate themselves from the false teachers (“children of the devil”). The shape of the writing for accomplishing this purpose leads into a discussion of genre in the next section.
- g. Among the similarities between the Gospel of John and 1 John, antithetical language will be an important key to understanding the nature of “the works of the devil.” The key relationship between the Gospel of John and 1 John, for the purposes of the present research, is the finding that at the center of each book is an emphasis on the cosmic battle between the Son of God and the evil one. In both cases this central emphasis occurs as part of a similar complex transitional device. This leads into a discussion of the structure of 1 John that will follow the upcoming discussion of genre.

### 3.2. GENRE

There is a lack of scholarly consensus or satisfaction with past proposals of the genre of 1 John. It is clearly not a normal letter, even though historically it has carried the title, “epistle,” because it lacks the opening and closing greetings typical of letters in the Hellenistic world.<sup>93</sup> Grayston has suggested it may be a handbook,<sup>94</sup> others have suggested it may be a circular letter, a sermon or a compilation of excerpts from sermons.<sup>95</sup> Trebilco

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<sup>93</sup> Kruse, *Letters*, 28.

<sup>94</sup> “1 John is neither epistle nor treatise but an enchiridion, an instruction booklet for applying the tradition in disturbing circumstances” (Kenneth Grayston, *The Johannine Epistles* [vols. 62-64 of *New Century Bible Commentary*; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984], 4).

<sup>95</sup> Hengel points out that the repeated use of the phrase, “we write” militates against considering 1 John to be a simple transcript of an oral sermon (Hengel, *Question*, 46), but he concludes that it was “written to be read, like a sermon in the services of the communities” (Hengel, *Question*, 48). Many commentators agree that 1 John was intended to be circulated to various groups of believers but their descriptions of the intended form and purpose vary. Brown describes 1 John as “a work consisting of comments on Johannine tradition as it is known to us in the Fourth Gospel. These comments were written to protect the author’s adherents within the Johannine Community from further inroads by secessionist teachers” (Brown, *Epistles*, 147). Edwards considers

proposes that the author was writing to people within his own city whom he knew very well (“little children”) and this makes it understandable that 1 John is not a letter but “more of a tractate.”<sup>96</sup>

A new proposal, that the genre of 1 John is a liturgy that combines two rituals, side-steps the usual debate over whether or not it is valid to consider the book to be within the epistolary genre. Ritual is used here in the sense of a written documentation of a public performance, designed to change the perception of a group about a given topic or person. Two rituals potentially applicable to 1 John are described in Malina and Neyrey’s edited volume, *The Social World of Luke-Acts: Models for Interpretation*. Malina and Neyrey state that “status degradation rituals publicly categorize, recast, and assign a moral character to deviant actors,”<sup>97</sup> while in a separate chapter McVann explains that status transformation rituals involve a passage from one status to another, including christening, baptism, marriage, or ordination.<sup>98</sup> In 1 John the believers are having their status transformed (or re-confirmed) as children of God (3:1) while the opponents are having their status downgraded to children of the devil (3:10). Investigation of the applicability of ritual models to 1 John will be described in detail in the social-cultural texture section of chapter four.

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a number of alternatives, citing Dodd (a circular letter for a number of local churches), and Bultmann and O’Neill (a collection of writings from multiple sources) (Edwards, *Epistles*, 35-45). She concludes that “it remains probable that our present text does incorporate material from a variety of sources” (Edwards, *Epistles*, 40). In support of this suggestion is the fact that Polycarp and Clement each left works consisting of compilations of sayings from various sources.

Schnackenburg mentions W. Nauck’s “new idea” that 1 John combines two genres (antithetical statements and sermonic explanations) (Schnackenburg, *Epistles*, 5). This is the same discovery made independently through original inductive research for this thesis. The homiletical portions can be viewed, using Watson’s rhetorical categories, as “amplification” of certain portions of the antithetical material. (For a description of “amplification,” see Watson, “Amplification,” 99-123.) This identification of two separate types of material lends support to the proposal that 1 John consists of a compilation of a confirmation homily or ritual and a status degradation ritual, into a permanent liturgy. As Schnackenburg says, “if Nauck is right, 1 John is not a letter in the proper sense of the word, but an official missive to a group of readers who need strengthening now that they have survived the danger of apostasy” (Schnackenburg, *Epistles*, 6). Robert Kysar’s observation further supports the hypothesis that the genre of 1 John could be a combination of separate rituals: “The disparate portions of the document were drawn from different homilies delivered at different times.” See “John, Epistles of” in *Anchor Bible Dictionary* (ed. David N. Freedman; Garden City: Doubleday, 1992), 902.

<sup>96</sup> Trebilco, *Ephesus*, 269.

<sup>97</sup> Bruce J. Malina, and Jerome H. Neyrey, “Conflict in Luke-Acts: Labeling and Deviance Theory.” in *The Social World of Luke-Acts: Models for Interpretation* (ed. Jerome H. Neyrey; Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1991), 106.

### 3.3. STRUCTURE

In the inner texture section of chapter four, it will be seen that the author has used a common memory aid of that time, known as chiasm,<sup>99</sup> as a means of organizing the content of two rituals for his readers or listeners. The literary combination of these rituals produced a memorable explanation or liturgy that could be read or recited to Johannine communities in various locations to help them understand the new (outcast) status of the opponents as well as their own status in relation to God. This proposal of a chiastic structure was discovered independently of, and differs in fundamental ways from, Thomas' presentation of a chiastic structure for 1 John.<sup>100</sup> At the center of the chiastic structure proposed here is 1 John 3:8-12, an interpretive lens for the rest of the book. ("For this purpose the Son of God appeared in order to destroy the works of the devil.")

The lack of agreement among commentators on the structure of 1 John is seen in the wide variety of proposed divisions (from 2 to 7) summarized by Raymond Brown in the fifth chart of the appendix in his commentary on 1 John.<sup>101</sup> The question might be asked, Is there any real structure in 1 John since commentators over the years have not been able to agree on divisions and an outline of the book?<sup>102</sup> The answer is that western thinkers have been thinking ethnocentrically and anachronistically in terms of modern western literary concepts and outlines. First John was written by an ancient Judeo-Christian author at a time when the Greco-Roman culture was influential. The text may be profitably seen as a synthesis or intermingling of two separate rituals, each with its own structure,<sup>103</sup> one of which, the Status Degradation Ritual, follows the common Hebrew chiastic pattern. The accusations against

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<sup>98</sup> Mark McVann, "Rituals of Status Transformation in Luke-Acts: The Case of Jesus the Prophet" in *The Social World of Luke-Acts: Models for Interpretation* (ed. Jerome H. Neyrey; Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1991), 333-60.

<sup>99</sup> Ronald Man defines chiasm (or chiasmus) as "a stylistic literary figure which consists of a series of two or more elements followed by a presentation of corresponding elements in reverse order." The pattern may be in the form of ABBA, or ABCBA, denoting words, lines, concepts, or themes. See Ronald E. Man, "The Value of Chiasm for New Testament Interpretation," *BibSac* 141 (1984): 146.

<sup>100</sup> John Christopher Thomas, "The Literary Structure of 1 John," *NovT* 40 (1998): 372.

<sup>101</sup> Brown, *Epistles*, 764.

<sup>102</sup> The present writer attempted this task from an inductive approach in 1973 for a master's thesis at Wheaton Graduate School, Wheaton Illinois.

<sup>103</sup> In fact, based on this author's prior inductive study of the structure of 1 John, each section of 1 John is structured with a different organizing principle. (See Beth Chilcote Snodderly, *Analysis of the Structure of First John* [Master's thesis, Wheaton Graduate School, 1975], 50-72). The current study shows these independent units are linked together with rhetorical transitions (see section 4.1.2.1.). Kenneth Bailey refers to a similar phenomenon in the book of Galatians: "John Bligh ... organizes the entire book of Galatians into interlocking structured literary forms" (Kenneth E. Bailey, *Poet and Peasant* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976], 47).

the opponents in this ritual are antithetically and closely matched with positive statements about the believing community, also fitting the chiasmic structure. Those same positive statements can be seen as belonging to a separate Status Transformation Ritual that is structured with amplification<sup>104</sup> and transitional<sup>105</sup> techniques described in Greco-Roman handbooks of rhetoric.

At the center of 1 John, 3:8-12, a chiasmic climax and chain-link interlock transition intersect, emphasizing the central importance in the author's mind of the need to overcome "the works of the devil." While some have called the style of 1 John a "stream of consciousness,"<sup>106</sup> as if there were no pattern, but only random thoughts being written down as they occurred to the author, this study shows the opposite to be the case. This writing is a carefully constructed written speech using chiasmic structure and a variety of rhetorical transitions, including that of chain-link interlock, to assist the author in developing and connecting his arguments in a memorable way. Transitions as a structural feature will also be discussed in chapter four in the section on inner texture.

### **3.4. SUMMARY AND EVALUATION OF THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF EPISTEMOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

The structural features of chiasm and rhetorical transitions and the ritual models proposed for the genre of 1 John are of key importance in arriving at the meaning of the phrase, "the works of the devil." Both the chiasmic structure and the chain-link interlock transition highlight the central importance to the author of 1 John of the phrase under investigation in this thesis. In addition, epistemological considerations of the occasion for writing, such as the historical circumstances, the nature of the controversy with the opponents, the purpose of 1 John, and its relationship to the Gospel of John, also contribute toward a fuller analysis of the meaning of the phrase, "the works of the devil."

In the following chapter, separate bounded studies will approach the meaning of this phrase within each of the categories of Socio-Rhetorical Analysis: inner texture, inter-texture, social-cultural texture, ideological texture, and theological texture. In the course of these studies several new contributions to Johannine scholarship will be proposed, including the

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<sup>104</sup> Watson, "Amplification," 100.

<sup>105</sup> Longenecker, *Rhetoric*, 1.

<sup>106</sup> See, for instance, Peter Rhea Jones, "A Structural Analysis of I John" *RevEx* 67 (1970): 440.

genre and structural features of the book. In the theological texture section of chapter four, the various findings will be “stitched together” to form a comprehensive pattern that will give a new look at the meaning the phrase in 1 John 3:8, “the works of the devil,” and what role the original audience may have perceived that the children of God might have in joining the unique Son of God in destroying those works.

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## **CHAPTER 4: EXEGESIS: A SOCIO-RHETORICAL READING OF 1 JOHN 3:4-18 WITH AN EMPHASIS ON 3:8**

Chapter Four is the core of this thesis in which the context and text of 1 John 3:8 (2:28–3:18) will be exegeted in detail, adapting Robbins' methodology and textures, as described in chapter two. This chapter will be divided into five major sections, one each for inner texture, inter-texture (with its subdivisions), social-cultural texture, ideological texture, and theological texture.

### **4.1. INNER TEXTURE**

The exegesis will begin with inner texture, from which will flow the direction to be taken in the remaining texture studies. The inner texture approach will begin by taking a wholistic look at the structure of the book. The finding of a chiasmic structure will be explained in order to orient the reader to a focus in this research on the center of the book. In a second separate study of the whole book, an analysis of transitions, including chain-link interlock, will again focus attention on the center of 1 John and its subject matter. Arising from this analysis, examples of what Robbins calls repetitive-progressive texture will be given to demonstrate the concentration of core themes in the central pericopes of 3:4-10, 3:11-18, showing their relevance to interpreting the meaning of the phrase in 3:8, "the works of the devil," and pointing toward the need for additional in-depth studies in the other textures. Following these wider approaches, the study will narrow to 2:28–3:18 for a detailed discourse analysis that will diagram and explain semantic relations of key themes.

#### **4.1.1. Chiasmic Structure of 1 John**

A broad look at the way language is used in 1 John, with the author's Jewish and Greco-Roman literary background in mind, reveals the intentional use of chiasm, a common oral-literary device in ancient Hebrew literature.<sup>107</sup> In addition to serving as a memory aid in the 1<sup>st</sup> century Mediterranean world for those listening to a text being read or recited aloud,<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> Nils Wilhelm Lund, *Chiasmus in the New Testament: A Study in Formgeschichte* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1942), 15.

<sup>108</sup> James Bailey comments on the thought patterns of ancient people: "Relatively unconcerned about a linear and logical flow of ideas, biblical communities relished sayings and stories that were memorable, and they thus appreciated repetition that we might consider redundant. ... Chiasmic patterns ... served both

two additional values of the chiasmic literary model are relevant for this study: insights from the chiasmic parallelisms enable the interpreter to better understand the author's use of terms, while the center of the chiasm focuses on the climax of the literary work.<sup>109</sup>

In the case of 1 John, the chiasmic structure gives insight into the group dynamics of the Johannine community and the chiasmic center will be seen to focus on the climax of a ritual labeling those who went out from the original group as "children of the devil" (3:10). In order to observe the overall chiasmic structure it will be necessary to look first at the verses describing each of the opposing groups found in 1 John. Chiasm was apparently used by the author as a means of organizing a set of antithetical statements for his readers or listeners. These statements are closely matched in describing what is true of believers (labeled "the children of God" in 3:10) and opposite statements about the opponents (labeled "the children of the devil" in 3:10). As mentioned in chapter three, Bultmann, O'Neill and others have observed the presence of two types of text, the antithetical statements and homiletical material that supplements or amplifies those statements.

The supplemental material, surrounding the antithetical statements, is addressed to the believing community (the "beloved," *teknia*, "little children"),<sup>110</sup> and can potentially be viewed as part of a "status transformation ritual," as described by McVann.<sup>111</sup> The portions of 1 John that refer to the opponents of the author's Community<sup>112</sup> will be seen to fit the model of a status degradation ritual,<sup>113</sup> as briefly described in chapter three. The proposed status degradation ritual will be discussed in detail in the social-cultural texture section of this chapter. In this section, the combination of

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pedagogical and liturgical purposes" (James L. Bailey and Lyle D. Van der Broek, *Literary Forms in the New Testament: A Handbook* [Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1992], 182).

<sup>109</sup> Man comments, "To the biblical authors, artistry in the use of structure was not an end in itself; it was a means toward more effective communication of their messages. In the case of chiasm, this is accomplished by underlining the central emphasis or clarifying correspondences in the text (Man, "Chiasm," 148).

<sup>110</sup> Verses in 1 John that speak about the believing community: 1:1-5, 7, 9, 2:1-3, 5-8, 10, 12-14, 17b, 20, 21, 23b, 24-29, 3:1-3, 5, 6a, 7, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 16, 18-24; 4:2, 4, 6a, 7, 9-19, 21; 5:1-10a, 11, 12a, 13-16, 18, 19a, 20, 21.

<sup>111</sup> McVann, "Rituals," 333-60. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to elaborate on the proposed existence of a "status transformation ritual" woven into the text of 1 John, although this will be referred to occasionally.

<sup>112</sup> The following verses of 1 John relate to the opponents and will later form the basis for the discussion of the proposed Status Degradation Ritual: 1:1-5, 6, 8, 10; 2:4, 9, 11, 15, 16, 17a, 18, 19, 21b, 22, 23a, 26; 3:4, 6b, 8, 10, 12, 15, 17; 4:1, 3, 5, 6, 8, 20; 5:10b, 12b, 16c, 17, 19, 21.

<sup>113</sup> Malina and Neyrey, "Conflict," 106.

antithetical statements, referring to believers and opponents, will be examined as a self-contained literary unit that will be seen to be in chiasmic structure.

#### 4.1.1.1. *Display of Group Norms through Antithetical Statements*

The values, or group norms (and their opposites), of the followers of the author of 1 John are clearly seen in antithetical statements throughout the book. For every statement characterizing the believers there is, in close proximity, an opposite statement about the opponents. These labels are contrasted in parallel columns in the following chart:

##### **Johannine Community**

ἐν τῷ φωτὶ περιπατῶμεν (1:7)

τὰς ἐντολάς αὐτοῦ τηρῶμεν (2:3b)  
ἐντολήν καινὴν ... ἧ ἔστιν ἀληθὴς  
... ἐν ὑμῖν (2:8a)

ὁ ἀγαπῶν τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ (2:10a)

ἐν τῷ φωτὶ μένει (2:10a)  
[ὁ ἀγαπῶν τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ  
ἐν τῷ φωτὶ μένει (2:10)]

ὁ δὲ ποιῶν τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ (2:17b)

μένει εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα. (2:17b)

ὑμεῖς χρίσμα ἔχετε ἀπὸ τοῦ ἁγίου  
(2:20)

τὴν ἀλήθειαν, ... οἴδατε αὐτήν (2:21a)

ὁ ὁμολογῶν τὸν υἱὸν (2:23c)  
καὶ τὸν πατέρα ἔχει (2:23d)

ἁμαρτία ἐν αὐτῷ [ἐκεῖνος] οὐκ  
ἔστιν (3:5b)

πᾶς ὁ ἐν αὐτῷ μένων  
οὐχ ἁμαρτάνει (3:6a)

ὁ ποιῶν τὴν δικαιοσύνην δίκαιός ἐστιν  
καθὼς ἐκεῖνος δίκαιός ἐστιν (3:7)

##### **Opponents**

ἐν τῷ σκότει περιπατῶμεν (1:6)

τὰς ἐντολάς αὐτοῦ μὴ τηρῶν (2:4b)  
ψεύστης ἐστίν (2:4c)  
ἐν τούτῳ ἡ ἀλήθεια οὐκ ἔστιν (2:4d)

ὁ λέγων ἐν τῷ φωτὶ εἶναι  
καὶ τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ μισῶν (2:9a)  
ἐν τῇ σκοτιᾷ ἐστίν (2:9b)  
ὁ δὲ μισῶν τὸν ἀδελφὸν  
ἐν τῇ σκοτιᾷ ἐστίν (2:11a)

ἐάν τις ἀγαπᾷ τὸν κόσμον  
οὐκ ἔστιν ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ πατρὸς  
ἐν αὐτῷ (2:15b)  
πᾶν τὸ ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ ... (2:16a)  
οὐκ ἔστιν ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς (2:16c)  
ὁ κόσμος παράγεται (2:17a)

νῦν ἀντίχριστοι πολλοὶ γεγόνασιν  
(2:18c)  
ἐξ ἡμῶν ἐξήλθαν (2:19a)  
οὐκ εἰσὶν πάντες ἐξ ἡμῶν (2:19d)

πᾶν ψεῦδος ἐκ τῆς ἀληθείας οὐκ  
ἔστιν (2:21b)

πᾶς ὁ ἀρνούμενος τὸν υἱὸν (2:23a)  
οὐδὲ τὸν πατέρα ἔχει (2:23b)

Πᾶς ὁ ποιῶν τὴν ἁμαρτίαν  
καὶ τὴν ἀνομίαν ποιεῖ (3:4a)

πᾶς ὁ ἁμαρτάνων  
οὐχ ἑώρακεν αὐτὸν οὐδὲ ἔγνωκεν  
αὐτόν (3:6b)

ὁ ποιῶν τὴν ἁμαρτίαν  
ἐκ τοῦ διαβόλου ἐστίν (3:8a)

Πᾶς ὁ γεγεννημένος ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ  
ἀμαρτίαν οὐ ποιεῖ (3:9a)  
ὅτι σπέρμα αὐτοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ μένει (3:9b)

οὐ καθὼς Κάιν ... (3:12a)

τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ αὐτοῦ [ἔργα] δίκαια  
(3:12d)

ἡμεῖς οἶδαμεν ὅτι μεταβεβήκαμεν  
ἐκ τοῦ θανάτου εἰς τὴν ζωὴν  
ὅτι ἀγαπῶμεν τοὺς ἀδελφούς (3:14a)

ἡμεῖς ὀφείλομεν ὑπὲρ τῶν ἀδελφῶν  
τὰς ψυχὰς θεῖναι (3:16b)

[μεταβεβήκαμεν ... εἰς τὴν ζωὴν (3:14a)]

ἀγαπῶμεν ... ἐν ἔργῳ καὶ ἀληθείᾳ  
(3:18)

γνωσόμεθα ὅτι ἐκ τῆς ἀληθείας ἐσμεν  
(3:19)

πάν πνεῦμα ὃ ὁμολογεῖ  
Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν ἐν σαρκὶ ἐληλυθότα  
ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ ἐστίν (4:2b)

ὑμεῖς ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ ἐστε (4:4a)  
ἡμεῖς ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ ἐσμεν (4:6a)

πᾶς ὁ ἀγαπῶν ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ γεγέννηται  
καὶ γινώσκει τὸν θεόν (4:7b)

ὁ ἀγαπῶν τὸν θεὸν  
ἀγαπᾷ καὶ τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ  
(4:21b)

ὁ πιστεύων εἰς τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ θεοῦ  
ἔχει τὴν μαρτυρίαν ἐν ἑαυτῷ  
(5:10a)

ὁ ἔχων τὸν υἱὸν  
ἔχει τὴν ζωὴν (5:12a)

οἶδαμεν ὅτι ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ ἐσμεν (5:19a)  
ἐσμὲν ἐν τῷ ἀληθινῷ,  
ἐν τῷ υἱῷ αὐτοῦ Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ (5:20)

πᾶς ὁ μὴ ποιῶν δικαιοσύνην  
οὐκ ἔστιν ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ  
καὶ ὁ μὴ ἀγαπῶν τὸν ἀδελφὸν  
αὐτοῦ (3:10b)

Κάιν ... ἐκ τοῦ πονηροῦ ἦν  
καὶ ἔσφαξεν τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ  
(3:12a)

τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ πονηρὰ ἦν  
(3:12c)

ὁ μὴ ἀγαπῶν  
μένει ἐν τῷ θανάτῳ (3:14b)

πᾶς ὁ μισῶν τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ  
ἀνθρωποκτόνος ἐστίν (3:15a)

πᾶς ἀνθρωποκτόνος  
οὐκ ἔχει ζωὴν αἰώνιον ἐν αὐτῷ  
μένουσιν (3:15b)

ὅς δ' ἂν ἔχη τὸν βίον τοῦ κόσμου  
καὶ θεωρῇ τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ χρεῖαν  
ἔχοντα, καὶ κλείσῃ τὰ σπλάγχνα  
αὐτοῦ ἀπ' αὐτοῦ,  
πῶς ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ θεοῦ μένει ἐν αὐτῷ;  
(3:17)

πολλοὶ ψευδοπροφήται ἐξεληλύθασιν εἰς  
τὸν κόσμον (4:1b)

πάν πνεῦμα ὃ μὴ ὁμολογεῖ  
τὸν Ἰησοῦν  
ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ οὐκ ἔστιν (4:3a)  
τοῦτό ἐστίν τὸ τοῦ ἀντιχρίστου (4:3b)

ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου εἰσίν (4:5a)

ὁ μὴ ἀγαπῶν  
οὐκ ἔγνω τὸν θεόν (4:8)

ἐάν τις εἴπῃ ὅτι Ἀγαπῶ τὸν θεόν  
καὶ τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ μισῇ,  
ψεύστης ἐστίν (4:20)

ὁ μὴ πιστεύων τῷ θεῷ  
ψεύστην πεποίηκεν αὐτον,  
ὅτι οὐ πεπίστευκεν  
εἰς τὴν μαρτυρίαν ἣν μεμαρτύρηκεν  
ὁ θεὸς (5:10b)

ὁ μὴ ἔχων τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ θεοῦ  
τὴν ζωὴν οὐκ ἔχει (5:12b)

ὁ κόσμος ὅλος ἐν τῷ πονηρῷ κεῖται  
(5:19)

This comparison of closely paired antithetical characteristics indicates that the author of 1 John intended to make clear who was “of the truth” and who was not. This pattern, seen consistently throughout the book, demonstrates that one of the two competing groups in the Johannine community was deviant from group norms. This insight from inner texture research points to the need for further research using a social-science model of group theory. This research will be summarized in the social-cultural texture section of this chapter. It was because of their deviant behavior and beliefs that the opponents had to be officially excommunicated from the original community, hence the need for the status degradation ritual that will be discussed later.

#### **4.1.1.2. Use of Chiastic Structure**

How likely is it that the author of 1 John would have used chiasmic structure for a public ritual, and why might he have been motivated to do so? As a Jewish follower of Jesus within the Johannine community, the author of 1 John would have known the ancient Hebrew texts, and this would have included familiarity with the chiasmic structures that were used extensively in the Hebrew Bible.<sup>114</sup> This structure may even have been as common in biblical times as the modern academic structure of essays, taught to children beginning in grade school: “Introduction, Body and Conclusion.” Lund, in his ground-breaking survey of the use of chiasmus in the Old and New Testaments states, “I have reached the conclusion that much of these symmetries was altogether subconscious, ... the writers had learned their forms so thoroughly that they had forgotten them as forms.”<sup>115</sup> Neyrey adds the insight that this common form “was anticipated by audiences to aid in following the argument or narrative.”<sup>116</sup> In a partially oral culture, chiasmic structure would have helped make a text memorable, with emphasis on the central point.

Given the presence in 1 John of obvious Hebrew parallelisms at the verse level, including the inverted parallelism of chiasm,<sup>117</sup> it seems reasonable to look for the possibility of chiasm in larger portions of the book. This possibility is strengthened by the obvious balanced parallels at the beginning and ending of the book (the theme of witnesses to the life

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<sup>114</sup> Lund, *Chiasmus*, 25.

<sup>115</sup> Lund, *Chiasmus*, ix.

<sup>116</sup> Jerome Neyrey, *The Gospel of John* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 38.

<sup>117</sup> See detailed examples in the discourse analysis later in this chapter.

in 1:1, 2 and 5:20) and the references to the antichrist at about equal distances on either side of the center of the book (2:18 and 4:3b). In an experiment of compiling in a separate document those verses that speak negatively of the opponents, the resulting text has obvious and very close chiastic parallelisms, as will be demonstrated below. Since the positive and negative labels are closely paired, a case can be made for the antithetical statements also being in chiastic arrangement. (See the chart below.) The lack of chiastic balance in the full text, and in the portion of the text that discusses realities of the believers, is due to intervening explanatory material that is not directly connected to the contrasting labels that display the chiastic relationships.

Returning to the original intention to isolate the portion of the text that refers only to the opponents and to investigate the possibility of chiastic structure in that text, the chart below incorporates only those verses that relate to the opponents (1:5b, 6, 8, 10; 2:4, 9, 11, 15, 16, 17a, 18, 19, 21b, 22, 23a, 26; 3:4, 6b, 8, 10, 12, 15, 17; 4:1, 3, 5, 6, 8, 20; 5:10b, 12b, 16c, 17, 19, 21). This is the text that will be examined later for its closeness of fit with the model of the status degradation ritual. It is helpful to envision the verses from the list above being listed vertically, then folding the list in half at the center. The result of this mental matching exercise is illustrated in the chiastic charts below, with the central hinge verses highlighted (3:4-15). The chart is arranged in a “U” shape, for convenience in seeing the parallelisms side by side. As in a typical chiastic chart, letters are assigned to each main section, as shown in this overview of the full chart:

A True God 1:5b	A' Idols (False gods and beliefs) 5:21
B Darkness, Truth is not in one, Liar Sin, Keep the commandments 1:6, 8, 10; 2:4	B' Unrighteousness, Sin unto death, Liar, Believe the witness 5:10, 12, 16, 19
C Light, Hate, Darkness 2:9, 11	C' Love, Hate, Does not know God 4:8, 20
D World vs. Father 2:15-17	D' World vs. God 4:3, 5, 6
E Antichrists 2:18, 19, 21-13, 26	E' Antichrist and false prophets 3:17; 4:1, 3s
<b>F Sin as lawlessness, practice of sin, of the devil, works of the devil 3:4, 6, 8</b>	<b>F' Murder, practice of righteousness, of the evil one, children of the devil 3:10, 12, 15</b>

In the full chart below, a number of parallel phrases have been indicated. Parallelisms, both synonymous and antithetical, between comparable sections (and particularly those in the central section) shed light on the meanings of terms and the author's theology. Insights resulting from this study will be examined in the theological texture section of this thesis.



2:17  
ὁ κόσμος παράγεται καὶ ἡ ἐπιθυμία αὐτοῦ

### E Antichrists

2:18 Παιδιά, ἐσχάτη ὥρα ἐστίν,  
καὶ καθὼς ἠκούσατε  
ὅτι ἀντίχριστος ἔρχεται,  
νῦν ἀντίχριστοι πολλοὶ γεγονάσιν

2:19  
ἐξ ἡμῶν ἐξῆλθαν  
ἀλλ' οὐκ ἦσαν ἐξ ἡμῶν.

εἰ γὰρ ἐξ ἡμῶν ἦσαν,  
μεμενῆκεισαν ἂν μεθ' ἡμῶν

2:21b  
οἶδατε ... ὅτι πᾶν ψεῦδος  
ἐκ τῆς ἀληθείας οὐκ ἔστιν.

2:22  
Τίς ἐστὶν ὁ ψεύστης  
εἰ μὴ ὁ ἀρνούμενος ὅτι Ἰησοῦ  
οὐκ ἔστιν ὁ χριστός;  
οὗτός ἐστι ὁ ἀντίχριστος,  
ὁ ἀρνούμενος τὸν πατέρα καὶ τὸν υἱόν.

2:23a  
πᾶς ὁ ἀρνούμενος τὸν υἱὸν  
οὐδὲ τὸν πατέρα ἔχει

2:26  
Ταῦτα ἔγραψα ὑμῖν περὶ τῶν πλανῶντων ὑμᾶς.

4:3a  
καὶ πᾶν πνεῦμα ὃ μὴ ὁμολογῆι τὸν Ἰησοῦν ...  
ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ οὐκ ἔστιν

### E' Antichrist and false prophets

4:3b  
= τοῦτό ἐστὶν τὸ τοῦ ἀντιχρίστου,  
= ὃ ἀκηκόατε ὅτι ἔρχεται,  
καὶ νῦν ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ ἐστὶν ἤδη  
4:1

Ἀγαπητοί, μὴ παντὶ πνεύματι πιστεύετε,  
ἀλλὰ δοκιμάζετε τὰ πνεύματα εἰ ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ  
ἐστὶν

ὅτι πολλοὶ ψευδοπροφήται  
ἐξεληλύθασιν εἰς τὸν κόσμον.

### 3:17 [example of denying the Father and Son]

ὅς δ' ἂν ἔχη τὸν βίον τοῦ κόσμου  
καὶ θεωρῆ τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ χρεῖαν ἔχοντα  
καὶ κλείσῃ τὰ σπλάγχνα αὐτοῦ ἀπ' αὐτοῦ,  
= πῶς ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ θεοῦ μένει ἐν αὐτῷ;

### F Sin as lawlessness, practice of sin, of the devil, works of the devil,

3:4  
Πᾶς ὁ ποιῶν τὴν ἀμαρτίαν  
καὶ τὴν ἀνομίαν ποιεῖ,  
ἡ ἀμαρτία ἐστὶν ἡ ἀνομία [eschatological death]

3:6b  
πᾶς ὁ ἀμαρτάνων οὐχ ἑώρακεν αὐτὸν  
οὐδὲ ἔγνωκεν αὐτόν

3:8a  
ὁ ποιῶν τὴν ἀμαρτίαν  
ἐκ τοῦ διαβόλου ἐστίν,  
ὅτι ἀπ' ἀρχῆς  
ὁ διάβολος ἀμαρτάνει.

(his nature)

3:8b  
εἰς τοῦτο ἐφανερώθη ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ,  
ἵνα λύσῃ τὰ ἔργα τοῦ διαβόλου.

### F' Murder, practice of righteousness, of the evil one, children of the devil

3:15  
= πᾶς ὁ μισῶν τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ  
= ἀνθρωποκτόνος ἐστίν,  
= οἶδατε ὅτι πᾶς ἀνθρωποκτόνος

= οὐκ ἔχει ζωὴν αἰώνιον ἐν αὐτῷ μένουσαν.

3:12  
= οὐ καθὼς Κάϊν  
= ἐκ τοῦ πονηροῦ ἦν

= καὶ ἔσφαξεν τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ [See John 8:44]  
καὶ χάριν τίνος ἔσφαξεν αὐτόν;  
= ὅτι τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ πονηρὰ ἦν,  
τὰ δὲ τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ αὐτοῦ δίκαια.

3:10b  
πᾶς ὁ μὴ ποιῶν δικαιοσύνην  
οὐκ ἔστιν ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ,  
καὶ ὁ μὴ ἀγαπῶν τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ

3:10a  
ἐν τούτῳ φανερά ἐστὶν τὰ τέκνα τοῦ θεοῦ  
= καὶ τὰ τέκνα τοῦ διαβόλου

#### 4.1.1.3. *Value of Chiastic Parallelisms*

Just as the phrases in more common Hebraic parallelisms are expected to shed light on the meanings of terms, chiastic parallelisms can function in the same way. In traditional parallelisms, which often aid interpreters through synonymous or antithetical meanings, the parallel elements are arranged in close proximity in patterns such as ABAB or ABCABC. Chiastic parallelism, or inverted parallelism, assumes the form ABCCBA or ABCBA. When this chiasm is spread out over a large portion of text, the parallelisms are not immediately obvious. Thomson points out that the balance of ideas resulting from a chiasm “is by far the most complex and potentially rewarding relationship in terms of exegesis.”<sup>118</sup> Kenneth Bailey includes in a list of other exegetical values of chiasmus, that the structure may “provide a crucial key to understanding by enabling the reader to see what words, phrases, or sentences are matched with what other words, phrases, or sentences in the structure.”<sup>119</sup>

Another key to exegesis found in chiastic passages, mentioned earlier, is the center around which the passage turns. Thomson comments, “the center often contains the focus of the author’s thought. ... This is a particularly powerful feature with obvious implications for exegesis.”<sup>120</sup> The theological texture section of this chapter will focus on the insight found at the center of the chiasm (3:8b and 3:10a): the intention of the Son of God to destroy the works of the devil and to distinguish between the children of God and the children of the devil. This serves as a confirmation of the validity of later examining portions of 1 John as a status degradation ritual. Two groups of people are having their status transformed; how to tell them apart is the major emphasis of 1 John. To put it in simplest terms: one of these groups is characterized by “sin” and the other is characterized by “righteousness” (3:7b, 8a, 10b).

#### 4.1.1.4. *Summary of Insights Related to the Chiastic Pattern in 1 John*

In summary, the text of 1 John may profitably be seen as a synthesis or intermingling of two separate sections of text, each with its own structure, one of which follows the common

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<sup>118</sup> Ian H. Thomson, *Chiasmus in the Pauline Letters*. JSNTSupp 111, (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 42.

<sup>119</sup> Bailey, *Poet and Peasant*, 74.

Hebrew chiasmic pattern. The accusations against the opponents, which have been seen to be in a chiasmic arrangement, are closely matched with positive statements about the believing community, also fitting the chiasmic structure (as shown above). The sections addressed to the believing community can be seen to be amplified<sup>121</sup> and structured with transitional<sup>122</sup> techniques described in Greco-Roman handbooks of rhetoric.<sup>123</sup> Analysis of the full text of 1 John from the standpoint of the author's Hellenistic background and use of rhetorical transitions will be considered next.

#### 4.1.2. Rhetorical Transitions in 1 John

First John is best understood as discourse intended to be read aloud to an audience with a persuasive purpose in mind.<sup>124</sup> George Kennedy describes the 1st century Mediterranean setting in which this book was written:

We need to keep in mind that the Bible in early Christian times was more often heard when read aloud to a group than read privately; very few early Christians owned copies of the Bible, and some did not know how to read. The rhetorical qualities inherent in the text were originally intended to have an impact on first hearing and to be heard by a group.<sup>125</sup>

Will the members of the Johannine community continue to walk in love for one another and in belief in Jesus as the Christ, or will they stumble by allowing former members of the community to deceive them into abandoning their faith and their love for each other?

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<sup>120</sup> Thomson, *Chiasmus*, 27.

<sup>121</sup> Watson, "Amplification," 100.

<sup>122</sup> Longenecker, *Rhetoric*, 1.

<sup>123</sup> Rhetoricians have historically employed numerous techniques which are described in ancient handbooks such as Aristotle, *The "Art" of Rhetoric; Rhetorica and Alexandrus*; Longinus, *On the Sublime*; Cicero, *de Inventione and Topica; Rhetorica ad Herennium*; and Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria*. Also see George Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation through Rhetorical Criticism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1984): 19.

<sup>124</sup> Austin, in *How to Do Things with Words*, describes verbal or written text that is designed to create change in its hearers or readers as a "speech act." Speech Act Theory and Socio-Rhetorical Analysis have overlapping interests: "With this emphasis on an utterance as a purposeful act comes the requirement of looking beyond the mere words comprising it (the locutionary act) to the social setting and conditions under which it is spoken" (Wade T. Wheelock, "The Problem of Ritual Language: From Information to Situation," *JAAR* 50 [1982]: 53).

This is the pastoral emergency the author of 1 John is addressing. In a carefully worded text, designed to be read aloud, he attempts to persuade his audience to remain in the truth, to stay connected to what they have known “from the beginning.” The author’s rhetoric, intended to confirm his audience’s pre-existing values and opinions, is characterized by strong contrasts between what is true and what is false, between praise and blame.<sup>126</sup>

To accomplish his purpose, the author of 1 John used several rhetorical techniques that are discussed and illustrated in numerous ancient Greco-Roman rhetorical handbooks. Watson has shown, for example, that the author of 1 John “skillfully uses recognized techniques of amplification common to Greco-Roman rhetoric as a major part of his inventional strategy.” In fact, Watson points out, “virtually every known rhetorical technique for amplification is utilized in the epistle.”<sup>127</sup>

Another aspect of the author’s rhetoric is seen in the connection of his thoughts through intricate transitions.<sup>128</sup> These transitional techniques reinforce in the readers’ and hearers’ minds the author’s main points and would have made it easy for a 1st century Mediterranean audience to follow and remember his train of thought.<sup>129</sup> Bruce Longenecker affirms, “Transitional links enhance the audience’s chance of assimilating an author’s meaning in an oral/aural culture.”<sup>130</sup>

After an overview of a number of transitional techniques found in 1 John, this section of the chapter will focus on the pattern AbaB, which Longenecker calls “chain-link interlock”<sup>131</sup> and which H. van Dyke Parunak says was very popular in ancient Mediterranean rhetoric<sup>132</sup> (although it is not commonly noticed by modern commentators). This type of

<sup>125</sup> Kennedy, *Interpretation*, 5.

<sup>126</sup> These characteristics indicate that 1 John can be classified, according to Greco-Roman conventions, as epideictic rhetoric, one of three major categories. (The other traditional categories are deliberative, with intent to persuade to a point of view, and forensic, to argue for a judgmental decision.) Epideictic rhetoric is used by a speaker whose audience already holds the values he intends to praise or that already rejects the values he intends to speak against. In fact, it is typical that both praise and blame are found in this type of rhetoric, with the intention of increasing the audience’s adherence to the speaker’s point of view. See Watson, “Amplification,” 119 and Kennedy, *Interpretation*, 19.

<sup>127</sup> Watson, “Amplification,” 100.

<sup>128</sup> Schnackenburg comments, “The author of 1 John likes to use a turn of phrase at the end of one section that will introduce the theme of the next, thus creating a transition, though at the same time blurring the lines of demarcation between the sections” (Schnackenburg, *Epistles*, 11).

<sup>129</sup> Longenecker, *Rhetoric*, 4. Also see Parunak, “Transitional Techniques,” 546.

<sup>130</sup> Longenecker, *Rhetoric*, 52.

<sup>131</sup> Longenecker, *Rhetoric*, 18.

<sup>132</sup> Parunak, “Transitional Techniques,” 546.

transition is found at the center of 1 John, and may have been intended to echo a similar transition at the center of the Gospel of John, as will be discussed later in this chapter in the inter-texture section.

#### 4.1.2.1. *Types of Transitions Found in 1 John*

Locating transitions in a text aids the interpreter in identifying major and minor sections, known as rhetorical units or pericopes, which can be analyzed as individual units. After brief descriptions and examples of several transitional techniques identifiable in 1 John, and a detailed description of the chain-link interlock transitions in 1 John,<sup>133</sup> the value for analytical and interpretive purposes of noticing these transitional techniques in 1 John will be discussed.

##### A. *Inclusio*

Longenecker describes this technique as “‘internal framing,’ supporting a single text-unit at its extremities.”<sup>134</sup> The transitional aspect of this technique lies in the recollection of a key word or phrase, indicating to the audience that a unit of thought has been completed and a new unit of thought is upcoming. This technique is often found in conjunction with other transitional elements. The units of thought in 1 John listed below demonstrate *inclusio* through key words that occur at the beginning and ending of each passage. For convenience, each passage first lists the verses that constitute an *inclusio*, then the English word or words that occur at the beginning and ending of the passage are noted. Next, in parentheses, the Greek text from the beginning and ending of the passage is provided, with the key words underlined. The beginning and ending phrases are separated by a forward slash (/):

1:3-5a: Hear, Announce (ὁ ἑώρακαμεν καὶ ἀκηκόαμεν, ἀπαγγέλλομεν καὶ ὑμῖν / ἔστιν αὕτη ἀγγελία ἣν ἀκηκόαμεν ἀπ’ αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀναγγέλλομεν ὑμῖν)

1:5b-2:10, 11: Light, darkness (ὁ θεὸς φῶς ἐστὶν καὶ σκοτία ἐν αὐτῷ οὐκ ἔστιν οὐδεμία / ὁ ἀγαπῶν τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ ἐν τῷ φωτὶ μένει, ... ὁ δὲ μισῶν τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ ἐν τῇ σκοτίᾳ ἐστὶν...)

2:17b-27a, 28a: Abiding (ὁ δὲ ποιῶν τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ μένει εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα / τὸ χρῖσμα ὃ ἐλάβετε ἀπ’ αὐτοῦ, μένει ἐν ὑμῖν... Καὶ νῦν, τεκνία, μένετε ἐν αὐτῷ...)

<sup>133</sup> Each of the examples from 1 John is based on original research by the present author.

<sup>134</sup> Longenecker, *Rhetoric*, 21.

2:28b–3:8b, 10: Appear (ἐὰν φανερωθῆ σχωμεν παρρησίαν / εἰς τοῦτο ἐφανερώθη ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ... ἐν τούτῳ φανερά ἐστιν τὰ τέκνα τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τὰ τέκνα τοῦ διαβόλου·)

A simultaneous *inclusio* encompasses the same set of verses:

2:29–3:10: Righteous (ἐὰν εἰδῆτε ὅτι δίκαιός ἐστιν, γινώσκετε ὅτι καὶ πᾶς ὁ ποιῶν τὴν δικαιοσύνην ἐξ αὐτοῦ γεγέννηται. / πᾶς ὁ μὴ ποιῶν δικαιοσύνην οὐκ ἔστιν ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ)

4:1-6: Spirit (μὴ παντὶ πνεύματι πιστεύετε, ἀλλὰ δοκιμάζετε τὰ πνεύματα εἰ ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ ἐστιν / ἐκ τούτου γινώσκουμεν τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς ἀληθείας καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς πλάνης)

4:7-21 Love (Ἀγαπητοί, ἀγαπῶμεν ἀλλήλους, ὅτι ἡ ἀγάπη ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ ἐστιν, / καὶ ταύτην τὴν ἐντολὴν ἔχομεν ἀπ’ αὐτοῦ, ἵνα ὁ ἀγαπῶν τὸν θεὸν ἀγαπᾷ καὶ τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ.)

4:7-12: Love (Ἀγαπητοί, ἀγαπῶμεν ἀλλήλους, ὅτι ἡ ἀγάπη ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ ἐστιν, / ἐὰν ἀγαπῶμεν ἀλλήλους, ὁ θεὸς ἐν ἡμῖν μένει καὶ ἡ ἀγάπη αὐτοῦ ἐν ἡμῖν τετελειωμένη ἐστιν)

4:16–5:3: Love (τὴν ἀγάπην ἣν ἔχει ὁ θεὸς ἐν ἡμῖν. / αὕτη γάρ ἐστιν ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ θεοῦ, ...)

5:1-5: Believe (that Jesus is the Christ or that he is the Son of God) (Πᾶς ὁ πιστεύων ὅτι Ἰησοῦς ἐστιν ὁ χριστός, ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ γεγέννηται / Τίς [δέ] ἐστιν ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ κόσμου εἰ μὴ ὁ πιστεύων ὅτι Ἰησοῦς ἐστιν ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ;)

5:6-11: Witness (καὶ τὸ πνεῦμά ἐστιν τὸ μαρτυροῦν / Καὶ αὕτη ἐστὶν ἡ μαρτυρία ...)

5:13-20 Eternal Life (Ταῦτα ἔγραψα ὑμῖν ἵνα εἰδῆτε ὅτι ζωὴν ἔχετε αἰώνιον / οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ ἀληθινὸς θεὸς καὶ ζωὴ αἰώνιος)

The entire book constitutes an *inclusio*, as seen in the first verse and last two verses of the book:

1:1–5:20, 21 Life (“Ὁ ἦν ἀπ’ ἀρχῆς, ... περὶ τοῦ λόγου τῆς ζωῆς / οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ ἀληθινὸς θεὸς καὶ ζωὴ αἰώνιος ... φυλάξατε ἑαυτὰ ἀπὸ τῶν εἰδώλων [the opposite of truth and life])

## B. Key Word Link

According to Parunak, “the most basic technique for uniting two segments of text is to place similar material [a key word] throughout both of them.”<sup>135</sup> He separately describes a link as thematic material “A” and “B” joined by a word, “c,” “inserted at the end of a development and taken up again at the beginning of the following development” (AccA).<sup>136</sup> This study combines these two definitions under the term, “key word.”

2:12-14 is linked with 2:15-17 through the key word, “abide.” The word occurs at the end of the first section, in 2:14, and again at the end of the next short section in 2:17b. As shown above, 2:17b can also serve as the beginning of the next section, using the key word “abide” as an *inclusio* with 2:27, 28.

2:28–3:10 is linked with 3:11-18 through the key word, “love.”

<sup>135</sup> Parunak, “Transitional Techniques,” 527.

<sup>136</sup> Parunak, “Transitional Techniques,” 531.

3:11-18 is linked with 3:19-24 through the key word, “truth.”

3:19-24 is linked with 4:1-6 through the key word, “spirit(s).”

4:7-21 is linked with 5:1-5 through the key word, “love.”

5:1-12 is linked with 5:13-21 through the key word, “life.” It is interesting to note that in the first and last examples here, the key word does double duty as an *inclusio* within the second section, as shown in the discussion above.

### C. Bridge Paragraph

Longenecker notes that the transitional bridge “contains intermingled references to themes in previous sections and looks forward to themes in upcoming sections.”<sup>137</sup> This technique is evident in the themes of 2:12-14 (see diagram in Appendix 2):

Forgiveness of sins (2:12) looks back to the previous section in which this theme was mentioned in 1:7, 9; 2:1, 2.

Knowledge of that which was from the beginning (2:13, 14) both looks back to the previous mention of this phrase in 1:1 and forward to the theme in upcoming verses, 2:24 and 3:11.

Victory over the evil one (2:13, 14) anticipates the themes in upcoming sections of victory (4:4; 5:4, 5) and the evil one or the devil in 3:8, 10, 12; 5:18, 19.

### D. Transitio

This term is defined by Longenecker as the brief recollection of an earlier theme and brief referral to an upcoming theme.<sup>138</sup> This technique is illustrated in 2:28 which contains a brief recollection of the theme of abiding found in the previous section and a brief referral to the new theme of Jesus’ appearing that is featured strongly in 1 John 3. The diagram in Appendix 2 identifies this as an overlapping verse that legitimately belongs both at the end of one section and at the beginning of the next section.<sup>139</sup>

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<sup>137</sup> Longenecker, *Rhetoric*, 43.

<sup>138</sup> Longenecker, *Rhetoric*, 42.

<sup>139</sup> See Brown, *Epistles*, 119. Brown refers to this as a “hinge verse” that ends one section and begins another by having themes of both. The phrase “overlapping verse,” referring to 1 John 2:28, was used by this author in a master’s dissertation written several years before Brown’s commentary was published.

### E. Chain-link Interlock

In his book, *Rhetoric at the Boundaries*, Longenecker focuses on the little-noticed transitional technique he calls “chain-link interlock” that is discussed by two ancient rhetoricians in their handbooks.<sup>140</sup> In chain-link interlock two major themes (A and B) are interlocked by a short anticipatory treatment of the upcoming theme (b), followed by a short retrospective look at the previous major theme (a), ending with the next major theme (B), summarized as AbaB.<sup>141</sup>

Parunak speculates that a reason that writers may have used the AbaB pattern frequently was because it was especially effective in helping the reader or listener follow the writer’s shift of thought.<sup>142</sup> He points out that in situations where a text is read aloud, a shift directly from topic A to topic B could easily be missed by a hearer who happened to be momentarily inattentive. “On the other hand, in a transition with the pattern AbaB, the topic shifts three times: once from A to b, once from b to a, and finally from a to B. The effect is to slow down the transition and give listeners more opportunity to note that a change is taking place.”<sup>143</sup>

Longenecker applies this technique to themes within large segments of text, including the Gospel of John<sup>144</sup> (which will be mentioned below in the inter-texture section for its relevance to interpreting 1 John 3:8). Longenecker notes, “several New Testament passages that have frequently been thought to involve structural clutter and disorder are in fact text-book cases of first-class style being animated by chain-link construction.”<sup>145</sup> This research attempts to demonstrate the applicability of this statement to the written speech of 1 John, a

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<sup>140</sup> “First-century rhetorician Quintilian and second century rhetorician Lucian of Samosata [talk about] the technique of overlapping of material at a text-unit boundary in order to facilitate a transition” (Longenecker, *Rhetoric*, 5). “In Lucian’s view, units of narrative material are not merely to sit side-by-side in a linear, boxed fashion, but should be joined inextricably by weaving them together in non-linear fashioning through a chain-link interlock, ‘to mix across the boundaries’” (Longenecker, *Rhetoric*, 12). Longenecker quotes Lucian from a translation by H.W. Fowler and F.G. Fowler of *The Works of Lucian* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1905), 2:133: “When the first [part] is complete the second will be brought into essential connection with it, and attached like one link of a chain to another; there must be no possibility of separating them;... the first is not simply to be next to the second, but part of it, their extremities intermingling.”

<sup>141</sup> Longenecker, *Rhetoric*, 18.

<sup>142</sup> Parunak, “Transitional Techniques,” 546.

<sup>143</sup> Parunak, “Transitional Techniques,” 546.

<sup>144</sup> Longenecker, *Rhetoric*, 6, 7.

<sup>145</sup> Longenecker, *Rhetoric*, 6.

book that has caused nearly unanimous consternation to commentators in their attempts to outline its structure.<sup>146</sup>

#### **4.1.2.2. Chain-link Interlock Examples in 1 John**

Two major examples of chain-link interlock in 1 John will be explained in this section.

*First example:* 2:28–4:21

A 2:28–3:10 Confidence in being Children of God by practicing righteousness, as He is righteous (and avoiding the opposite of righteousness)

b 3:11-18 How to know love and the opposite of love (anticipatory of B)

a 3:19–4:6 Confidence; knowing the spirit of truth (righteousness) vs. the spirit of deception or error (retrospective of A)

B 4:7-21 Love of God and brother vs. the opposite of love

*Second example:* 4:7–5:12 (Notice that in this example, part B of the preceding chain-link overlaps with sections A, b, and part of a in a new chain-link interlock.)

A 4:7-12 Love

b 4:13-15 Witness (anticipatory of B)

a 4:16–5:3 Love and Confidence (retrospective of A)

B 5:1, 4-12 Witness to what is believed about Jesus

Following a detailed summary outline of the rhetorical transitions in 1 John, including, a “mini-interlock” embedded within the first example of chain-link interlock, this section will discuss the value of these techniques for understanding the purpose and message of 1 John.

#### **4.1.2.3. Summary Outline of Rhetorical Transitions in 1 John**

1:1-5a Prologue with embedded *inclusio* of the theme of “announcing”

1:5b-2:11 (*inclusio* of light vs. darkness)

2:12-14 Bridge paragraph, intermingled themes looking backward and forward

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<sup>146</sup> Brown, *Epistles*, 764. The chart in his Appendix summarizes the various views of a large number of commentators on conflicting proposed structural divisions of 1 John.

2:14 Key word: abiding concludes one section and anticipates the next section (used again in 2:17b)

2:17b-28 (*inclusio* of abiding)

2:28 *transitio*: briefly recalls what has been said (abiding) and briefly sets forth what is to follow next (appearing).

2:28b, 29–3:10 Key words: appear, righteous

2:28–3:10 is linked with 3:11-18 through the key word, “love.”

3:11-18 is linked with 3:19-24 through the key word, “truth.”

3:19-24 is linked with 4:1-6 through the key word, “spirit(s).”

4:7-12 (*inclusio* of love)

4:7-21 (*inclusio* of love)

2:28 – 4:21 1st Chain-link interlock

A 2:28 – 3:10: Confidence in being children of God or “of God” comes from doing right/being righteous

b’ (mini interlock) 3:10b, 11: love brother, love one another

a’ (mini interlock) 3:12: righteous deeds

b 3:11-18: Love: how to know what love really is and is not (anticipates 4:7ff. while describing the opposite of love, the works of the devil, and what it means to have righteous deeds)

[3:18, 19: truth as a keyword transition]

a 3:19 – 4:6: Confidence to know the difference between spirit of truth and antichrist/deception (looks back on earlier sections while using the keyword “κόσμος” that will constitute a weak keyword transition to the next section)

B 4:7-21: Love: God is love, love one another in imitation of Him (God sent his son to save the κόσμος)

4:7–5:12 2nd Chain-link interlock

[4:7-21 has been the second major section of a chain-link interlock, and now it in turn becomes the first major section in another chain-link interlock.]

A 4:7-12: Love

b 4:13-15: anticipates the next major themes about witness and what to believe

a 4:16 – 5:3: goes back to the previous themes of love and confidence

B 5: 4-12: Belief in and witness to Jesus

4:7-21 is linked with 5:1-5 through the key word, “love.”

4:16–5:3: (*inclusio* of love)

5:1-5 is an embedded section that has “belief” as an *inclusio* of verses 1 and 5 (See the diagram in Appendix 2 that helps visualize these complexities.)

5:6-11: (*inclusio* of witness)

5:12 Key word transition (life). This last verse of the chain-link interlock section serves as a transition to the Conclusion of 1 John.

5:1-12 is linked with 5:13-21 through the key word, “life.”

5:13-20 (*inclusio* of eternal life)

1:1 – 5:21 The last two verses of the book form an *inclusio* with the first verse, united by the phrases, “Word of life” (who was a person who could be seen, heard, and touched; 1:1) and “he is the true God and eternal life” (5:20).<sup>147</sup>

#### **4.1.2.4. Contributions of Identifying Rhetorical Transitions to the Understanding of the Purpose and Message of 1 John**

What does this study of rhetorical transitions add to the interpretation of 1 John? Three examples will be discussed here, with a fourth indicated for later discussion in the section on inter-texture: (1) insights into the structure of the book, (2) identification of specific structural units and implications for identifying the main themes of these units, (3) a solution to a theological problem some have had with thinking the emphasis of 1 John is on loving the “brother” (those in the believing community) to the neglect of the rest of the world, and (4) confirmation of a central emphasis of 1 John on the cosmic battle between the Son of God and the evil one. Discussion of this last point will be delayed until the section dealing with inter-texture for the purpose of comparison with a similar emphasis in the Gospel of John.

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<sup>147</sup> An allusion in 1 John 1:1 to John 1:1 strengthens the likelihood that this inclusion was a deliberate rhetorical device, with helpful interpretive possibilities. Knowledge that “the Word was God,” (John 1:1) would have been part of what the author and his readers had known “from the beginning” (1 John 1:1). This leads to the conclusion that what was proclaimed “concerning the Word of life” (1 John 1:1) is being spelled out in 1 John 5:20: “He [Jesus Christ] is the true God and eternal life,” an echo of John 1:1, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” The author has tied the book together with the

### A. Intentional Structure of 1 John

Recognizing the intentional use of chain-link interlock and other rhetorical transitions in 1 John helps the interpreter bring order out of chaos, in a sense. As mentioned earlier, Longenecker points out that some New Testament passages that have been thought to be disorderly and poorly structured, are in fact “text-book cases of first-class style being animated by chain-link construction.”<sup>148</sup> From the perspective of western commentators looking for logical outline points, the topics in 1 John seem to zig zag back and forth or to be in no discernable order. The lack of agreement among commentators on the structure of 1 John is seen in the wide variety of proposed divisions (from 2 to 7) summarized by Brown.<sup>149</sup> This study shows 1 John is a carefully constructed written speech that uses a variety of transitions, including that of chain-link interlock, to assist the author in developing and connecting his arguments in a memorable way.

### B. Identification of Structural Units and Themes

Identification of transitions has contributed toward determining the pericopes for the present study. A value in noticing the *inclusio* features in 1 John 2:28 – 3:10 (with the themes of “appearing/apparent” and “righteousness” in 2:28, [3:5, 7], 8b, 10) is that the interpreter can be “confident” he or she is dealing with a distinct textual unit. Even though the word, “love” in 3:10 is repeated in 3:11, the recognition of this repetition as a key word transitional feature helps the interpreter to avoid the temptation to extend the boundaries of the rhetorical unit past 3:10. The main theme of 2:28 – 3:10 can be summarized as confidence in being born of God, which is demonstrated by righteousness.

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theme of “life” and the allusion to Jesus Christ as God—the main theological point of the book, and the belief he wanted to see confirmed among his readers.

<sup>148</sup> Longenecker, *Rhetoric*, 6.

<sup>149</sup> Brown, *Epistles*, 764. Brown says about recognition of units in 1 John, “Within 1 John there are a few clear units, set apart by their subject matter, that no proposed division breaks up, e.g., 2:12-14; 2:15-17; 4:1-6. Nevertheless, these units have little apparent direct connection with what has gone before and what comes after, and so their role in the plan of the letter is unclear. . . . All recognize 4:1-6 as a unit, but they differ on whether it goes with what follows... or with what precedes.” Brown, *Epistles*, 118. Because Brown did not take rhetorical transitional techniques into consideration, he missed the function of 4:1-6 which belongs to both the preceding and following larger units. As part of a chain link interlock it looks retrospectively back at the confidence the children of God have in overcoming the one in the world (2:28–3:10). (It also repeats 6 times the key word, κόσμος, that is featured three additional times in the following section, 4:7-21.) Similarly, Brown did not recognize 2:12-14 as a bridge paragraph in which the themes of preceding and following sections are intermingled. Far from having “little apparent direct connection with what has gone before and what comes after,” this unit skillfully bridges themes in both directions.

The structural linkage of 2:28 – 3:10 with 4:7-21, by means of the intervening of smaller transitional units, emphasizes that showing love is inextricably part of what it means to do what is right. Topic A (confidence and righteousness), in 2:28 – 3:10, is linked with the anticipatory (3:11-18) and full treatment of topic B (4:7-21), namely love, and its opposite, hatred and murder. This chain-link interlock of the topics calls attention to the integrated nature of two key aspects of God’s character, righteousness and love, in which the child of God is expected to partake.

### C. Whom Should Believers Love?

The author of 1 John stresses love for the “brothers” and for “one another” so often that some commentators have wondered about the ingrown nature of the Johannine community and whether they expected to demonstrate love to anyone at all outside their own fellowship. Van der Merwe quotes an extreme critic of the Johannine group’s ingrown concern for fellow believers as saying that a Johannine Christian, “on seeing a wounded traveler would ask: ‘Are you saved, brother?’ instead of giving aid.”<sup>150</sup> Lieu<sup>151</sup> and Van der Watt<sup>152</sup> each conclude that the group’s love involved only internal relationships. Van der Watt stresses the familial metaphors of 1 John and simply dismisses the question of whether the believer has any responsibility to those outside the family of God. He claims that this question, which is not addressed in the letter, “is raised in an extraneous theological perspective.”<sup>153</sup> However, the chain-link transitional structure gives a new perspective showing that 1 John does, in fact, have something to say about the believer’s responsibility to those outside the family of God. This should be a welcome interpretation to those throughout time and in various cultures who have wondered about this “extraneous theological” question.

To arrive at this new perspective, a brief review of the chain-link interlock involving 2:28 – 4:21 is necessary. Verse 3:17, in which the author calls for demonstrating love to a “brother in need,” is part of a transitional unit “b” in the chain link diagram reviewed below,

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<sup>150</sup> Dirk van der Merwe, “‘A Matter of Having Fellowship’: Ethics in the Johannine Epistles,” in *Identity, Ethics, and Ethos in the New Testament* (ed. Jan G. van der Watt; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2006), 535-63.

<sup>151</sup> Judith M. Lieu, *The Theology of the Johannine Epistles* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 53.

<sup>152</sup> J. G. van der Watt “Ethics in First John: A Literary and Socioscientific Perspective,” *CBQ* 61(1999): 510.

<sup>153</sup> van der Watt, “Ethics,” 510.

anticipating the major unit “B,” both of which have love as the main focus. The question needing an answer is, “who is included in the term, ‘brother’?”

A 2:28–3:10 Confidence in being children of God by practicing righteousness, as he is righteous

b 3:11-18 How to know love (anticipatory of B)

a 3:19–4:6 Confidence; knowing the spirit of truth (righteousness) (retrospective of A)

B 4:7-21 Love of God and brother [and the κόσμος, see 4:14]

This complex inter-locking transition pulls God’s concern for the “κόσμος,” which occurs in unit B in 4:14, into the discussion of whom the believer should love in 3:17. The section in which 3:17 falls (unit b, 3:11-18) is anticipatory of the full treatment in 4:7ff of what it means to love “one another.”

Help for discovering what the Johannine community might have understood to be included in the term, “brother” or “one another,” can be found by looking at 4:11-14 as a sub-unit embedded in a larger unit. These verses are marked off by a version of *inclusio*, in which thoughts, at the beginning and ending of the unit can be considered parallel, although not identical in wording. At the beginning and ending of this unit of thought, verses 11a and 14b describe the extent to which the God, the Father, demonstrated love (underlined words). Also at the beginning and ending of the unit, verses 11a, b and 14c describe the *object of love* (italicized words):

**1 John 4:11-14, beginning of unit:**

Extent of God’s love: 4:11a: If God so loved “us” / εἰ οὕτως ὁ θεὸς ἠγάπησεν ἡμᾶς

*Object* of God’s love: 4:11b: then we also ought to love *one another* / καὶ ἡμεῖς ὀφείλομεν ἀλλήλους ἀγαπᾶν

...

**1 John 4:11-14, ending of unit:**

Extent of God’s love: 4:14b: The Father has sent the Son to be the savior / ὁ πατήρ ἀπέσταλκεν τὸν υἱὸν σωτήρα

*Object* of God’s love: 4:14c: of the *world* / τοῦ κόσμου

The κόσμος in 4:14c defines who “us” should include in verse 11a. (Also see John 3:16 below.) The author demonstrates in this unit a core belief that God sacrificed his Son for the whole world, not just for the Johannine community. Echoes of 1 John 4:9, 2:2, and John

3:16 would have been heard by the audience due to the distinctive wording in 4:11, 14 (compare the underlined words in the verses below with each other and with those underlined or italicized above):

1 John 2:2: αὐτὸς ἱλασμός ἐστιν περὶ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν, οὐ περὶ τῶν ἡμετέρων δὲ μόνον ἀλλὰ καὶ περὶ ὅλον τοῦ κόσμου.

1 John 4:9: τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ τὸν μονογενῆ ἀπέσταλκεν ὁ θεὸς εἰς τὸν κόσμον ἵνα ζήσωμεν δι' αὐτοῦ.

John 3:16: οὕτως γὰρ ἠγάπησεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν κόσμον ὥστε τὸν υἱὸν τὸν μονογενῆ ἔδωκεν ... ἔχη ζωὴν αἰώνιον.

Considering the world as an object of God's love, and therefore also an object of the believers' love who are to love just as God did (4:11, also see 4:17: "Just as Jesus is, so also are we in this world"), solves the theological problem some have had in thinking that 1 John's emphasis is on loving the fellow believer to the neglect of the rest of humanity.<sup>154</sup> This insight contributes to the theological texture to be discussed later in this chapter.

#### D. Cosmic Battle

PHEME PERKINS affirms that "it is a fundamental conviction of Johannine theology that Jesus' coming accomplished the victory over evil which had been the object of so much apocalyptic preaching."<sup>155</sup> In 1 John, as part of an intricate chain-link interlock, reference is made to the Son of God coming to destroy the works of the devil. This is also the central chiasmic climax, giving double support to the importance of the present research, namely, investigation of the

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<sup>154</sup> Also see John 17:18 ("As you sent/ἀπέστειλας me into the world/κόσμον, I have sent/ἀπέστειλα them into the κόσμον") and John 20:21 ("As the Father has sent/ἀπέσταλκέν me, I am sending/πέμπω you.") The life situation of the author and readers is likely to have included close familiarity with the Qumran literature that stresses love for brother and hatred for others. First John can be seen as an early step toward encouraging the Johannine community to see things less from the Qumran point of view and more from a divine point of view, as understood by the leaders of the Johannine community. The explanation above demonstrates that the author is still speaking their old language (love for one another/brother) but he is calling, in a subtle way, for a shift in their thinking. In the inter-texture studies this relationship between 1 John and the Qumran literature will be discussed in more detail.

Later, in writing to believers within the same city from which scholars believe the author of 1 John was writing, Ignatius spoke of hostile unbelievers as "brothers," showing progress was occurring in the thinking of the Early Church, when he said, "Let us show ourselves their brothers by our forbearance" (Ignatius to the Ephsians 10:3).

<sup>155</sup> Perkins, *Epistles*, 43.

nature of the works of the devil. In the section of this chapter on scribal inter-texture a similar finding in the Gospel of John will further reinforce the value of these inter-locked passages as lenses through which to look both backward and forward at the rest of each book. In the study of theological texture, findings from looking through this lens will be explored.

#### **4.1.2.5. Summary of Insights Related to Rhetorical Transitions**

In summary, this study of rhetorical transitions has highlighted several contributions to Johannine studies. It has demonstrated a new way to approach and understand the intentional structure of the book and has highlighted specific structural units, it has proposed a solution to the theological problem of love for brother vs. love for others outside the community, and it has confirmed that an emphasis is present in 1 John on cosmic battle.

In the next section, the theme of cosmic battle, that has been highlighted in each of the preceding whole-book studies, will be explored through charts of repetitive and progressive texture of vocabulary and clusters of themes. Two charts using repetitive-progressive texture bring out the relationships of key themes in 1 John and will lead to a focus on the two central pericopes, 2:28–3:10 and 3:11-18 in a detailed discourse analysis.

#### **4.1.3. Repetitive and Progressive Texture in 1 John**

Socio-Rhetorical Analysis “brings both literary and rhetorical techniques together to analyze aspects of words and meanings in the text.”<sup>156</sup> One of the ways in which Robbins advocates exploring words and meanings is through charts of repetitive and progressive texture. Words that occur more than once in a unit can be mapped out through charts, giving the interpreter insights into the overall picture of the discourse, which will then lead to closer investigation of the details of the text.<sup>157</sup> In this section two charts represent the result of an investigation of repeated themes and repeated key words.

CHART 1: Cosmic Battle themes in 1 John, grouped in 7 clusters

CHART 2: Key vocabulary of 1 John 3:8, 10 charted in the order in which they occur in the whole book.

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<sup>156</sup> Robbins, *Texture*, 3.

<sup>157</sup> Robbins, *Texture*, 8.

With each chart, the themes to be charted will be listed first, with each occurrence in its order of appearance in the book of 1 John. For the first chart, due to the complexity of the clusters of themes, numbers are assigned and listed across the top of the chart. In the second chart, each of the nine key vocabulary words are listed across the top. Divisions of 1 John, chosen according to insights gained from the analysis of transitions, are listed on the left side of the chart. An “x” identifies each occurrence of the theme-cluster or vocabulary word within each division of the book.

#### **4.1.3.1. CHART 1: Cosmic Battle Themes in 1 John, Grouped in 7 Clusters**

This chart portrays a rhetorical word picture in which opposing forces are engaged in a cosmic battle. This imagery will be developed in the section on ideological texture as part of the present author’s perspective on Salvation History as viewed by the Johannine community. For now, it is sufficient to note that these clusters of themes have been chosen based on participants in the battle, what they can be seen doing, and how they can be characterized in terms of beliefs and behavior. The component parts of these themes will first be explained and then listed by number and charted by their occurrences in the section divisions of 1 John, as discussed in previous studies:

1. Participants on the Devil’s side
2. What the opponents are doing
3. Characteristics of opposition
4. Participants on God’s side
5. What God, Jesus, Spirit are doing
6. What believers are doing
7. Characteristics of God and his children

##### **1. Participants on the Devil’s side**

ψευδόμεθα (lie) or ψεύστης (liar) ψευδοπροφήται (false prophets) 1:6; 1:10; 2:4; 2:21; 2:22; 2:27; 4:1; 4:20; 5:10

πλανῶμεν (deceive) 1:8; 2:26; 3:7; 4:6

κόσμου (world) 2:2; 2:15; 2:15; 2:15; 2:16; 2:16; 2:17; 3:1; 3:13; 3:17; 4:1; 4:3; 4:4; 4:5; 4:5; 4:5; 4:9; 4:14; 4:17; 5:4; 5:4; 5:5; 5:19

πονηρόν (evil one) 2:13; 2:14; 3:12; 3:12; 5:18; 5:19

ἀντίχριστος (antichrist) 2:18; 2:18; 2:22; 4:3

διαβόλου (devil) 3:8; 3:8; 3:8

τέκνα τοῦ διαβόλου (children of the devil) 3:10

Κάϊν (Cain) 3:12

ἀνθρωποκτόνος (murderer) 3:15; 3:15

πνεῦμα ὃ μὴ ὁμολογεῖ τὸν Ἰησοῦν / πνεῦμα τῆς πλάνης (spirit that does not confess Jesus, or of deception) 4:3, 4:6

## 2. What the opponents are doing

ἐν τῷ σκότει περιπατῶμεν (walk in darkness) 1:6; 2:8; 2:9; 2:11; 2:11; 2:11

ψευδόμεθα (lie) or ψεύστης (liar) ψευδοπροφήται (false prophets) 1:6; 1:10; 2:4; 2:21; 2:22; 2:27; 4:1; 4:20; 5:10

ἁμαρτίας (sin) 1:7; 1:8; 1:9; 1:9; 1:10; 2:1; 2:1; 2:2; 2:12; 3:4; 3:4; 3:5; 3:5; 3:6; 3:6; 3:8; 3:8; 3:9; 3:9; 4:10; 5:16; 5:16; 5:16; 5:16; 5:17; 5:17; 5:18

πλανῶμεν (deceive) 1:8; 2:26; 3:7; 4:6

μισῶν (hate) 2:9; 2:11; 3:13; 3:15; 4:20

ἐτύφλωσεν (blinded) 2:11

ἔσφαξεν (slaughtering) 3:12; 3:12

ἀνομίαν (being unlawful) 3:4; 3:4

## 3. Characteristics of opposition:

παράγεται (passing) 2:8; 2:17

ἐπιθυμία (desire, lust) 2:16, 2:16; 2:17

σαρκὸς (flesh) 2:16

ἀλαζονεία (arrogance, pride) 2:16

θανάτου (death) 3:14; 3:14; 5:16; 5:16; 5:16; 5:17

## 4. Participants on God's side

πατέρα (father) 1:2; 1:3; 2:1; 2:15; 2:16; 2:22; 2:23; 2:23; 2:24; 3:1; 4:14

υἱοῦ (son [of God]) 1:3; 1:7; 2:22; 2:23; 2:23; 2:24; 3:8; 3:23; 4:9; 4:10; 4:14; 4:15; 5:5; 5:9; 5:10; 5:11; 5:12; 5:12; 5:13; 5:20; 5:20

Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (Jesus Christ) or Ἰησοῦ 1:3; 1:7; 2:1; 2:22; 3:23; 4:2; 4:3; 4:15; 5:1; 5:5; 5:6; 5:20

θεοῦ (God) 1:5b; 2:5; 2:14; 2:17; 3:1; 3:2; 3:8; 3:9; 3:9; 3:10; 3:10; 3:17; 3:20; 3:21; 4:1; 4:2; 4:2; 4:3; 4:4;

4:6; 4:6; 4:7; 4:7; 4:7; 4:8; 4:8; 4:9; 4:9; 4:10; 4:11; 4:12; 4:12; 4:15; 4:15; 4:15; 4:16; 4:16; 4:16; 4:16; 4:20; 4:20; 4:21; 5:1; 5:2; 5:2; 5:3; 5:4; 5:5; 5:9; 5:9; 5:10; 5:10; 5:10; 5:11; 5:13; 5:18; 5:18; 5:19; 5:20; 5:20

Τεκνία (little children) 2:1; 2:12; 2:28; 3:7; 3:18; 4:4; 5:21

τέκνα (children) 3:1; 3:2; 5:2

ἐκεῖνος (that one) 2:6; 3:3; 3:5; 3:7; 3:16; 4:17; 5:16

πατέρες (fathers) 2:13, 14

νεανίσκοι (young men) 2:13; 2:14

γεγέννηται (those born of [God]) 2:29; 3:9; 3:9; 4:7; 5:1; 5:1; 5:1; 5:4; 5:18

τέκνα τοῦ θεοῦ (children of God) 3:10

πνεύματος (spirit) [of truth] 3:24; 4:2; 4:2; 4:6; 4:13; 5:6; 5:6

μονογενῆ (one and only born) 4:9

σωτήρα (savior) 4:14

## 5. What God, the Son, and Jesus are doing

ἐφανερώθη (manifested, appeared) 1:2; 1:2; 2:19; 2:28; 3:2; 3:2; 3:5; 3:8; 3:10; 4:9

ἄφη (forgive) 1:9; 2:12

ἱλασμός (propitiation, atoning sacrifice, oil on troubled waters, substitute) 2:2; 4:10

ἀγάπη (love) or ἀγαπητοί (Beloved) 2:5; 3:1; 3:16; 3:17; 4:7; 4:8; 4:9; 4:10; 4:10; 4:11; 4:12; 4:16; 4:16; 4:19

μένειν (remain, reside, abide, word of God, what you have heard from the beginning, the anointing, love of God) 2:14; 2:24; 2:27; 3:17; 3:24; 4:12; 4:13; 4:15; 4:16

δίκαιος (doing righteousness) 2:1; 2:29; 2:29; 3:7; 3:7; 3:7; 3:10; 3:12; 5:17

ἄρη (take away) 3:5

λύση (destroy) 3:8

ἔθηκεν (laid down) 3:16; 3:16

ὁ γεννηθεὶς ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ τηρεῖ αὐτόν καὶ ὁ πονηρὸς οὐχ ἄπτεται αὐτοῦ (keeping those born of God from the evil one) 5:18

## 6. What believers are doing

walk in the φῶς (light) 1:7; 1:7; 2:8; 2:9; 2:10

have κοινωνίαν (fellowship) 1:3; 1:3; 1:6; 1:7  
 ἐντολὰς (obeying commands) 2:3; 2:8; 3:22; 3:23; 3:24; 4:21; 5:2; 5:3; 5:3  
 τηρῶμεν (keep, obey) 2:3; 2:5; 3:22; 3:24; 5:3; 5:18  
 ἀγάπη (love) or ἀγαπητοί (Beloved) 2:7; 2:10; 3:2; 3:10; 3:11; 3:14; 3:14; 3:18; 3:21; 3:23; 4:1; 4:7; 4:7;  
 4:7; 4:8; 4:10; 4:11; 4:11; 4:12; 4:16; 4:17; 4:18; 4:18; 4:18; 4:19; 4:20; 4:20; 4:20; 4:21; 4:21; 5:1; 5:1;  
 5:2; 5:2; 5:3  
 μένειν (remain, reside, abide) 2:6; 2:10; 2:17; 2:24; 2:24; 2:27; 2:28; 3:6; 3:9; 3:24 4:13; 4:15; 4:16; 4:16  
 νεικίκατε (overcome; have victory over) 2:13; 2:14; 4:4; 5:4; 5:4; 5:4; 5:5  
 ἰσχυροὶ (strong) 2:14  
 δίκαιος (righteous) 2:1; 2:29; 2:29; 3:7; 3:7; 3:7; 3:10; 3:12; 5:17  
 ἔθηκεν (laid down) 3:16; 3:16  
 πιστός (faithful, believe) 3:23; 4:16; 5:4; 5:5; 5:10; 5:10; 5:10; 5:13  
 ὁ γεννηθεὶς ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ τηρεῖ αὐτόν καὶ ὁ πονηρὸς οὐχ ἄπτεται αὐτοῦ (being kept from the evil one)  
 5:18

### 7. Characteristics of God and His Children

ζωῆς (life); ζήσωμεν (live) 1:1; 1:2; 1:2; 2:25; 3:14; 3:15; 4:9; 5:11; 5:11; 5:13; 5:16; 5:20  
 φῶς Phos (light) 1:5b; 1:7; 1:7; 2:8; 2:9; 2:10  
 ἀγάπη (love) or ἀγαπητοί (Beloved) 2:5; 2:7; 2:10; 3:1; 3:2; 3:10; 3:11; 3:14; 3:14; 3:16; 3:17; 3:18;  
 3:21; 3:23; 4:1; 4:7; 4:7; 4:7; 4:7; 4:8; 4:8; 4:9; 4:10; 4:10; 4:10; 4:11; 4:11; 4:11; 4:12; 4:12; 4:16; 4:16;  
 4:16; 4:17; 4:18; 4:18; 4:18; 4:19; 4:19; 4:20; 4:20; 4:20; 4:21; 4:21; 5:1; 5:1; 5:2; 5:2; 5:3  
 μένειν (remain, reside, abide) 2:6; 2:10; 2:14; 2:17; 2:19; 2:24; 2:24; 2:27; 2:27; 2:28; 3:6; 3:9; 3:14;  
 3:15; 3:17; 3:24; 3:24; 4:12; 4:13; 4:15; 4:16; 4:16; 4:16  
 πιστός (faithful, believe) 1:9; 3:23; 4:16; 5:4; 5:5; 5:10; 5:10; 5:10; 5:13  
 δίκαιος (righteous) 1:9; 1:9; 2:1; 2:29; 2:29; 3:7; 3:7; 3:7; 3:10; 3:12; 5:17 (adikia)  
 ἀλήθειαν (truth, truly, true) 1:6; 1:8; 2:4; 2:5; 2:8; 2:8; 2:21; 2:21; 2:27; 3:18; 3:19; 4:6; 5:6; 5:20; 5:20;  
 5:20

## CHART 1 Cosmic Battle Themes

1. Participants on the Devil's side
2. What the opponents are doing
3. Characteristics of opposition
4. Participants on God's side
5. What God, Jesus, Spirit are doing
6. What believers are doing
7. Characteristics of God and his children

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Sections of 1 Jn							
1:1-5a				XXXXX X	XX		XXX
1:5b-2:2	XXXX	XXXXX XXXXX X		XXXX	XXX	XXXXX X	XXXXX XXXX
2:3-11	X	XXXXX XXXX	X	XX	X	XXXXX XXXX	XXXXX XXXXX XX

2:12-14	xx	x		xxxx	xx	xxx	x
	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
2:15-17a	xxxxx x		xxxxx x	xxx			x
2:17b-28	xxxxx xxx	xxxx		xxxxx xx	xxx	xxxxx	xxxxx xxxxx xx
2:28-3:10	xxxxx	xxxxx xxxxx xxx		xxxxx xxxxx xxxxx xxxx	xxxxx xxxxx xxxx	xxxxx xxxxx	xxxxx xxxxx
3:11-18	xxxxx x	xxxx	xx	xxx	xxxxx x	xxxxx xx	xxxxx xxxxx xx
3:19-24				xxxxx	x	xxxxx xxx	xxxxx
4:1-6	xxxxx xxxx	xx		xxxxx xxxxx xxx		x	xx
4:7-21	xxxx	xxx		xxxxx xxxxx xxxxx xxxxx xxxxx xxxxx xx	xxxxx xxxxx xxxxx x	xxxxx xxxxx xxxxx xxxxx	xxxxx xxxxx xxxxx xxxxx xxxxx xxxxx xx
5:1-5	xxx			xxxxx xxxxx xxxx		xxxxx xxxxx xxxx	xxxxx xx
5:6-12	x	x		xxxxx xxxxx xxxx		xxxx	xxxxx
5:13-21	xxx	xxxxx xx	xxxx	xxxxx xxxxx xxx	xx	xxx	xxxxx xxx

#### 4.1.3.2. *Insights from Chart 1: Cosmic Battle Themes in 1 John*

This chart groups the activities and characteristics of the two types of people, those on God's side and those on the side of the devil or evil one. Themes 4, 5 and 6 begin to be more concentrated beginning with pericope 2:28–3:10 and throughout the rest of the book, as described below.

Theme 4, participants on God's side, has an increased number of occurrences in 2:28–3:10. This is the pericope in which the devil comes into the picture and it is also where the children of God are first mentioned, joining in the cosmic battle that is part of the ideological texture of the author of 1 John.

Theme 5, what God/Jesus/the Spirit are doing, is particularly concentrated in the two pericopes under discussion here, as well as in the pericope with the full treatment of the theme of love in 4:7-21. The fact that demonstrating love is one of the key things God and the Son can be seen doing seems to indicate that love has a role to play in the cosmic battle in the Johannine worldview.

Theme 6, what believers are doing, shows even more activity charted than for what God/Jesus/the Spirit is doing. This indicates an important role for God's children in the battle, including joining the Son of God in some sense to destroy the works of the devil. Again, love is an important aspect of what believers are seen doing, further evidence of the role of love in overcoming evil in the cosmic battle.

#### 4.1.3.3. *CHART 2: Key Vocabulary from the Pericope, 1 John 3:8-10*

The key terms are listed in the order in which the words occur in 1 John:

ἀπ' ἀρχῆς 1:1; 2:7; 2:13; 2:14; 2:24; 2:24; 3:8; 3:11

φανερῶν 1:2; 1:2; 2:19; 2:28; 3:2; 3:2; 3:5; 3:8; 3:10; 4:9

ἀμαρτία 1:7; 1:8; 1:9; 1:9; 1:10; 2:1; 2:1; 2:2; 2:12; 3:4; 3:4; 3:5; 3:5; 3:6; 3:6; 3:8; 3:8; 3:9; 3:9; 4:10; 5:16; 5:16; 5:16; 5:16; 5:17; 5:17; 5:18

δικαιοσύνην 1:9; 1:9; 2:1; 2:29; 2:29; 3:7; 3:7; 3:7; 3:10; 3:12; 5:17

ἀγάπη 2:5; 2:7; 2:10; 2:15; 2:15; 2:15; 3:1; 3:2; 3:10; 3:11; 3:14; 3:14; 3:16; 3:17; 3:18; 3:21; 3:23; 4:1; 4:7; 4:7; 4:7; 4:7; 4:8; 4:8; 4:9; 4:10; 4:10; 4:10; 4:11; 4:11; 4:11; 4:12; 4:12; 4:16; 4:16; 4:16; 4:17; 4:18; 4:18; 4:18; 4:19; 4:19; 4:20; 4:20; 4:20; 4:21; 4:21; 5:1; 5:1; 5:2; 5:2; 5:3

πονηρόν 2:13; 2:14; 3:12; 3:12; 5:18; 5:19

γεγέννηται 2:29; 3:9; 3:9; 4:7; 5:1; 5:1; 5:1; 5:4; 5:18; 5:18;

τέκνα (τοῦ θεοῦ / διαβόλου) 3:1; 3:2; 3:10; 5:2

διαβόλου 3:8; 3:8; 3:8; 3:10

λύση 3:8 (possibly 4:3)

ἔργα 3:8; 3:12; 3:18

Sections of 1 Jn	ἀπ' ἀρχῆς	φανερῶς	ἁμαρτία	δικαιοσύνην	ἀγάπη	τέκνα	διαβόλου	λύση	ἔργα
									γεγέννηται πονήρον
1:1-5a	x	xx							
1:5b-2:2		xxx	xxxxx	xxx					
2:3-11	x				xxx				
2:12-14	xx		x					xx	
2:15-17a					xxx				
2:17b-28	xx	x							
2:28-3:10	x	xxxxx x	xxxxx xxxxx	xxxxx x	xxx	xxx	xxxx	x	x
3:11-18	x			x	xxxxx x		xx		xx
3:19-24					xx				
4:1-6					x			(x)	
4:7-21		x	x		xxxxx xxxxx xxxxx xxxxx xxxxx xxxxx	x			
5:1-5					xxxxx	x			
5:6-12						xxxx			
5:13-21			xxxxx xx	x			xx	xx	

#### 4.1.3.4. Insights from Chart 2: Key Themes Related to 1 John 3:8-10

##### A. Concentration of the Theme of ἁμαρτία

A striking feature related to the key themes found in 3:8-10 is visibly evident from this chart.

The theme of ἁμαρτία is concentrated in the pericope in which 1 John 3:8 is located, the chiasmic center of 1 John, with approximately equal numbers of occurrences of the term at approximately equal distances from the center section.

ἁμαρτία 1:7; 1:8; 1:9; 1:9; 1:10; 2:1; 2:1; 2:2; 2:12; 3:4; 3:4; 3:5; 3:5; 3:6; 3:6; 3:8; 3:8; 3:9; 3:9; 4:10; 5:16; 5:16; 5:16; 5:16; 5:17; 5:17; 5:18

The fact that ἁμαρτία is positioned in and around the chiastic center, as well as the fact that it is in this central pericope that the destruction of the works of the devil is mentioned, indicates that the works of the devil to be destroyed are closely related to ἁμαρτία. These observations confirm that the verses at the hinge of the chiastic structure (3:8-12; see the chiastic chart) can be viewed as a central lens through which to look both backwards and forwards at the rest of the book. The significance of this lens will be discussed in the section on theological texture. In the upcoming scribal inter-texture section key words studies will include ἁμαρτία and the phrase ἀπ’ ἀρχῆς, which will lead toward a better understanding of the nature of the devil’s sin “from the beginning.”

#### B. Three Other Themes Concentrated in 1 John 3:8-10

Three other themes have a concentration in the two pericopes at the center of 1 John, with irregular distribution before and after the center focus.

- 1). Πονηρόν (another way to refer to ὁ διαβόλου<sup>158</sup>): Key word studies and cultural inter-texture studies will bring out the nature of the evil the author of 1 John was addressing and encouraging his audience to overcome (2:13, 14 and 5:18, 19).
- 2). Ἐφανερώθη: Word studies in the scribal inter-texture section will bring out the eschatological implications of this term that is closely associated with destroying the works of the devil.
- 3). Δικαιοσύνην: Doing [works of] righteousness (ὁ ποιῶν τὴν δικαιοσύνην) in 2:28–3:10 is the antithesis of the works of the devil that the Son of God appeared to destroy. Word studies in the inter-texture section will address the question, what does it mean to do righteousness?

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<sup>158</sup> Brown (*Epistles*, 416) equates “children of the devil” with “sons of the Evil One,” found in Matthew 13:38.

### C. Four Themes Introduced in 2:28–3:10

Four themes are introduced for the first time in the pericope, 2:28–3:10: τέκνα / γεγέννηται, διαβόλου, λύση, and ἔργα.

#### 1). Τέκνα θεοῦ

Associated with τέκνα θεοῦ is the phrase, αὐτοῦ γεγέννηται (born of God). Each of these terms is introduced for the first time in this section. These combined references to God's children occur just as the intention of the Son of God to destroy the works of the devil is being explicitly stated. The significance of this will be developed in key word studies in the scribal inter-texture section and in the theological texture section.

#### 2). Διαβόλου

This term is found only in this section, but will be considered along with the term for “the evil one,” τὸν πονηρόν in the key word studies of the scribal inter-texture section.

#### 3). Λύση

This term occurs in this pericope, and in some manuscripts it occurs again in 4:3. The word study will explain the significance of this term through inter-textual comparisons.

#### 4). Ἔργα

This term is found only in the two central pericopes, 2:28–3:10 and 3:11-18. Inter-textual studies on both evil works and the works of God or works of righteousness will assist in determining the meaning of the phrase, τὰ ἔργα τοῦ διαβόλου.

### D. Concentration of the Theme of “Love” in 3:11-18

The theme of “love” is concentrated in two places in 1 John: in the second pericope studied here, 3:11-18, and more fully in 4:7-21. The few occurrences of this theme in the two intervening pericopes support the proposal that 3:11-18 is part of a chain-link interlock transition that is anticipatory of 4:7-21, the main treatment of the theme. The fact that the theme of “love” visually dominates the chart once the defeat of the devil is announced in

section 2:28–3:10, reinforces the finding in the “cosmic battle” chart that “love” may be a means of defeating the devil or a result of the defeat of the devil, or both.

#### E. Concentration of the Theme of “Righteousness” in 2:28–3:10

The theme of “righteousness” is concentrated in the pericope, 2:28–3:10. This supports the choice of a sub-title for the pericope, as will be shown in the following discourse analysis, “God’s children are righteous like Him.” Because the opposite has also been shown to be true in this pericope (that the devil’s children are like him), this chart points toward the reality that a clash of two types of people and their spiritual leaders is being described.

From these whole-book studies of repetitive-progressive texture, chiasmic structure, and rhetorical transitions, the study now narrows to a detailed discourse analysis of the two pericopes identified as central to the author’s ideological portrayal of a cosmic battle in which the devil’s works will be defeated.

#### **4.1.4. Discourse Analysis**

Based on the analysis of rhetorical transitions, 2:28 can be clearly seen as the beginning of a new structural unit (as well as an overlapping verse from the previous unit), with two inclusions (φανερῶθη, δικαιοσύνην) identifying 3:10 as the end of that unit. Verses 3:11-18 form an anticipatory section in the chain-link interlock diagram (looking ahead to 4:7-21). The unit is identified by the inclusion formed with the word and concept of ἀγαπῶμεν.

In the chart below, the label for each line consists of the verse number in the text followed by the line number. For example, line 28.2 refers to the second line of 1 John 2:28. Similarly, 1.4 refers to the fourth line of verse 1 in chapter 3, etc.

## Discourse Analysis of 1 John 2:28 – 3:18

## THEMES

## COMMENTS

Pericope 1  
2:28-3:1028.1 Και νῦν, τέκνία, μένετε ἐν αὐτῷ,28.1: key word transition from previous section (μένετε); τέκνία forms an inclusion with 3:18

(Ch. 2)

A. Confidence at his appearing

- a — 28.2 ἵνα ἐὰν φανερωθῇ  
 b — 28.3 σχῶμεν παρρησίαν  
 b' — 28.4 καὶ μὴ αἰσχυνοῦμεν ἀπ' αὐτοῦ  
 a' — 28.5 ἐν τῇ παρουσίᾳ αὐτοῦ.

28.2 φανερωθῆ forms an inclusion with 3:10  
28.2-5: a chiasm with synonyms in lines 2, 5; & antonyms in lines 3, 4

1. God's Children are righteous, like Him (Ch. 3)

- c — 29.1 ἐὰν εἰδῆτε ὅτι δίκαιός ἐστιν,  
 c — 29.2 γινώσκετε ὅτι καὶ πᾶς ὁ ποιῶν τὴν δικαιοσύνην  
 d' — 29.3 ἐξ αὐτοῦ γεγέννηται.  
 e — 1.1 Ἴδετε ποταπὴν ἀγάπην δέδωκεν ἡμῖν ὁ πατήρ,  
 d — 1.2 ἵνα τέκνα θεοῦ κληθῶμεν,  
 d — 1.3 καὶ ἐσμέν. [τέκνα θεοῦ]  
 e' — 1.4 διὰ τοῦτο ὁ κόσμος οὐ γινώσκει ἡμᾶς,  
 e'' — 1.5 ὅτι οὐκ ἔγνω αὐτόν.  
 d — 2.1 ἀγαπητοί, νῦν τέκνα θεοῦ ἐσμεν,

29.1-3: God's children are like him; (righteous), which forms an inclusion with 3:10

1.4, 5: The world does not know God or His children; presented in chiasmic structure by topic

- a — 2.2 καὶ οὐπω ἐφανερῶθα  
 f — 2.3 τί ἐσόμεθα.  
 a' — 2.4 οἶδαμεν ὅτι ἐὰν φανερωθῇ,  
 f' — 2.5 ὅμοιοι αὐτῷ ἐσόμεθα,  
 a' — 2.6 ὅτι ὀψόμεθα αὐτόν  
 f' — 2.7 καθὼς ἐστίν.  
 a' — 3.1 καὶ πᾶς ὁ ἔχων τὴν ἐλπίδα ταύτην ἐπ' αὐτῷ  
 f' — 3.2 ἀγνίζει ἑαυτὸν, καθὼς ἐκεῖνος ἀγνός ἐστιν.

2.6: amplification (cf v. 3:6)

3.1 hope of being like him at his appearing

2. Sin to be taken away

- c' — 4.1 Πᾶς ὁ ποιῶν τὴν ἁμαρτίαν  
 g — 4.2 καὶ τὴν ἀνομίαν ποιεῖ,  
 c' — 4.3 καὶ ἡ ἁμαρτία  
 g — 4.4 ἐστὶν ἡ ἀνομία.  
 a — 5.1 καὶ οἶδατε ὅτι ἐκεῖνος ἐφανερῶθη,  
 c' — 5.2 ἵνα τὰς ἁμαρτίας ἄρῃ,  
 c — 5.3 καὶ ἁμαρτία ἐν αὐτῷ οὐκ ἐστίν.  
 h — 6.1 πᾶς ὁ ἐν αὐτῷ μένων  
 c — 6.2 οὐχ ἁμαρτάνει  
 c' — 6.3 πᾶς ὁ ἁμαρτάνων  
 h' — 6.4 οὐχ ἐώρακεν αὐτόν οὐδὲ ἔγνωκεν αὐτόν.

4.1-4: author's definition of sin Where a chiasmic structure would have been expected, parallelism is used instead.

5.3 amplification

6.1-4: slogan  
6.2: unspecified definition of sin

6.4: cf. 1:1-3, 8-10, 2:12-14, 3:2

- i — 7.1 Τεκνία, μηδεὶς πλανᾷ ὑμᾶς·  
 c — 7.2 ὁ ποιῶν τὴν δικαιοσύνην  
 c — 7.3 δίκαιός ἐστιν,  
 c — 7.4 καθὼς ἐκεῖνος δίκαιός ἐστιν.

7.1: clarification of J. theology of sin as opposite of righteous. See 1:8, 2:26 (deceive)

- c' — 8.1 ὁ ποιῶν τὴν ἁμαρτίαν  
 c' — 8.2 ἐκ τοῦ διαβόλου ἐστίν,  
 c' — 8.3 ὅτι ἀπ' ἀρχῆς ὁ διάβολος ἁμαρτάνει.  
 — 8.4 εἰς τοῦτο ἐφανερῶθη ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ,  
 — 8.5 ἵνα λύσῃ τὰ ἔργα τοῦ διαβόλου.

8.1 (Sin as defined in 3:4 and 3:10)

8.1, 2, 3 key words in chiasmic order

8.4, 5 amplification

8.5 works of devil = hate, death,



The inner structures of each of these two linked pericopes make extensive use of poetic Hebraic chiasmus within various sets of lines, sometimes using precise wording, other times through key words, and at times through similar and/or opposite meanings. These occurrences will be highlighted in the discussions of the two pericopes. Each pericope will be discussed separately with detailed comments line by line, and within clusters of related lines. Following this detailed analysis, the findings related to each of the major themes in the pericopes will be summarized, with indications of research needed in the following sections of the thesis.

#### 4.1.4.1. *Comments on Pericope 1: 2:28-3:10*

Three main themes are diagrammed for this pericope in the discourse analysis above:

- A. Confidence at his appearing, lines 28.1 – 10.5; indicated with a dotted line: ······
- B. God’s children are righteous like Him, lines 29.1–10.5; indicated with a solid line: ——
- C. Sin (to be taken away), lines 4.1–9.5; indicated with a double line: ==

28.1 Verse 2:28 has been described earlier in this chapter, in the discussion of transitions, as an example of “*transitio*”: a hinge or overlapping verse. The discourse analysis shows that this verse properly belongs in both the preceding and present pericopes because of two key word links, one looking back (μένετε) and the other forward (φανερῶθη).

28.2-5 This sub-section constitutes a chiasm with synonyms in lines 28.2 and 28.5 (φανερῶθη, παρουσία) and antonymns plus a negative, resulting in synonymous statements in lines 28.3 and 28.4 (παρρησίαν, μὴ αἰσχυθῶμεν). Also note the typical Hebraic play on sound-alike words in lines 28.3 and 28.5 (παρουσία, παρρησίαν).<sup>159</sup> The significance of this word play is that the two words involved form the title for the section: confidence at his appearing.

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<sup>159</sup> A sound-alike word play can be called a paronomasia. The *Oxford English Dictionary* points out that paronomasia comes from the Greek words meaning “after naming.” Paronomasia means “to alter slightly in naming; a playing on words that sound alike; a word-play; a pun.” Word plays are intentional and should be taken seriously. Michael Fishbane states: “Justification for the utilization of puns and allusions in exegesis lies in the acknowledged independent and efficacious power of words. They are pregnant with meaning” (Michael Fishbane, “Jeremiah IV 23-26 and Job III 3-13: A Recovered Use of the Creation Pattern,” *VT* 21 [1971]: 161). An example of paronomasia from Genesis 1:2 is the rhyming phrase, *tohu wabohu* (“destroyed and desolate,” or more conventionally translated, “formless and void”). It may not be too far a stretch to speculate that the author of 1 John may have used a rhyming and alliterative word play in 2:28 because he had Genesis 1 in mind as he wrote, since 1 John 1:1 echos John 1:1, which in turn echoes Genesis 1:1. In addition, in 1 John 3:8 reference is made to the devil “who has been sinning from the beginning.” In the section of this chapter on scribal inter-texture, the relevance of *tohu wabohu* to the sinning of the devil from the beginning will be explored.

28.2 φανερόω forms an inclusion with line 10.1, an indication of unit boundaries. The term appears in lines 2.2, 2.4, 5.1, 8.4, 10.1. Who or what appeared, for what purpose, and with what results are questions to ask of the text in later word studies.

29.1-3 God's children practice righteous deeds that demonstrate God's righteous character. These phrases form an inclusion with 10.4, 5, giving another confirmation of the ending boundary of the pericope. (Verses 2:28 and 2:29 each form an inclusion with 3:10, giving a flexible starting point for the pericope.)

29.3-1.2 These three lines form a simple chiastic structure using equivalent concepts, diagrammed in the discourse analysis as d-e-d':

d' = being born of God, which is equivalent to being a child of God

e = the father's love

d = being a child of God which is equivalent to being born of God

29.3 shows that the relationship between God, as father, and those who are born of God, his children, is that the children demonstrate the father's righteous character.

1.1 being born of God (29.3) and being called God's child (1.2) is linked in this line with God's love. Love, another aspect of God's character in which his children participate, will be developed in the upcoming pericope, 1 John 3:11-18, which in turn is anticipatory of the major treatment of this theme in 1 John 4:7-21.

1.2 being called 'God's child' is equivalent to being born of God, repeating the thought in line 29.3.

1.3-2.1 These lines form a 4-line chiastic structure that relates to the previous chiastic cluster, diagrammed as d-e'-e''-d.

d = being a child of God

e' = something opposite to the father's love (the world does not know us)

e'' = something opposite to the father's love (the world does not know God)

d = being a child of God

1.3 echoes line 1.2 ("and we are [God's children]"), which is stated directly in line 2.1.

1.4, 5 forms the center of this chiasm, speaking of what the world does not know (us or him, meaning God). This thought will be picked up again in the next pericope in line 13.2, but otherwise these lines do not directly relate to the major themes of this pericope.

- 2.1 The children of God are beloved, relating back to line 1.1 in which the author exclaimed about the manner of love God had given in calling the audience and himself God's children. It also rounds off the chiasm begun in line 1.3.
- 2.2–3.2 In this series of eight lines, two general themes alternate:  
 a = the hope of “that one's” appearing, and what will become clear or revealed with that appearing  
 f = being like “him”/ “that one”
- 2.2 Theme a. This is the first occurrence of the theme of φανερωθη since it was introduced in line 28.2. In that context the believer was encouraged to have confidence, which is the case in this cluster of lines as well. In this line, what is going to be revealed has not yet been made apparent.
- 2.3 Theme f. What the believers will be is the object of the hope of what will be revealed.
- 2.4 Theme a'. This line speaks of the appearance of a person, not just the revealing of a state of being as in line 28.2.
- 2.5 Theme f'. Now the object of the believers' hope, and the content of what they will be is described: ὅμοιοι αὐτῷ ἐσόμεθα.
- 2.6 Theme a'. This line speaks of seeing the person whose appearance is spoken of in line 2.4.
- 2.7 Theme f'. καθὼς ἐστίν again refers to what “that one” is like.
- 3.1 Theme a'. Here the hope refers to the hope of “that one's” appearing, the theme of lines 2.4 and 2.6.
- 3.2 Theme f''. The climax of this series reveals the character (ἀγνός) of the one who will appear, which is also the character of the children of God who will be like him when he appears.
- 4.1-4 An abrupt change of thought occurs here, typical of the author's antithetical style throughout the book. Apparently the theme of holiness in line 3.2 prompted reflection on the opposite theme of sin (ἁμαρτίαν). The pattern of alternating themes, noticed in the preceding cluster, continues in this cluster as well, although some thought needs to be given as to why the author did not use the chiastic pattern here, which he uses throughout this pericope and which might have been expected to be used here. The chiastic pattern would have yielded the following result:  
 c' ὁ ποιῶν τὴν ἁμαρτίαν (the opposite of the theme of righteousness)



5.1 Again the theme of φανερώθη occurs, this time giving one of two specific statements regarding the reason why the Son of God appeared. The other occurs in lines 8.4 and 8.5. In addition, in the cluster of lines 2.2–3.2, a third reason for the Son of God appearing was explained more indirectly. These themes, summarized below, will be discussed in more detail in word studies in the inter-texture section of the thesis.

Occurrences of φανερώθη in 1 John:

2.2–3.2: “That one” appeared so that the children of God could become like him (holy)

5.1, 2: The Son of God appeared to take away sin

8.4, 5: The Son of God appeared to destroy the works of the devil

All of these purposes relate to God’s intention to establish his nature in his children. In the section on theological texture, this intention will be related to the findings of the transitions in 1 John that draw in concern for the potentially believing world as well as for those who are already children of God.

5.3 This line relates back to line 3.2: in the Son of God there is no sin, but instead there is holiness, which is meant to be true of the children of God as well according to line 3.2.

6.1-4 These lines follow a chiasmic arrangement by theme: h-c’-c-h

h = being close to God (μένων)

c’ = sin, the opposite of righteousness

c = the absence of sin, namely righteousness

h’ = being close to God (seeing and knowing him)

This cluster, beginning with, “the one who abides in him does not sin, ” has not been placed in relation to the theme of righteousness due to the reasons listed below. Taken together these reasons throw doubt on whether this verse represents a true statement about the righteousness of the believer. While it is true that God’s children are meant to be like him, this verse could easily represent a subtle distortion of the truth by the opponents of the Johannine community.

a. The phrase of the next verse, line 7.1, tells the hearers not to let themselves be deceived. Following Swadling,<sup>160</sup> this could indicate that what has just been

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<sup>160</sup> A review of Swadling’s proposal, presented earlier in a footnote in chapter 1, shows it is possible to read 1 John 3:6 as a mocking quotation by the opponents to disparage the believers:

said in verse 6 might be a quotation or slogan misused by the opponents to mock the Johannine believers: you who are worried about sin have neither seen nor known him.

b. The verse contains material that contradicts earlier statements in 1 John:

- The author included himself in the first person plural statement, in 1:8: ἐὰν εἴπωμεν ὅτι ἁμαρτίαν οὐκ ἔχομεν, ἑαυτοὺς πλανῶμεν (an echo of this statement would have been in the hearer's minds when verse 3:7 was heard or read: "don't let anyone deceive you"). Verse 1:8 indicates that the author knew he sometimes sinned.
- Yet the author also specifically included himself in the prologue statements about eyewitnesses who had seen the one "from the beginning," therefore it cannot be true that those who sin have not "seen" him.
- In 1 John 2:3, 4 the author explained how to know that we have known him (if we keep his commandments) and how to recognize those who do not know him (those who do not keep his commandments), with the implication that the author and his followers are the ones who do keep his commandments (which later in 3:24 are shown to be love for the brother and belief in Jesus as the Christ).
- If the author claimed to have seen and known "him," and yet also acknowledged the presence of sin in his life that needed to be forgiven (1:9), then verse 3:6

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πᾶς ὃ ἐν αὐτῷ μένων οὐ ἁμαρτάνει·  
 πᾶς ὃ ἁμαρτάνων  
 οὐχ ἑώρακεν αὐτόν  
 οὐδὲ ἔγνωκεν αὐτόν.

Each pair of lines begins and ends with the same or similar word or phrase (πᾶς ὃ, ἁμαρτάνει/ἁμαρτάνων) and (οὐχ/οὐδὲ, αὐτόν). Harry Swadling points out that this way of arranging the lines shows the semi-poetic nature of the verse and lends support to the theory that this verse was a slogan well known to the community. (See Swadling, "Sin," 205-11). "It is quite acceptable practice and sound polemic technique to quote one's opponent scornfully and then refute him in the following sentence." (Swadling, "Sin," 9) And that is exactly what the author of First John does in verse 7: "Dear children, do not let anyone deceive you ...." This reading makes it possible to see that the opponents may have been mocking the Johannine Christians: "Children of God do not sin [regardless of how they act] because they have God's seed in them (3:9). They are not able to sin. If anyone sins it means they are ignorant and have never seen or known God." This attribution of a pre-gnostic viewpoint to the secessionists is similar to a report by Irenaeus who describes the Gnostics as despising those who guard against sinning even in thought or word as "utterly contemptible and ignorant persons, while they highly exalt themselves, and claim to be perfect, and the elect seed." (*Adv. Haer.* 1.6.4)

could be interpreted as a quotation of a misused slogan that was causing confusion among the believers.

- c. The verse does not follow the pattern of ὁ ποιῶν τὴν ἁμαρτίαν, as in lines 4.1, 8.1, 9.2 or ὁ ποιῶν τὴν δικαιοσύνην, as in lines 29.2, 7.2, 10.4. Instead it says οὐχ ἁμαρτάνει. There may be a subtle difference between those who sin (ὁ ἁμαρτάνων) and those “doing (works of?) sin” (ὁ ποιῶν τὴν ἁμαρτίαν), but it is beyond the scope of this study to investigate this.
- d. This verse does not fit an emerging overall pattern in this pericope, which is a serious consideration with an author who arranges his text as carefully as this one does. When something does not fit an established pattern the reason for the aberration needs to be identified. This pattern will be explained when the theme of righteousness is discussed following the line and cluster explanations of the pericope under investigation.
- 7.1 This line relates to lines 6.1-4, encouraging the author’s hearers not to let themselves be deceived by slogans that sound close to the truth, but which lead to error and confusion.
- 7.2-4 These lines each focus on the theme of righteousness and illustrate the elements of the pattern alluded to above: God’s children do works of righteousness which demonstrate their character, which is modelled on the character of God himself. Each of these lines has a negative parallel in the next cluster of lines, 8.1-5.
- 7.2 Referring to the child of God, ὁ ποιῶν τὴν δικαιοσύνην, this line refers back to 29.2.
- 7.3 Still referring to the child of God, δίκαιός ἐστιν, this line relates to 2.5, ὅμοιοι αὐτῷ ἐσόμεθα.
- 7.4 Referring to the unique Son of God, καθὼς ἐκεῖνος δίκαιός ἐστιν, this line refers back to 29.1 and relates to line 5.3, ἁμαρτία ἐν αὐτῷ οὐκ ἔστιν. The line describes the nature of God and his Son.
- 8.1-5 These lines begin the center of the chiasmic structure proposed earlier, serving as an interpretive lens for the rest of the book.
- 8.1-3 The key words in these lines are arranged in chiasmic order, with the central focus on ἀπ’ ἀρχῆς:



uses this pattern to call attention once again, at the center of the chiasmus, to the fact that those born of God have God's (sinless) character in them.

Πᾶς ὁ γεγεννημένος ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ	a	Everyone born of God
ἁμαρτίαν οὐ ποιεῖ,	b	does not sin
ὅτι σπέρμα αὐτοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ μένει,	c	because God's seed abides in him
καὶ οὐ δύναται ἁμαρτάνειν,	b'	and he is not able to sin
ὅτι ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ γεγέννηται.	a'	because he has been born of God

In the Greek, even the exact word order demonstrates a chiastic relationship:

γεγεννημένος  
 ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ  
 ἁμαρτίαν  
 οὐ ποιεῖ  
 σπέρμα αὐτοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ μένει,  
 οὐ δύναται  
 ἁμαρτάνειν  
 ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ  
 γεγέννηται

10.1 The first line of the conclusion of this pericope repeats the theme of φανερά, now as a predicate adjective,<sup>161</sup> first used in the verb form of the root word in line 28.2, rounding off the pericope with an inclusion. This line relates to lines 10.2, 3 (the two types of people revealed), and also to lines 10.4, 5 (what is revealed about them).

10.2, 3 In this case what is being revealed (“apparent”) is not the unique Son of God, as in 28.2, but the children of God as distinguished from the children of the devil.

10.4, 5 These lines are grouped together to explain how to tell two types of people apart.

Those who do not ποιῶν δικαιοσύνην are not of God, and neither are those who do not love their brother.

10.4 Δικαιοσύνην provides a second inclusion relating back to lines 29.1, 2. This theme will be discussed in detail in the next segment of this discourse analysis.

10.5 Ἀγαπῶν serves as a transitional key word into the next pericope, and at the same time relates back to the love of God mentioned in line 1.1, where it was associated with God calling believers his children, who are also called his ἀγαπητοί in line 2.1.

#### 4.1.4.2. Summary of Comments on Major Themes in Pericope 1: 2:28–3:10

A. Confidence at his appearing, lines 28.1 – 10.5; indicated with a dotted line: ………

B. God's children are righteous like Him, lines 29.1–10.5; indicated with a solid line: ——

C. Sin (to be taken away), lines 4.1–9.5; indicated with a double line: ==

A. Theme of Appearing (Φανερώθη), lines 28.2–10.5

The term φανερώθη occurs in lines 28.2, 2.2, 2.4, 5.1, 8.4, 10.1.

Allusions to Jesus' appearing occur in lines 28.5 (his παρουσία), 2.6 (we shall see him), and 3.1 (having the hope of seeing him at his appearing).

The theme of φανερώθη has the following semantic relations in the discourse analysis above:

28.2 when he appears relates to line 28.3, we may have confidence

28.5 his παρουσία refers to the event in which Jesus will be revealed

2.2, in the passive voice, this line refers to line 2.3, the content of what has not been revealed yet is what God's children will be in the future.

2.4 refers again, as in line 28.2, to Jesus' expected appearing that will have the consequence of God's children being like him (line 2.5). This is the hope (line 3.1) and the reason for confidence and not being ashamed in lines 28.3, 4.

2.6 ὁψόμεθα αὐτὸν relates back to line 2.2, namely his appearing

3.1 The hope referred to here is that of seeing him (line 2.6) at his appearing (line 2.2)

5.1 This line relates to line 5.2 which gives a purpose for which ἐκεῖνος appeared (to take away sin). The construction is parallel to line 8.4.

8.4 This line relates to line 8.5 which gives a second purpose for which the Son of God appeared, to destroy the works of the devil.

10.1 Here the root word φανερώω occurs as a predicate adjective, relating to lines 10.2, 3 (who is revealed) and lines 10.4, 5 (what is revealed about those persons that makes it possible to distinguish them).

In this pericope the theme of φανερώθη describes the past and expected future coming of Jesus, with the purposes of taking away sin and destroying the works of the devil, and with the result that God's children can have confidence now and hope for the future that they will be like Jesus when they see Him as He is.

B. Theme of God's Children Being Righteous Like Him, lines 29.1–10.5

This theme occurs in lines 29.1, 29.2, 7.2, 7.3, 7.4, 10.4. Allusions to this theme occur in lines 2.3, 2.5, 2.7, 3.2 (the children of God are like ἐκεῖνος who is ἄγνός), 5.2 (the Son of God takes away sin, which results in its opposite, righteousness), 5.3 (in him there is no sin,

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<sup>161</sup> Martin M. Culy, *I, II, III John: A Handbook on the Greek Text* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2004), 78.

which is a description of righteousness), 8.4, 5 (destroying the works of the devil will result in righteousness), 9.2-4 (those born of God do not do sinful works but have God's seed remaining in them; descriptions of righteousness).

In addition, lines 8.1-3 have been included in the summary of this theme as demonstrations of the opposite of righteousness because they fit a pattern that emerges from the particular lines of text listed above. (If lines 8.1-3 are removed the pattern is not disrupted, but some insights can be gained by including them, as will be seen in the comments below.)

The following basic pattern is repeated four times in this pericope, with lines 10.4, 5 providing a summary statement and link to the next pericope.

A: God's nature (or the devil's)

B: God's children (or unique Son) demonstrate his character through visible works (or the devil's children demonstrate his character through their works)

C: God's children have God's nature (or the devil's children have the devil's nature)

This pattern is seen in the analysis below of the theme of δικαιοσύνην using the semantic relations that were diagrammed in the discourse analysis above:

29.1 He (God/Christ) is righteous (A)

29.2, 3 those who do righteousness are born of him (B)

2.5 we shall be like him—holy (a reference to line 3.2) (C)

5.3 in him is no sin (another way to state 2:29 or 3:2, he is righteous; he is holy) A

7.2 the one who does righteousness (B)

7.3 is righteous (another way of stating that God's children are like him) (C)

7.4 as that one is righteous (restates 2:29 for a third time) (A)

8.1 the one who does sin (doing the opposite of righteousness) (B')

8.2 is of the devil (the pattern shows this should be interpreted "is like the devil," rather than "born of" or originating from the devil, as is the case with those who are like God; this insight would not have been discovered had not these lines been included in the pattern) (C')

- 8.3 from the beginning the devil sins (the devil's character is the opposite of God's character) (A')
- 8.4, 5 the Son of God comes to destroy the works of the devil, as the ultimate and unique child of God, doing something representative of God's righteous character (B)
- 9.1-5 Those born of God have God's sinless character in them (C)
- 10.4 all who do not do righteousness are not of God (the opposite of 29.2) (B')
- 10.5 and neither is the one who does not love his brother; (C'). This links the themes of righteousness and love, providing a partial definition of righteousness, and looking ahead toward 1 John 4:8: "God is love." (theme A, God's nature)

A basic pattern has emerged from the text showing God's righteous nature (A) as the basis for the visible works of God's children (B), demonstrating that they possess God's nature (C).<sup>162</sup> (This theme is brought out in verse 4:16 in which another attribute of God is to be demonstrated by His children, showing that His nature abides in them:

Ὁ θεὸς ἀγάπη ἐστίν, καὶ ὁ μένων ἐμὲ τῇ ἀγάπῃ ἐν τῷ θεῷ μένει καὶ ὁ θεὸς ἐν αὐτῷ μένει.)

C. Theme of ἁμαρτία (which is to be taken away), encompasses lines 4.1–9.5

The term ἁμαρτία occurs in lines 4.1, 4.3, 5.2, 5.3, 6.2, 6.3, 8.1, 8.3, 9.2, 9.4.

ἁνομία, a closely related term, occurs in lines 4.2, 4.4.

Another closely related phrase, τὰ ἔργα τοῦ διαβόλου, occurs in line 8.5.

The theme of ἁμαρτία has the following semantic relations in the discourse analysis above:

4.1 relates to line 4.2, indicating the equivalency of ἁμαρτία and ἁνομία.

4.3 relates to line 4.4, equating ἁμαρτία and ἁνομία.

5.2 gives the purpose, to take away sin, for which ἐκεῖνος was revealed (line 5.1)

5.3 gives the qualification (in him there is no sin) for ἐκεῖνος to take away sin (line 5.2)

6.2 is part of a slogan purporting to describe what is true of those who remain in him (line 6.1), that they do not sin.

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<sup>162</sup> De La Potterie comes to this same conclusion when he states, "The proper theme of the Epistle is ... the announcement of a profound spiritual reality which [Christians] bear within them, and the visible manifestations of which the author makes clear" (Ignace de la Potterie and Stanislaus Lyonnet, *The Christian Lives by the Spirit* [Staten Island: Alba House, 1971], 47).

- 6.3 is part of a slogan purporting to describe what is not true of those who sin: they have never seen or known him (line 6.4)
- 8.1 relates to line 8.2, showing who the one who does sinful works is like (the devil)
- 8.3 relates to lines 8.1, 2 in a key word chiasmic pattern, showing the persistence of the devil's sinful nature from the beginning.
- 8.5 gives the purpose for which the Son of God appeared (line 8.4): to destroy the works of the devil. This line will relate to the next pericope in which the evil works of Cain are described.
- 9.2 relates to line 9.1 in making a statement (ἁμαρτίαν οὐ ποιεῖ) about ὁ γεγεννημένος ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ
- 9.4 repeats in slightly different terms the same statement made in 9.2, and relates to line 9.3, which repeats line 9.1. As described above, lines 9.1-5 are in a word for word chiasmic order, with the focus on God's σπέρμα that remains in the one born of God, ensuring that the child has the nature of the father.

The theme of ἁμαρτία in this pericope makes it clear that sin is the extreme opposite of God's nature and that he intends to do away with sin. How this will be done is through the activity of the Son of God (taking away sins and destroying the works of the devil). But insights from the next pericope will be needed in order to know what exactly is included under the rubric of ἁμαρτία, and to discern whether the author of 1 John envisioned the other children of God, in addition to the unique Son of God, being involved in doing away with sin and the works of the devil.

#### **4.1.4.3. Comments on Pericope 2: 3:11-18**

The themes and semantic relations of this pericope are much simpler than those in 2:28–3:10. One main theme, ἀγάπε, is diagrammed in the discourse analysis above that encompasses the full pericope, which is bounded by an inclusion with the word, ἀγαπῶμεν. Cain's negative example, Christ's positive example, an embedded additional hypothetical negative example, and a concluding challenge constitute the sub-sections of this pericope.

- 11.1 introduces the theme for the section and relates back to 1 John 2:7 which speaks of a command they have had from the beginning.

- 11.2 defines the content of the message referred to in 11.1, as “love one another,” and sets the tone for the rest of the pericope which will be about negative and positive examples of love.
- 12.1-6 A loose chiasmic structure can be discerned in these six lines giving a negative example of what love is not. Violent murder, *ἐσφαξεν*, is at the center of the chiasmus.
- 12.1 specifies that Cain is not an example of what is meant by the phrase in 11.2, *ἀγαπῶμεν ἀλλήλους*. (B)
- 12.2 relates to line 12.5, as both lines describe Cain, or his works, as *πονηρὰ*. (C)
- 12.3 relates to line 12.4, making the statement that Cain slaughtered his brother. (D)
- 12.4 is a question version of line 12.3, asking why Cain slaughtered his brother. These equivalent lines, as the center focus of a chiasmic structure, also relate to lines 12.2 and 12.5 in describing the specific nature of the evil deeds of Cain, who was of the evil one. (D)
- 12.5 relates to line 12.4, giving the reason for Cain slaughtering his brother, and relates to line 12.2 as already mentioned. (C)
- 12.6 states the opposite of line 12.1: Cain’s brother is a good example whose works were righteous. (B’)
- 13.1 functions as an introduction to the next sub-section, similar to the function of line 14.1. Neither of these lines provides content, but just serves as a general phrase to call attention to the subject mentioned in the next line.
- 13.2–15.1 These lines constitute another chiasm illustrating what is true for the Johannine believers reading or hearing the text of 1 John. Because of the murderous nature of the evil one, demonstrated in lines 12.1-5, believers can expect to be hated, at least, if not murdered, by those whose nature is like that of the evil one. In this chiasm, love of the brothers is the central focus.
- 13.2 relates to line 15.1 with the key word, *μισεῖ*. (A)
- 14.1 relates to line 14.3 with the key word, *θανάτου*. (B)
- 14.2 is the center of the chiasm, and the exact opposite of the center of the preceding chiasm in lines 12.3, 4. This line links the theme of lines 13.2 and 15.1 (*μισεῖ*) with the theme of lines 14.1 and 14.3 (*θανάτου*) through the phrase, *ἀγαπῶμεν τοὺς ἀδελφούς*, which is the antonym of both hatred and death, given both the preceding statement in 14.1 that passing out of death into life is conditioned upon the reality that

is stated in 14.2, and the following statement in 14.3 that the one who does not love remains in death. (C)

14.3 is in a chiastic relationship with line 14.1. (B')

15.1 is in a chiastic relationship with line 13.2. This line introduces a new term,

ἀνθρωποκτόνος, that will be amplified in line 15.2. (A')

15.2 amplifies line 15.1, and relates back to line 14.1 in which it was stated that believers can know they have passed out of death into life. In line 15.2 they know that no murderer has eternal life in him. The following logical syllogisms seem to be present in this section of the pericope, each with the same conclusion, found at the center of the chiasm:

*First Syllogism:*

Major Premise: Believers know they have passed out of death into life (14.1)

Minor Premise: The one who does not love remains in death (14.3)

Conclusion: Therefore it must be true that believers love the brothers (14.2)

*Second Syllogism:*

Major Premise: Those who hate are the same as murderers (15.1)

Minor Premise: Murderers do not have eternal life in them (15.2)

Conclusion: Therefore believers (who have life) love (do not hate) the brothers (14.2)

16.1, 2, 3, 18.1, 2 If lines 17.1-4 are temporarily set aside as an embedded negative example in narrative form (unlike the rest of the sections of this pericope which use the poetic chiastic format), a third chiasm emerges in the form of a-e'-e'-a. At the center of this chiasm is the extreme demonstration of love: giving up one's life, countering the extreme opposite example of the first chiasmus in this pericope—violently taking life from another.

16.1 relates to line 18.1 with the key word, ἀγάπε. (A)

16.2 relates to line 16.3, giving the positive example of ἐκεῖνος who gave up his life (E')

16.3 relates to line 16.2, serving jointly as the center of the chiastic structure, and showing that believers are to imitate the example related in line 16.2. (E')

18.1, 2 These lines relate to line 16.1 by amplifying the meaning of the term, ἀγάπε, which is not just something talked about, but demonstrated in practical works. (A)

17.1-4 This narrative section is embedded in the chiasm described above as an example of how one might fail to give up one's life (re-defined here as τὸν βίον τοῦ κόσμου rather than ψυχὴν as in lines 16.2, 3) and therefore fail to demonstrate love. The author's view of the serious consequences of not being characterized by love are shown in the syllogisms above derived from lines 14.1–15.2.

17.1 relates indirectly to lines 16.2, 3 as another type of “life” that believers are expected to give up out of love for one another.

17.2 relates to 17.1, giving a hypothetical example of a circumstance that might befall a person who has the “life of the world,” or the capacity to meet physical needs. This is reminiscent of the parable of the Good Samaritan.

17.3 relates to 17.2, with a hypothetical negative choice made by the person with the capacity to meet a brother's need.

17.4. relates to 17.3, by asking a rhetorical question, showing that a person making a selfish choice does not have the love of God in them.

18.1, 2 The concluding exhortation relates back to the opening lines of the pericope, 11.1, 2, with a repetition of the main subject, love. The key word in line 18.1, ἔργω, relates back to the following lines:

16.3 and 17.1 show that good works are associated with life, both ψυχὴν and βίον.

12.6 is part of a section indicating that those who are characterized by righteous works, as Cain's brother was, are hated and sometimes murdered by those who are of the evil one.

12.5 Cain's works were evil, and these were specified in lines 12.3, 4: ἔσφαξεν τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ.

The above discussion of righteous and evil works helps to shed light on the meaning of the phrase in line 8.5, τὰ ἔργα τοῦ διαβόλου. This will be further discussed in the sections on scribal and historical inter-texture, as well as in the sections on ideological and theological textures.

#### **4.1.4.4. Summary of Insights from Discourse Analysis of 1 John 2:28 – 3:18**

In these pericopes the following points have been brought out that will need further investigation in upcoming sections of this chapter:

### A. Key Words and Concepts

Key words and concepts from these pericopes will be studied in more detail in the scribal inter-texture section of this chapter, based on the insights from this discourse analysis.

### B. Chiastic Arrangement of Key words and Central Focus

The key words in 1 John 3:8a are arranged in chiastic order, with the central focus on ἀπ' ἀρχῆς. This focus on “from the beginning,” calls attention to the fact that in the Johannine worldview, sin is an intrinsic part of the devil’s character and always has been, just as righteousness is an intrinsic part of God’s character. In the section of this chapter on scribal inter-texture the relevance of *tohu wabohu* תהו ובהו (in Genesis 1:2) to the sinning of the devil ἀπ' ἀρχῆς will be explored.

### C. Definition of Ἄμαρτία

The definition of ἄμαρτίαν is enhanced by the findings of the chiastic structure discussed earlier in this chapter, in which verses 3:4 and 3:15 are found to be parallel, associating ἀνομία (which is equated in 3:4 with death, which in turn can be extrapolated to mean the intentional destruction of God’s created beings and the opposition to God’s creative will). This will be significant in developing the theological texture later in this chapter. The section on ideological texture will examine some assumptions the present author making in attempting to interpret the key phrase, “the works of the devil,” in a 21<sup>st</sup> century context.

### D. Purposes of the Appearing of the Son of God

The purposes for which the Son of God appeared relate to God’s intention to establish his nature in his children. In the section on theological texture, this intention will be related to the findings of the transitions in 1 John that draw in concern for the potentially believing world as well as for those who are already children of God.

### E. Works of Children Demonstrate Character

The devil’s children do works of sin which demonstrate their character, which is modelled on the character of the devil, just as God’s children do works of righteousness which demonstrate their character, which is modelled on the character of God.

#### 4.1.5. Summary of Insights from Inner Texture Investigations

In this section on inner texture, the chiasmic structure and rhetorical transitions of the whole book of 1 John have been explored, each pointing to the central focus at the center of the book on “the works of the devil” and on the distinction between the “children of God” and the “children of the devil.” The repetitive-progressive texture charts have shown that many of the themes progress toward a climax at the center of the book.

Findings of the chiasmic structure, in which verses 3:4 and 3:15 are found to be parallel, associate ἀμαρτίαν with θανάτον, which can be extrapolated to mean the intentional destruction of God’s created beings (murder) and opposition to God’s creative will. In the ideological texture this presupposition will be explored, that opposition to God’s will is an integral part of the definition of sin.

The chain-link transition identified in 1 John will be compared, in the next section of this chapter (scribal inter-texture), to a similar transition in the Gospel of John. This will reinforce the value of these inter-locked passages as lenses through which to look both backward and forward at the rest of each book. In the study of theological texture the implications from looking through this lens will be explored. Another insight from the chain link transition discussion is that since the world is an object of God’s love, then it must also be an object of the believers’ love who are to love just as God did (4:11, also see 4:17: “Just as Jesus is, so also are we in this world”). This insight relates to overcoming the works of the devil since, as was pointed out in the repetitive-progressive texture charts, the author’s arrangement of the text indicates love has a role to play in the cosmic battle. This also contributes to the theological texture to be discussed later in this chapter.

Further insight into what the author and audience would have understood the central phrases of 1 John to mean will be gained in studies of historical and cultural inter-texture studies, in which the events, practices and insider cultural knowledge in Asia Minor will be examined for relevance to the main topic of discussion in this thesis.

In the social-cultural texture, anthropological group theory will be applied to a study of the Johannine group and their opponents (the “children of God” and the “children of the devil.”). Also in the social-cultural texture, ritual theory will be used to examine the text of 1 John, with the conclusion that the book consists of two rituals, one related to each type of group. Two groups of people are having their status transformed; how to tell them apart is the major emphasis of 1 John. In the ideological texture section of this chapter, the core images

found in the two pericopes under investigation will be examined as graphic images with a persuasive purpose—the author’s ideology expressed in the form of word pictures. The theological texture section of this chapter will focus on the insight found at the center of the chiasm (3:8b and 3:10a): the intention of the Son of God to destroy the works of the devil and to distinguish between the children of God and the children of the devil.

The first repetitive-progressive texture chart shows that the pericope of 2:28–3:10 is both where the devil first comes into the picture and it is also where the children of God are first mentioned, joining in the cosmic battle that is part of the ideological texture of the author of 1 John. The theme of what God/Jesus/the Spirit are doing, is particularly concentrated in the two pericopes under discussion here as well as in the full treatment of the theme of love in 4:7-21. This seems to indicate that love has a role to play in the cosmic battle since that is the main theme of two out of three of these pericopes. The theme of what believers are doing shows more activity charted in these pericopes than for what God/Jesus/the Spirit is doing. This indicates an important role for God’s children in the battle, including joining the Son of God in some sense to destroy the works of the devil. These themes will recur repeatedly in upcoming texture studies and will be drawn together in the theological texture discussion.

The second repetitive-progressive texture chart has pointed to the need for inter-textual word studies to clarify the key terms found in 1 John 3:8 and its immediate context, with a view toward identifying what might have been in the author’s mind when he placed destruction of the works of the devil at the chiastic climax in an eschatological context.

In addition to the studies called for by the whole book studies mentioned above, the discourse analysis of the two central pericopes points toward other areas needing further exploration in the other textures.

1. A focus in 1 John 3:8 on ἀπ’ ἀρχῆς calls attention to the fact that sin is an intrinsic part of the devil’s character and always has been. In the section of this chapter on scribal inter-texture, the relevance of *tohu wabohu* תהו ובהו (from Genesis 1:2) to the sinning of the devil ἀπ’ ἀρχῆς will be explored.

2. The analysis of the themes φανερωθῆ and δικαιοσύνην revealed a pattern in which it was seen that the Son of God appeared with the intention of establishing God’s nature in His children. In the section on theological texture, this intention will be related to the findings

of the transitions in 1 John that draw in concern for the potentially believing world as well as for those who are already children of God.

3. The pattern just mentioned also shows that the devil's children do works of ἁμαρτίαν which demonstrate their character, which is modelled on the character of the devil. The works of the evil one that the devil's children do are illustrated in the pericope, 3:11-18, with Cain as an archetypal example.<sup>163</sup> In the ideological and theological textures the nature of the works of the devil will be further explored. In addition, in the historical inter-texture section, some attention will be paid to the practices of magic and demonology in the city of Ephesus at the time the Johannine community was having difficulties with its opponents. This may shed further light on what the believers may have envisioned when they heard the term spoken, "the works of the devil."

Next, three types of inter-texture studies, scribal, historical, and cultural, will be applied to the text under consideration. Following these inter-texture explorations, the next three textures to be examined later will be the social-cultural texture, ideological texture, and theological texture. In the theological texture section many of the threads from these separate studies will be drawn together into a coherent picture of a theology of the works of the devil.

#### **4.2. INTER-TEXTURE**

The study of 1 John 3:8, having begun with the context of the text itself (inner texture), now moves into exploration of other texts that have been echoed or alluded to in the text under investigation, termed inter-texture by Robbins.<sup>164</sup>

Each of the inter-texture studies here will be self-contained, always keeping in view the research question, what is the meaning of the phrase in 1 John 3:8, "the works of the devil." The findings within each bounded study will be summarized at the end of each subsection and later brought into relationship with each other in the discussion of theological texture. The three sub-divisions of inter-texture will include the following studies:

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<sup>163</sup> Compare 1 John 3:12 (Cain's deeds were evil) with John 3:20ff (men loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil). The common themes in these passages help the contemporary reader understand what may have been in the minds of the original hearers of 1 John who would most likely have been familiar with the Gospel of John. Evil deeds are associated with walking in darkness, rather than in the light (1 John 1:6,7), and Cain's example shows the association of hatred and murder with evil deeds done in the dark.

<sup>164</sup> See Robbins, *Tapestry*, 32.

Scribal Inter-texture. Written texts outside of 1 John <sup>165</sup> will provide important background information for interpreting the key words and phrases under investigation. In addition to looking at other biblical texts for the meanings of key words (Johannine literature, other parts of the New Testament, Hebrew Bible), selections from the Qumran literature, the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* and Ignatius' letter to the Ephesians will give helpful insights. This section will incorporate a technical examination of the phrase from the Hebrew Bible, *tohu wabohu* תהו ובהו (which relates to the nature of the devil's sin ἀπ' ἀρχῆς), and a brief comparison with 1 John of a chain-link transition in the Gospel of John as part of the discussion of terms used to refer to "the devil."

Historical Inter-texture. The historical and religious milieu, and practices of magic current in the 1<sup>st</sup> century environment of Ephesus, will be related to the main questions being asked of the text, to see what additional insights can be gleaned. As Harland says, "it is worthwhile investigating social and cultural life in western Asia Minor, including cities like Ephesus, since this is the world in which many Christians lived and breathed, and in which many New Testament documents were produced and read."<sup>166</sup>

Cultural Inter-texture. Greco-Roman literature will contribute insights into cultural insider knowledge of the ancient myths about Heracles/Hercules. Contemporary interpreters, who do not have this insider cultural knowledge, are likely to miss echoes of these myths the audience may have heard when the author of 1 John spoke about the strength of the young men in 2:14 and the fact that they had victory over the "evil one." A brief exploration of the Heracles myths will assist in arriving at an ancient Mediterranean understanding of the cosmic battle at the heart of 1 John and what role God's children, in addition to God's unique Son, might have in that battle and in overcoming the works of the devil/evil one.

#### **4.2.1. Scribal Inter-Texture Key Word Studies**

The approach that will be taken for exploring scribal inter-texture will be to investigate key words from a variety of inter-textual perspectives. From the repetitive-progressive charts and

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<sup>165</sup> Sloyan points out that "there are so many echoes of biblical passages from both Testaments in this brief body of literature that it would be tedious to cite them all. The remarkable thing is how much of it from the New Testament is extra-Johannine." (Gerard S. Sloyan, *Walking in the Truth: Perseverers and Deserters: The First, Second, and Third Letters of John* [Valley Forge, Pa.: Trinity Press, 1995]) 4.) An insight from historical inter-texture helps us realize that this style was typical of others writing in the 1<sup>st</sup> century C.E. Polycarp's style in his letter to the Philippians is basically a patchwork of quotations and allusions.

<sup>166</sup> Harland, *Associations*, 2.

the discourse analysis, the following words (or word clusters) have emerged as key themes for understanding the phrase at the center of the chiasmic structure of the book, the “works of the devil”:

ἀπ’ ἀρχῆς 1:1; 2:7; 2:13; 2:14; 2:24; 2:24; 3:8; 3:11

ἁμαρτία 1:7; 1:8; 1:9; 1:9; 1:10; 2:1; 2:1; 2:2; 2:12; 3:4; 3:4; 3:5; 3:5; 3:6; 3:6; 3:8; 3:8;  
3:9; 3:9; 4:10; 5:16; 5:16; 5:16; 5:16; 5:17; 5:17; 5:18

δικαιοσύνην 1:9; 1:9; 2:1; 2:29; 2:29; 3:7; 3:7; 3:7; 3:10; 3:12; 5:17

φανερῶ 1:2; 1:2; 2:19; 2:28; 3:2; 3:2; 3:5; 3:8; 3:10; 4:9

πονηρόν 2:13; 2:14; 3:12; 3:12; 5:18; 5:19 (will be considered with its synonym, διαβόλου);  
διαβόλου 3:8; 3:8; 3:8; 3:10

ἔργα 3:8; 3:12; 3:18

λύειν 3:8

In this section each of these words or word clusters will be examined through inter-textual studies in other Johannine writings and other New Testament books. Relevant Hebrew Bible and extra-biblical writings will also be mentioned. It is beyond the scope of this study to present a comprehensive analysis of each term. Instead, the following process will be followed:

1. The usage of the term in 1 John will be supplemented through examination of other relevant biblical and extra-biblical passages.
2. Information from lexical tools will be incorporated as it proves helpful.
3. Insights will be summarized from each separate word study that help to illuminate the meaning of the phrase, “the works of the devil.”
4. A summary will be made of the overall contribution of the word studies toward understanding the phrase, “the works of the devil.”

#### **4.2.1.1. Ἀπ’ Ἀρχῆς**

As a key aspect of the overall chiasmic climax of 1 John (namely, 3:8-12 as shown in the chiasmic structure chart in the inner texture section), the statement is made that “the devil has been sinning ἀπ’ ἀρχῆς” (3:8a). In fact, the phrase, ἀπ’ ἀρχῆς was seen in the discourse analysis to be the central focus of 1 John 3:8a (lines 8.1-3), with the key words of the sentence arranged in chiasmic order:



B. Because it is stated twice in 1 John 2:13, 14 that the fathers have known, literally, “the from the beginning,” is it possible that this could refer to the fact that they know both Jesus and the devil’s nature? Each is referred to as “from the beginning.” (See 1 John 1:1 which echoes John 1:1.). Seeing 1 John 3:8a in a potential chiasmic relationship to 2:13, 14 lends support to this possibility. The fathers have known about Jesus “from the beginning,” but they have also known about the evil one who has been “sinning from the beginning.” Their knowledge of the evil one is clear in 2:13, 14 which refers not only to the fathers but also to the young men who have overcome the “evil one.” (Possible cultural echoes from the Greco-Roman myths of the strong man Heracles will be explored in the cultural inter-texture section.)

C. The center of this thematic chiasmus has eternal life as its focus. It is interesting to compare this “mini-climax” to the main climax of the book which includes reference to the devil’s “sinning from the beginning,” and which would have brought to the audience’s mind a similar phrase in John 8:44: “your father, the devil ... was a murderer from the beginning.” It has already been pointed out that the works of the devil (1 John 3:8b) are associated with sin and death and this will be confirmed in upcoming word studies. Doing away with those works, then, should result in the qualities opposite to those of the devil being revealed, namely life and righteousness, just as the center of this thematic chiasmus emphasizes.

In addition to the association of the concept of “from the beginning” with “life,” the theme of life is seen again in association with ἀρχῆς in the prologues of both 1 John and the Gospel of John. We can arrive at a further understanding of the nature of the devil’s works through an exploration of the content of what the Johannine community knew “from” or “in” the beginning. The phrase, “in the beginning” in the prologue of the Gospel of John is associated with another chiasm, obviously a favorite memory aid for the writers in the Johannine tradition:

John 1:1, 2

1a	In the <u>beginning</u> was the Word and the Word was <u>with God</u> ,	a
1b	And the Word <b>was</b> God.	c
2	The same was in the <u>beginning with God</u>	a

The center of the chiasm in these verses emphasizes that the Word *was* God. This is part of what the audience of 1 John would have understood when they heard the opening phrase of 1 John, “that which was from the beginning.” What they knew from the beginning

was that the Word was God, that he became flesh and dwelt among us (John 1:1, 14, compare 1 John 1:1-3). The devil, who has been sinning “from the beginning,” did not acknowledge the authority of God and demonstrates hatred instead of love, as Jesus commanded. The devil’s followers are just like him, as is seen from the phrase, “those who do sin are of [like] the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning (1 John 3:8a).”<sup>170</sup>

The fact that the devil’s followers are like him demonstrates his rulership over them. This is explicitly stated in John 12:31, with an occurrence of a variation, and different usage, of the word, ἀρχῆς: “now the ἄρχων of this world is cast out.”<sup>171</sup>

This provides confirmation of the cosmic conflict identified earlier in the chain-link interlock transition of 1 John. A similar transition and theme in the Gospel of John will be explored in the upcoming word study of ὁ διάβολος / τὸν πονηρόν. Not only is the devil being cast out / destroyed in both 1 John 3:8 and John 12:31, but the same root word for primacy (of temporal beginning or of rulership) is used in the climactic verse of each passage. This echo would no doubt have been heard by the original audience, who would also have this chiasmic climax in 3:8 in mind when they heard at the end of 1 John that the whole world lies in the [power of] the evil one (5:19). Could it be possible that the phrase, “the devil has been sinning from the beginning,” is a play on words, with two meanings of ἀρχῆς / ἄρχων in mind:<sup>172</sup> the devil has been sinning from the temporal beginning (ἀρχῆς) of his rulership (ἄρχων) of earth?<sup>173</sup>

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<sup>170</sup> Kysar states that “‘of the devil’ is literally ‘out of the devil’ and denotes origin” (Robert Kysar, *I, II, III John, Augsburg Commentary on the New Testament* [Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1986], 80). However it was pointed out earlier in the discussion of the semantic relations in the discourse analysis of 2:28–3:18, that a pattern associated with the theme of δικαιοσύνην (God’s/the devil’s nature is imitated in the actions and character of their children) leads to the conclusion that in 3:8a the phrase, ἐκ τοῦ διαβόλου ἐστίν, should be interpreted “is like the devil.” This interpretation is supported by Haas et al: “‘is of the devil,’ in the sense of ‘originates from, and has the quality of the devil’” (Haas, DeJonge, and Swellengrebel, *Handbook*, 83.)

<sup>171</sup> Bauer indicates that in addition to different types of temporal beginnings, ἀρχή can also refer to “ruler, authority” (W. A. A. Bauer, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* [trans. and eds. W. F. Arndt and F. W. Gingrich, 2nd ed., rev. and aug.; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979, 112].)

<sup>172</sup> Ling agrees with the possibility that “from the beginning” can mean two things at once. In his case he is thinking of the devil’s sin “in the beginning of history and at the root of the universe” (Trevor Ling, *The Significance of Satan* [London: S.P.C.K. 1961], 31).

<sup>173</sup> It is important to note the similarities between what has just been suggested to Essene and Ebionite thought. Here are “two ways” the Johannine community had to choose between: a prince of this world “from the beginning,” and “that which was from the beginning,” which has been heard, seen, and touched, the Word of life (1 John 1:1), who was Jesus, the Christ, the Holy One of God. The perversion of this truth by the two sects was being set straight by the truth presented in (the liturgy) of 1 John. Neither the Ebionites, a semi-Christian sect, nor the Essenes acknowledged Jesus as the Christ.

This possibility will be explored next, looking at the echo in 1 John 1:1 and John 1:1 of Genesis 1:1, “in the beginning.” A short study of the Hebrew phrases *bereshit* בְּרֵאשִׁית (in the beginning) and *tohu wabohu* תְּהוֹ וַבֹּהוּ (a description the chaotic state of the earth before creation) in Genesis 1:1, 2 will lead to deeper insights into the nature of the devil’s sin from the beginning.<sup>174</sup>

The book of Genesis opens with the word, “beginning” (*reshit* רֵשִׁית plus the prefix *be*). The transliterated Hebrew and a literal translation of Genesis 1:1, 2 read:

*Bereshit bara elohim et hashamayim we’et ha’aretz  
we’ha’aretz*

*hayeta tohu wabohu*

*we’hosek al-pene tehom*

*we’ruach elohim merachepet al-pene hammayim*

בְּרֵאשִׁית בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת הָאָרֶץ

וְהָאָרֶץ

תְּהוֹתָ תְהוֹ וַבֹּהוּ

וַחֲשֵׁךְ עַל־פְּנֵי תְהוֹם

וַרּוּחַ אֱלֹהִים מְרַחֶפֶת עַל־פְּנֵי הַמַּיִם

In (the) beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

And as for the earth,

it was destroyed and desolate (*tohu wabohu*),

with darkness on the face of the deep,

but the Spirit of God stirring over the face of the waters.

(Genesis 1:1, 2; original translation from the Hebrew).

“Beginning” is very appropriate as the first word of the biblical story. It presented a direct challenge to the ancient cyclical worldviews that knew nothing about a beginning and ending to history.<sup>175</sup> In the present author’s understanding of the basic story of Scripture and history that will be explored in the ideological texture section, God’s adversary rebelled

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<sup>174</sup> Westcott comments that because the devil has been sinning from the beginning, “the force of the argument lies in the recognition of the state of things at the first dawn of human history. From the very beginning we see a power in action hostile to God” (Westcott, *Epistles*, 106). Houlden agrees, “The devil is seen as a being who existed before the creation of the world and no doubt our writer knew stories of his fall from angelic status to begin his career as the arch-opponent of God’s good purposes. The beginning refers to the moment of that mysterious, primeval disaster” (James L. Houlden, *A Commentary on the Johannine Epistles* [New York: Harper & Row, 1973], 95). The upcoming study will confirm this insight.

Evangelical scholars Marshall and Kruse, however, make two unexamined assumptions in their discussion of 1 John 3:8a related to the devil’s sin from the beginning. First they assume that human sin is the “beginning” of sin, and secondly they assume without discussion that the serpent represents the devil, which is not stated in Genesis 3 (Marshall, I. Howard. *The Epistles of John* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978], 185; Kruse, *Letters*, 123). Each of them is reading his own theology and ideology into the text without making a case for his position. If a scholar is determined to be anthropocentric in looking to human sin as the definition or goal of the devil’s sin, a better example of what the author of 1 John may have had in mind by “sinning from the beginning” (rather than the serpent tempting Eve), would be that of Cain’s murder of his brother, as Brown indicates in his survey of a number of possibilities of what is meant by the devil’s sin “from the beginning” (Brown, *Epistles*, 156), since a few verses after 1 John 3:8, Cain is mentioned. However, the text clearly states that it is the devil who has been sinning, not just humans. The interpretation of this verse needs to take into account what the people of that time believed about the spirit world. The study of Genesis 1:2 will be a step in that direction.

<sup>175</sup> The apocalyptic end-time expectations built into ancient Judaism, and heightened at the time of the 1<sup>st</sup> century C.E., will be briefly explored in the cultural inter-texture section.

against him at some indefinite time before the relative new “beginning” spoken of in Genesis 1:1.<sup>176</sup> At the time of his rebellion, this adversary (translated “*satan*” in the Septuagint) had responsibility for ruling this world. This position is supported by New Testament understandings of the role of a being that opposes God’s will:<sup>177</sup>

John 12:31: “now the prince of this world will be driven out.”

1 John 5:19: “the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.”

Ephesians 6:12: “our struggle is ... against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.”

Colossians 1:13: “he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves.”

Jude 6: “... angels which kept not their own principality, but left their proper habitation, incurred the wrath of God.”

In addition, Ezekiel 28 shows a fallen cherub’s existence before the beginning, presumed by a number of evangelical commentators to be Satan.<sup>178</sup> “You were the model of

<sup>176</sup> Seeing Genesis 1:1 as a relative new beginning has been explored at length in an unpublished research paper (Beth Snodderly, “A Hermeneutical Analysis of Genesis 1:1, 2” [Research paper, William Carey International University, 2006]). Old Testament evangelical scholars Merrill Unger and Bruce Waltke have both proposed this possibility. See Merrill F. Unger, *Unger’s Commentary on the Old Testament*. Vol 1. (Chicago: Moody Press, 1981), 5; and Bruce K. Waltke, “The Creation Account in Genesis 1:1-3, Part 3: The Initial Chaos Theory and the Pre-creation Chaos Theory,” *BibSac* 132 (1975): 216-28.

<sup>177</sup> In an upcoming word study in this chapter the terminology used in the New Testament and in extra-biblical literature to speak of this adversary/satan will be surveyed.

<sup>178</sup> See. Unger, *Commentary*, 5. This is an ideological issue. Evangelical scholars whose worldview leads them to accept the existence of primeval spirit-beings tend also to accept Ezekiel 28:14-16 as a description of the fall of an originally perfect being due to pride. But Gruenthaner argues that the Hebrew Masoretic text is corrupt, and that the Greek, which has an opposite meaning, is to be preferred: “Instead of ‘Thou wast the Cherub extended and covering, etc.’ (v. 14) we should probably read with the Greek: ‘With the Cherub I placed thee; thou wast on the holy mountain of God.’ In place of, ‘And I destroyed thee, O covering Cherub’ (v. 16), the Greek has the more acceptable reading: ‘And the Cherub destroyed thee from the midst of the stones of fire.’ These variants show that the prince of Tyre is in reality being compared to Adam in paradise. Under these circumstances the passage cannot be used to prove the fall of a Cherub” (“Demonology, *CBQ*, 21). Gruenthaner’s choice is based on his own ideological preference.

J. Stafford Wright attempts to balance the two positions on the identity of the Cherub: “Admittedly the fall of Satan is a deduction from Scripture, but no other deduction is possible if we are to avoid dualism. It is no longer fashionable to apply the words of ... Ezekiel 28:11f. to Satan, yet this interpretation should not be totally abandoned. Some interpreters speak of the language of myth here, yet the myth of a presumptuous and fallen spirit may well be the tradition about Satan. At the very least we must say that the inspired prophets compare the rulers of Babylon and Tyre to some high spirit who rebelled against God in his pride, and they must have believed that there was some basis for their comparison” (J. Stafford Wright, “The Devil and All His Works” *Churchman* 75 [1961]: 161).

In the end, the choice of whether to follow the Hebrew or Greek text, and how to view the identity of the Cherub, are ideological choices. In this study, Ezekiel 28 is taken as supportive of the theory being developed that *tohu wabohu* describes the result of a judgment against evil, which by implication must have been committed or instigated by one or more intelligent beings.

perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. ... You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created until wickedness was found in you. So I drove you in disgrace from the mount of God and I expelled you, O guardian cherub ... Your heart became proud ... and you corrupted your wisdom” (Ezekiel 28:12, 15-17). There seems to be some correspondence between the fallen cherub’s original role and the office of the high priest. Twelve precious stones are listed in this passage in connection with the fallen angelic being’s prior state; nine of these were included in the twelve stones of the high priest’s breastplate described in Exodus 28:17-20, although in differing order. It would seem to be a fair assumption that in a pre-creation state these stones had spiritual significance about the role of the king-like or priest-like angelic being who fell.

In this scenario, from the beginning there has been opposition to God’s intention for creation. The result of God’s judgment against this opposition is described by the phrase in Genesis 1:2, *tohu wabohu* תהו ובהו, destroyed and desolate, or chaotic conditions. A detailed study of the word, *tohu* תהו, shows that in each occurrence in Scripture, the context indicates judgment against something that is the opposite of God’s good intentions for creation. (See the “Word Associations Chart” in Appendix 3.)

Hebraic parallelism and context demonstrate the significance of *tohu wabohu* תהו ובהו in Genesis 1:2:

As for the earth,

- (A) it was *tohu wabohu* תהו ובהו
- (B) with darkness on the face of (the) deep
- (C) but the Spirit of God stirring over the face of the waters.

Lines (B) and (C) are in antithetical relationship to each other. As seen in the Qumran and Johannine literatures, the Spirit of God is the antithesis of darkness. These lines show that God has not left his land or his people totally without His presence, even in the midst of darkness. It could also be argued that lines (A) and (B) stand in synonymous relationship to each other, with “darkness” and “deep” serving as an elaboration of the meaning and connotations of *tohu wabohu* תהו ובהו. Darkness is a common biblical symbol of evil and it is the first thing God corrects in Genesis 1 as he sets about overcoming evil with good (“let there be light”).

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Both the words “darkness/*hosek* חֹשֶׁךְ” and “deep/*tehom* תְּהוֹמוֹם” would no doubt have sent shivers of remembered horror down the spines of the original audience hearing this story from Genesis spoken aloud.<sup>179</sup> The people of Israel would have kept alive in their memories the escape from slavery (societal *tohu wabohu* תְּהוֹמוֹ וְבוֹהוּ) in the land of Egypt where the plague of darkness had helped change Pharaoh’s mind about letting them go. This plague, in turn, was associated with the last plague of the killing of the first-born sons during the night in all the Egyptian households. Shortly after escaping these horrors of darkness and death, the Israelites had escaped from the “deeps” of the feared sea by the Spirit (*ruach* רוּחַ) of God (Exodus 15:10, another allusion to Genesis 1:2) separating the water and making a dry path, followed by the drowning of their enemies. There is no doubt but that the imagery conjured up by the language in the parallelisms of Genesis 1:2 would have meant to those listening to the words and sounds of Genesis 1:1 that the land “at the beginning,” before God started making it livable, was an ominous, hostile place.

The full phrase, *tohu wabohu* תְּהוֹמוֹ וְבוֹהוּ, occurs in only two other passages of Scripture, both demonstrating hostile activity and judgment on conditions that were the opposite of God’s will for creation:

Isa 34:11: A desert landscape is described and judgment against Edom is portrayed with the measuring line of chaos/confusion (*tohu* תְּהוֹמוֹ) and the plumb line of desolation (*bohu* בּוֹהוּ). The opposite of creation and building construction are described as judgment against an evil society.

Jer 4:23: The earth was *tohu wabohu* תְּהוֹמוֹ וְבוֹהוּ. In the context of this passage, the people are skilled at doing evil; they don’t know how to do good; towns are ruined, deserted, without inhabitants. Again, the opposite of creation and building construction are described as judgment against an evil society.

*Tohu wabohu* תְּהוֹמוֹ וְבוֹהוּ — wherever it is found — is not God’s will. In each occurrence of this term it describes a judged and destroyed state of the earth that God wants to see

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<sup>179</sup> For the purposes of this study it is not important to clarify whether this audience consisted of Moses’ followers, recently escaped from Egypt, or the Jewish people in Exile, who would have kept those Exodus stories alive and who would have identified strongly with the symbolism.

corrected. It implies the existence of evil, of opposition to God's will, and chaos.<sup>180</sup> This condition is

found right at the beginning of the Hebrew Bible. "In the beginning," because the land was destroyed and desolate due to God's judgment, according to the scenario being developed here, God began the creation sequence as described in Genesis 1:3ff. This background from the Hebrew Bible is part of the context for the phrase in 1 John 3:8a: "the devil has been sinning from the beginning."<sup>181</sup>

This focus on the devil's sin "from the beginning," has called attention to the fundamental nature of the devil's character. The nature of sin as envisioned in the context of 1 John will be explored in the next word study.

#### 4.2.1.2. Ἄμαρτία

In order to better understand the nature of the devil's sin, it will be necessary to explore the context in 1 John of the word, ἄμαρτία, supplemented with insights from other biblical and extra-biblical texts.

As pointed out in the repetitive-progressive texture chart, most of the occurrences of ἄμαρτία in 1 John are concentrated chiastically in three sections of the book: 1:7–2:2; 3:4-9; and 5:16-18:

1:7; 1:8; 1:9; 1:9; 1:10; 2:1; 2:1; 2:2; 2:12; 3:4; 3:4; 3:5; 3:5; 3:6; 3:6; 3:8; 3:8; 3:9; 3:9; 4:10; 5:16; 5:16; 5:16; 5:16; 5:17; 5:17; 5:18

In the first group the emphasis is on the need for cleansing from sin through the atoning sacrifice of Christ, the Righteous One. In the last group (parallel in the chiastic chart to the first group), ἄμαρτία is defined in 5:17 as ἀδικία (unrighteousness). In these sections, the type of sin in view is associated with the opposite of righteousness, namely, right deeds. In the center group, ἄμαρτία is defined in 3:4 as ἀνομία, often translated "lawlessness," but by some scholars, "iniquity."<sup>182</sup>

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<sup>180</sup> Moeller's comments agree with the findings here: "The arts inspired by the diabolical are characterized by the representation of disorder, of a cosmic chaos" (Charles Moeller, "Introduction," in *Satan* [ed. de Jesus-Marie, Bruno, O.C.D.; New York: Sheed and Ward, 1952], xv).

<sup>181</sup> Ling would like to summarize "the conception of Satan as the representation of human sin" (Ling, *Significance*, 11). But it was not man's sin that caused the original *tohu wabohu* mentioned in Genesis 1:2, since this occurred prior to the account of the creation of man. Similarly, it was not man's sin that caused the serpent to tempt Eve.

<sup>182</sup> de la Potterie and Lyonnet, *Christian*, 42.

Here the definition of sin is intensified through its equation with ἀνομία.

Grundmann, in the *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, gives this definition, “sin is action opposed to the divine ordinance, which corresponds to the right. It is thus ἀνομία and ἀδικία. As ἀδικία it is contradiction of what is right, and therefore of God’s will, so that it is also ἀνομία. It has its origin, therefore, in opposition to God.”<sup>183</sup>

The definition of sin as opposition to God is important for understanding the nature of the works of the devil. The parallelisms found when placing 1 John 3:4, 5 in relation to 3:8a, b (justified by the similarities in wording and themes), reveal that doing τὴν ἀνομίαν is equivalent to being ἐκ τοῦ διαβόλου (“out of” or “like” the devil). The lines to relate to each other in the format A, B, A’, B’:

A Πᾶς ὁ ποιῶν τὴν ἁμαρτίαν καὶ τὴν ἀνομίαν ποιεῖ,  
 B καὶ οἶδατε ὅτι ἐκεῖνος ἐφανερώθη, ἵνα τὰς ἁμαρτίας ἄρη.  
 A’ Ὁ ποιῶν τὴν ἁμαρτίαν ἐκ τοῦ διαβόλου ἐστίν,  
 B’ εἰς τοῦτο ἐφανερώθη ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ, ἵνα λύσῃ τὰ ἔργα τοῦ διαβόλου.

Since “taking away sin” and “destroying the works of the devil” are equivalent according to the second set of parallelisms in these verses, the clear implication is that “doing sin” (3:4) is “doing what the devil does,” in other words, the “works of the devil” (3:8). In the previous word study, it was seen that it is the long-standing nature of the devil to sin and that he has been doing so since the beginning of his rulership of the earth, which is in opposition to God’s will for the earth.

In an earlier study of the chiasmic structure of the book, the type of sin labeled ἀνομία was seen to be parallel with hatred and death, which is the opposite of God’s will for his people to love one another and have eternal life.<sup>184</sup> The central portion of that chart is repeated here for reference:

F Sin as lawlessness, practice of sin, of the devil, works of the devil, 3:4 Πᾶς ὁ ποιῶν τὴν ἁμαρτίαν καὶ τὴν ἀνομίαν ποιεῖ, ἡ ἁμαρτία ἐστίν ἡ ἀνομία [eschatological death]= 3:6b πᾶς ὁ ἁμαρτάνων οὐχ ἑώρακεν αὐτόν οὐδὲ ἔγνωκεν αὐτόν	=	F’ Murder, practice of righteousness, of the evil one, children of the devil 3:15 πᾶς ὁ μισῶν τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ ἀνθρωποκτόνος ἐστίν, οἶδατε ὅτι πᾶς ἀνθρωποκτόνος οὐκ ἔχει ζωὴν αἰώνιον ἐν αὐτῷ μένουσαν.
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<sup>183</sup> Walter Grundman, “ἁμαρτάνω,” *TDNT* 2:306.

<sup>184</sup> Also see the parallel purposes of the writing of the Gospel of John and 1 John in John 20:31 and 1 John 5:13—both confirming eternal life. Another possible inter-textual echo may be seen in John 10:10: “The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy: I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.”

<p>3:8 ὁ ποιῶν τὴν ἁμαρτίαν ἐκ τοῦ διαβόλου ἐστίν, ὅτι ἀπ’ ἀρχῆς ὁ διάβολος ἁμαρτάνει.</p> <p>(the devil’s nature)</p> <p>3:8b εἰς τοῦτο ἐφανερώθη ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ, ἵνα λύσῃ τὰ ἔργα τοῦ διαβόλου.</p>	<p>3:12 = οὐ καθὼς Κάιν = ἐκ τοῦ πονηροῦ ἦν = καὶ ἔσφαξεν τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ [See John 8:44] καὶ χάριν τίνος ἔσφαξεν αὐτον; = ὅτι τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ πονηρὰ ἦν, τὰ δὲ τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ αὐτοῦ δίκαια.</p> <p>3:10b πᾶς ὁ μὴ ποιῶν δικαιοσύνην οὐκ ἐστίν ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ, καὶ ὁ μὴ ἀγαπῶν τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ</p> <p>3:10a ἐν τούτῳ φανερά ἐστίν τὰ τέκνα τοῦ θεοῦ = καὶ τὰ τέκνα τοῦ διαβόλου</p>
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In the above chart, Cain’s example, as a follower of the evil one (3:12), is parallel to 3:8 in which the devil is described as sinning from the beginning. The clear implication is that both are murderers, particularly when the allusion to John 8:44 is recalled (“the devil ... was a murderer from the beginning”). The verse, 1 John 3:4, which describes ἁμαρτία as ἀνομία, appears in the chiasmic chart parallel to the explanation in 3:15 that anyone who hates his brother is a murderer. In the Johannine worldview, if a person doesn’t love someone (which implies helping with physical resources, see 3:16-18), then that person hates the other person (which is equivalent in this chiasmic passage to murder, the destruction of life, whether physically or spiritually).<sup>185</sup> In upcoming word studies in this section and in the

<sup>185</sup> This worldview finds a parallel in the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, in circulation before and during the time of the writing of 1 John. In the *Testament of Gad* 2:5, in the context of telling his children about the twelve brothers’ attempted murder of Joseph, Gad confirms that lawlessness is equivalent to murder: “Thus the God of our fathers delivered [Joseph] from our hands, that we should not work great lawlessness in Israel” (R. H. Charles, trans. *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* [London: Adam and Charles Black, 1908], 151). In another passage, *T. Gad* 4:1, 2, 7, the writer of the Testaments attributes to Gad an understanding that hatred is equivalent to lawlessness, which is equivalent to murder: “Beware, therefore, my children, of hatred; for it worketh lawlessness even against the Lord Himself. For it will not hear the words of his commandments concerning the loving of one’s neighbor and it sinneth against God. ... For the spirit of hatred worketh together with Satan, ... but the spirit of love worketh together with the law of God in long-suffering unto the salvation of men” (Charles, *Testaments*, 152, 153).

The parallels with 1 John are remarkable. Note the connection of hatred with Satan, and love as a “law of God.” In addition, *T. Gad* mentions the “commandment” of loving one’s neighbor as if it were synonymous with the “law of God.” In 1 John there are two commands, or laws, one of which is to love one another (3:23). If the terms “command” and “law” can be considered interchangeable for the purposes of interpreting 1 John, the older view of ἀνομία (as “lawlessness”) could still be seen as a legitimate interpretation, even though 1 John does not have a legal context such as is found in Paul’s letters. Ἀνομία would then refer to breaking God’s commands, transgressing God’s will, as expressed by the two Johannine commands: believe and love (1 John 3:23). Breaking those commands results in spiritual death in the first case (“he who does not have the Son of God does not have life, 1 John 5:12) and physical death (hate = murder) in the second case.

This argument runs counter to de la Potterie who claims, “the idea of the transgression of a law, common in classical times, is here completely absent from the term; we have seen no passage where the words

section of this chapter on ideological texture, the possibility will be explored that the early Johannine Christians in Asia Minor may have perceived one aspect of the devil's sin, and his works, in his opposition to God's will for the earth, as the instigation of conditions causing disease and other physical aberrations that keep humans from experiencing God's will for his people.

Through multiple approaches to the text, the phrase under investigation, "the works of the devil," is gradually being mined for its depth of meaning. Because of the closely intertwined use of terms in 1 John, it is an artificial, even if temporary, separation to consider each word separately. From the reference to the fact that sin is both *ἀνομία* and *ἀδικία*, it can be seen that in order to fully understand the meaning of *ἁμαρτίαν*, the concept of "righteousness" will also need to be explored. The word *ἐφανερώθη* also needs explanation, especially in the context of *ἀνομία*, both of which are eschatological terms. De la Potterie says of *ἀνομία* that it is "essentially an eschatological term that designates the hostility and revolt of the forces of evil against the kingdom of God in the last days of the world; such hostility is characterized by its satanic aspect, by the control that is exercised by the devil."<sup>186</sup> For the author of 1 John, the community was living in the "last hour" in which many antichrists were attempting to deceive the believers (2:18, 26). The appearing of the Son of God was eagerly expected, one result of which would be to take away sin and destroy the works of the devil, thus restoring God's will on earth, characterized by righteousness and love.

A passage from one of the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* confirms this expectation among 1<sup>st</sup> century believers. Note the similar (bold) terms from this passage that are in common with 1 John, as discussed above:

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iniquity and law belong to the same context" (de la Potterie and Lyonnet, *Christian*, 45). This is an odd statement from a scholar who has just shown his familiarity with the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* by quoting from the *Testament of Dan* a few pages earlier. It could be expected that de la Potterie would also be familiar with the passage in *T. Gad* 4:1, 2, 7 where the terms "lawlessness" (*ἀνομία*, translated "iniquity" by de la Potterie), "commandment" and "law of God" are all found. Also see Smalley who backs away from viewing *ἀνομία* as "lawlessness" (Stephen S. Smalley, *1, 2, 3 John*. Vol. 51 of *Word Biblical Commentary*. [Waco: Word Books, 1984], 155).

But viewing "law" and "command" as synonyms for the purposes of interpreting *ἀνομία* in 1 John agrees with Louw and Nida who define *ἁμαρτάνω / ἁμαρτία* as, "to act contrary to the will and law of God; to sin, to engage in wrongdoing, sin" (Johannes, P. Louw and Eugene A. Nida, eds., *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains* [New York: United Bible Societies, 1988], 773.

<sup>186</sup> de la Potterie, *Christian*, 42.

And it shall be in the time of the **lawlessness** of Israel, that the Lord will (not) depart from them, but will transform them into a nation that **doeth His will**. ... Keep, therefore, yourselves, my children, from every **evil work**. ... Depart, therefore, from all **unrighteousness**, and cleave unto the **righteousness** of God, and your race will be saved for ever (*T. Dan* 6:6, 8, 10).<sup>187</sup>

The righteousness of God is the topic of the next word study, to be followed by an exploration of the Righteous One's "appearing" and truths "manifested" in the pericope 2:28–3:10.

#### 4.2.1.3. Δικαιοσύνην

The theme of δικαιοσύνην in 1 John is concentrated in the first of the pericopes under consideration in the inner texture section: 1:9; 1:9; 2:1; 2:29; 2:29; 3:7; 3:7; 3:7; 3:10; 3:12; 5:17

In discussing the first and third concentrations of the theme of ἁμαρτία, as shown in the repetitive-progressive texture chart, it was mentioned that these are in a chiasmic relationship and are both associated with the opposite of righteousness, ἀδικία (see 1:9 and 5:17). The repetitive-progressive texture chart also reveals that the second concentration of the theme of ἁμαρτία, in the central pericope of 2:28–3:10, is matched by a concentration of the positive theme of δικαιοσύνην. These associations in 1 John indicate that sin, intensified by its identification with ἀνομία ("the iniquity" or "the lawlessness"), is the opposite of God's righteous character.

The emphasis in the central section of 1 John is on demonstrating that God's righteous character (δίκαιός ἐστιν, 2:29 and 3:7) is revealed in the works his children do (ὁ ποιῶν τὴν δικαιοσύνην δίκαιός ἐστιν, καθὼς ἐκεῖνος δίκαιός ἐστιν, 3:7). This was also highlighted in the analysis of semantic relations in the discourse analysis section of the inner texture discussion. As pointed out by Schrenk in the *Theological Word Dictionary of the New Testament*, δικαιοσύνην in the non-Pauline writings of the New Testament "is almost always used ... for the right conduct of man which follows the will of God and is pleasing to

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<sup>187</sup> R. H. Charles, trans., *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1908), 133-34.

him.”<sup>188</sup> This is seen in the following representative overview, from a concordance study, of the non-Pauline uses of δικαιοσύνην in the New Testament:

Matthew 3:15: Jesus insisted on baptism to fulfill “all righteousness,” indicating his desire to please God and do his will.

Matthew 5:10: Those who are persecuted for “righteousness’ sake” receive the kingdom of heaven, in the same context with those who see God because of their pure hearts.

Luke 1:75: Zechariah prophesied concerning God’s salvation that would enable his people to serve him “in holiness and righteousness.”

John 16:8-11: “When he [the Spirit of truth] comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment: In regard to ἀμαρτίας, because men do not believe in me, ... in regard to δικαιοσύνην, because I am going to the Father, ... and in regard to κρίσεως (judgment), because the ruler (ἄρχον) of this world now stands condemned.” Here several themes from Isaiah 5:7 (LXX) are echoed (see below), showing the contrast between sin and righteousness and the need to be able to judge between them so as to avoid being under the dominion of the ruler of this world.

Acts 10:35: [God] accepts men from every nation who fear him and ἐργαόμενος δικαιοσύνην (do works of righteousness). Righteousness is associated with a right relationship with God in this and the other non-Pauline passages where δικαιοσύνην is found.

Hebrews 12:11, 14: Discipline ... produces a harvest of δικαιοσύνην and peace for those who have been trained by it. ... Make every effort to live in peace with all men and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord.

James 3:18: Peacemakers who sow in peace raise a harvest of δικαιοσύνην. The “harvest” in this and the preceding passage allude to the end of the age when Jesus will be revealed.

Revelation 22:11: Let him who does wrong (ὁ ἀδικῶν) continue to do wrong; ... let him who does right (ὁ δίκαιός) continue to do right (δικαιοσύνην ποιησάτω). In this context at the end of the New Testament, and the end of the age, it is now too late for people to change their orientation. They have already chosen between the two options and

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<sup>188</sup> Gottlob Schrenk, “Δικαιοσύνην,” *TDNT* 2:198.

will have to experience the consequences of their choice of doing ἀδικία or doing δικαιοσύνην.

Schrenk finds that a “basic relationship to God is always in view” in the non-Pauline δικαιοσύνην passages and states that this links it firmly with the Hebrew Bible.<sup>189</sup> An example of this link to the Hebrew Bible is seen in Isaiah 5:7, which demonstrates that in the Septuagint, δικαιοσύνην is the opposite of ἀνομία. In this passage, God had planted a vineyard, representative of his people, Israel. He expected it to ποιῆσαι κρίσιν (do justice), and instead ἐποίησεν δὲ ἀνομίαν (it did lawlessness/iniquity) and not δικαιοσύνην.

This stark choice between doing sin or doing righteousness is continued after the Hebrew Bible writings in the Qumran Literature (1QS is the abbreviation for the first Qumran Scroll, or *Manual of Discipline*). As in 1 John, there is a “champion” for each choice. In 1 John Jesus Christ is the Righteous One, associated with light (1:7) while the devil is the lawless, sinful and evil one, associated with darkness (1:6). The Qumran scrolls have similar terminology: “In the hand of the Prince of Lights is the dominion of all sons of righteousness: in the ways of light they will walk. In the hand of the Angel of Darkness is all the dominion of the sons of perversity and in the ways of darkness they will walk” (1QS III, 20, 21). The sons of righteousness are encouraged to trust “in all the deeds of God” (1QS IV, 4), which will result in “healing, abundance of peace with length of days, ... joy in eternity with everlasting life” (1QS IV, 6, 7). In the antithetical worldview of the Qumran and Johannine communities, the qualities associated with the deeds or works of God would automatically be seen as the exact opposite of the works of the devil. This will be further explored in the word study on τὰ ἔργα τοῦ διαβόλου.

At the same time as the Qumran community was developing its understanding of righteousness vs. sin, other Jewish believers were writing the memoirs of the Twelve Patriarchs, looking back from the experience of the Exile. It is likely that Christian believers later added interpolations into these *Testaments*, which gives further evidence of the way early followers of Jesus understood their faith.<sup>190</sup> In the *Testament of Levi* (13:5) is a potential echo of the Qumran Scroll’s association of healing with righteousness. “Work righteousness, therefore, my children, upon the earth, that ye may have (it) as a treasure in

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<sup>189</sup> Schrenk, *TDNT* 2:195.

<sup>190</sup> Charles, *Testaments*, 55.

heaven.” In a footnote the editor notes that in some manuscripts, instead of the reading, “have it as a treasure,” the word ὑγιαόμενοι is found (“may be healed, made sound”),<sup>191</sup> resulting in the reading, “Work righteousness, ... that ye may be healed.” The elder in 3 John also wished for his children ὑγιάνειν (to be in good health, often used in the Septuagint to translate the Hebrew, *shalom*). In 3 John 2 the term is associated with walking in the truth, interchangeable in the Qumran scrolls with righteousness.

In *T. Levi* 17:9-13 the patriarch again demonstrated his awareness of the fact that righteousness, associated with healing, will reign when sin is done away with:

9. And the lawless shall cease to do evil  
And the just shall rest in him.
10. And he shall open the gates of paradise,  
And shall remove the threatening sword against Adam.
11. And he shall give to the saints to eat from the tree of life,  
And the spirit of holiness shall be on them.
12. And Beliar shall be bound by him,  
And he shall give power to His children to tread upon the evil spirits.
13. And the Lord shall rejoice in his children,  
And be well pleased in His beloved ones for ever.

Charles adds this footnote to the above passage: “the righteous will eat thereof and enjoy a long life on earth. 1 *Enoch* Xxvi. 5, 6. This fruit fills and heals the righteous, 4 *Ezra* vii.123. Cf. Rev. 22:2.”<sup>192</sup>

This association of healing with the practice of righteousness and truth is important for an understanding of what the author and audience of 1 John would have meant by the opposite of righteousness, namely sin and the “works of the devil.” This study has shown that the Johannine use of righteousness in 2:28–3:10 is in harmony with that of the Hebrew Bible, the Qumran literature, and the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*.

In these words studies answers are being sought to questions such as: What does it meant to do righteousness? What does it mean to do sin? What is the nature of the “sin” that is the work of the devil? What was the devil’s sin from the beginning?

These inter-textual word studies are making it clear that sin is the opposite of God’s will, which includes more than simply good behavior by humans. Health and well-being are also God’s will for his people according to the ancient Jewish writings. The opposite of

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<sup>191</sup> Charles, *Testaments*, 52.

<sup>192</sup> Charles, *Testaments*, 66.

God's creational order and the destruction of the orderliness of human building constructions are descriptions of the consequences of evil, as seen in the study of the Hebrew phrase, *tohu wabohu* תהו ובהו. If the devil's work is to oppose God's work, which includes God's creational order,<sup>193</sup> then the devil's sin potentially encompasses more than just "human sin," which is what many commentators have settled for.<sup>194</sup> In the antithetical worldview of the Johannine and Qumran communities it would have been expected that the works of the devil would need to be destroyed, nullified, or reversed in order for God's will, as expressed by the term, righteousness (the antithesis of the works of the devil), to be revealed.<sup>195</sup>

The appearing of the Son of God for the purpose of destroying the devil's works, and the associated truths that are made apparent in the central pericope of 1 John, will be the focus of the next word study.

#### 4.2.1.4. Φανερώω

As with the theme of δικαιοσύνην, this theme is concentrated in the first of the pericopes featured in this study: 1:2; 1:2; 2:19; 2:28; 3:2; 3:2; 3:5; 3:8; 3:10; 4:9.

In these inter-textual word studies it has been pointed out that in the worldview of the author of 1 John, the devil has been sinning since the beginning of his rulership over the earth and that this sin is fundamentally opposition to God's will. God's will is characterized by righteousness, life, and love according to major themes in 1 John. In the discourse analysis of 1 John 2:28 – 3:18, of the themes φανερώω and δικαιοσύνην, a pattern was seen that the Son of God appeared with the intention of establishing God's nature in His children.<sup>196</sup> The same pattern will be seen in two inter-textual studies below: one from the Qumran literature and one from the Gospel of John. These will then be compared to the passages in 1 John in which the occurrences of the term φανερώω<sup>197</sup> are used in relationship to characteristics of the Son of God and the characteristics of the children of God.

<sup>193</sup> See more on the works of God in the upcoming word study on ἔργα.

<sup>194</sup> See the discussion of this topic in chapter 1, section 1.3.2.

<sup>195</sup> See the upcoming word study on λύω for the implications of the ways this term can be translated.

<sup>196</sup> These themes are concentrated in the central pericope, 2:28-3:10, as shown in the highlighted list above.

<sup>197</sup> According to Bauer, φανερώω has to do with making something known (this applies to 1 John 3:10); while in the passive voice it refers to something becoming visible or known, revealed (1 John 4:9), or to show or reveal oneself, to be revealed, to appear (1 John 3:5, 8) (W. A. Bauer, *BDAG*, 852-53). Bultmann and Luhrmann point out the association of this word with ἀποκαλύπτω in examples before and outside the New Testament (*TDNT* 9:75), an eschatological insight that will be further developed in this section. In the related word, φαίνω,

A passage in the Qumran's *Manual of Discipline* (1QS) gives a sense of the apocalyptic environment in which the "appearing" (or "visitation" as in 1QS) of the Son of God, and other revelations, was being heard by the audience of 1 John. As was pointed out earlier, for the author of 1 John, the community was living in the eschatological "last hour" (2:18, 26). The appearing of the Son of God in this setting would be to take away sin (3:5) and to once and for all destroy the works of the devil (3:8b), thus restoring God's will on earth, characterized by righteousness and love.<sup>198</sup> This expectation is also clear in 1QS IV, 15-25, diagrammed below in a characteristically Hebraic chiastic format, original to this study, to highlight the central apocalyptic climax which is parallel to the expectations at the center of 1 John: the appearance, or visitation, of one who will do away with what is evil or wicked.

#### Truth and Injustice Struggle: 1QS IV, 15-25 in Chiastic Structure<sup>199</sup>

##### A. Mixture of good and evil:

15 The nature of all the children of men is ruled by these two spirits, and during their life all the hosts of men have a portion of their divisions and walk in both their ways. 16a And the whole *reward for their deeds shall be, for everlasting ages*, according to whether each man's portion in their two divisions is great or small.

##### A'. Mixture of good and evil:

24 and they walk in both wisdom and folly. According to his portion of truth, so does a man hate injustice, and according to his inheritance in the realm of injustice so is he wicked and so 25 hates truth. For God has established the two spirits in equal measure until the determined end, and until the Renewal, and He knows the *reward of their deeds from all eternity*.

##### B. Strife between the spirits

16b For God has established the spirits in equal measure until the final age, 17 and has set everlasting hatred between their divisions.

##### B'. Strife between the spirits

23c Until now the spirits of truth and injustice struggle in the hearts of men.

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"I shine," the connotation of light is present, as in John 1:5 (the light in the darkness φαίνει) and 1 John 2:8 ("the darkness is passing and the true light is already φαίνει) (Bultmann and Luhrmann, *TDNT*, 73).

<sup>198</sup> Three parallel statements about the purpose of the appearing of the Son of God are found in 1 John:

1. That one (the Son of God) appeared to take away sins (ἐκεῖνος ἐφανερώθη, ἵνα τὰς ἀμαρτίας ἄρῃ, 3:5)

2. The Son of God appeared to destroy the works of the devil (εἰς τοῦτο ἐφανερώθη ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ, ἵνα λύσῃ τὰ ἔργα τοῦ διαβόλου, 3:8)

3. The Son was sent to demonstrate love so we could have life (ἐν τούτῳ ἐφανερώθη ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν ἡμῖν, ὅτι τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ τὸν μονογενῆ ἀπέσταλκεν ὁ θεὸς εἰς τὸν κόσμον ἵνα ζήσωμεν δι' αὐτοῦ 4:9)

These are three ways of saying the same thing. Sin, "the works of the devil," and death (the opposite of life) are all contrary to God's will, in the Johannine worldview, and need to be destroyed, eliminated, eradicated or nullified. In later studies the role of the unique Son of God in this regard will be compared with the possibility that the other children of God were also expected to contribute toward destroying the works of the devil.

<sup>199</sup> This passage from the Qumran literature is from Geza, Vermes, ed., *The Dead Sea Scrolls in English* (London: Penguin Books, 1995).

Truth abhors the works of injustice, and injustice hates all the ways of truth. 18a And their struggle is fierce in all their arguments for they do not walk together.

**C. Final destruction of evil and results**

18b But in the mysteries of His understanding, glorious wisdom, God has ordained an end for injustice, and at the time 19a of the **visitation** he will destroy it for ever.

19b Then truth, which has wallowed in the ways of wickedness during the *dominion of injustice* until 20a the appointed time of judgment, shall arise in the world for ever.

**C'. Final destruction of evil and results**

22b For God has chosen them for an ever-lasting Covenant 23a and all the glory of Adam shall be theirs. 23b There shall be no more lies and all the *works of injustice shall be put to shame*.

**D. Means of the destruction of “the works of the devil”:**

20b God will then **purify** every deed of man with His truth. 20c He will **refine** for Himself the human frame by rooting out all spirit of injustice from the bounds of 21 his flesh. He will **cleanse** him of all wicked deeds with the spirit of holiness; **like purifying waters he will shed upon him the spirit of truth** (to cleanse him) of all abomination and injustice. 22a And he shall be **plunged into the spirit of purification** that he may instruct the upright in the knowledge of the Most High and teach the wisdom of the sons of heaven to the perfect of way.

The following emphases are found in the sections of this chiastic arrangement:

- A. Two spirits; two ways in which people walk (truth or injustice), everlasting reward for their deeds (or works)
- B. Spirits of truth and injustice, struggle between these spirits.
- C. Visitation brings an end to injustice and lies; the works of injustice will be destroyed and put to shame; an emphasis on the unending time period envisioned.
- D. Injustice, wicked deeds and abominations are done away with through the purifying and cleansing activity of the spirit of truth.

This passage shows that the visitation of God, in the Qumran doctrine, will result in righteousness (justice), truth, and holiness, and the absence of injustice, lies and wickedness. The visitation (or appearing) of God at the end of the age results in the “sons of heaven” experiencing the positive qualities associated with the spirit of truth and an increase in their knowledge of the Most High. In 1 John, however, the end of the age is already being experienced. God has already visited his people in the form of his Son and the benefits of the end of the age are already beginning to be experienced,<sup>200</sup> including God’s children being like him, even while the cosmic battle continues.

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<sup>200</sup> Expectations similar to both the Qumran and Johannine traditions are recorded in Ignatius’ letter to the Ephesians in 19:3: “Consequently all magic and every kind of spell were dissolved, the ignorance so characteristic of wickedness vanished, and the ancient kingdom was abolished when God appeared in human form to bring the newness of eternal life, and what had been prepared by God began to take effect.”

One depiction of the cosmic battle in the Johannine literature is the conflict between darkness and light, a common theme in both the Qumran and Johannine literature, that is directly connected with the theme of φανερόω.<sup>201</sup> The related word, φαίνω, “I shine,” carries the connotation of light, as in John 1:5 (“the light in the darkness φαίνει”) and 1 John 2:8 (“the darkness is passing and the true light is already φαίνει”). The appearing of the Son of God that is being investigated in 1 John 3:8 includes the quality of light as part of God’s and his Son’s nature: “God is light; in him there is no darkness at all” (1 John 1:5), and as Jesus’ said of himself, “I am the light of the world” (John 9:5). When the light shines (φαίνει) in the darkness, the darkness is not able to overcome it (John 1:5). Instead, the light, when it has appeared (ἐφανερώθη) causes the works of the devil to *dis*-appear, or to be nullified, destroyed. This insight will be revisited in the upcoming word study on λύειν, “to destroy” (the “works of the devil”).

A study of representative passages of φανερόω in the Gospel of John shows that the appearing of the Son of God results in characteristics that are the opposite of those associated with the sin of the devil: righteousness (1:29: taking away the sin of the world), truth, and increased knowledge of God and his glory (2:11; 17:6, 7) which is parallel to the expectations in the chiastic center of 1QS IV, 15-25. Examples of uses of φανερόω in the Gospel of John:

1:29, 31 John saw Jesus ... and said, “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! ... the reason I came baptizing with water that he might be revealed to Israel.

2:11 Jesus revealed his glory; and his disciples put their faith in him.

3:21 Whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what he has done has been done through God.

9:3 [The man was born blind] so that the work of God might be revealed in him.

17:6, 7 In Jesus’ prayer to the Father he said, “I have revealed you to those whom you gave me out of the world... now they know that everything you have given me comes from you.”

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<sup>201</sup> While the passage above from the Qumran literature does not refer to the contrasts between light and dark, the immediately preceding passages do, along with numerous others. 1QS III, 19-21 is representative: “In a dwelling of light are the generations of truth and from a well of darkness come the generations of perversity. In the hand of the Prince of Lights is the dominion of all sons of righteousness: in the ways of light they will walk. In the hand of the Angel of Darkness is all the dominion of the sons of perversity and in the ways of darkness they will walk.”

In the Gospel of John, a beginning level of knowledge of God is revealed to the disciples. Through his baptism and miracles, the disciples know Jesus came to take away sin and that God's work is creative and restorative (water is turned to wine, the blind man becomes able to see). This knowledge is expanded in 1 John to include the awareness that the children of God can be like the unique Son of God (1 John 3:2). The following occurrences of  $\phi\alpha\nu\epsilon\rho\acute{\omega}$  in 1 John show the characteristics of the Son of God, the characteristics of the children of God, and the purposes of the coming of the Son of God:

2:28: Abide in him, that when he shall appear, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before him at his coming.

3:2 It does not yet appear what we shall be... when he shall appear, we shall be like him.

3:5 He was manifested to take away our sins.

3:8 The Son of God was manifested that he might destroy the works of the devil.

3:10 In this the children of God and the children of the devil are revealed (according to the criteria of righteousness and love)

4:9 In this was manifested the love of God toward us (God sent his only Son into the world that we might live through him).

In the three sets of texts compared here, from the Qumran literature, the Gospel of John, and 1 John, the common theme is that the appearing or visitation of God results in His nature being experienced by those to whom He is revealed.<sup>202</sup> In 1 John the concept is most developed, that those who are known as God's children can expect to participate in His character (3:2, 10).

God's character includes his life-giving nature. The following comparison of parallel uses of the term  $\phi\alpha\nu\epsilon\rho\acute{\omega}$  in 1 John 3:8 and 4:9 shows that the ultimate purpose of Jesus' appearing is to give life to the children of God, replacing death that is a work of the devil in the present age.

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<sup>202</sup> In order for God's nature to be experienced, anything deceiving or confusing a person, that prevents them from choosing to have fellowship with God, must be cleared out of the way, as in 1 John 3:7: "let no one deceive you." This is part of what the author of 1 John refers to when he says the purpose of Jesus' appearing was to destroy the "works of the devil." Culpepper remarks that, "for John, ... the destruction of the devil's work comes not by exorcisms, as in the Synoptic Gospels, but by Jesus' revelation of the Father, and that supremely in his death and exaltation" (R. Alan Culpepper, *The Gospel and Letters of John* [Nashville: Abingdon, 1998], 61, 62).

4:9 The love of God (A) was **manifested** by sending the Son (B) so we could live (C)

ἐν τούτῳ ἐφανερώθη

A ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν ἡμῖν,

B ὅτι τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ τὸν μονογενῆ ἀπέσταλκεν ὁ θεὸς

C εἰς τὸν κόσμον ἵνα ζήσωμεν δι' αὐτοῦ.

3:8 The Son of God (B) was **manifested** to destroy works of devil (D)

εἰς τοῦτο ἐφανερώθη

B ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ,

D ἵνα λύσῃ τὰ ἔργα τοῦ διαβόλου.

#### Analysis:

Themes A, B, and C are compatible, all of one purpose

A = B = C (= indicates compatibility, all of one purpose)

But B is opposed to D (and vice versa)

B ≠ D (≠ indicates “opposite of,” or “opposed to”)

Therefore

C ≠ D (which means life is the opposite of the works of the devil, which is equivalent to saying that death *is* the work of the devil).

Sin, the works of the devil and death (the opposite of life) are all equivalent ways of describing that which is against God's will and contrary to his nature. All, according to the worldview of the Johannine community, need to be destroyed, eliminated, eradicated. Those who abide in God / the Son and in whom God / the Son abide have life, which is the opposite of death, and which is also the opposite of the works of the devil. Once again, through an independent exegetical route, it can be seen that the works of the devil are closely connected with death.<sup>203</sup> In the ideological and theological texture discussions, the implications of this will be elaborated, resulting in a proposed theology of the works of the devil that will include disease, which is death at the cellular and bodily level.

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<sup>203</sup> In addition, Langton points out significant confirmation in extra-biblical literature: “The Book of Wisdom ... states that ‘by the envy of the devil death entered into the world’ (2:24). Whether the reference is to the seduction of Eve by the serpent, or to the murder of Abel by Cain, the power of inflicting death is ascribed to the Devil” (Edward Langton, *Satan, A Portrait* [London: Skeffington & Son, 1945], 37).

Before engaging in the word study on ἔργα (both of the devil and of God), which will synthesize many of the findings of the research to this point, the question needs to be addressed as to who or what is the devil whose works are being investigated in this study. A short summary will be given of the terms in 1<sup>st</sup> century C.E. writings that refer to the devil, the adversary and antithesis of who God is.

#### 4.2.1.5. Ὁ διάβολος

The term, ὁ διάβολος occurs only in the first of the two pericopes under consideration in this thesis: 3:8; 3:8; 3:8; 3:10. A related term, τὸν πονηρόν (evil one), is found in earlier and later sections of the epistle: 2:13; 2:14; 3:12; 3:12; 5:18; 5:19;

Who is the devil? Before undertaking a study of the “works of the devil,” a brief overview will be given of the Hebrew Bible background upon which the New Testament writers built their understanding of “the devil.” Following this survey, the question will be addressed through an inter-textual study of six terms used in the New Testament and extra-biblical literature in circulation during the 1st century C.E., that are roughly synonymous with ὁ διάβολος. Finally, a comparison will be made between the Gospel of John and 1 John of two terms used for the evil one in similar rhetorical settings, namely, chain-link interlock transitions.

#### A. Hebrew Bible Background

Commentators often note a progression from the Hebrew Bible’s understanding of a “satan,” as one among many spirit beings, to Jesus’ portrayal of Satan that showed a coalescence of evil in one personified entity.<sup>204</sup> The following summary combines insights from Kelly, Russell and Gruenthaner in their writings on the history of Satan. From the surrounding cultures, the Hebrews would have been familiar with “nature-demons” as Russell calls the “personifications of single evils, such as pestilence, plague, and famine.”<sup>205</sup> With the teaching of Genesis 3 on the Serpent, Gruenthaner points out, we can logically conclude “that an evil, superhuman being exists intent upon the physical and spiritual ruin of mankind.”<sup>206</sup>

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<sup>204</sup> See, for example, Trevor Ling, *The Significance of Satan* (London: S.P.C.K. 1961), 11, 17, 54; Jeffrey Burton Russell, *The Devil: Perceptions of Evil from Antiquity to Primitive Christianity* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977), 180, 228; Henry Ansgar Kelly, *Satan: A Biography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 58; J. Stafford Wright, “The Devil and All His Works,” *Churchman* 75 (1961): 162.

<sup>205</sup> Russell, *Devil*, 215.

<sup>206</sup> Michael Gruenthaner, “The Demonology of the Old Testament,” *CBQ* 6 (1944): 15.

But in Numbers 22 an “Angel of Yahweh” is called a “satan,” an adversary against Balaam. So the term is not yet used consistently to refer to an evil being at this point in the Hebrew Bible. In 1 Kings 22:21-23, the account of lying spirits among the prophets leads Gruenthaner to state that it is evident that “the Hebrews believed in evil spirits and that these acted only with divine permission.”<sup>207</sup> This is true in the story of Job as well, when “the Satan,” as the Greek translators of the Hebrew Bible termed him, has to have God’s permission before he can touch Job physically.<sup>208</sup> Russell sees Satan in the book of Job “as the personification of the destructive power of the God.”<sup>209</sup>

The confusion arising when a good God is considered to be the source of destructive events is wrestled with by the Hebrew authors of 1 Chronicles and 2 Samuel. In each of these books, an account of David being incited to take a census are given, but in the earlier account in 2 Samuel 24:1, the author felt it was God who incited David. At a later time, the same event is described in 1 Chronicles 21:1, but now it is “Satan” (whom Kelly suggests could have been a man with the proper name of Satan<sup>210</sup>) that incites David to take a census. Could it be that the people of Israel were growing in their awareness that while God allowed bad things to happen, it was an opponent to God’s people who was the agent of evil? Finally, the last glimpse of a Satan in the Hebrew Bible, in Zechariah 3, is similar to that in Job. In both cases “the Satan” appears before God to accuse God’s people to him, indicating awareness of a particular being, not just one among many adversaries. The choice of the Greek translators of the Septuagint to use ὁ διάβολος in these two places, but not others, for the Hebrew, “satan” (adversary) is what Kelly finds to be “the birth of Satan.”<sup>211</sup> In this they showed “a belief that one of God’s Angels not only acted as a satan, but was actually named Satan, which they rendered in Greek as ὁ διάβολος, Devil, in the Books of Job and Zechariah. We have thus witnessed the Birth of Satan.”<sup>212</sup>

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<sup>207</sup> Gruenthaner, “Demonology,” *CBQ*, 16.

<sup>208</sup> Could it be possible that the author of 1 John had Job 1:12 in mind in 1 John 5:18, when speaking of those born of God, “we know that ... the one who was born of God keeps him safe, and the evil one does not touch him”?

<sup>209</sup> Russell, *Devil*, 200.

<sup>210</sup> Kelly, *Satan*, 31.

<sup>211</sup> Kelly, *Satan*, 31.

## B. Inter-textual Study of Five Terms Referring to “the Devil”

During the inter-testamental era there was time for an understanding of the nature of Satan, or “the devil,” as the Septuagint sometimes translated “satan,” to grow and coalesce. By the time of the New Testament there were a number of terms used to describe a specific evil<sup>213</sup> being.<sup>214</sup> Here, five of those terms will be examined that are used in New Testament and extra-biblical literature to refer to ὁ διάβολος:

Τὸν πονηρόν (evil one)

Ὁ διάβολος (devil)

Σατανᾶς (Satan)

Ὁ ἄρχων (ruler)

Βελιάρ (from the Hebrew, *beliya'al*, “worthlessness,” which becomes at Qumran and in the New Testament a technical name for the devil, “Belial, or “beliar”)<sup>215</sup>

The chart, “Terms for the Evil One,” in Appendix 4, shows occurrences of each of these terms, with phrases of text, within the following writings:<sup>216</sup>

1 John

Gospel of John

New Testament books in general

<sup>212</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>213</sup> While Kelly specifically seeks to avoid “the prejudicial term, ‘the Evil One’ in referring to the devil or Satan (Kelly, *Satan*, 125), he has not taken into account what might be thought of as a “Rosetta Stone” in the parallel Synoptic accounts of the parable of the sower. In each account, the one taking away the seed sown along the path has a different name, indicating that these are most likely equivalent terms for the same ill-intentioned being:

Matt 13:19: When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, τὸν πονηρόν, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is the seed sown along the path.

Mark 4:14: Some people are like seed along the path, where the word is sown. As soon as they hear it, Satan comes and takes away the word that was sown in them.

Luke 8:12: Those along the path are the ones who hear, and then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, so that they cannot believe and be saved.

<sup>214</sup> This discussion follows Arnold in his conclusion: “The religions-historical parallels would support the conception of actual evil beings ... as opposed to ... an evil atmosphere consisting of abstract ideas such as attitudes, peer pressure, licence, etc. Such a view appears to be more of a Western imposition onto the text” (Clinton E. Arnold, *Ephesians: Power and Magic; The Concept of Power in Ephesians in Light of Its Historical Setting* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992], 61. This conclusion seems warranted by the repeated reference to this entity using terminology of personhood, intention, and activity (“works”).

<sup>215</sup> Brown, *Epistles*, 400.

### *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*

#### Three of the Early Church Fathers (Papias, Polycarp, Ignatius)

Following a summary of the use of each of the five terms in each of the categories of writings, the findings will be synthesized in a combined description of the characteristics of the evil one. This section will then conclude with a look at how two of the terms referring to the devil are used as interpretive lenses at the center of chain-link interlock transitions of 1 John and the Gospel of John—the ruler of this world (ὁ ἄρχων τοῦ κόσμου τούτου) in the Gospel and ὁ διάβολος in 1 John. This will lead directly into the next word study on the works of the devil.

#### 1). Τὸν πονηρόν

Each group of writings has its own distinctive preferred way to refer to the one whose characteristics and actions are the opposite of those of God.<sup>217</sup> In 1 John this being is most often referred to as τὸν πονηρόν, “the evil one.” The struggle between τὸν πονηρόν and humans is clear.<sup>218</sup> The evil one has to be overcome (2:13, 14)<sup>219</sup> and those who belong to God need protection from this one who has control over the whole world (5:18, 19). In the Gospel of John this need for protection is also in view as Jesus prays that his disciples will be protected from τὸν πονηρόν. These themes are seen in other parts of the New Testament as well: Jesus’ followers need to pray to be rescued or guarded from the evil one (Matthew 6:13; 2 Thess. 3:3) and believers need to use God’s armor to protect themselves from the flaming arrows of the evil one (Ephesians 6:16). Clearly the characteristics associated with τὸν πονηρόν are those of active aggression with intent to harm and destroy.<sup>220</sup>

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<sup>216</sup> It is not within the scope of this research to present a comprehensive survey of the uses of these terms in the extra-biblical literature. Those cited are representative of these works. This chart will also be a reference source for discussion of the word studies on “works of the devil.”

<sup>217</sup> Foerster states that one of the “two distinctive features in the NT view of Satan [is] the absolute antithesis between God and Satan” (Foerster, “διάβολος,” *TDNT*, 2:79).

<sup>218</sup> See 1QS IV, 18, 23 quoted in the preceding word study for the concept of “struggle” in the Qumran literature.

<sup>219</sup> In the cultural inter-texture section attention will be given to echoes of the Heracles myth in 1 John 2:14 in which it is stated that the young men are strong and have overcome the evil one. This also echoes Jesus’ statement that a person cannot enter the house of the strong man without binding him first (Matthew 12:29, Mark 3:27).

<sup>220</sup> Louw and Nida place the term, πονηρός, (without the article) in the subdomain of Sickness, Disease, Weakness (Louw, and Nida, *Lexicon*, 248, 250). This is significant for understanding the nature of the evil works of the devil, and it fits well with independent findings that repeatedly associate the works of the devil with death.

## 2). Ὁ διάβολος

The second term used in 1 John to refer to the evil one is ὁ διάβολος, in which the “sin” of the devil and his children is in view. As discussed above, and as will be discussed in the upcoming word study on the “works of the devil,” the nature of this sin is closely associated with both physical and spiritual death. John’s gospel uses the term ὁ διάβολος in only two instances to refer to this evil being. (Other occurrences of διάβολος without the article refer to people being accused of having “a devil” or several devils, namely the demons under the rulership of ὁ διάβολος.) Both references to ὁ διάβολος as a specific evil being occur in a context in which people are seeking to kill Jesus (John 8:40-44; 13:2), further reinforcing the nature of the devil as a murderer, as Jesus states explicitly in John 8:44. The temptation of Jesus by ὁ διάβολος in Matthew and Luke demonstrates the devil’s opposition to God’s will. Other occurrences in the Synoptics of “devil” refer to demons within an afflicted person, most often manifested by disease and distortion of God’s will for the human body. Acts 10:38 summarizes Jesus’ response to the devil’s attempts to destroy human life: “Jesus ... went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil.” The Epistles are full of warnings to watch out for the tricks and snares of ὁ διάβολος who has “power of death” (Hebrews 2:14). Ignatius also warns about the snares of the devil (Ignatius to Tral. 8:1). In the *Testament of Naphtali* the devil is associated with wild beasts and people who are doing that which is “not good” (*T. Naphtali* 8:6).

## 3). Ὁ ἄρχων

In the Gospel of John the most frequently used term for the evil one is ὁ ἄρχων τοῦ κόσμου τούτου (the ruler of this world), which is distinctive in the New Testament to John’s Gospel.<sup>221</sup> “The ruler of the kingdom of the air” (Eph. 2:2) and “the ruler of the demons” (Βεελζεβούλ) in the Synoptic gospels are similar titles, all referring to the authority and

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<sup>221</sup> Langton points out that “a similar designation of Satan is found in the apocalyptic writings. In the *Martyrdom of Isaiah*, Beliar who is mentioned alternatively with Satan, is said to be ‘the ruler of this world’ (2:4)” (Edward Langton, *Satan, A Portrait* [London: Skeffington & Son. 1945], 31). This serves as confirmation that these three terms, Satan, Beliar, and “the ruler of thisworld,” legitimately belong in a list of terms used in the 1<sup>st</sup> century C.E. to describe an evil being. The designation, Satan, is one of the three terms for the evil being used in the Synoptic accounts of the parable of the sower. (See footnote 213.) Taking the Synoptic accounts of the Parable of the Sower and the description of an evil entity in the *Martyrdom of Isaiah*, gives an interlocking set of five titles for a singular evil being with specific evil characteristics. These are the five being surveyed in this study: the evil one, the devil, the ruler of this world, Satah, and Beliar. For the purposes of this study it does not particularly matter whether this evil being was thought to be a real spirit-person or if references to this being

power of this evil being. Ignatius speaks of “the ruler of this age” who can be destroyed by gentleness (Ignatius to Tral 4:2), and whose evil tricks and traps believers must flee (Ignatius to Phil. 6:2).

#### 4). Σατανᾶς

While Σατανᾶς (Satan) does not occur in 1 John and is found only once in the Gospel of John, it is very common in the rest of the New Testament where it is used as a proper name in speaking to or about a being that has personality, intention to harm, and who tempts people to do what is wrong.<sup>222</sup> As in the Hebrew Bible, the word “satan” is sometimes used generically rather than as a proper name. But it is the being to whom that proper name belongs who will, as Gruenthaner says, “be publicly and solemnly condemned to remain in hell forever (2 Pet. 2:4; Jude 6).”<sup>223</sup> The being named, “Satan” is found in the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* in association with cruelty, lying, pride and hatred (*T. Dan.* 3; 6; 5: 6; *T. Gad* 4:7). Polycarp referred to Marcion, whose teachings he considered heretical, as “the first born of Satan.” Ignatius speaks of the overthrow of Satan when he says that when believers “meet together frequently, the powers of Satan are overthrown” (Ignatius to Ephesians 13:1). Papias also speaks of the defeat of Satan in fragments 11 and 24.

#### 5). Βελιάρ

While in the New Testament the proper name Βελιάρ occurs only once (2 Cor. 6:15, “what fellowship does Christ have with Beliar”), in the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* this is by far the favorite term for the evil one. In all of these occurrences, a being with personality, power, authority, and evil intention is in view, often in a war-like context.

### C. Summary of the Survey of Five Terms

In summary, then, the evil one, known also as devil, ruler of this world, Satan, and Beliar, models all the characteristics that are opposite of and opposed to God, as demonstrated in his

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were simply a personification for evil in general. In either case the descriptions and activities of evil remain the same and need to be overcome.

<sup>222</sup> Ling adds, in speaking of the Pauline writings, “Satan works by deception, and so, inevitably, must those who serve him” (Ling, *Significance*, 39). Believers are warned in 1 John 2:26 and 3:7 about those who are attempting to deceive them, giving support for the proposal that destroying the works of the devil included, among other things, nullifying the work of the opponents who were the deceivers, the servants of the devil.

<sup>223</sup> Gruenthaner, “Demonology,” *CBQ*, 7.

Son, Jesus. He is viewed by the biblical and extra-biblical writings surveyed above as a hostile, aggressive enemy, from whom God's children need protection to avoid falling into his traps. That protection is promised in 1 John, "the one born of God keeps him [the believer] and the evil one does not touch him" (5:18).

#### D. Comparison of Two Terms in the Gospel of John and 1 John

Two of the terms for the evil one that are used in the Johannine literature can be compared through a glimpse of the chain-link interlock transitions that establishes "an interpretative lens" through which to view other aspects of the text.<sup>224</sup> As mentioned earlier, Longenecker applies the chain-link interlock technique to the Gospel of John.<sup>225</sup> In a compact chain-link outline he finds the following pattern in the Gospel of John:<sup>226</sup>

A John 1:1 – 12:19 (Jesus' public ministry)

b (anticipatory inter-locked unit): John 12:20-36 (Jesus' advance preparation for his death, including reference to the ruler of this world being driven out, in 12:31)

a (retrospective inter-locked unit): John 12:37-50 (Jesus' public works)

B John 13:1 – 21:25 (Jesus' private ministry, preparing his disciples for his death; the account of his death and resurrection; reference in 14:30 to "the ruler of this world is coming; he has no power over me," and 16:11, the ruler of this world now stands condemned.")

An example of Longenecker's idea of an "interpretive lens" is seen in the allusion to the cosmic battle between Jesus and "the ruler of this world" at the hinge of the Gospel of John (in unit "b"), intricately woven together with unit "B" through chain-link interlock. This finds a counterpart at the center of 1 John, where a chain-link interlock transition also occurs (described earlier in the inner texture section of this chapter) in connection with reference to

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<sup>224</sup> Longenecker, *Rhetoric*, 122.

<sup>225</sup> Longenecker, *Rhetoric*, 6, 7.

<sup>226</sup> Noll finds a similar pattern that he summarizes by saying, "the first half of the Gospel shows the Son coming into this Father's world to claim his rightful inheritance, but the stewards of that inheritance, the rulers of the Jews, do not believe the truth because they are of this world and are children of the devil (John 8:23, 44). As the time for his going out of the world approaches, Jesus now turns from the Jews and begins to speak of the crisis facing the world and its ruler" (Stephen F. Noll, *Angels of Light, Powers of Darkness: Thinking Biblically about Angels, Satan and Principalities* [Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1998], 135).

the cosmic battle.<sup>227</sup> (“For this reason the Son of God appeared—to destroy the works of the devil” [3:8b].) This is also the central chiasmic climax, giving double support to the importance to the author of the topic of this research, namely, investigation of the nature of the works of the devil, the subject of the next word study following a brief summary of this word study.

#### E. Summary

In the ancient Mediterranean world, the devil and the evil one were viewed as actual evil beings, not as abstract ideas. Although various names are used to represent a main evil being (who has other evil spirits/demons under his rule), there is a consistency in the works and motives attributed to this being who is opposed to God’s rule. In turn, the Johannine writers affirm, God has sent his Son to cast out this evil ruler and to destroy his works. Those works will be examined in the next word study.

#### 4.2.1.6. Ἔργα

Arriving at a Johannine understanding of the phrase, τὰ ἔργα τοῦ διαβόλου, is the main focus of this research. In the present word study of the term, ἔργα,<sup>228</sup> insights from previous word studies will be integrated and additional insights will be gained that will be related to those of other studies in the theological texture section where a theology of the works of the devil will be proposed.

In 1 John, the three uses of the word, ἔργα, all occur in the two pericopes examined in the inner texture section (3:8; 3:12; 3:18). Each of these occurrences demonstrates the antithetical worldview of the Johannine community: the “works of the devil” (3:8) are to be destroyed by the appearing of the Son of God (the work of the devil and the work of God are

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<sup>227</sup> In speaking of the opposition of “the world” to believers and the opposition between God and the evil one, Schnackenburg comments, “One has the feeling of being in the middle of a conflict between the powers of good and evil, a conflict involving not only human beings but also superhuman spirits (Schnackenburg, *Epistles*, 29).

<sup>228</sup> According to the *TDNT*, the word, ἔργον, in its general sense denotes activity in contrast to idleness. This word and related terms also refer in classical Greek usage to occupations and various kinds of undertakings including “works of peace and services in the public welfare, but also ... heroic acts of war” (Georg Bertram, “ἔργον, ἐργάζομαι,” *TDNT* 2:635). In this connection Bertram mentions the life of Heracles as an example of one whose works demonstrated a Hellenistic philosophical ideal of serving humanity (Bertram, *TDNT* 2:635-36). More will be mentioned about Heracles in the cultural inter-texture section, noticing the myths that would likely have been in the minds of the audience hearing or reading 1 John 2:13-14: “I write to you young men that you are strong and you have had victory over the evil one.” The labors works of

mutually exclusive); Cain's murderous evil works are contrasted with the righteous works of his brother (3:12); and the believer is urged to demonstrate love, as opposed to hate, through practical works (3:18).<sup>229</sup>

This inter-textual study of the term, ἔργα, will follow an antithetical approach as an organizing principle:

- *Positive works*: Listing the ἔργα of God as seen in the New Testament and comparing these with the works of Jesus' followers, supplemented by a glimpse of some expectations in extra-biblical literature of what deeds godly people were expected to be able to do.
- *Negative works*: Taking the opposite of what we know from the Johannine literature to be God's will (as seen in Jesus' works), and reviewing the activities attributed to the evil one in Appendix 4 and in a passage studied previously from the Qumran literature, to arrive at what the Johannine community would have been likely to have attributed to the devil and his works.

#### A. Positive Works: the ἔργα of God as Seen in the Gospel of John<sup>230</sup>

A study of the occurrences of the New Testament use of the word, ἔργα, and related words, ἐργάζομαι and εὐεργετῶν, reveals that the concentration of references to Jesus' "works" is found in the Gospel of John.<sup>231</sup> Jesus' works are demonstrated in the Synoptics through a large number of various healings and other miracles, but they are not specifically termed "works" except in general summative terms (Matthew 11:2<sup>232</sup> and Luke 24:19<sup>233</sup>). Acts

Heracles, in one sense, could be thought of as metaphors of the works of the Son of God who overcomes the works of the evil one, otherwise known as the devil.

<sup>229</sup> A similar contrast and exhortation is found in the *Testament of Gad* 6.1: "And now, my children, I exhort you, love ye each one his brother, and put away hatred from your hearts, love one another in deed, and in word, and in the inclination of the soul."

<sup>230</sup> The work, or activity, of God began "in the beginning" with creation. (Compare this with the devil's works—the devil has been sinning "from the beginning.") As the Prologue of the Gospel of John states, "all things were made by him [the Word]." The work of God continued with his activity within the history, "of the elect people which is attested as the work of God," including both "military successes" and "the wonderful events in the wilderness. Here ἔργα sometimes has the sense of miracles" (Bertram, *TDNT* 2:640). Jesus' works, which were often in the category of miracles, are a further continuation of the works of God: "It is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work." (John 14:10)

<sup>231</sup> See Appendix 5 for a list of the occurrences of the word, ἔργον, in the New Testament.

<sup>232</sup> Matthew 11:2, 4, 5: When John heard in prison what Christ was doing [ἔργα τοῦ Χριστοῦ], he sent his disciples to ask him... Jesus replied, "Go back and report to John what you hear and see: The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is preached to the poor." Jesus' answer describes his works in words that echo Isaiah 35:5-6 and 61:1: "Then will the eyes of the blind be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped. Then will the lame leap like a deer and the

10:38 also summarizes Jesus' ministry using a version of the word, ἔργα: "Jesus ... went around doing good (εὐεργετῶν) and healing all who were under the power of the devil."

The author of the Gospel of John presents six signs (σημείων), or miracles, that are representative of the works (ἔργα) of God done through Jesus, as he specifically refers to them in John 14:11. Discussion of the actual word, ἔργα, in the Gospel of John, will be interspersed as it occurs in relationship to the six signs or miracles found in the Fourth Gospel, which will serve as representative of the nature of Jesus' work on earth.

The six signs or miracles in the Gospel of John, as commonly recognized by most commentators<sup>234</sup> are listed here with generalizations about the sphere in which Jesus' work operates:

- 1). Turning water into wine (John 2:1-11; demonstrating power over nature; meeting a social need; revealing<sup>235</sup> Jesus' glory with the result that his disciples believed in him).
- 2). Healing the official's son who was dying (John 4:43-54; showing God's will for good health and life; Jesus says as result of this miraculous sign, "your son will live").
- 3). Healing the man at the pool who had been an invalid for 38 years (John 5:1-15; showing Jesus' concern for true righteousness when he heals on the Sabbath and instructs the

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tongue of the dumb shout for joy." (Isaiah 35:5, 6) "... the Lord has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release for the prisoners." (Isaiah 61:1)

The research for this thesis will show that the works of the devil can be seen as the opposite of the Messiah's works, the devil being responsible for the conditions the Messiah appeared to begin correcting.

<sup>233</sup> Luke 24:19: [Jesus of Nazareth] ... was a prophet, powerful in word and deed [ἐν ἔργῳ καὶ λόγῳ] before God and all the people.

<sup>234</sup> See A.J. Kostenberger, *The Missions of Jesus and the Disciples in the Fourth Gospel* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans), 57. Kostenberger's goal is to explain "...the Fourth Gospel's description of the task of Jesus, especially with a view toward its relationship to the disciples' task.... The link in 14:12 suggests a certain degree of continuity between the two. On the other hand, the fact that the working of signs is in the Fourth Gospel reserved for Jesus may suggest that the fourth evangelist differentiates between the tasks to be accomplished by Jesus and those to be fulfilled by Jesus' followers" (*Missions*, 52). In this section the primary task is to contrast the positive works of God, as seen in the signs, or works, of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel with the opposite of those works, which will be labeled, "works of the devil." A later discussion of the extent to which Jesus' disciples may participate in his works will relate only to the generalizations of the nature of his works, not to the specific signs, or works, uniquely performed by the unique Son of God.

<sup>235</sup> Note the connection of φανερόω with a work of God in which God's glory is seen. In John 2:11, Jesus demonstrated [ἐφάνερωσεν] God's glory when he turned the water into wine. In 1 John 3:8 it is stated that the purpose for which Jesus was manifested [ἐφάνερωθη] was to destroy the works of the devil. It is becoming clear that these are equivalent statements, namely revealing God's glory simultaneously destroys the works of the devil.

man to stop sinning; a discourse about life through the Son and the works of God follows this miracle).<sup>236</sup>

- 4). Feeding the 5000 (John 6: 1-15; again demonstrating power over nature; meeting a physical need; the bread of life discourse follows, including a definition of the work of God in verse 29, “the work of God [τὸ ἔργον τοῦ θεοῦ] is this: to believe in the one he has sent”).<sup>237</sup>
- 5). Healing the man born blind (John 9:1-41; showing God’s will for physical wholeness; accompanied by two statements about the work of God;<sup>238</sup> followed by a conversation about the spiritual blindness of those who do not believe in Jesus [9:35-41]).<sup>239</sup>

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<sup>236</sup> In John 5:17 Jesus makes it clear that the Father did not stop doing good works on the Sabbath when he says: “My Father is still working and I also am working (ἐργάζομαι).” Later Jesus claims that the work (ἔργα) his Father gave him to finish provides the evidence or testimony that he was sent by the Father (John 5:36). In John 4:34 Jesus had made it clear that he intended to finish the work the Father gave him when he said, “my food is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work (αὐτοῦ τὸ ἔργον).” Later, in teaching at the Feast, Jesus referred back to the healing that took place on the Sabbath: “I have done one work [ἐν ἔργον ἐποίησα] and you are all astonished” (John 7:21). He goes on, in this context to warn the people to “stop judging by mere appearances, and make a right judgment [δικαίαν κρίσιν].” This association of Jesus’ works with righteousness is important to notice for later comparison with the works of the devil which are associated with the opposite of righteousness.

<sup>237</sup> This sign and discourse show the association of belief and life, as is found in the purpose statements of both the Gospel of John (20:31) and in 1 John 5:13: “I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.” Here in John 6:29 it is stated specifically that belief in the Son is a work of God. If belief in Jesus is a work of God, Polycarp is clear that the opposite is true as well, that lack of belief in Jesus is a work of the devil: “For everyone who does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is an anti-Christ and whosoever does not confess the testimony of the Cross is of the devil; and whosoever perverts the oracles of the Lord for his own lusts, and says that there is neither resurrection nor judgment, this man is the first-born of Satan” (Philippians 7:1, 2).

<sup>238</sup> John 9:3: Neither this man nor his parents sinned, said Jesus, but this happened so that the work of God might be displayed (ἵνα φανερωθῇ τὰ ἔργα τοῦ θεοῦ) in his life. Again φανερωθῇ, appears conjunction with the works of God. Here the revelation of God’s glory, and simultaneous destruction of a work of the devil (physical blindness), is found in the sign that demonstrates God’s nature as light, and God’s will for his people to have spiritual as well as physical sight.

John 9:4: As long as it is day, we must work the works (ἐργάζεσθαι τὰ ἔργα) of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work (ἐργάζεσθαι). Here again is the antithetical worldview, shared with the Qumran community, in which the works of God are associated with light (day), and the associated fact that these works cannot be done in the dark of night. The reverse is also true: the works of darkness cannot be done in the light. This is the purpose for which Jesus was revealed (ἐφανερώθη), to bring the light of God which exposes/ nullifies/ destroys the works of darkness, which will be seen to be the works of the devil. John 3:20, 21 indicates that everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds (ἔργα) will be exposed. But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly (φανερωθῇ,) that what he has done (αὐτοῦ τὰ ἔργα) has been done through God.” Once again the role of φανερωθῇ is seen in conjunction with the works of God.

<sup>239</sup> The fact that belief in Jesus is considered to be a work of God (as stated in John 6:29) is seen to be important to the author of the Gospel in John 10. This chapter falls between the the account in chapter 9 of the healing of the man born blind (who believed in Jesus as a result), and the account of the raising of Lazarus from the dead, which was also for the purpose of generating belief among Jesus’ followers (John 11:15). In chapter

- 6). Raising Lazarus from the dead (John 11:1-43; demonstrating power over death; Jesus' claim in 11:25: "I am the resurrection and the life").

These "signs," in John's Gospel, also called "works" and translated "miracles" by the *New International Version*, are representative of what is known about the work of God, through the work of His Son, in the Fourth Gospel in particular, and in the New Testament in general. Acts 10:38 summarizes Jesus' response to the devil's attempts to destroy human life: "Jesus ... went around doing good (εὐεργετῶν) and healing all who were under the power of the devil." Following the last work of God recorded in the Gospel of John, raising Lazarus from the dead, Jesus withdrew from doing "works" in public ministry and began to prepare his disciples for his death by explaining the significance of those works. Included in the lengthy discourses of chapters 14–17 are a number of references to the works of God and of Jesus, listed below, showing the close fellowship between the Father and Son, and the importance of belief for those who want to be part of that fellowship, as 1 John 1:3 describes the relationship of believers to the Father and Son.

*Works of God and of Jesus in John 14–17:*

John 14:10: Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you are not just my own. Rather it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work (ἔργα).

John 14:11: Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the miracles [ἔργα] themselves.

John 14:12: I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing (τὰ ἔργα ἃ ἐγὼ ποιῶ)

John 15:24: If I had not done (τὰ ἔργα μὴ ἐποίησα) among them what no one else did, they would not be guilty of sin. But now they have seen [these works], and yet they have hated both me and my Father.

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10 the following references to Jesus' works occur, speaking of the importance of believing in the Son of God as a result of seeing his works:

10:25: The works (ἔργα) that I do in my Father's name speak for me.

10:32: Jesus said to them: "I have shown you many great miracles (ἔργα) from the Father. For which of these do you stone me?"

10:37: Do not believe me unless I do what my Father does (ποιῶ τὰ ἔργα τοῦ πατρὸς).

10:38: But if I do it, even though you do not believe me, believe the miracles (ἔργους), that you may learn and understand that the Father is in me, and I in the Father.

The Gospel of John concludes Jesus' discussion of his and the Father's works in his prayer to the Father in John 17:4: "I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do." This reference to Jesus bringing glory to God by finishing God's work, echoes what was said following the first work by Jesus at the wedding of Cana in which Jesus "revealed his glory" resulting in belief on the part of his followers.

In summary, the works of God are clearly seen through Jesus' miraculous and caring good works that were done for the purpose of generating belief in his followers and which had the result of overturning the works of the devil. Those who put their faith in him, Jesus said, will perform similar good works (John 14:12).

B. Comparison of Jesus' Works with the Works of Jesus' Followers, Supplemented by a Glimpse of Some Expectations in Extra-biblical Literature of What Deeds Godly People Would Be Able to Do

One of the questions to be answered in this major study of the "works of the devil," through the various texture studies of Socio-Rhetorical Analysis, is whether the children of God are expected to participate with the unique Son of God in destroying the works of the devil. Progress toward an answer to this question is found in Jesus' statement in John 14:12: "the person who believes in me will perform the works that I am doing and will perform greater works than these." Before looking at the evidence in the New Testament for the works of believers, it will be helpful to see from sample extra-biblical texts what some of the expectations were regarding those sincerely attempting to follow God's ways.

The fourth scroll of the Qumran literature contains a passage that encourages the sons of righteousness to trust "in all the deeds of God" (1QS IV, 4), which will result in "healing, abundance of peace with length of days, ... joy in eternity with everlasting life" (1QS IV, 6, 7). This description demonstrates an expectation by the Essene believers that evil deeds would some day be done away with. For the Qumran community this "time of visitation" (see the chiasmic structure of 1QS IV, 15-25 in the word study "appearing") lay in the future, at which time the spirit of truth would purify "every deed of man" (1QS IV, 20), enabling humans to practice justice and truth and participate in the deeds of God. There is no indication here that the sons of righteousness would participate with the spirit of truth in overcoming wickedness, injustice and lies, but only that after the visitation of the spirit of truth the sons of truth would be able to perform good deeds.

But what the Qumran community saw as taking place at a future time, the Johannine community believed Jesus had fulfilled, with consequences for the present. The difference in expectation, then, of how God's people would participate in the "deeds of God" had to do with timing. In both cases, the Qumran believers and Johannine believers were aware that the spirit of God would be the agent of overturning injustice and wickedness. But in the Johannine belief, Jesus *was* the visitation of God, and he had made the benefits of his appearing available to his followers, including overcoming evil.

In Ignatius' Letter to the Ephesians and in the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, there seem to be expectations that the people of God collectively participate in the overthrow of evil. Ignatius wrote, "When believers meet together frequently, the powers of Satan are overthrown" (Eph 13:1). In *T. Levi* 17:11, 12, encouragement to fight evil is given: "He shall give to the saints to eat from the tree of life, and ... Beliar shall be bound by Him, and He shall give power to His children to tread upon the evil spirits."<sup>240</sup> In *T. Naphtali* 8:4-6, the good works of the "children" result in God being glorified, the devil fleeing from them, and the wild beasts fearing them.<sup>241</sup> Also see *T. Issachar* 7:7: "Every spirit of Beliar shall flee from you/ And no deed of wicked men shall rule over you/ And every wild beast shall ye subdue." These passages are comparable to Isaiah 11:5-9 in which the righteous will be at peace with wild beasts (wolf, leopard, lion, bear, cobra, viper), "and a little child will lead them." By implication, given the antithetical worldview of 1<sup>st</sup> century Johannine and Qumran believers and the readers of the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, if it is God's will to subdue wild beasts, then the opposite of God's will (instigating wild beasts to harmful behavior) must be a work of the devil (or Beliar or Satan). The passages in Isaiah and the *Twelve Patriarchs* imply that righteous people have a role in overcoming a work of the devil by subduing the wild beasts. Mark seems to be referring to this tradition about the wild beasts when he explains that in Jesus' temptation by Satan in the desert, "he was with the wild animals" (Mark 1:13). This reinforces the proposition that the 1<sup>st</sup> century believer could have viewed destructive behavior of wild animals as a work of the devil/Satan/Beliar.

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<sup>240</sup> Quotations from the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* are from R. H. Charles, *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1908).

<sup>241</sup> If ye work that which is good, my children,  
 [Both] men and angels shall bless you;  
 And God shall be glorified among the Gentiles through you,  
 And the devil shall flee from you [cf. James 4:7]  
 And the wild beasts shall fear you, (*T. Naphtali* 8:4-6)

These few examples from extra-biblical literature demonstrate that there was an expectation in the 1<sup>st</sup> century Mediterranean world that God's people would in some sense join in God's work. Returning to Jesus' promise in John 14:12 that his followers would perform not only the works he was doing, but even greater works, a comparison of Jesus' works and the works of the believers in the book of Acts is helpful for seeing how Jesus' promise began to be fulfilled. Jesus' own summary of his works included, "the blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is preached to the poor" (Matthew 11:2-5). A generalized summary of the six signs in John's Gospel showed that Jesus met physical and social needs by providing drink and food, he healed the sick, crippled and blind, and he raised the dead. In the book of Acts deeds similar to those just summarized are done by followers of Jesus in clear fulfillment of Jesus' promise in John 14.

*Deeds of Jesus' followers in the book of Acts:*

Acts 3:1-10: Peter heals the crippled beggar

Acts 4:32-37: believers share their possessions so there are no needy people among them

Acts 5:12-16: the Apostles heal many sick and those tormented by evil spirits

Acts 6:1-6: seven brothers are chosen to care for the physical needs of the widows

Acts 8:4: the disciples are scattered and preach the word wherever they go

Acts 8:5-8: Philip does miraculous signs: evil spirits come out of many, cripples are healed

Acts 9:7-19: Ananias prays for Saul's eyesight to be restored

Acts 9:36: Dorcas "was always doing good and helping the poor"

Acts 9:37-42: Dorcas is raised from the dead

Acts 10 and throughout the rest of the book: followers of Jesus preach the good news in the wider Mediterranean area

Rather than a continued emphasis on the physical miracles performed by the apostles, the Epistles show a frequent emphasis on general good works that are characteristic of all followers of Jesus. In John 3:20, 21 this truth is expressed in the antithetical style typical of the Johannine community: "Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds (ἔργα) will be exposed. But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly (φανερῶθῃ) that what he has done (αὐτοῦ τὰ

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ἔργα) has been done through God.” The author of 1 John gives a concrete example that is representative of the numerous uses of the term, ἔργα, in the various epistles of the New Testament. In the context of the statements that hatred is akin to murder (1 John 3:15) and that Jesus demonstrated love by laying down his life for us (3:16), the author asks and pleads, “if anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him? Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth” (1 John 3:18). The importance of believers’ works being aligned with Jesus’ example and God’s truth is also seen in 2 John 8 in which the elder reminds the community to watch out for deceivers, the enemies of the truth, “that you do not lose what you have worked for (ἐἰργάσασθε),” implying that “truth” is the goal of the works of believers. That this goal is worked toward collectively is shown in 3 John 8: “we ought to show hospitality to such men [brothers going out for the sake of the Name] so that we may work together (συνεργοὶ) for the truth.”

The important conclusion to note about the works done by Jesus and his followers is that these works are done through God, or his Holy Spirit and that these are always directed toward what is true and good, and toward correcting, or overcoming, what is not true to God’s will (such as sickness or destructive behavior in animals or humans).

### C. Negative Works

The method here is to review what is seen to be God’s will, as demonstrated in Jesus’ works in the Gospel of John and attribute the opposite of that to the devil and his works. This is in accord with the antithetical worldview of the Johannine community.<sup>242</sup> These qualities that are the opposite of Jesus’ works are then compared to the activities attributed to the evil one in Appendix 4 and in a passage studied previously from the Qumran literature. This will lead to one way of understanding what the Johannine community would have been likely to have attributed to the devil and his works.

In the worldview of the Qumran and Johannine communities, the qualities associated with the deeds or works of God would automatically be seen as the exact opposite of the works of the devil and vice versa. In this study of the works attributed to the devil, the

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<sup>242</sup> In chapter 1 reference was made to Westcott’s point that “the works of the devil,” are opposed to “the works of God” (Westcott, *Epistles*, 107).

principle of mutual exclusivity, taken from the antithetical worldview<sup>243</sup> of the Johannine community, will be followed: what is not of God is by definition of the devil.<sup>244</sup> Third John 11, while not using the exact word, ἔργα, summarizes this principle: “Dear friend, do not imitate what is evil but what is good. Anyone who does what is good (ὁ ἀγαθοποιῶν) is from God. Anyone who does what is evil (ὁ κακοποιῶν) has not seen God.” By taking the opposite of what we know from the Johannine literature to be demonstrations of God’s will, and by reviewing the activities attributed to the evil one in Appendix 4, and in a passage studied previously from the Qumran literature, it will be possible to arrive at what the Johannine community would have been likely to have attributed to the devil and his works.

#### D. The Johannine Understanding of the “Works of God” and the Opposite of Those Works

As mentioned earlier in the study of the “works of God,” a summary of the generalized principles seen in the six signs in John’s Gospel, shows that Jesus met physical and social needs by providing drink and food, he healed the sick, crippled and blind, and he raised the dead. In addition to these generalizations about the six signs, a number of statements made in John’s Gospel and in 1 John, listed earlier, about the nature of the works of God, include the following principles:

John 3:21: Works done through God are done in the light and can be seen by others

John 6:29: The work of God is to believe in the one he has sent

John 9:3: God’s work can be displayed in a person’s life

John 9:4: God’s work is done in the day

John 10:25: Works done in the Father’s name are self-evident

John 10:37: Jesus did the works his Father does

John 10:38: Doing the works of God demonstrates that Jesus is from the Father

John 14:10: The Father does his work in Jesus

John 14:12: Those who believe in Jesus will do the same works he has been doing

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<sup>243</sup> As an example of this worldview, refer again to the chart in the inner texture section showing the antithetical comparison of the characteristics of the Johannine community with the characteristics of the opponents.

<sup>244</sup> An example from elsewhere in the New Testament of the works attributed to the devil can be found in James 3:14-16: If you harbor bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth. Such “wisdom” does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, of the devil. For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice.”

John 15:24: Those who see God's works done among them have to choose to participate with God or to hate the Father.

1 John 3:17, 18: God's love is made evident through works that meet human needs

Believers are able and expected to participate in these types of works, as demonstrated in the book of Acts. Since this is true, it would seem reasonable to postulate that believers are also expected to participate in overturning the opposite of these works and restoring order and God's will on earth.

Taking the opposite of the qualities of Jesus' works and the opposite of statements about the works of God in the Johannine writings yields a proposed list of activities characteristic of God's opponent:

1. Jesus met physical and social needs by providing drink and food.

The opposite: the devil's work would be to cause physical and social chaos (i.e., famine).

2. Jesus healed the sick, crippled and blind.

The opposite: the devil's work would be to cause sickness, crippling and blindness.

3. Jesus raised the dead.

The opposite: the devil's work would be to cause death.

4. Works done through God are done in the light.

The opposite: the devil's work is done in the dark.

5. The works of God can be seen by others to be clearly of God.

The opposite: the devil's work is to deceive and confuse.

6. The work of God is to believe in the one he has sent.

The opposite: the devil's work is to turn people away from belief in Jesus.

7. The Father does his work through Jesus (and by extension, through his followers).

The opposite: the devil does his work through his own "children."

8. God's love is made evident through works that meet human needs.

The opposite: the devil's hatred results in human neediness.

This list of the devil's works,<sup>245</sup> arrived at through taking the opposite of God's works as seen in the Gospel of John, will shortly be compared with the activities ascribed to the evil one in, as listed in Appendix 4 and in selected portions of the Qumran literature, to see where there is correspondence and where the lists supplement each other. Activities ascribed in Appendix 4 to the evil one/devil/Satan/ruler of this world/Beliar include:

**Johannine Literature:**

Murder (John 8:44; 1 John 3:12)

Evil (1 John 3:12)

Intent to harm (implied by John 14:30; 17:15; 1 John 5:18, 19)

Sin and instigating others to sin (1 John 3:8)

Not doing right (1 John 3:10)

Not loving one's brother (1 John 3:10)

Lies (John 8:44)

Betrayal (John 13:2, 27)

**Other NT writings:**

Lies (implied by Matthew 5:37; Acts 5:3;

Intent to harm (implied by Matthew 6:13; Luke 13:16; 22:31; 2 Corinthians 12:7; Ephesians 6:16; 2 Thessalonians 3:3; 1 Peter 5:8; Revelation 2:10)

Prevents belief (Matthew 13:19)

Tempts to wrongdoing (Matthew 4:1, 10; Acts 7:5; Ephesians 2:2; 4:27; 6:11; 1 Timothy 3:6; James 4:7)

Causes blindness, dumbness (numerous Synoptic accounts)

Causes death (Hebrews 2:14)

Opposes believers (2 Corinthians 2:11; 1 Thessalonians 2:18; Jude 9)

Deceives (2 Corinthians 11:14)

Rules the demons (Matthew 9:34, and parallels)

***Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs***

Enslaves/ rules over those who do that which is not good (*T. Naph* 8:6, *T. Dan* 4:7, *T. Asher* 1:3, *T. Ben* 7:1)

Cruelty (*T. Dan* 3:6)

Lying (*T. Dan* 3:6)

Wickedness (*T. Dan* 5:6, *T. Asher* 1:3.)

Pride (*T. Dan* 5:6)

Causes people to sin (*T. Dan* 5:6)

Hatred (*T. Gad* 4:7)

Deceit (*T. Ben* 6:1, *T. Judah* 25:3, *T. Zebulun* 9:8)

Bloodshed (*T. Ben.* 7:1)

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<sup>245</sup> The *Translator's Handbook* offers the alternative phrase, "all that the devil is doing," which supports the method being used here of uncovering the activities of the devil in order to define and categorize his works. The *Handbook* allows for the devil's work to include "both ... the Devil's own sinful deeds, and ... his instigating others to sin" (Haas, DeJonge, and Swellengrebel, *Handbook*, 84).

**1QS IV, 15-25**

Injustice (IV, 17, 20, 21, 24)

Abominations (IV, 21)

Wicked deeds (IV, 21, 24)

Folly (IV, 24)

Hates truth (IV, 25)

The works of the devil described in the two studies above are synthesized and compared in the following list. Activities from the second list, those ascribed to the evil one/devil/Satan/ruler of this world/Beliar found in biblical and extra-biblical literature, are placed under the eight categories in the first list, of the devil's works that were generalized from the opposite qualities of God's work, as seen in the Johannine literature.

**1. Causing physical and social chaos (i.e., famine).**

Opposes believers (2 Corinthians 2:11; 1 Thessalonians 2:18; Jude 9)

Wickedness (*T. Dan* 5:6; *T. Asher* 1:3)

Wicked deeds (1QS IV, 21, 24)

Injustice (1QS IV, 17, 20, 21, 24)

**2. Causing sickness, crippling and blindness.**

Causes disease, blindness, dumbness (numerous Synoptic accounts)

**3. Causing death.**

Murder (John 8:44; 1 John 3:12)

Not loving one's brother (1 John 3:10)

Causes death (Hebrews 2:14)

Hatred (*T. Gad* 4:7)

Bloodshed (*T. Ben* 7:1)

**4. Work is done in the dark.**

Rules the demons (Matthew 9:34, and parallels)

Abominations (1QS IV, 21)

The Qumran and Johannine literatures both use the term "darkness" to refer to the realm of the evil one. See John 3:19; 1 John 1:5, 6; 1QS III, 20-22.<sup>246</sup>

**5. Deceiving and confusing people.**

Lies (John 8:44; implied by Matthew 5:37; Acts 5:3)

Deceives (2 Corinthians 11:14)

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<sup>246</sup> John 3:19: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil.

1 John 1:5, 6: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth.

1QS III, 20-22: In the hand of the Prince of Lights is the dominion of all sons of righteousness: in the ways of light they will walk. In the hand of the Angel of Darkness is all the dominion of the sons of perversity and in the ways of darkness they will walk. And by the Angel of Darkness are the errors of all the sons of righteousness; and all their sins and iniquities and guiltiness and deeds of transgression are in his dominion.

Lying (*T. Dan* 3:6)  
 Pride (*T. Dan* 5:6)  
 Deceit (*T. Ben* 6:1; *T. Judah* 25:3; *T. Zebulun* 9:8)  
 Folly (1QS IV, 24)  
 Hates truth (1QS IV, 25)

#### **6. Turning people away from belief in Jesus (or from righteousness)**

Prevents belief (Matthew 13:19)  
 Betrayal (John 13:2, 27)

#### **7. The devil does his work through his “children.”**

Sins and instigating others to sin (1 John 3:8)  
 Does not do what is right (speaking of children of the devil) (1 John 3:10)  
 Evil works of Cain who was “of the evil one” (1 John 3:12)  
 Tempts to wrongdoing (Matthew 4:1, 10; Acts 7:5; Ephesians 2:2; 4:27; 6:11; 1 Timothy 3:6; James 4:7)  
 Enslaves/ rules over those who do that which is not good (*T. Naph* 8:6; *T. Dan* 4:7, *T. Asher* 1:3; *T. Ben* 7:1)  
 Causes people to sin (*T. Dan* 5:6)  
 Propagates false teaching (heretics are called “the first born of Satan” in Polycarp to the Philippians 7:1)

#### **8. The devil’s hatred results in human neediness.**

Intent to harm (implied by John 14:30; 17:15; 1 John 5:18, 19)  
 Intent to harm (implied by Matthew 6:13; Luke 13:16; 22:31; 2 Corinthians 12:7; Ephesians 6:16; 2; Thessalonians 3:3; 1 Peter 5:8; Revelation 2:10)  
 Cruelty (*T. Dan* 3:6)

#### E. Summary Comments about the Works of the Devil

These studies give an idea of what the Johannine community would have been likely to have attributed to the devil and his works.<sup>247</sup> These attempts to consolidate and compare the works of the devil have been built on the assumption that the devil’s works are the opposite of God’s works, an assumption supported by the antithetical worldview found in the Johannine literature, the Qumran literature, and the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*. These works of the devil are directed against humans, keeping them from participating in God’s will for

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<sup>247</sup> In confirmation of the general view of the evil spirit world in the ancient Mediterranean world, James Charlesworth summarizes the view of evil spirits found in the Pseudepigrapha, “The earth is full of demons. Humanity is plagued by them. Almost all misfortunes are because of the demons; sickness, drought, death, and especially humanity’s weaknesses about remaining faithful to the covenant” (J.H. Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha and the New Testament* [SNTSMS 54, Cambridge, 1985], 66). This prevalent worldview will be confirmed in the historical inter-texture and cultural inter-texture studies. An understanding of “the works of the devil” by the Johannine community needs to take these general attributions to the demonic spirit world into account.

humankind.<sup>248</sup> In the cosmic battle at the heart of 1 John and the Gospel of John, it is clear that God intends to oppose this opposition to his will, thus nullifying it.

The next word study will focus on the term, λύειν (“nullify” or “destroy”), taking into consideration insights from previous word studies, such as the role of “light” and the “appearing” of Jesus in overturning evil works of darkness.

#### 4.2.1.7. Λύειν

In 1 John the term λύειν term occurs in 3:8,<sup>249</sup> εἰς τοῦτο ἐφανερώθη ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ, ἵνα λύσῃ τὰ ἔργα τοῦ διαβόλου. With this last word study a variety of proposals of the meaning and the means of destruction of the works of the devil will be explored, but further texture studies will continue to examine the meaning of the phrase, the “works of the devil,” from historical, cultural and ideological perspectives before a theology of the works of the devil is proposed.

##### A. Definition of Λύειν

An examination of the word λύειν in the New Testament reveals two basic uses of the term. This becomes clear in a comparison of seven word pictures, in which this term is used, which can be grouped into two sets:

Group 1:

1. Luke 19:33: untying the colt
2. John 1:27: untying sandals
3. John 11:44: unbinding Lazarus from his grave clothes

Group 2:

4. John 2:19: “destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up”
5. Acts 27:41: the back part of the ship was being broken up
6. Eph 2:14: breaking down the dividing wall (between Jews and Gentiles)
7. 2 Peter 3:10-12 the elements will be set ablaze and dissolved

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<sup>248</sup> The results of this study go far beyond the traditional rather simplistic interpretation of the nature of the “works of the devil,” as typified by Brown who says, “If one asks more specifically what are the works of the devil which the Son of God was revealed to destroy, there can be no doubt that they are sins” (Brown, *Epistles*, 407).

<sup>249</sup> The controversy over the use of this term in 1 John 4:3, as translated in later Latin manuscripts, is beyond the scope of this study.

For the first group of usages, the applicable definition of λύειν is given by Louw and Nida in their lexicon of semantic domains, under the domain of “Attachment”: “to reverse the result of tying by untying.”<sup>250</sup> The second definition of λύειν given by Louw and Nida is located in the domain of “Violence, Harm, Destroy, Kill,” and applies to the second set of word pictures above: “to destroy or reduce something to ruin by tearing down or breaking to pieces; Acts 27:41: the back part of the ship was being broken to pieces by the violence of the waves.”<sup>251</sup>

The question to be decided is in which group of word pictures the use of λύειν in 1 John 3:8 belongs. Some commentators avoid this decision by claiming both uses of the term.<sup>252</sup> Kysar uses his own theology to decide the meaning: “To destroy: ‘to loose.’ It means to free humans from the power of evil. Here the author invokes a slightly different concept of atonement which centers in the objective forces of opposition to God.”<sup>253</sup> These definitions are inadequate, given the reality of the seriousness and nature of the works of the devil as outlined in the previous word study. These works were seen to be much more than just tempting humans to sin, therefore “λύση τὰ ἔργα τοῦ διαβόλου” must be more than just loosing people from the power of sin.<sup>254</sup> The devil has been sinning from the beginning and

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<sup>250</sup> Louw and Nida, *Lexicon*, 221.

<sup>251</sup> Louw and Nida, *Lexicon*, 230. This usage is reminiscent of the Hebrew phrase, studied earlier, in Genesis 1:2, *tohu wabohu*, which describes the condition of the land after it had been destroyed through the judgment of God.

<sup>252</sup> See for example Plummer who does not distinguish between the two usages: “Loosening or dissolving is appropriate. ... The ἔργα of the devil are the sins which he causes men to commit. Christ came to undo these sins” (Alfred Plummer, *The Epistles of St. John* [1886; repr., Grand Rapids: Baker, 1980], 79). Hobbs follows Plummer’s example in his failure to clarify: “‘Destroy’ renders an aorist subjective form of λύω, to loose. It also means to dissolve or to break. ... Vaughan (p. 79) suggests the meaning here [1 John 3:8] that our sins bind us like chains. Christ came that He might break these chains and loose us from them” (Hobbs, *Epistles*, 87).

<sup>253</sup> Kysar, *I, II, III John*, 81. Explanations like Kysar’s, that λύειν means to free humans from the power of evil, betray an anthropocentric viewpoint, as if the works of the devil were only about humans. The devil’s work has been directed “from the beginning” against God and only secondarily against humans, according to the interpretation of Genesis 1:2 discussed earlier. In that exegesis of Genesis 1, before humans were created the earth was already in a condition of chaos as a result of a destruction of the evil one’s work (through judgment) of rebellion against God’s purposes. Kysar is on the right track in referring to “the objective forces of opposition to God” but he doesn’t tie the human-centered and God-centered explanations together. It would seem reasonable that the “objective forces of opposition” would require more than just a rescue of the victims of the opposition’s work. In a war, such as the cosmic war of the Johannine worldview, the source of the opposition has to be destroyed.

<sup>254</sup> Although Smalley first uses the stronger definition, “the dissolution of what is otherwise coherent,” he also falls back to the use of the term as an undoing or loosing of something. He limits the nature of the works of the devil to traps for human beings, saying that “the coming of Jesus in flesh and blood was concerned with unpicking the net of evil in which the devil has always attempted to trap human beings” (Stephen S. Smalley, *I, 2, 3 John*. Vol. 51 of *Word Biblical Commentary* [Waco: Word Books, 1984], 170). The images used by Smalley and others, such as picking apart nets that trap humans or undoing the sins that bind humans, are

his works are characterized by intentional opposition to God's will, including disease, deceit, lying, injustice, hatred, bloodshed, and turning people away from belief in Jesus.<sup>255</sup>

Bauer's definition of *λύειν* is helpful in understanding the force behind the word as it is used in 1 John 3:8: the Son of God came to "destroy, bring to an end, abolish, do away with"<sup>256</sup> the works of the devil. These works are opposed to God. In Johannine theology the appearing of the Son of God brings the light and the glory of God, in the face of which the works of the devil are done away with. Brown fails to catch this significance, when he applies his preferred definition of *λύειν*, "to destroy, dissolve, nullify," to "depriving the devil's works of the supernatural power to harm human beings."<sup>257</sup> This anthropocentric conclusion overlooks the focus of Jesus' works, done through God, for the glory of God.<sup>258</sup> Destroying the works of the devil is one of Jesus' works, and Jesus' works, in Johannine theology (particularly those identified as "signs" in the fourth Gospel), are focused on the glory of God,<sup>259</sup> not simply on the improved condition of humans.<sup>260</sup>

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images that demonstrate an individualist worldview assumption that contemporary western culture has inherited from the Enlightenment. This worldview is foreign to the writers of the 1<sup>st</sup> century. For them the works of the devil were being done on a cosmic scale, not only an individual scale. The daughter of Abraham whom Satan had bound for 18 years (Luke 16:11) represented the whole nation of Abraham's children that had been bound by Satan, first in Exile and then under the Roman government. In the social/cultural texture section more will be said about the group orientation of the people in the ancient Mediterranean world.

<sup>255</sup> The contested textual variant of 1 John 4:3 shows the battle for correct belief in Jesus as the Christ: ὁ λύει τὸν Ἰησοῦν. In this case, "λύειν here is to be construed as the opposite of ὁμολογεῖν Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν ἐν σαρκὶ ἐληλυθότα. It does not mean 'to dissolve the unity of the person of Jesus'" (*TDNT*, 336). Regardless of which reading is preferred for 1 John 4:3, the verse and its textual history illustrate the work of the devil that opposes the work of God which is to believe in the one he has sent, his Son, Jesus Christ (John 6:29).

<sup>256</sup> *BDAG*, 483. Haas, DeJonge, and Swellengrebel give a similar definition for the context of 1 John 3:8, saying that "to destroy is sometimes rendered 'to undo, to do away with, to cause to be lost for sure, to put/make an end to, to wipe out'" (Haas, DeJonge, and Swellengrebel, *Handbook*, 84).

<sup>257</sup> Brown, *Epistles*, 406.

<sup>258</sup> See John 17:4: "I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do," and John 14:10: "It is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work." The result of Jesus' first miracle in the Gospel of John was that he revealed, or made visible, his glory. This was directed, in turn, toward the glory of God, as seen in John 12:27, 28 when Jesus says: "It was for this very reason I came to this hour. Father, glorify your name!"

<sup>259</sup> Kostenberger, *Missions*, 60.

<sup>260</sup> The improved condition of humans is not for its own sake, but for the purpose of glorifying God, according to John 15:8: "This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit." The non-Johannine exhortation by Jesus in Matthew 5:16 also demonstrates this: "Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise [give glory to] your Father in heaven."

## B. Means of Destruction of the Works of the Devil

Using Brown's succinct definition of λύειν, "to destroy, dissolve, nullify,"<sup>261</sup> as a working model, the next question to ask is by what means the works of the devil are destroyed, dissolved, or nullified. First John 3:8 states that the Son of God appeared for the purpose of destroying the works of the devil. Was that a one-time event on the cross, as some commentators have claimed?<sup>262</sup>

Before answering this question it will be helpful to look at a summary of what is said in the New Testament and extra-biblical literature about the means of the destruction of works of the devil. It is important to keep in mind that Jesus knew the "ruler of this world" would continue to be active after he, Jesus, returned to the Father, and for that reason he gave his followers the tools to deal with the evil one in his last instructions in John 14-17. A survey of the documents used in earlier word studies (the New Testament, *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, and selections from the Qumran literature), shows two basic categories within which destruction of (or doing away with) the works of the devil takes place: (1) The appearance of someone or something who is the opposite of the devil or evil one (Jesus/ light that reveals God's glory/ Spirit of Truth). (2) The choices of humans to act in ways opposite to the ways of the devil or evil one. Each of these will be discussed with examples from the literature, followed by a summary of three stages in which the works of the devil are destroyed.

- 1). The appearance of someone or something who is the opposite of the devil or evil one  
(Jesus/ light that reveals God's glory/ Spirit of Truth)

In the Synoptic Gospels the appearance of Jesus resulted in the works of the devil, in the form of demons, being cast out or destroyed. (The demons in Mark 1:24 asked, have you

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<sup>261</sup> It is likely that Brown derived this set of synonyms from the usage of λύειν in Ignatius to the Ephesians. In Ephesians 13:1 the root word is translated as "nullified" by Lightfoot (J.B. Lightfoot and J.R. Harmer, eds., *The Apostolic Fathers: Greek Texts and English Translations of Their Writings* [2<sup>nd</sup> ed.; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992], 145), and Holmes (*Fathers*, 100). For the same root word in Ephesians 19:3, these translators use "dissolved" (Lightfoot, *Fathers*, 149; Holmes, *Fathers*, 102).

<sup>262</sup> This seems to be implied in Hebrews 2:14, 15: "... so that by his death he might destroy (καταργέω, "abolish") him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil—and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death." See, for example, Edmond D. Hiebert, "An Expository Study of 1 John, Part 5 (of 10 parts): 'An Exposition of 1 John 2:29–3:12'" *BibSac* 146 (1989): 212 for a representative conservative evangelical point of view regarding a one-time destruction of the works of the devil on the cross.

come to ἀπολέσαι/destroy us?)<sup>263</sup> Reports of Jesus' encounters with demons would likely have been known through oral tradition to the Johannine believers even though the Gospel of John did not mention these.

The Prologue of the Gospel of John summarizes in philosophical terms Jesus' activity that is portrayed in specific stories in the Synoptic Gospels. "For John ... the destruction of the devil's work comes not by exorcisms, as in the Synoptic Gospels, but by Jesus' revelation of the Father, and that supremely in his death and exaltation."<sup>264</sup> The appearance of the Son of God, who is the "light of the world," brings light into darkness and nullifies the works of the devil. When the light shines (φαίνει) in the darkness, the darkness is not able to overcome it (John 1:5). Instead, the light, when it has appeared (ἐφανερώθη) causes the works of the devil, done in the dark (John 3:19, 20), to *dis*-appear. Jesus, according to the Johannine authors, was revealed (ἐφανερώθη), to bring the light of God which exposes/ nullifies/ destroys the works of darkness or works of the devil. The revelation of God's glory simultaneously destroys the works of the devil.

A similar view of how the ways of wickedness and injustice will be done away with is found in the first Qumran scroll, column 4:18-22, presented earlier in chiastic format. God himself will appear and bring "an end for injustice, and at the time of the visitation he will destroy it for ever" (1QS IV, 18b, 19a). The means of this destruction is through the revelation of the spirit of truth ("he will shed upon him the spirit of truth") which will cleanse men of all wicked deeds, abominations and injustice. These evil deeds will be rooted out and replaced with the positive qualities characteristic of God (truth, holiness, knowledge, wisdom).

Ignatius gives another example of the destruction of the works of the devil as a result of the appearance of God (in this case, as in John, through his Son). "Consequently all magic and every kind of spell were dissolved, the ignorance so characteristic of wickedness vanished, and the ancient kingdom was abolished when God appeared in human form to bring the newness of eternal life, and what had been prepared by God began to take effect"

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<sup>263</sup> The activity of such unclean spirits constitutes a "work of the devil," in their opposition to God's creational purposes, and deserves to be part of the discussion of 1 John 3:8. Brown's comments are helpful: "Jesus' ministry is taken up with driving out demons who recognize that he is the Son of God and has come to annihilate them (Mark 1:24; 3:11). In Matt 12:38 Jesus says, 'If it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you'; and in Luke 10:18 he says ... he saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven" (Brown, *Epistles*, 407).

<sup>264</sup> R. Alan Culpepper, *1 John, 2 John, 3 John* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1985), 62.

(Ignatius to the Ephesians 19:3).<sup>265</sup> In both the Qumran passage and in Ignatius' note to the Ephesians it can be seen that the appearing of God (or his Son) does away with wickedness, brings right knowledge,<sup>266</sup> and the end result of the appearing is eternal life, lived according to God's ways.

These examples illustrate the difference between two stages of the destruction of the works of the devil. In the Johannine literature Jesus' first appearing, leading to giving up his life, casts out the prince of this world (as Jesus predicted in John 12:31). This is the stage referred to in Hebrews 2:14: "so that by his death he might destroy (καταργέω, "abolish") him who holds the power of death." Ignatius refers to this stage also, and says further that "as a result [of God appearing in human form], all things were thrown into ferment, because the abolition of death was being carried out" (Ignatius to the Ephesians 19:3b). A later appearing results in further destruction of the works of the devil. The Qumran literature only knows of one visitation at a future time, but its description correlates with descriptions of conditions at the end of time after a second appearing of Jesus (John 14:4: "I will come back and take you to be with me"). The book of Revelation describes the city in which God's rule is unopposed by any works of the devil, just as the description in 1QS IV, 18-22 envisions a similar situation: "Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the lamb's book of life" (Revelation 21:27).

But in between the first appearing, in which Jesus repeatedly demonstrated that the devil's works were being destroyed, and his second appearing, in which the devil and his works are expected to be destroyed forever, there is an in-between stage of the destruction of the works of the devil in which believers are intended to participate. Jesus told his disciples to expect to do even greater works than he had done (John 14:12) and he promised to send the Spirit of truth who would guide believers and through whom they would do the Father's works.

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<sup>265</sup> This verse from Ignatius to the Ephesians will be considered again in the historical inter-texture section looking at the historical background of Ephesus, a center of magic.

<sup>266</sup> In Ignatius this is expressed negatively in referring to ignorance as characteristic of wickedness, while in 1QS IV, 22 "knowledge of the Most High" is portrayed as a result of wickedness being rooted out.

2). The choices of humans to act in ways opposite to the ways of the devil or evil one. While it is true that the unique Son of God performed a unique work on the cross in destroying the works of the devil, it is clear that that event was a decisive turning point in the cosmic battle, not the final battle. This unique act of war did indeed free humans from the power of the evil one (Hebrews 2:15; 1 John 5:19), but that was not the end of the story. With Jesus' triumph over Satan the first of three stages of the defeat of the works of darkness took place. With the sending of the Holy Spirit to believers, Jesus initiated the second stage of ongoing defeat of the devil by enabling his followers to continue the works he had been doing. In fact, Jesus promised they would do even greater works (John 14:12)—works directed toward overcoming evil and extending even further God's rule of righteousness and truth. As Hoskyns wrote, "The obedience of Jesus and His victory over the world (John 16:33) will expand in the obedience and victory of his disciples."<sup>267</sup> Works by believers, aimed at destroying the works of the devil, can be at both a personal and collective level.

Believers overcome evil on a personal level as in James 4:7: "resist the devil and he will flee from you." Ignatius speaks of "the ruler of this age" whose work can be destroyed by gentleness (Ignatius to Tral 4:2). The *Testament of Asher* admonishes believers: "but from wickedness flee away, destroying the evil inclination by your good works" (*T. Asher* 3:2).

Paul's letter to believers in Ephesus, where the Johannine community was also concentrated, emphasized the role believers can play in exposing works of darkness to the light, and thus destroying them in some sense: "have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them. For it is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret. But everything exposed by the light becomes visible, for it is light that makes everything visible" (Ephesians 5:11-14). When believers' actions expose evil deeds to the light, particularly by showing the positive alternative to deeds of darkness when they choose to act according to God's ways, some works of the devil are destroyed.

But in addition to individuals being released from the work of the devil in their lives, believers acting collectively can have an impact on the works of the devil. In Romans 16:20, in a context similar to that of 1 John with divisions and heresies within the Church (verse 17), Paul is confident, Ling points out, of victory "based on the known 'obedience' of those whom he is addressing. It is their obedience which will through the working of God result in

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<sup>267</sup> Edwyn C. Hoskyns, *The Fourth Gospel* (London: Faber, 1947), 424.

the extinguishing of the evil now present in their midst. The whole realm of Satan suffers a defeat as a result of the obedience of the Christian Church in one particular place.”<sup>268</sup>

Ignatius echoes this confidence in his letter to the Ephesians 13:1: “When you meet together the powers of Satan are overthrown, destroyed.” But as has been shown in an inner texture study, the work of God’s people is not intended to be limited to doing good only among the “brothers” with the same beliefs. Society (the *κοσμος*, “the world”) is in need of rescue from the hold the evil one has upon it (1 John 5:19: “the whole world lies in the [power of] the evil one). Strong champions, in the tradition of Heracles,<sup>269</sup> are needed to overcome evil wherever it is found and contribute toward the final cosmic overthrow of Satan described in the Apocalypse (Revelation 20:10: “And the devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of burning sulfur, ... for ever and ever”).

### C. Conclusions

Authors of the Qumran literature, the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, and the Johannine literature (as well as the New Testament as a whole) all looked forward to the day when a visitation or an appearing of a Righteous One would bring a final end to evil (destruction of the works of the devil) and usher in the unending reign of peace, righteousness and truth, as seen in the representative passages below:

#### 1QS IV, 20-22a

The appointed time of judgment, shall arise in the world for ever. God will then purify every deed of man with His truth. He will refine for Himself the human frame by rooting out all spirit of injustice from the bounds of his flesh. He will cleanse him of all wicked deeds with the spirit of holiness; like purifying waters he will shed upon him the spirit of truth (to cleanse him) of all abomination and injustice. And he shall be plunged into the spirit of purification that he may instruct the upright in the knowledge of the Most High and teach the wisdom of the sons of heaven to the perfect of way.

#### *T. Naphtali* 8:2-4

In the last times... shall salvation arise unto Israel  
 And in them shall Jacob be blessed.  
 For through their tribes shall God appear [dwelling among men] on earth,  
 To save the race of Israel,  
 And to gather together the righteous from amongst the Gentiles.  
 If ye work that which is good, my children,  
 Both men and angels shall bless you;  
 And God shall be glorified among the Gentiles through you,  
 And the devil shall flee from you,  
 And the wild beasts shall fear you,  
 And the Lord shall love you,

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<sup>268</sup> Ling, *Significance*, 42.

<sup>269</sup> See the discussion of the myths of Heracles as they relate to 1 John 2:13, 14 and the cosmic battle, in the cultural inter-texture section.

And the angels shall cleave to you.

1 John 2:28; 3:2, 5, 8; 5:13, 20b: And now, dear children, continue in him, so that when he appears we may be confident and unashamed before him at his coming. ... We know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure. ... You know that he appeared to take away sins. ... The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work. ... I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life. ... We are in him who is true—even in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life.

2 John 2: Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and from Jesus Christ, the Father's Son, will be with us in truth and love.

These writings agree that a new era will ultimately be ushered in by the appearing of the Righteous One. But in the meantime, in the Johannine worldview, the following syllogism, as mentioned earlier in this thesis, is in effect:

Major premise: God's work on earth is to defeat the devil's work, which is opposing God's will or law for the earth.

Minor premise: Jesus' followers are meant to join him in doing God's works.

Conclusion: Therefore, Jesus' followers are meant to participate in defeating or destroying the works of the devil and restoring God's will on earth.

#### **4.2.1.8. Summary of Insights from the Scribal Inter-texture Word Studies**

In the Johannine ideology, the devil is an evil being who has been sinning since the beginning of his rulership over the earth. His fundamentally sinful nature aggressively models all the characteristics that are opposite of and opposed to God's will. The Son of God appeared to give life (1 John 4:9), while the devil's works can be summarized as bringing death—both physical (disease and deformity, social chaos, mental chaos) and spiritual (unbelief, hatred). The appearing of the Son of God results in characteristics that are the opposite of those associated with the sin of the devil and in fact nullifies the works of the devil in the lives of those who choose to live in the light (1 John 1:7). The ultimate purpose of Jesus' appearing is to glorify God by bringing life to the children of God, replacing death that is a work of the devil in the present age.

Three stages in the destruction of the works of the devil can be seen in the word studies above:

1. Jesus' appearing on earth demonstrated his mastery over the devil through his works and atoning death on the cross (1 John 2:2; 4:9).

2. The ongoing works of believers overcome the evil one (1 John 2:13, 14) through their faith, through obedience, and through the Father working in them (John 14:10, 12, 20).
3. At a second appearing of a Righteous One, the devil and his sinful works will be destroyed forever, resulting in an unending reign of righteousness and truth (see 1 John 2:28; 3:2, 5, 8; 5:13, 20b; 2 John 2).

In addition to these and other insights gained from scribal inter-texture by examining written documents that are related in some way to the text of 1 John, knowledge of historical realities of the 1<sup>st</sup> century Mediterranean world will contribute valuable insights as well as confirming those discussed above. Certain aspects of the historical background of 1 John will be the focus of the next section.

#### **4.2.2. Historical Inter-texture**

This section moves from scribal inter-texture to historical inter-texture. Robbins explains, “Historical intertexture concerns events that have occurred at specific times in specific locations.”<sup>270</sup> He goes on to include people, places, institutions, events and customs as part of this aspect of Socio-Rhetorical Analysis.<sup>271</sup> Historical evidence from such sources as monuments and inscriptions help interpreters better understand the world in which the Johannine community lived. For the purpose of discovering what the Johannine author and audience would have understood the “works of the devil” to include, the environment of the city of Ephesus, that would have been familiar to them and influenced their thinking, will be explored from three standpoints. After a review of the historical evidence for Ephesus as the setting for the writing and reading/hearing of the Gospel of John, and by implication 1 John, the following categories of information will be briefly discussed, followed by conclusions related to the topic, the “works of the devil”:

1. History of Ephesus
2. Biblical inter-textual evidence of events and practices in Ephesus
3. The worship of Artemis and relevance to works of devil

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<sup>270</sup> Robbins, *Texture*, 63.

<sup>271</sup> Robbins, *Texture*, 65-66.

#### 4.2.2.1. *Ephesus as the Setting for the Writing and Recipients of 1 John*

Brown's evidence for Ephesus as the setting for the writing of 1 John was summarized in chapter 3. Trebilco also arrives at this conclusion by triangulating evidence from early church leaders Polycrates (bishop of Ephesus at the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century CE), Irenaeus (Bishop of Lyon who wrote *Adversus Haereses* around 180 CE) and Papias (an earlier bishop, writing around 130 CE from Hierapolis, northeast of Ephesus and close enough for communication to take place). Trebilco's reasoning is as follows:

- a. Irenaeus wrote in *Adv. Haer.* 3.1.1 that a John (he thought it was the apostle John who leaned on Jesus' breast, but which John is immaterial to the discussion of the location) wrote a gospel after Matthew, Mark, and Luke, from Ephesus, where he lived to an old age.
- b. Prior to Irenaeus, "Papias thought that John the Elder [not the apostle] was the author of the Fourth Gospel."<sup>272</sup> Papias knew Polycarp, who in turn knew John whom he called "the disciple of the Lord."<sup>273</sup>
- c. Shortly after Irenaeus wrote *Adversus Haereses*, Polycrates also wrote that John the Elder was the author of the Gospel and that this John was in Ephesus.<sup>274</sup>

These early church leaders' views agree that the Gospel of John was written by someone named John in Ephesus. Trebilco goes on to outline his view of the authorship of the epistles of John and concludes,

Even if we were to postulate different authors of 1 John and the Gospel and 2-3 John ... the similarities of both language and theology between all these works requires the view that there was a very close association between the author of 1 John and John the Elder (the author of the Gospel and 2-3 John) and thus that they belonged to the same circle or group and were definitely in the same geographical location of Ephesus.<sup>275</sup>

Assuming, then, that Ephesus was the location of the author of 1 John, and further assuming that the author's close relationship with his "dear children," as he calls his

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<sup>272</sup> Trebilco, *Ephesus*, 252.

<sup>273</sup> Irenaeus quotes Polycarp using this description, disciple of the Lord, of the John fleeing from the bathhouse in Ephesus (*Adv. Haer.* 3.3.4).

<sup>274</sup> Trebilco, *Ephesus*, 252.

<sup>275</sup> Trebilco, *Ephesus*, 267

audience, means the recipients of 1 John also lived in Ephesus, an understanding of the environment of that city should prove helpful in viewing the text of 1 John through ancient Mediterranean eyes.

#### **4.2.2.2. History of Ephesus**

Ephesus was a major trade center, both by land and sea. A number of major roads to the inland began (or ended) in Ephesus, while its seaport gave it access to all of the Mediterranean world. The city was the capital of the province of Asia and according to Trebilco, inscriptions show it received the designation, “the first and greatest metropolis of Asia.”<sup>276</sup> The book of Revelation seems to recognize this status by listing Ephesus first of the seven cities to whom the book is addressed. The fact that the church of this city is praised for recognizing “those who claim to be apostles but are not” and finding them false (Revelation 2:2) is an indirect indication of the traveling preachers passing through the city using the good road systems of the *Pax Romana* that intersected in this prosperous seaport. Some travelers were attracted there by the reputation of the temple of Artemis, one of the seven wonders of the ancient world, “the ornament of the whole province.”<sup>277</sup>

#### **4.2.2.3. Biblical Inter-textual Evidence of Events and Practices in Ephesus**

Paul was one of the traveling preachers passing through Ephesus, and as has already been noted in chapter 3, he encountered disciples of John the Baptist in this city (Acts 19:1-7).<sup>278</sup> The account in Acts 19 of Paul’s ministry in Ephesus also gives evidence of Jewish exorcists, including the seven sons of Sceva, who tried to use Jesus’ name to drive out evil spirits. This indicates the prevalence of the belief in those days in evil spirits, as well as showing the influence Paul had in demonstrating that the works of these hostile spirits (including illnesses, see Acts 19:11) could be destroyed (because the illness was cured) through the name of Jesus.

Following the account of the Jewish exorcists in Ephesus, Acts 19 goes on to relate that large numbers of people in the city who had been associated with the practice of magic

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<sup>276</sup> Trebilco, *Ephesus*, 1, 14.

<sup>277</sup> Trebilco quotes from an inscription of around 44 CE which includes this phrase (Trebilco, *Ephesus*, 20).

<sup>279</sup> decided to burn their books (Acts 19:19) and follow the way of Jesus that Paul was preaching.

Another evidence of Paul's influence in countering the powers of darkness in this city is recorded in Acts 19:23-41, relating the riot that broke out in Ephesus, stirred up by Demetrius, a leader among the craftsmen who made silver shrines of Artemis. The uproar was finally quieted by the city clerk: "Men of Ephesus, doesn't all the world know that the city of Ephesus is the guardian of the temple of the great Artemis and of her image, which fell from heaven? Therefore, since these facts are undeniable, you ought to be quiet and not do anything rash.... As it is, we are in danger of being charged with rioting because of today's events." (Acts 19:35, 36, 40)

#### **4.2.2.4. *The Worship of Artemis and Its Relevance to the Works of the Devil***

The readiness of the people to riot over an offense to their patron goddess, Artemis, <sup>280</sup> illustrates a statement by Lightfoot quoted by Hill: "The lifetime of Polycarp [70–155 CE] was the most tumultuous period in the religious history of the world; and a chief arena of the struggle between diverse creeds and cults was Asia Minor." <sup>281</sup> Because of the strategic location of the city and the elaborate temple of the cult of Artemis, with her fanatic devotees as seen in the account of Acts 19, Ephesus was at the center of this religious upheaval in Asia Minor during the time of the biblical writings. <sup>282</sup> The characteristics associated with the goddess Artemis and the worship of her will be briefly listed next, leading to conclusions

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<sup>278</sup> These disciples were not the only Jewish people in the city. Trebilco points out "evidence from both Josephus and inscriptions show that the Jews could regard themselves as one group, 'the Jews in Ephesus'" (Trebilco, *Ephesus*, 51).

<sup>279</sup> Arnold documents that Ephesus was a center for magical practices, citing Clement of Alexandria, the Ephesia Grammata, and other sources. (Clinton E. Arnold, *Ephesians: Power and Magic; The Concept of Power in Ephesians in Light of Its Historical Setting* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992], 14-17).

<sup>280</sup> Trebilco has surveyed the archaeological evidence and summarizes, "The frequency of her name in official documents and on coins indicates her relationship with the city" (Trebilco, *Ephesus*, 27).

<sup>281</sup> Charles E. Hill, *Lost Teaching*, 1.

<sup>282</sup> Trebilco states, "It was the cult of the Ephesian Artemis which, more than anything else, made Ephesus a centre of religious life during our period" (Trebilco, *Ephesus*, 19). However, other deities were worshiped in this city as well. Harland discusses numerous inscriptions showing that informal associations abounded in Ephesus "under the patronage of deities like Zeus, Dionysos, and Demeter" (Harland, *Associations*, 2). Trebilco mentions in a footnote that Heracles was among the many deities, both major and minor, worshiped in Ephesus (Trebilco, *Ephesus*, 19). A statue of Heracles still standing in Ephesus is likely one referred to by the ancient biographer Philostratus, in his *Life of Apollonius*, placed in the city in commemoration of the death of a plague demon. The cultural echoes that may have been heard by the Johannine community related to Heracles will be discussed in the upcoming cultural inter-texture section.

about how believers living in a city with this atmosphere might have viewed the phrase, the “works of the devil.”

Van Tilborg summarizes the importance of Artemis in first century Ephesus, saying she was “at least as important as that of the emperors. She has been linked with Ephesus from time immemorial and is still very much present in this era.”<sup>283</sup> She was a goddess of many qualities. She was considered to be queen of the cosmos and, in a hint of rivalry with the God of the Jewish and Christian populations, she held the titles “Saviour,” and “most manifest” (ἐπιφανεστάτη).<sup>284</sup> Trebilco quotes two ancient writers: “Strabo writes, ‘Artemis has her name from the fact that she makes people ἀρτεμέας’ that is safe and sound, and Artemidorus adds ὕγιες—healthy. There are other indications that Artemis was thought of as being benevolent to her followers.”<sup>285</sup>

In a period of time when natural disasters, such as plagues and famines, could strike without warning, staying on favorable terms with important gods and goddesses, such as Artemis, was important to society. Pilch comments that “all the Mediterranean contemporaries of Jesus and his followers believed in the reality of a spirit world that regularly meddled in human affairs.”<sup>286</sup> Eventually Christian leaders such as Polycarp were persecuted and even martyred because of their refusal to worship the appropriate gods and goddesses, since their “atheism” was viewed as bringing the wrath of those deities on the city in the form of disease or famine.<sup>287</sup>

The help of powerful gods and goddesses was also believed to be needed to ward off the attacks of evil spirits. The practice of magic, as mentioned in Acts 19, was prevalent in Ephesus. Ignatius wrote in his letter to the believers in this city that with the coming of God in human form, “all magic was dissolved” (Ignatius to the Ephesians 19:3),<sup>288</sup> perhaps

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<sup>283</sup> Sjeff Van Tilborg, *Reading John in Ephesus* (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 48.

<sup>284</sup> Trebilco, *Ephesus*, 22.

<sup>285</sup> Trebilco, *Ephesus*, 21.

<sup>286</sup> John J. Pilch, *Healing in the New Testament: Insights from Medical and Mediterranean Anthropology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000), 101.

<sup>287</sup> Harland, *Associations*, 249.

<sup>288</sup> Arnold points out that the only occurrence of the word “magic” in Ignatius’ letters is in the letter to Ephesus, supporting the view that the city was particularly known as a center of the practice of magic. (Arnold, *Ephesians*, 16). This is relevant to the consideration of what the audience of 1 John might have considered the “works of the devil” to include. Ignatius spoke of dissolving (ἐλύετο) magic and spells. The author of 1 John, assumed to be writing to another congregation of believers in the same city, spoke of the Son of God destroying (λύσῃ) the works of the devil. The apparent parallelism in these writings needs to be taken seriously. In addition, Ignatius uses the same root word for destroy/ dissolve/ nullify in Ephesians 13:1, “when you meet together frequently, the powers of Satan are overthrown (καθαίρονται) and his destructiveness nullified

referring to the event recorded in Acts 19:19. Arnold concludes, based upon evidence from inscriptions and monuments, that Artemis of Ephesus was “a goddess of the underworld [who was] intimately linked with magical practices.”<sup>289</sup> Arnold’s research led him to postulate that “the overriding characteristic of the practice of magic throughout the Hellenistic world was the cognizance of a spirit world exercising influence over virtually every aspect of life.”<sup>290</sup> Trebilco confirms that Artemis was “worshipped because of her lordship over supernatural powers.”<sup>291</sup> Arnold finds a literal illustration of those supernatural powers in an image of Artemis with “rows of animals sculpted on her skirt. The frightful-looking creatures should probably be understood as representations of the harmful spirits of nature over which Artemis wields authority.”<sup>292</sup>

These rows of frightful creatures are reminiscent of the wild beasts of *T. Naphtali* 8:4, 6<sup>293</sup> and the wild animals of Mark 1:13 (Jesus “was with the wild animals, and angels attended him”). Paul refers to the connection of wild beasts with Ephesus: “If I fought wild beasts in Ephesus for merely human reasons, what have I gained?” (1 Corinthians 15:32). Perhaps he was referring to the rioting of Acts 19, comparing mob violence to the activity of wild beasts. The authority of Jesus shown in Mark, the potential authority of the children of Naphtali over wild beasts, and Paul’s survival when he fought the “wild beasts” in Ephesus (whether literal or figurative) would have been seen as a direct challenge to the goddess of Ephesus who was supposed to be the master of these representations of evil.

#### 4.2.2.5. *Conclusions from Historical Inter-texture Study*

While the Johannine believers, coming out of a Jewish background, would not have been worshippers of Artemis, they would have been familiar with the places and events connected with the city such as the temple of Artemis, the Jewish exorcists, the riots over rival teaching,

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(λύεται) by the unanimity of your faith.” The common denominator is the presence of Christ, whether physically present as the Son of God or spiritually present in believers through the means of God’s children abiding in the Father and the Son and vice versa. Compare Jesus’ words in John 15: 7 (“If you abide in me and my words abide in you ...) with Ignatius to the Ephesians 10:3 (“... that you may abide in Christ Jesus physically and spiritually”).

<sup>289</sup> Arnold, *Ephesians*, 168.

<sup>290</sup> Arnold, *Ephesians*, 18.

<sup>291</sup> Trebilco, *Ephesus*, 22.

<sup>292</sup> Arnold, *Ephesians*, 25.

<sup>293</sup> *T. Naphtali* VIII. 4, 6: “If ye work that which is good, my children, / Both men and angels shall bless you; .../And the wild beasts shall fear you, ... But him who doeth not that which is good, / Both angels and men shall curse, .../ And every wild beast shall master him.”

and pressure to worship and appease false gods and goddesses in order to prevent natural disasters such as disease epidemics. They would have been aware of the goddesses' connection with the underworld, with magic, with evil spirits, and her reputation for "saving" those who worshipped her from evil spirits, including healings attributed to her.

Several tentative conclusions can be drawn from this survey of historical background, regarding how believers in Ephesus might have viewed the works of the devil:

1. The connection of the goddess Artemis with the underworld presents one more piece of evidence that opponents to the true God had some connection with death.
2. The depiction of the goddess taming wild beasts shows the felt need of the people for deliverance from evil spirits, including diseases thought to be caused by them.
3. The imitation of casting out evil spirits in Jesus' name by Sceva and his sons gives one more piece of evidence in the belief that evil spirits caused illness and that these could be driven out by one more powerful than they (in this case Jesus, who was more powerful than the patron goddess, Artemis).
4. The widespread practice of magic found in Ephesus, and throughout Asia Minor, was something evil that needed to be destroyed according to both Ignatius and the author of the book of Acts. The parallelism between Ignatius' statement that the appearing of God in human form dissolved all magic and the statement of the author of 1 John that the appearing of the Son of God was for the purpose of destroying the works of the devil indicates that believers in Ephesus would likely have had magical practices in mind when they heard the phrase, "the works of the devil."
5. The beliefs in Artemis and all the other Greco-Roman gods and goddesses, in addition to the wide variety of Judeo-Christian heresies that Irenaeus wrote about, would have been seen by the Johannine believers as opposition to the true God, and therefore a work of the devil.

Based on the reasoning in the earlier word studies, anything in opposition to God and his will would have been considered by the Johannine community to be a work of the devil. A study of the city of Ephesus and its history presents us with evidence that beliefs in false gods, magic, and disease were all likely to have been considered works of the devil by the Johannine believers living there.

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### 4.2.3. Cultural Inter-texture

The study of the city of Ephesus gives a sample of what Jewish believers who lived within the Hellenistic culture would have been familiar with regarding customs and religious beliefs. Rohrbaugh points out the importance of a cross-cultural reading of the Bible, including knowledge of “the cultural resources and worldview available to a reader socialized in the Mediterranean world.”<sup>294</sup> Adapting Sisson’s question that he asked regarding Paul, “what voices from the surrounding culture”<sup>295</sup> has the author of 1 John evoked in advancing his ideology regarding the nature of the works of the devil? In addition to the goddess Artemis, celebrated so widely in Ephesus, the whole population would have been aware of the pantheon of Greco-Roman gods and goddesses, one of the most well-known of whom was Heracles, the icon of youth and strength, supposedly fathered by Zeus with a human mother, worshiped both as a god and a hero. As Bruns points out, the author of 1 John would have been “familiar with the thought of the pagan world and not averse to making use of it.”<sup>296</sup> This familiarity with the pagan Hellenistic world supplemented his strong Jewish affinities and the similarities in his writings to those of the Qumran community that had withdrawn from Judeo-Hellenistic society.

Keeping in mind Greco-Roman as well as Jewish cultural dimensions gives new possibilities for hearing the echoes and allusions<sup>297</sup> that the original audience of 1 John may have heard in phrases referring to “destroying the works of the devil” (1 John 3:8) or “overcoming the evil one” (1 John 2:13, 14), or “casting out the prince of this world” (John 12:31), all of which have been shown earlier to be speaking about the same evil being who is opposed to God and over whom God intends to have final victory. An exploration of the cultural background that is alluded to in 1 John 2:13, 14 will provide deeper insights

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<sup>294</sup> Richard L. Rohrbaugh, “Introduction,” in *The Social Sciences and New Testament Interpretation* (ed. Richard L. Rohrbaugh; Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1996), 1.

<sup>295</sup> Russell B. Sisson, “A Common Agon: Ideology and Rhetorical Intertexture in Philippians,” in *Fabrics of Discourse: Essays in Honor of Vernon K. Robbins* (eds. David B. Gowler, L. Gregory Bloomquist, and Duane F. Watson; Harrisburg: Trinity Press, 2003), 246.

<sup>296</sup> J. Edgar Bruns, “A Note on John 16:33 and 1 John 2:13, 14,” *JBL* 86 (1967): 451-53.

<sup>297</sup> Van Tilborg calls this “interference,” “the exchange which spontaneously originates between reader and text when a typical similarity or dissimilarity is seen. In our case, these deal with city-interferences: all texts about the history, culture, architecture, and social environment of first century Ephesus which positively or negatively ‘interfere’ with the reading process of John’s Gospel” (Van Tilborg, *John*, 3, 4).

(Robbins calls this a “thicker” texture <sup>298</sup>) into the nature of “the works of the devil” and a better understanding the role and a possible role-model for the “young men” in having victory over the evil one.

Echoes of “insider” cultural knowledge and allusions to familiar myths are characteristic of the cultural inter-texture method of Socio-Rhetorical Analysis. <sup>299</sup> With this approach the interpreter “begins with verbal signs in the text that explicitly evoke verbal signs in other texts.” <sup>300</sup> In this cultural inter-textual study, verbal signs in the bridge paragraph of 1 John 2:13, 14 <sup>301</sup> that speak of young men having victory over the evil one (γράφω ὑμῖν, νεανίσκοι, ὅτι νενικήκατε τὸν πονηρὸν) will be seen to evoke the myths of Heracles that were commonly known in the ancient Mediterranean world. In addition, the possibility will be considered that the term, νεανίσκοι, may have brought to the audience’s mind the common practice of pederasty in that place and time. <sup>302</sup> The focus will be on how these allusions relate to an understanding of the phrase, “the works of the devil.”

#### 4.2.3.1. *Νεανίσκοι as a Hint of Pederasty*

The play on words in 1 John 2:13 on the similar-sounding, νεανίσκοι / νενικήκατε (repeated in 2:14 with the amplification, ὅτι ἰσχυροὶ ἐστε), calls attention to a particular time in the life of a man in ancient Greece when he was young, strong, and potentially able to be victorious in physical contests such as battle, Olympic games, or in rivalry for the love of the ἐράσται, the older partners in pederastic relationships.

Plato’s dialog, “Rival Lovers,” is representative of the homosexual connotations that may have been associated with hearing the term, νεανίσκοι. In this dialog Socrates reports a scene that appears to have been considered normal, “I entered the grammar school of the teacher Dionysius, and saw there the young men (νεανίσκοι) who are accounted the most

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<sup>298</sup> “As interpreters explore the inter-texture of a text, then, they are continually looking at phenomena outside and inside the text being interpreted. In a context of comparison, the text’s particular configuration of phenomena in the world takes on a richer, thicker quality” (Robbins, *Texture*, 3).

<sup>299</sup> Robbins, *Texture*, 58.

<sup>300</sup> Robbins, *Tapestry*, 32.

<sup>301</sup> First John 2:12-14 was seen, in the inner texture discussion of rhetorical transitions, to be a bridge paragraph, looking both backwards at previous themes and forwards to upcoming themes, one of which is overcoming the evil one, including destroying his works.

<sup>302</sup> Consideration of this possibility may be troublesome for some western biblical interpreters. As Rohrbaugh indicates, “by immersing ourselves in strange Mediterranean readings of the Bible we risk theological culture shock” (Rohrbaugh, “Introduction,” 3).

comely in form and of distinguished family, and their lovers.”<sup>303</sup> Davidson distinguishes between the young men (νεανίσκοι) in the age-grade 18 and older, and the younger boys (παῖς) “who were escorted to the gymnasium by the slave παιδαγόγοι and followed around at a distance by a pack of admirers.”<sup>304</sup> Percey reports this homosexual theme in plays by Aeschylus (who wrote a play that has been lost titled, *Neaniskoi*<sup>305</sup>) and Euripides, and in considerable numbers of poems in the ancient era.<sup>306</sup> Van Tilborg presents evidence of the acceptance of the practice of homosexuality in a quotation of the poet Strato of Sardis<sup>307</sup> and from other literature, visual arts, and epigraphs showing that during the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> centuries C.E., as had been true for centuries, sexual “relationships between men and boys are ... ‘naturally accepted’ imaginarily, poetically, emotionally, and factually.”<sup>308</sup>

In an environment in which it was acceptable and common for young boys and adult men to have sexual relationships, it would seem likely that the word νεανίσκοι would be associated in peoples’ minds with that cultural phenomena when reading 1 John in Ephesus. In that case, one way to read this passage, “I write to you young men that you have overcome the evil one,” would be that they had successfully resisted homosexual relationships offered when they were younger.<sup>309</sup> This potential implication would then indicate one way in which the phrase, “the works of the devil,” may have been heard in ancient Ephesus.

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<sup>303</sup> Plato, “Rival Lovers,” Section 132a. Cited 26 May 2008. Online: <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text.jsp?doc=Plat.%20Lovers>.

<sup>304</sup> James Davidson, *The Greeks and Greek Love: A Radical Reappraisal of Homosexuality in Ancient Greece* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 2007), n.p. [cited 24 May 2008]. Online [http://www.friends-classics.demon.co.uk/N\\_071119\\_2.htm](http://www.friends-classics.demon.co.uk/N_071119_2.htm).

<sup>305</sup> J. H. Rose, *A Handbook of Greek Literature: From Homer to the Age of Lucian* (New York: Dutton, 1960), 147.

<sup>306</sup> William A. Percey, *Pederasty and Pedagogy in Archaic Greece* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1996), 186-87.

<sup>307</sup> All night long, my dripping eyes tear-stained,  
I strive to rest my spirit that grief keeps awake—  
Grief for this separation from my friend since yesterday,  
When Theodorus, leaving me here alone,  
Went to his own Ephesus.  
If he come not back soon I shall be no longer able  
To bear the solitude of my bed. (Van Tilborg, *John*, 150.)

<sup>308</sup> Van Tilborg, *John*, 153.

<sup>309</sup> The legitimacy of this possible reading is strengthened by the fact that a few verses later the author of 1 John refers to the world and its desires passing away (2:17), as does the bloom of youth and the desire of the ἐράσται for a young man once his smooth cheeks began to grow a beard. Paul demonstrates in Romans

#### 4.2.3.2. *Νεανίσκοι as an Allusion to Heracles*

Another reading of 1 John 2:13, 14, with the combination of terms, “young men” (νεανίσκοι), “overcome/have victory over” (νενικήκατε), and “strong” (ἰσχυροί), would almost inevitably have reminded anyone living in Ephesus of the statue of the strong young Heracles that Apollonius had erected in that city during the time the Johannine writings were circulating.<sup>310</sup> Myths of Heracles were recycled in many of the famous ancient poets and dramatists such as Homer, Aeschylus, and Euripedes. But even 400 years prior to these written tales, the life of the famous god-hero Heracles was shown in artwork such as vases and sculptured reliefs.<sup>311</sup> That the comparison of Heracles to the strong young men and to the unique Son of God was likely to have been intentional is reinforced by the fact, as Bruns reports, that “a generation after the publication of the Johannine writings, Justin Martyr explicitly contrasts Jesus, the veritable *ischuros gigas* with Herakles, the *ischuros gigas* of myth.”<sup>312</sup>

The relevant question for this study is to try to imagine what aspects of the life and labors of Heracles might have been intended by the author or assumed by the audience when they heard or read that the young men were strong and had overcome the evil one (1 John 2:14), and that the Son of God had come to destroy the works of the devil (1 John 3:8). A brief look at three general characteristics attributed to Heracles will be followed by a comparison to biblical themes, as part of the process of mining the depths of a 1<sup>st</sup> century Mediterranean understanding of the phrase, “the works of the devil.”

1. Heracles was considered to have great strength.
2. Heracles demonstrated victory over evil entities.
3. Heracles was viewed as a defender against disease and death.

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1:26, 27 the fact that pederasty, along with all same-sex passion, was considered “sin” by Jewish Christian believers. This may be an illustration of one interpretation of sin as ἀνομία, against natural law.

<sup>310</sup> Bruns, “Note,” 453. Also see F.C. Conybeare, trans., “Apollonius of Tyana by Flavius Philostratus,” n.p. [cited 25 May 2008]. Online: <http://www.chrestos.com/>.

<sup>311</sup> Michael Stewart, “Herakles, Greek Mythology: From the Iliad to the Fall of the Last Tyrant,” n.p. [cited 24 May 2008]. Online: <http://messagenet.com/myths/bios/heracles.html>.

<sup>312</sup> Bruns, “Note,” 452. Bruns misses the closer echo from Jewish literature of Samson, a young man who is strong and, like Heracles, is reputed to have overcome a lion (Judges 14:5, 6). In both cases the lion, a wild beast (θηρίων) can be read as representative of the “evil one.” For θηρίων as a symbol of evil, see Mark 1:13 and Revelation chapters 13 and 17 in particular.

### A. Great Strength

Heracles' strength was legendary. In the myth of his birth, as a baby he kills two snakes, one with each hand. Among the twelve special labors set for him by his cousin, Heracles demonstrated superior strength, as well as cunning, in cleaning out the Aegean stables by re-directing the course of a river, by holding up the heavens for Atlas the Titan for a time, by capturing several wild and strange animals, by moving mountains, and by tossing boulders as if they were small stones.<sup>313</sup>

### B. Evil Entities

Using his great strength, in other labors that Heracles was required to undertake (in atonement for having killed his own sons in a fit of madness), he demonstrated victory over several actively evil entities, including a lion, a hydra, and the dog of Hades. The first of his "labors" is depicted on a Temple of Zeus (mid-fifth century B.C.E.) showing Heracles as beardless (therefore young), standing with his foot on the dead lion of Nemea that he had killed, as instructed by his cousin.<sup>314</sup> This lion was a menace to the people of Nemea, a half-sister of Cerberos, the watchdog of the gates of Hades. Heracles wrestled with the lion and strangled it to death, thus rescuing the population from a great evil. He wore its skin as a symbol of his strength throughout the rest of his life. (Notice the resemblance to one of the stories of the strong man Samson of the Hebrew Bible in Judges 14:5, 6.)

In another of his labors, Heracles was to kill the Hydra, a deadly many-headed monster that lived in a swamp. As soon as one of its heads was cut off, two more would grow in its place. "To make matters worse, the Hydra's very breath was lethal. Even smelling its footprints was enough to bring death to an ordinary mortal. Fortunately, Heracles was no ordinary mortal."<sup>315</sup> Heracles was able, with his nephew's help, to overcome this "evil one" as well.

Finally, after many other adventures in which he performed seemingly impossible and super-human feats, Heracles was given one last "labor," to bring the dog, Cerberos, back from Hades, the Underworld. The dog is described in myths as having teeth as sharp as a

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<sup>313</sup> Michael Stewart, "Herakles, Greek Mythology: From the Iliad to the Fall of the Last Tyrant," n.p. [cited 24 May 2008]. Online: <http://messenger.com/myths/bios/heracles.html>.

<sup>314</sup> Ibid.

<sup>315</sup> "Heracles," n.p. [cited 24 May 2008]. Online: <http://www.mythweb.com/encyc/entries/Heracles.html>.

razor, multiple heads, a poisonous snake for a tail, as well as snakes growing out of its back. Somehow the strong hero was able to get Cerberus by the throat and choke it into submission, again defeating an evil one, this time a guardian of the place of death.<sup>316</sup>

### C. Defender Against Disease and Death

Perhaps it was this last of the twelve labors, proving himself capable of defeating even death, in a sense, that gave Heracles the reputation of being one who averted evil, a defender against disease and death. This reputation is seen in the story found in “The Life of Apollonius,” in which Apollonius puts a stop to a plague raging in Ephesus by inciting the population of the city to stone to death an old beggar who turns out to actually be a dog as large as a lion, who had been the cause of the plague. After this incident, according to the story, the statue of the “Averting god, Heracles,” was set up over the place where the plague demon had been killed.<sup>317</sup>

Harrison cites an Orphic Hymn to Heracles that confirms his reputation for defending against disease and death:

Come Blessed One, bring spells for all diseases,  
Drive out ill fates, wave in thy hand thy branch  
With magic shafts banish the noisome Keres.<sup>318</sup>

Harrison also describes a scene engraved on a shrine dedicated to Heracles. Holding his branch from the tree of life, he represents youth pitted against a “pygmy ker, with shrunken body and distorted face,” depicting disease and death.<sup>319</sup> An inscription on this shrine reads, “Of Herakles Alexikakos,” or “Heracles, Defender from Evil.”<sup>320</sup>

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<sup>316</sup> Ibid.

<sup>317</sup> F.C. Conybeare, trans., “Apollonius of Tyana by Flavius Philostratus,” n.p. [cited 25 May 2008]. Online: <http://www.chrestos.com/>.

<sup>318</sup> Jane Ellen Harrison, *Themis: A Study of the Social Origins of Greek Religion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1912), 366. “The keres were the female spirits of violent or cruel death, including death in battle, by accident, murder or ravaging disease” (“Theoi Greek Mythology: Exploring Mythology in Classical Literature & Art,” n.p. [cited 30 May 2008]. Online: <http://www.theoi.com/Daimon/Keres.html>).

<sup>319</sup> Harrison, *Themis*, 379.

<sup>320</sup> Harrison, *Themis*, 378.

#### 4.2.3.3. *Summary/Implications of Cultural Inter-texture*

The fact that a statue of Heracles was put up in Ephesus over the spot where a plague demon, in the form of a vicious wild animal, part lion and part dog, was supposed to have been killed, indicates that the people apparently saw in the myth of Apollonius an echo of Heracles' first and last labors of killing the vicious lion and capturing the dog of Hades. Further it is clear that they connected the killing of mythical wild beasts with defeating disease. Perhaps one interpretation of Paul's statement that he fought wild beasts in Ephesus is that he was present during a plague and did not succumb to it.

For Jewish Christian believers in Ephesus, the verbal connection between strong young men overcoming the evil one (1 John 2:13, 14) with the famous strong young hero fighting wild beasts, thereby overcoming evil, would likely have been reminiscent of the passage mentioned earlier in this chapter from the *Testament of Naphtali* 8:2-4:

If ye work that which is good, my children, ...  
The devil shall flee from you,  
And the wild beasts shall fear you,  
And the Lord shall love you,  
And the angels shall cleave to you.

This can be compared with the wild animals Jesus was among, without harm, in the desert, while the angels attended to his needs (Mark 1:13). Shortly after this experience among wild animals, according to Mark's account, Jesus began demonstrating his authority over demons (1:23ff) and healing many who were sick with various diseases caused by demons (1:34). In this context Mark introduces the account of Jesus and Beelzebul, and the necessity to bind the strong man (Mark 3:20-27). Luke's version adds that a stronger one, meaning Jesus, overcomes the strong man, referring to Satan. This is a scribal inter-textual echo that would likely have been heard by the Johannine community when they heard that the young men have overcome the evil one. They would have recognized the role of Jesus, the unique Son of God, as the one who overcomes Satan, the evil one, and defeats him (1 John 3:8). But they would also realize that the strong young men have a role in working with the unique and strong Son of God to overcome and destroy the works of the devil.

This short study of one aspect of cultural inter-texture in the Greco-Roman world has shown that the myths of Heracles, in which he conquers enemies of humans, can serve as metaphors for the work of the young men and unique Son of God in overcoming, as Bruns says, "the personified representative of evil, whether he be called Satan ((John 13:27), the

devil (John 8:44, 13:2; 1 John 3:8, 10) the evil one (John 17:15; 1 John 2:13, 14; 3:12; 5:18) or the prince of this world (John 12:31; 16:33).<sup>321</sup> From this study we can add another personification of evil to Bruns' list: "wild beasts." All of these personifications are depicted in both biblical and extra-biblical literature as murderers and agents of death. This is the enemy whose works Jesus destroys. This is the enemy the strong young men are able to overcome, indicating that they are stronger, or have access to a stronger power, than the evil one they overcome. "Now is the prince of this world cast out; you have overcome the evil one; the Son of God came to destroy the works of the devil," one of which this study shows is disease and death.

#### **4.2.4. Conclusions from Inter-texture Studies**

From scribal, historical and cultural inter-texture studies, the insights numbered below have been gained into the questions of this thesis, which are, (1) What would the original audience have understood the phrase in 1 John 3:8, "the works to mean? (2) How might a comprehensive investigation of this phrase contribute toward theological discourse about the Johannine understanding of the devil/evil and cosmic conflict?

1. The devil's sin is characterized by that which is in opposition to God's will.
2. The works of the devil include:
  - a. death and disease (characterized by murder, attributed to wild beasts, evil spirits)
  - b. instigation of humans to behave in ways that are counter to God's will ("sin")
    - i. Individual sins (such as pederasty)
    - ii. Group behavior opposing God (such as the opponents of 1 John, the riots in Ephesus against Paul)
  - c. false beliefs that turn people away from the true God (characterized by idols, false gods such as Artemis, wrong teaching such as that of the opponents in 1 John).
3. The destruction of the works of the devil was begun with Jesus' death on the cross. ("Now is the prince of this world cast out.")
4. Destruction of the works of the devil continues in the lives of believers who overcome the evil one through the strength of the Son and the Father working in them.

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<sup>321</sup> Bruns, "Note," 252.

4. At a future appearing of a Righteous One, the devil and his sinful works will be destroyed forever.

This concludes the investigations of the text through the lens of inter-texture. Next the lens of Social-cultural texture will be used to gain new insights into the text.

### 4.3. SOCIAL-CULTURAL TEXTURE <sup>322</sup>

Discoveries from inner texture investigations have guided the direction taken in the scribal, historical and cultural inter-texture studies. Insights gained from these separate studies, analogous to patterned quilt squares that will later be stitched together, have contributed significantly toward the research problems being addressed in this thesis. A third texture, social-cultural texture, has the potential to confirm the insights already gleaned and contribute additional findings.

In the Socio-Rhetorical Analysis model, social-cultural texture starts with sociological and anthropological theory that is potentially applicable to the text. As mentioned in chapter 2, the Johannine community was a recognizable social entity with distinctive beliefs and practices that felt itself threatened by the activities of former group members. Since the situation the author of 1 John is addressing relates to deviance from group norms, Mary Douglas' grid/group theory <sup>323</sup> will assist in understanding the community dynamics related to group norms and deviance. In addition, the way in which the author deals with deviance will be examined through the lens of ritual theory, specifically the "Status Degradation Ritual," <sup>324</sup> which Malina and Neyrey adapted from Harold Garfinkel. <sup>325</sup>

After establishing the value and legitimacy of using social-scientific models, Mary Douglas' Grid and Group model of four types of groups will be briefly explained, including boundary maintenance and concern with deviant behavior typical of Low Grid, High Group societies. This model will then be applied to the Johannine community to show the perceived necessity of casting out those who deviated from the group norms. The text of 1 John clearly indicates both the Johannine group's norms and how the secessionists violated or deviated

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<sup>322</sup> This section is adapted from an article by Beth Snodderly and D. G. van der Merwe, "Status Degradation in First John: Social Scientific and Literary Perspectives," *Acta Patristica et Byzantina* 18 (2007): 179-213.

<sup>323</sup> Mary Douglas, "Cultural Bias" in *In the Active Voice* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1982), 183-266.

<sup>324</sup> Malina, and Neyrey, "Conflict," 98.

<sup>325</sup> Harold Garfinkel, "Conditions of Successful Degradation Ceremonies," *AJS* 61 (1956): 420-24.

from those norms, leading to their expulsion from the group. The means of formalizing that expulsion can be better understood through the lens of Malina's and Neyrey's Status Degradation Ritual model. By applying social-science models of grid/group theory and ritual theory, this section will investigate the nature of the problem being addressed in 1 John, the way in which the author of 1 John chose to handle that problem, and the relationship of the community's values to their understanding of "the works of the devil."

#### 4.3.1. The Use of Social-scientific Models

Appropriate interpretation of biblical texts requires interacting with the social-cultural values, beliefs, and customs of the people who wrote and received the written documents being studied.<sup>326</sup> Culture permeates everything a person or group says, writes, and does. Without knowing the presuppositions and common knowledge of a people, including their cultural frame of reference, modern interpreters cannot really grasp the meanings behind the words they use, even if those words sound familiar. "Not only must modern observers and interpreters clarify their own viewpoint and articulate their own values, they must strive as well to imagine and learn the viewpoint and values of those of another culture whom they would study."<sup>327</sup>

But how are contemporary interpreters to know what the biblical culture was like? As Hobbs points out, most contemporary interpreters of the Bible live in a westernized global culture that is alien to the culture of the ancient Mediterranean world.<sup>328</sup> Malina suggests that trying to understand a biblical text (in this case, 1 John), is like trying to learn a foreign language and culture.<sup>329</sup> Elsewhere he states, "what is needed is a cross-cultural approach to grasping the meanings imparted by a foreign language."<sup>330</sup> Social-scientific models can serve as that cross-cultural approach. This social-scientific analysis rests upon two presuppositions from respected proponents of using social-scientific theory in New Testament interpretation

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<sup>326</sup> Robbins, *Texture*, 1.

<sup>327</sup> John J. Pilch and Bruce J. Malina, eds., *Biblical Social Values and Their Meaning: A Handbook* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1998), xxxvii.

<sup>328</sup> Raymond Hobbs, "The Language of Warfare in the New Testament" in *Modelling Early Christianity: Social-Scientific Studies of the New Testament in Its Context* (ed. Philip F. Esler; London: Routledge, 1995), 266.

<sup>329</sup> Bruce J. Malina, "Reading Theory Perspective: Reading Luke-Acts" in *The Social World of Luke-Acts: Models for Interpretation* (ed. Jerome H. Neyrey; Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1991), 4.

<sup>330</sup> Bruce J. Malina, *Christian Origins and Cultural Anthropology: Practical Models for Biblical Interpretation* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1986), 12.

1. Malina states, “A fundamental presupposition in social-scientific criticism of the Bible, duly outfitted with historical and cross-cultural lenses, runs: if something actually exists, then it could possibly exist.”<sup>331</sup> Applied to the study of 1 John, this means that since contemporary social scientists have observed group formation and dissolution under a variety of cross-cultural conditions, the principles they have formulated can be used to analyze the ancient groups referred to in the text of 1 John.

2. A basis is needed for categorizing the nature of groups in the 1<sup>st</sup> century Mediterranean world. Based on a comparison of descriptions of societies in ancient Middle Eastern texts and anthropologists’ descriptions of contemporary rural societies in that part of the world, J. Duncan Derrett proposes, “there is no reason to surmise that Mediterranean societies have undergone fundamental changes ... within the relatively short interval of two millennia.”<sup>332</sup> In other words, it is legitimate to apply cultural insights into the nature of present-day group dynamics in the rural Mediterranean world to ancient group dynamics in the same area.

By accepting these presuppositions the possibility is opened for using current social-scientific models to better explain phenomena being reported or implied in an ancient text. Philip Esler points out, “the explicit use of models brings the interpreter’s values and perspectives out into the open,” which helps the interpreter avoid hidden anachronism and ethnocentrism.<sup>333</sup> At the same time, the use of anthropological models, that describe and predict behavior in a variety of contemporary societies and cultures, gives the interpreter points of comparison and brings up new questions leading to new insights into the original intentions and meaning of the biblical author. “As an exercise, the use of models is designed to stimulate the sociological imagination, to free the object of our gaze from ... the patina of the obvious.”<sup>334</sup>

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<sup>331</sup> Bruce J. Malina, “Early Christian Groups: Using Small Group Formation Theory to Explain Christian Organizations” in *Modelling Early Christianity: Social-Scientific Studies of the New Testament in Its Context* (ed. Philip F. Esler; London: Routledge, 1995), 96.

<sup>332</sup> J. Duncan M. Derrett, “The Evil Eye in the New Testament” in *Modelling Early Christianity: Social-Scientific Studies of the New Testament in Its Context* (ed. Philip F. Esler; London: Routledge, 1995), 65.

<sup>333</sup> Philip F. Esler, *The First Christians in Their Social Worlds: Social-Scientific Approaches to New Testament Interpretation* (London: Routledge, 1994), 12.

### 4.3.2. Douglas' Grid and Group Model

Without the aid of an anthropological model, it would not be obvious that 1 John meets the criteria of ritual conflict confrontation, the typical means of addressing conflict in Low Grid, High Group societies.<sup>335</sup> As background for understanding the value of the Status Degradation Ritual as a model for studying 1 John, Douglas' Grid and Group model<sup>336</sup> will be used to examine the nature of the Johannine group. This model focuses on two major features of societies: "Grid" refers to a society's rules, structure and leadership (or the lack of them), while "Group" refers to the extent to which members of the society do or do not consider themselves to be part of a group that defines their values and practices. In the Grid and Group cultural theory, anthropologists analyze different societies to classify relative levels of "Grid" and "Group" in the way people relate to one another. The combinations of these categories can be graphed in four quadrants, with Grid as the vertical axis and Group as the horizontal axis as shown in the following chart.

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<sup>334</sup> Esler, *First Christians*, 13.

<sup>335</sup> Beth Snodderly, "Applying the Grid and Group Cultural Theory to an Understanding of Two Conflict Situations within the Frontier Mission Fellowship" (Research Paper, William Carey International University, 2004), 31. Also see the chart below adapted from this paper.

**Comparisons of Grid and Group Descriptions of Societies**  
**Adapted from Mary Douglas, Sherwood Lingenfelter and Sheryl Silzer**

	<p><b>Type B: High Grid, Low Group</b></p> <p>Insulated, excluded from groups</p> <p>Individual autonomy is minimal</p> <p>Behavior ordained by classifications of social system</p> <p>Bureaucratic system</p> <p>Conflict addressed by formal confrontation</p> <p>Identity from following rules, submitting to authority</p>	<p><b>Type C: High Grid, High Group</b></p> <p>Strongly group-oriented</p> <p>Individual behavior controlled by group</p> <p>Organized in graded compartments; specialization</p> <p>Work by role, group and situation rules</p> <p>Armory of solutions to internal conflicts</p> <p>Identity from belonging to an orderly, structured whole</p>
	<p><b>Type A: Low Grid, Low Group</b></p> <p>Individualist</p> <p>Social context of competition, control over others and individual autonomy</p> <p>Not constrained by ascribed status</p> <p>Individuals can make decisions and transact freely</p> <p>Conflict as open confrontation</p> <p>Values innovation, creativity, independence</p> <p>Control and success depends on having allies</p> <p>Relations between individuals ambiguous</p>	<p><b>Type D: Low Grid, High Group</b></p> <p>Collectivist</p> <p>Insider-outsider boundaries</p> <p>Individual behavior subject to group controls</p> <p>Work by group interest</p> <p>Inadequate means of conflict resolution</p> <p>Conflict avoidance or ritual confrontation</p> <p>Interaction with others, but discourages rules, authority</p> <p>In-group and out-group distinctions important</p>



This study focuses on descriptions of the Low Grid, High Group society, as these are most characteristic of the general 1<sup>st</sup> century Mediterranean world, according to Bruce Malina,<sup>337</sup> who is known for applying insights from ancient Mediterranean culture to the interpretation of biblical texts. Once one has recognized that some New Testament texts reflect the characteristics of highly group-oriented societies with few strong leadership roles among them (a relatively egalitarian society), it becomes helpful to study the texts more closely using the Low Grid, High Group model developed from observations of many

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<sup>336</sup> Mary Douglas, "Cultural Bias" in *In the Active Voice* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1982), 183-266.

<sup>337</sup> Malina, *Origins*, 37.

contemporary cultures. Malina's description of groups in this lower right quadrant explain some of the group dynamics that were likely experienced by the Johannine community:

“Strong group/low grid ... generates societies of fixed rites ... a focus on group boundaries rather than on stable caste classification. ... The existence of this quadrant will normally be recognizably a proliferation of competing groups, each attempting to be self-contained, to win out over its competitors, defend its gains... There is a strong concern in the respective groups about maintaining social boundaries ... but these boundaries seem under attack; ... there are informers, spies, or deviants present.” Groups are characterized by “an abiding concern to ferret out persons who do not belong within the boundaries, with fitting rituals for expelling them beyond group lines, like expulsion, shunning, or excommunication.”<sup>338</sup>

This description fits very well with the competing groups described in 1 John, and as a model it explains the likelihood and necessity of a public ritual to deal authoritatively once and for all with the deviant group. Without the ritual, the conflict and competition for the allegiance of group members could continue indefinitely, due to the fact that leaving a group voluntarily is unlikely in a strong group society, since the group forms the identity of the individual. “In the Mediterranean once one joins, it is rather difficult to leave since the unit is the collective self not the individualistic self, and groups cannot see themselves dissolve without dishonor.”<sup>339</sup> The author of 1 John makes it clear that one of the two competing groups in the Johannine community were dishonorably deviant from group norms and labels them as “children of the Devil,” as was seen in the earlier inner texture studies of antithetical statements and the chiasmic climax in 3:8-10.

#### **4.3.3. Group Norms and Deviations in 1 John**

The values, or group norms (and their opposites), of the followers of the author of 1 John were found through inner texture investigation to be clearly presented in the antithetical statements throughout the book. For every statement characterizing the believers there is, in close proximity, an opposite statement about the opponents. (See the chart in section 4.1.1.1.) This comparison of closely paired antithetical characteristics indicates that the author of 1 John intended to make clear who was “of the truth” and who was not. It was because of their

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<sup>338</sup> Malina, *Origins*, 37.

<sup>339</sup> Malina, in *Modeling Early Christianity*, 109.

deviant behavior and beliefs that the opponents had to be officially excommunicated from the original community, hence the need for a Status Degradation Ritual.

#### 4.3.4. Overview of the Proposed Presence of Ritual Theory in 1 John

Looking through the cultural lens of the ritual model provides evidence that the author or editor of 1 John has presented the reader with two separate rituals that have been antithetically intermingled to create the text as we have it now. Understanding the genre of 1 John as a unique combination of rituals side-steps the usual debate over whether or not it is valid to consider the book to be within the epistolary genre.<sup>340</sup> Ritual is used here in the sense of a written documentation of a public performance, designed to change the perception of a group about a given topic or person. Two rituals potentially applicable to 1 John are described in Malina and Neyrey's edited volume, *The Social World of Luke-Acts: Models for Interpretation*, namely a "Status Degradation Ritual," and a "Status Transformation Ritual." Malina and Neyrey state that "status degradation rituals publicly categorize, recast, and assign a moral character to deviant actors,"<sup>341</sup> while in a separate chapter Mark McVann explains that status transformation rituals involve passage from one status to another, including christening, baptism, marriage, or ordination.<sup>342</sup> In 1 John the believers are having their status transformed (or re-confirmed) as children of God (3:1) while the opponents, or "secessionists" as Raymond Brown calls them,<sup>343</sup> are having their status downgraded to children of the devil (3:10).

Each of these rituals, preserved in 1 John as a written text, was most likely meant to be read or recited aloud in the oral-literary environment of 1<sup>st</sup> century Mediterranean culture.<sup>344</sup> The literary combination of these rituals in chiasmic format produced a memorable explanation that could be read or recited to Johannine communities in various locations to help them understand the new (outcast) status of the opponents as well as their own status in relation to God. A majority of the verses in the text are addressed to or speak about one of

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<sup>340</sup> Robert Kysar's observation lends support to the hypothesis that the genre of 1 John could be a combination of separate rituals: "The disparate portions of the document were drawn from different homilies delivered at different times." See "Epistles," in *ABD*, 902.

<sup>341</sup> Malina and Neyrey, in *Social World*, 106.

<sup>342</sup> Mark McVann, "Rituals," 333-60.

<sup>343</sup> Brown, *Epistles*, 71.

<sup>344</sup> Thomas E. Boomershine, "Jesus of Nazareth and the Watershed of Ancient Orality and Literacy," *Semeia* 65 (1994): 7-36.

these groups, the believing community (the “beloved,” *teknia*, “little children”),<sup>345</sup> and can potentially be viewed as a “Status Transformation Ritual.” As mentioned above, this type of ritual was intended to transform or re-confirm the self-image of the members of the Johannine community. The author offered them a ritual interpretation of reality that would restore confidence in their status as children of God (3:1) who possess eternal life (5:13). It is beyond the scope of the present research to investigate the justification for this proposed Status Transformation Ritual. This study will focus instead on the second ritual within the synthesized text, the portions of 1 John that refer to the “secessionists,” the opponents of the author’s community. These verses will be seen to fit the model of a Status Degradation Ritual, as described by Malina and Neyrey.<sup>346</sup>

#### **4.3.5. Summary of the Key Points of Malina’s and Neyrey’s Description of the Status Degradation Ritual**

Survival of the original group and its values demanded that the members of the deviant group be excommunicated or “un-fellowshipped.” How could this be done in such a way that all concerned recognized the change in status and relationships? In the context of discussing Mediterranean group culture, Malina mentions, as quoted above, that those who do not belong within the boundaries of the type of group that represents the Johannine community (low grid/strong group) are expelled “with fitting rituals.”<sup>347</sup> In a chapter he co-authored with Jerome Neyrey, Malina describes in detail the nature of such a “fitting ritual,” which the authors adapted from sociologist Harold Garfinkel who developed “a model of how denouncers arrange for the successful denunciation of their target victims.”<sup>348</sup> Malina and Neyrey call this model a “Status Degradation Ritual.” Such rituals “publicly categorize, recast, and assign a moral character to deviant actors. This results in a total change of their identity to that of ‘a deviant;’ they are engulfed in the master status of a deviant.”<sup>349</sup>

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<sup>345</sup> Verses in 1 John that speak about the believing community: 1:1-5, 7, 9, 2:1-3, 5-8, 10, 12-14, 17b, 20, 21, 23b, 24-29, 3:1-3, 5, 6a, 7, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 16, 18-24; 4:2, 4, 6a, 7, 9-19, 21; 5:1-10a, 11, 12a, 13-16, 18, 19a, 20, 21.

<sup>346</sup> The following verses of 1 John relate to the opponents and will form the basis for the discussion of the proposed Status Degradation Ritual: 1:1-5, 6, 8, 10; 2:4, 9, 11, 15, 16, 17a, 18, 19, 21b, 22, 23a, 26; 3:4, 6b, 8, 10, 12, 15, 17; 4:1, 3, 5, 6, 8, 20; 5:10b, 12b, 16c, 17, 19, 21.

<sup>347</sup> Malina, *Origins*, 37.

<sup>348</sup> Malina and Neyrey, in *Social World*, 104.

<sup>349</sup> Malina and Neyrey, in *Social World*, 106.

Malina and Neyrey conclude their chapter with the hope that others will find the description and application of this model to be useful in other New Testament studies. This served as the initial impetus to attempt application of this model to 1 John, looking to see if the model would be a good fit for the data of the text.

A brief summary here of Garfinkel's model, as described and supplemented by Malina and Neyrey, will serve as a model to analyze the text of 1 John.

Garfinkel's model for a successful degradation ritual consists of four variables, each of which will be described according to the model and then applied to the portions of 1 John that speak about the opponents. These variables consist of:

1. The denouncer.
2. The deviant whose status will be degraded.
3. An explanation for the need to downgrade the status of the deviant person or group.
4. Witnesses who will agree with the denouncer on the new identity of the deviant.<sup>350</sup>

#### **4.3.5.1. *The Denouncer***

Malina and Neyrey include additional information that explains and supplements this model. They use the term "labeling" to describe the activity of Garfinkel's first variable, the "denouncer." Labels can be either positive or negative evaluations of the character of a person or group. Negative labels are accusations of deviance. Who are these labelers of deviant behavior, or "denouncers" as Garfinkel terms them? Malina and Neyrey point out that these are the people whose interests as public figures or as spokespersons for the group are threatened by the behavior of the deviants. When the members of a group perceive a threat to their shared social system, the creators or enforcers of the rules of the group become the "denouncers" to separate out those causing the threat.<sup>351</sup>

#### **4.3.5.2. *The Deviant Whose Status Will Be Degraded***

The second variable, the deviant, is a person or group that "... threatens the moral universe of the labelers," according to Malina and Neyrey.<sup>352</sup> In the Status Degradation Ritual, this

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<sup>350</sup> Malina and Neyrey, in *Social World*, 104.

<sup>351</sup> Malina and Neyrey, in *Social World*, 102.

<sup>352</sup> Malina and Neyrey, in *Social World*, 98.

person or group will experience a change in social status in relation to the wider group, becoming an outsider to be shunned.

#### **4.3.5.3. *An Explanation for the Need to Downgrade the Status of the Deviant Person or Group***

“Banning” is a term Malina and Neyrey use to refer to the explanations given by the denouncers to define behavior as being outside the boundaries of acceptable group norms (Garfinkel’s third variable)<sup>353</sup>. The ritual is a public event intended to change the attitudes of the witnesses (the fourth variable) so they will see it is in the group’s best interest to label and cast out the deviant. This can be done by demonstrating that the core values and beliefs of the group are the opposite of those of the deviant, making it more likely the witnesses will be persuaded to agree with the denouncer’s judgment. Higher authorities are appealed to in support of the need to ban the individual or group (such as God’s will or the good of the people).<sup>354</sup> In the process of the ritual the denouncer shows why the behavior of the deviant is evil and permanently unacceptable to the society.

#### **4.3.5.4. *Witnesses Who Will Agree with the Denouncer on the New Identity of the Deviant***<sup>355</sup>

If the ritual is successful, witnesses (the fourth variable in Garfinkel’s model) will be convinced of the truth of the negative assessment and of the need for the new, lower, status of the deviant.<sup>356</sup> The deviant will be “condemned by all concerned ... public attention is focused on the shame of the deviant.”<sup>357</sup> Looking back at the deviant’s past, witnesses will agree that the person (or group) always did have something wrong with them. The new master status becomes a lens to interpret everything known about them.

Having described two social-scientific models to compare with specific portions of the text of 1 John, and having applied the first of these models (grid/group) to the text, the ritual model will next be compared with the text to test the validity of the hypothesis that part of the text was originally a Status Degradation Ritual intended to create a permanent divorce

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<sup>353</sup> Malina and Neyrey, in *Social World*, 102.

<sup>354</sup> Malina and Neyrey, in *Social World*, 105.

<sup>355</sup> Malina and Neyrey, in *Social World*, 104.

<sup>356</sup> Malina and Neyrey, in *Social World*, 103.

<sup>357</sup> Malina and Neyrey, in *Social World*, 105.

between the opponents and the original Johannine community. In the inner texture study, an analysis of the chiasmic structure of the portions of 1 John that speak about the opponents established the text to which the ritual model will be applied. In that analysis the conclusion was reached that the opponents were undermining the faith of the believing community, and thus were labeled, “children of the devil.” Under these circumstances, it is not hard to understand why a leader within a “low grid/strong group” society would feel the need to protect the group by drawing boundaries around acceptable behavior and beliefs and casting out the deviants who did not meet the criteria. This is the purpose of a Status Degradation Ritual.

#### **4.3.6. Application of the Ritual Model to the Chiasmic Text**

As described above, Garfinkel’s model for a successful degradation ritual consists of four variables:

1. The denouncer
2. The deviant
3. An explanation
4. Witnesses

These features are all present in the chiasmic text defined in the inner texture section. Each of these will now be examined to see what insights can be gained into the purposes and meaning of the text.

##### **4.3.6.1. *The Denouncer***

“The denouncer must be so identified with the witnesses ... that the denouncer is perceived as a publicly known person, not a private individual. The denouncer must be invested with the right to speak in the name of [the group’s] core values.”<sup>358</sup> Mark McVann points out that “the movement from one status to another is presided over by persons qualified to supervise the transition and certify its legitimacy. We call such persons “professionals” or “ritual elders.”<sup>359</sup>

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<sup>358</sup> Malina and Neyrey, in *Social World*, 104.

<sup>359</sup> McVann, in *Social World*, 336.

Many Johannine scholars consider the author of 1 John to be identical with the “Elder” who wrote 2 and 3 John.<sup>360</sup> Certainly throughout the full text of 1 John the author identifies with his audience in a role appropriate to an elder, calling them his dear little children and showing concern for their well-being. This public pastoral role fits well with the ritual model, which calls for someone qualified to denounce the heretics among the Johannine community. Robert Kysar also sees the author as someone accepted by the community “as one who spoke from the vantage point of some authority or privilege.”<sup>361</sup>

While an egalitarian society, such as the Johannine community, does not have strong authoritative leaders, Kysar’s term, “privilege” can describe the status of a person around whom an egalitarian group might rally to reach consensus about dealing with deviant behavior. The first five verses (the Prologue) of 1 John serve the function of giving the credentials of the author/denouncer for performing the ritual:

1:1

That which was from the beginning  
     which we have heard  
     which we have seen with our eyes  
     which we have beheld  
     which we have handled with our hands  
     concerning the word of life

1:2

And this life appeared  
     and we saw  
     and bear witness  
     and announce to you  
     the eternal life which was with the father and appeared to us

1:3

What we have seen heard we announce to you  
 so you may have fellowship with us  
 and our fellowship is with the father  
     and with his son Jesus Christ

1:4

We write this to you so that our joy may be full.

1:5a

This is the message we have heard from him and announce to you:

The author portrays himself as an eyewitness of the original events of the community’s tradition, one who is qualified to testify to the eternal life that was made physically manifest through the Son. His claim to have fellowship with the Father and Son

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<sup>360</sup> van der Merwe, “Sin,” 543.

<sup>361</sup> Kysar, “Epistles,” in *ABD*, 902.

and his intention to include his hearers in that fellowship (1:3), along with his stated desire to find joy as a result of writing his text (1:4), indicate the author's respected professional status, perhaps that of a pastor, and his right to be the denouncer in this ritual. His dual purpose was to strengthen his followers and to accuse his opponents.

#### **4.3.6.2. *The Deviant Whose Status Will Be Degraded***

The next element in the ritual model is the group of people whose status is being downgraded. In 1 John it is clear that the "deviants" are the opponents or secessionists, labeled as "antichrists" who "went out from us" (2:18, 19). The chiasmic structure of the verses under consideration has helped to demonstrate clearly the seriousness of the case against the opponents and their deviation from group norms. For every value held by the believing community, an opposite characteristic is attributed to the opponents, and these are repeated in the chiasmic parallels for added emphasis. The climax of the chiasmic structure is the labeling of these deviants as "children of the devil" whose works the Son of God came "to destroy." There was no possibility of fellowship with those who were to the believing community as darkness is to light (see 1:5, 6).

These people were a threat to "the moral universe of the labelers"<sup>362</sup> and their influence had to be nullified. As mentioned earlier in the discourse analysis of section 4.1.4, it is possible they had been deceiving the believing community with the misuse of Johannine slogans as well as demonstrating unloving behavior, lies and unbelief. The lengthy list of antithetical qualities of the children of God vs. the children of the devil (see section 4.1.1.1.) demonstrate clearly both the nature of the "moral universe" of the Johannine community and the threat posed by those who were characterized by the opposite of those values. This is exactly the nature of a deviant: someone who is "out of place," a rule breaker, a threat to the order and values of the group's life.<sup>363</sup> The ritual model helps the interpreter better understand the emergency the author of 1 John was dealing with and why he described the two groups of people in such extremely opposite terms.

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<sup>362</sup> Malina and Neyrey, in *Social World*, 98.

<sup>363</sup> Malina and Neyrey, in *Social World*, 100.

#### 4.3.6.3. *An Explanation for the Need to Downgrade the Status of the Deviant Person or Group*

The third feature of the Status Degradation Ritual is the “explanation” for banning the deviants that is intended to convince the rest of the group (the witnesses) to adopt the denouncer’s interpretation of the situation. Malina and Neyrey state that “rule creators define a state of affairs by drawing or redrawing boundaries around something or someone of social significance, thus situating them as ‘out of bounds’ or as a threat or danger.”<sup>364</sup> Mc Vann speaks of “assembling a case record.”<sup>365</sup> The portions of 1 John that speak of the opponents assemble a detailed explanation by building up accusations, climaxing in 3:8b, 10a with the strong denunciation of them as children of the devil, whose works the Son of God came to destroy. The implication may even be that the opponents themselves constituted a “work of the devil” that needed to be destroyed or nullified. In a situation in which it is the denouncer’s task to convince others of his point of view, this strong denunciation is understandable. The author’s goal was to convince his children to denounce with him those whose values and beliefs were contrary to theirs. No doubt the “case record” consists of stereotypes, but stereotyping serves well the purpose of defining and condemning what lies outside the boundary of acceptability, thus allowing the witnesses and denouncer to feel justified in rejecting the deviant.

As part of the “explanation” section of the ritual, “the condemnation and the deviant label will be justified by appeal to some higher order norm: God’s will, the good of the people, the honor of the nation.”<sup>366</sup> From the Johannine community’s perspective this can be envisioned in widening concentric circles: God’s will is in the center, a wider circle represents the community in right relationship with God, and a still wider circle represents the equivalent of the “honor of the nation,” which in this context would be the greater community that included the opponents of the Elder. The Elder had told his “children” to “walk as Jesus walked” but some were not doing so (2:6). In the “explanation” portion of the ritual he appeals to God’s will to demonstrate that the deviants need to be cast out for the good of the people, the Elder’s followers. As the Elder stated in giving his credentials in the prologue, his goal is fellowship with the believers. The opponents had caused a schism,

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<sup>364</sup> Malina and Neyrey, in *Social World*, 102.

<sup>365</sup> McVann, in *Social World*, 336.

<sup>366</sup> Malina and Neyrey, in *Social World*, 106.

which was not good for the community, and potentially threatened its survival. The honor of the community is at stake here, an important point the model helps emphasize.

In examining the goodness of fit of the ritual model for the “explanation” segment of the ritual, the appeal to the higher norm of God’s will is now discussed. This aspect of the model is seen in the Prologue in which the author appeals to his special relationship with God (“fellowship”) and his special knowledge of that which has been known “from the beginning.” Throughout the text, reference to God and the Son of God are made repeatedly. Examples are paired here from the chiasmic structure showing that God and the Son of God are appealed to in assembling the elder’s case in these ways:

- The deviants are accused of making God a liar, not having God’s Word in them, and not believing God’s witness (compare 1:10; 5:10 in the chiasmic structure)
- Those who do not keep God’s commandments also do not know God; they do not have the Son of God, nor do they have life (compare the chiasmic parallelisms in 2:4; 5:12)
- Denying the Father is equivalent to denying love to those in need (see 2:22, 23; 3:17)
- The Son of God was manifested to destroy the works of the devil (3:8)
- Everyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God (3:10)

The appeal to higher authority as a characteristic of a Status Degradation Ritual helps explain the necessity for repeated references in the text to God, the Father and Son (and the spirit of truth).

#### **4.3.6.4. Witnesses Who Will Agree with the Denouncer on the New Identity of the Deviant**

The fourth element of the Status Degradation model is that of the witnesses to the ritual. As mentioned earlier, if the ritual is successful, witnesses will be convinced of the truth of the denouncer’s explanation.<sup>367</sup> “When a person is successfully declared a deviant, people who knew the person begin to see connections between the deviant’s condemnation and all that they know about that deviant’s past life.”<sup>368</sup> It is in this sense that the author of 1 John can say retrospectively that the deviants were never really “of” us (2:18, 19). Applying the ritual

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<sup>367</sup> Malina and Neyrey, in *Social World*, 103.

<sup>368</sup> Malina and Neyrey, in *Social World*, 105.

model to the text gives a good explanation for the purpose of the strong denunciations against the opponents. As a ritual, the text will only be successful if it convinces the believing community to agree to the new outcast status of the deviant opponents. The chiasmic parallelisms shed additional light on the serious charges being brought, that the witnesses are expected to agree with:

- The opposite of having fellowship with God is walking in darkness and being part of the world that lies in the evil one (1:6 // 5:19).
- Those who do not have the truth residing in them are participating in the “sin unto death,” which the author does not encourage the community to pray for (1:6b, 8b // 5:16c, 17).
- The claims of the opponents indicate that they do not believe God, they make God out to be a liar, they are liars themselves, and they do not have life (1:10, 2:4 // 5:10, 12).
- Those who hate their brothers do not love God; they are walking around in the darkness not knowing where they are going, and they do not know God (2:9, 11 // 4:8, 20).
- The qualities admired by the world are not from God (2:15-17 // 4:3a, 5, 6).
- The opponents are equated with the eschatological “antichrist” and “false prophets” (2:18, 19, 21b, 22, 23a, 26 // 4:1, 3).
- Denying the Father and Son is equated with closing one’s affections and refusing to help a brother in need (2:23a // 3:17).
- The sin of lawlessness and being “of the devil ... who has been sinning from the beginning” is equated with the sin of Cain (hatred and murder), who was of the evil one (who was also a murderer from the beginning, an allusion to John 8:44) (3:4, 8a // 3:12, 15).

At the very center of the chiasmus, two “manifestations” are listed side by side: The Son of God was manifested (appeared) to destroy the works of the devil and it is made manifest or apparent who are the children of God and who are the children of the devil. In the process of the manifestation of these opposite sets of people, the devil’s work is being exposed and undone (λύσῃ).

#### 4.3.6.5. *Conclusion from the Ritual*

The “Elder” concludes his ritual with a somewhat abrupt warning to his witnesses, in the hope that they will agree with him in his denunciation of the opponents: “little children, keep yourselves from idols” (5:21). From the chiasmically paired accusations against the opponents it is clear that the author is warning his beloved children in this last verse of the book to stay away from the deviants, the children of the devil, those who represent a false way to God. In the chiastic structure the full meaning of this ending is brought out by the balancing antithetical phrase in the prologue, in 1:5b: “God is light and in him there is no darkness at all.” In other words, stay away from those who represent the opposite of who God is—the false teachers who will lead you into walking in darkness and the sin of idolatry if you don’t agree with the author’s diagnosis and denunciation.

These comparisons indicate a good fit between the Status Degradation Ritual model as applied to selected portions of the text of 1 John. The model calls for four categories: the denouncer, one or more deviants, an explanation that includes appeals to higher authority, and witnesses. The selections of the text examined clearly meet all these criteria. The author of 1 John demonstrates his qualifications to be the public denouncer of the deviants—the group that “went out from us.” Through a lengthy list of antithetical comparisons he explains the manner in which the opponents have flagrantly violated group norms and therefore must be divorced from the original community. The witnesses called for by the model correspond to the “little children” of the author’s community to whom he addressed his text, hoping to maintain fellowship with them if they would agree with his assessment of the situation (1:3; 5:21). If the hypothesis is correct, that the text portions were originally a ritual to be recited or read to members of the Johannine community, it is not surprising that there is no indication as to whether the witnesses agreed with the denouncer or not. That was the hoped-for result of the ritual which was packaged in chiastic format to help the witnesses keep in mind reasons for the desperate measure being taken—labeling the former members of the group as “children of the devil,” never to be associated with again.

Was the ritual successful? Perhaps not. One of the values of examining 1 John in light of the ritual model is that it raises this very question. If the denouncer was not successful in rallying enough of his witnesses to agree with him, this could explain why, as Brown states, “after the Epistles there is no further trace of a distinct Johanne Community. ... [It is] likely

that most of the author's adherents were swallowed up by the 'Great Church.'"<sup>369</sup> As more and more members of the community were deceived by the secessionists, the remaining believers may have eventually decided to seek out other less troubled, less dysfunctional fellowships with which to meet.

#### **4.3.7. A Summary of Insights into the Purpose and Message of 1 John Resulting from the Application of the Social-science Models to the Text**

McVann poses a key question: "What have we learned by using ritual analysis that we might otherwise not have known?"<sup>370</sup> Applying the Status Degradation Ritual model, in conjunction with the oral-literary device of chiasmic structure, to portions of 1 John, has provided new answers to some questions often asked of the text. In question and answer format, some of the key insights gained from this analysis are briefly summarized here.

*Question: Why was 1 John written?*

Answer: The sections of the text that speak about the opponents may have been written (perhaps originally spoken) as a formal denunciation, a Status Degradation Ritual, against those rule-breakers who threatened the stability of the Johannine community. Perhaps this portion of the text was intended to be read/recited to various geographical locations of the Johannine community. The intended result of the Status Degradation Ritual was a final divorce between the two groups.

*Question: What is the genre of 1 John?*

Answer: First John can be viewed as a combination of two rituals, antithetically intermingled, each of which labels the status of one of the two sets of people referred to in the book. Robert Kysar's observation, mentioned earlier, lends support to this view: "The disparate portions of the document were drawn from different homilies delivered at different times."<sup>371</sup> The resulting combination of rituals produced a memorable explanation (possibly used as a liturgy) for the Johannine community of who they are as God's children and the reason for their divorce from the opponents, now labeled as children of the devil.

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<sup>369</sup> Brown, *Epistles*, 103.

<sup>370</sup> McVann, in *Social World*, 359.

*Question: Why does the text appear to be disjointed?*

Answer: The ritual model suggests that 1 John may be the combination of two separate rituals, mingled in an editorial process to produce a memorable document that could be read or recited to members of the Johannine community. Without postulating any particular order in their origin, the pieces of the book that may have originally been separate entities include a list of antithetical characteristics of the children of God and children of the devil, a Status Transformation Ritual (that may have originated as a baptismal or confirmation homily), and a Status Degradation Ritual.

*Question: Why is there so much repetition in 1 John?*

Answer: Part of the text is in a chiasmic structure that is unfamiliar to western thought patterns, but which served as a common organizing principle in ancient Hebrew literature. That structure intrinsically involves repetition. The use of repetition through chiasm would have increased the memorability of what was read by or to the community. In addition, an aspect of the Status Degradation Model calls for appeals to higher authority, designed to convince witnesses to agree with the denouncer. Repeated references to God, the Father and the Son serve this purpose in 1 John.

*Question: Why does the author portray the two groups so stereotypically and in such stark contrasts as “good” and “evil”?*

Answer: This is a typical way to maintain boundaries in high group, low grid societies. This cultural convention would help facilitate group members (the “witnesses” of the ritual model) reaching a consensus as to who is “in” and who is “out” of the group.

*Question: Who are the opponents of 1 John?*

Answer: They are deviants from the group norms of the Johannine community. This is their master status that engulfs all others. They are typified as the children of the devil who have nothing in common with the members of the Johannine community, who are typified as the children of God.

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<sup>371</sup> Kysar, “Epistles” in *ABD*, 902.

*Question: What is sin? Do the children of God sin or do they not?*

Answer: The chiastic structure of the text indicates that one definition of sin is walking in darkness and “unrighteousness” (1:6; 5:17). From the full text of 1 John we learn that believers can pray for each other to be forgiven from this type of sin (5:16) and that God is ready to forgive unrighteousness (1:9; 2:1, 2). Unrighteousness is in a context predominantly speaking about the believers, the followers of the Elder. Because they have Jesus as their Paraclete, their sins can be forgiven (2:1).

The other definition of sin is “lawlessness” (3:4), the sin of the opponents, used in the center of the chiastic ritual describing the children of the devil. In the chiastic parallel, this type of sin is equated with hatred, murder and death (3:15). The children of the devil do not have Jesus as their Paraclete, and this sin cannot be forgiven (5:16, the sin that leads to death). Keeping this definition in mind when reading 3:6, 9 reveals that since God’s children do not hate and murder others nor do they have death reigning in their lives, therefore it can be said that in that sense they do not sin.

*Question: What is the significance of the similarities and differences between the prologue of 1 John and that of the Gospel of John?*

Answer: The function of the prologue of 1 John is to present the credentials of the denouncer who is carrying out a Status Degradation Ritual, while the prologue of the Gospel serves to demonstrate the credentials of the eternal “Word.” It was the denouncer’s eyewitness status “from the beginning” and knowledge of the Word of Life that qualified him to know and declare to others who was “in” and who was “out” of the Johannine community.

In summary, the social science models provide us with new lenses to look at the text of 1 John, giving insight into the purpose and meaning of the author in writing this book. The works of the devil can be defined in the context as anything opposed to the Johannine view of truth, righteousness, God’s will, including the opponents who were being divorced from the group due to their deviant beliefs and behavior. This divorce can be seen as a form of death and destruction. Their life in the group was being destroyed, in line with the statement in 1 John 3:8 that the Son of God came to destroy the works of the devil. This conclusion confirms similar conclusions from a variety of studies. In the next section, the ideology of the author, the present interpreter, and past interpreters will be put in dialog to begin placing

some of the “quilt pieces” together with the goal of seeing the overall design emerge in the theological texture where a theology of “the works of the devil” will be summarized.

#### 4.4. IDEOLOGICAL TEXTURE AND PERSPECTIVE

##### 4.4.1. Description of Ideological Texture

The insights gained up to this point through exploring other textures of the text will need to be placed in dialog with one another in order to interact with the author’s ideological agenda for his original audience.<sup>372</sup> DeSilva asks, “What goal or goals drive the author? How does the author use the text to achieve this goal?”<sup>373</sup> Ideological analysis acknowledges that New Testament texts are rhetorical in that they “seek to persuade ... readers to respond to situations and other ideas in certain ways, and not in other ways.”<sup>374</sup> From the exegetical studies it is clear that the author of 1 John has an agenda for his readers. The closely paired contrasts between “children of God” and “children of the devil” give a strong sense of what the author considers to be appropriate or inappropriate for his audience.

In order to fairly uncover a biblical author’s ideological purpose, ideological texture involves a three-way conversation between the current interpreter of a text, past interpreters of the text, and the author’s rhetorical strategy for bringing about change.<sup>375</sup> In ideological texture studies, the points of view of these conversation partners are taken into account and comparisons made to see where there are points of agreement or disagreement. Robbins asks,

What is the relation of our reading of a New Testament text to the way in which a first-century person might have written or read a text? The answer is that all people choose ways to write and to read a text. For this reason, socio-rhetorical criticism interprets not only the text under consideration but ways people read texts in late antiquity and ways people have interpreted New Testament texts both in the past and in different contexts in our modern world.<sup>376</sup>

In this section, the readings of the text by past interpreters and the present interpreter will be compared with the way a 1<sup>st</sup> century Mediterranean believer might have heard the

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<sup>372</sup> “Successful analysis of the author’s ideological strategy requires the integration of insights gleaned from exploring the other textures.” (deSilva, *Introduction*, 25.)

<sup>373</sup> deSilva, *Introduction*, 25.

<sup>374</sup> deSilva, *Introduction*, 464.

<sup>375</sup> Robbins, *Texture*, 95.

<sup>376</sup> Robbins, *Tapestry*, 39.

text, which would likely have been read aloud. In order for this comparison and conversation to take place, the presuppositions of the conversation partners need to be examined. The Pontifical Biblical Commission has openly acknowledged the variety of perspectives from which contemporary interpreters approach the biblical text: “philosophical, psychoanalytic, sociological, political, etc.”<sup>377</sup> DeSilva points out that “cultural studies, postcolonial criticism and feminist criticism have ... raised our awareness of how biblical interpretation is a political and ideological act.”<sup>378</sup> According to which lens the interpreter uses, the answers to questions brought to the text will receive differing answers. This necessitates looking carefully and critically at the biases and beliefs of the present interpreter of a text. Robbins clarifies the importance of the conversation partners and their unique backgrounds:

The primary subject of ideological analysis and interpretation is people. Texts are the secondary subject of ideological analysis, simply the object of people’s writing and reading. The issue is the social, cultural, and individual location and perspective of writers and readers. Ideological analysis of a text, then, is simply an agreement by various people that they will dialogue and disagree with one another with a text as a guest in the conversation.<sup>379</sup>

The value of the ideological texture of Socio-Rhetorical Analysis lies in bringing more than one approach together in dialog to see how they can enrich each other and add extra dimensions of understanding—a thicker texture, as Robbins says.

#### **4.4.2. Parameters of This Study**

According to deSilva there is no formal methodological procedure yet in place for answering such questions as how the author attempts to convince his readers of his perception of reality or how he attempts to make clear “the options or alternatives available to the readers in their situation.”<sup>380</sup> Therefore, the present investigation of Ideological Texture in 1 John chooses to follow the approach outlined here. An emphasis in this section will be on bringing out into the open the broad context of salvation history from the present interpreter’s ideological point of view, as necessary background for getting as close as possible to the persuasive purposes

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<sup>377</sup> Pontifical Biblical Commission, “The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church,” n.p. [cited 11 April 2008]. Online: <http://www.ewtn.com/library/CURIA/PBCINTER.htm#3>.

<sup>378</sup> deSilva, *Introduction*, 25.

<sup>379</sup> Robbins, *Texture*, 95.

<sup>380</sup> deSilva, *Introduction*, 464.

of the author of 1 John. One of the biblical author's strategies for influencing his audience was through implied verbal imagery. Examining these word pictures will be another emphasis in this section.<sup>381</sup>

Patterns of beliefs and moral values influence the way meaning is constructed from words and sentences and this meaning takes place within groups who share and reinforce common beliefs and values. In other words, the nature of a group or society will affect the way the text is understood and applied.<sup>382</sup> With this in mind, the following steps will be taken to engage in ideological discourse, leading to a description of one way of looking at the text of 1 John 3:8, with an emphasis on what the biblical author intended his audience to do about "the works of the devil." (1) First a review and analysis of past interpreters' presuppositions will be undertaken. (2) Next the present interpreter's presuppositions will be summarized and compared to those of other interpreters. (3) Finally, in light of the present interpreter's assumptions about the Johannine community's worldview of salvation history, a composite of persuasive images in 1 John will be presented in the context of a big picture view of the biblical story. As Roy Jeal says in his exposition of the imagery in Philemon, "physical imagery indicated by words induces emotional responses that move people toward understanding and action."<sup>383</sup> Discovering the desired understanding and action that is the goal of the author through his use of written text is one aspect of the nature and purpose of exploring ideological texture.<sup>384</sup>

The aspect of ideological texture to be emphasized here will be the elucidation of the present author's perception (from a particular ideological point of view) of the biblical author's intentions for his original audience. First however, other parties in this conversation will be consulted.

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<sup>381</sup> Vernon Robbins has coined the term, "rhetography" to describe the use of verbal images in the context of a rhetorical argument. The rhetograph becomes a collective vision intended to persuade the audience to do what the author is urging (ideological purpose). However since Robbins' writings on this topic were not publicly available at the time of the writing of this thesis, instead, Roy Jeal's more informal model has been followed. In an unpublished essay on the letter to Philemon, Jeal envisions the underlying story and word pictures behind the text. Jeal references Robbins' forthcoming essay, "Rhetography: A New Way of Seeing the Familiar Text," to which he had access as a member of Robbins' scholarly circle. (Roy R. Jeal, "Blending Two Arts: Rhetorical Words, Rhetorical Pictures and Social Formation in the Letter to Philemon." Booth College: Unpublished Paper, 2007.)

<sup>382</sup> See Robbins, *Tapestry*, 96, 193.

<sup>383</sup> Jeal, "Blending," 3.

<sup>384</sup> deSilva, *Introduction*, 25.

#### 4.4.3. The Presuppositions of Past Interpreters

In chapters one and three the ideological presuppositions of representative scholars were mentioned in relationship to their views on epistemological questions or the meaning of the phrase, “the works of the devil.” A short summary is given here of aspects of these scholars’ ideologies that relate to the text of 1 John, with brief analysis, critique and/or comparison to the ideology of the author of this thesis, which will be developed in more detail in the upcoming section.

Dammers demonstrates ideological analysis in his contemporary reading of 1 John 3:8: “The Son of God alone can release men from demonic powers not only in witch-ridden African homesteads or idol-haunted Indian villages, but in the more sophisticated industrial society of the West.”<sup>385</sup> This perspective has similarities to the upcoming explanation of the present author’s view of the ideology of the author of 1 John. It implies that the devil’s power that needs to be destroyed is pervasive and multi-faceted. Unlike most commentators, Dammers sees demonic power as something real and active, based on his experiences in African villages.

Neufeld’s analysis of 1 John from the standpoint of speech-act theory also demonstrates ideological texture: “Language leaves neither the author nor the audience unchanged or uninvolved. ... The author of 1 John expects that both he and his audience will act in accordance with these words.”<sup>386</sup> Again, this perspective resonates with that of the present author who sees in 1 John a text that expects agreement from the reader with the author’s point of view. The original audience and contemporary audiences may interpret the works and children of the devil in different ways, but speech-act theory, and the present author, agree that some type of change is expected of the reader.

Brown, Cullmann, Grayston, Hengel, Houlden, Kruse, O’Neill, Schnackenburg, and Swadling see a polemic tone in 1 John. This implies that the author is speaking against the opponents and trying to convince his audience to repudiate them. The present author’s ideological assumption is that 1 John was compiled for the purpose of confirming the audience in their decision to disassociate themselves from the opponents and to remain connected to the truth. It would not be easy for them due to the fact that the audience was

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<sup>385</sup> Dammers, *Commentary*, 48.

<sup>386</sup> Neufeld, *Speech Acts*, vii-viii.

caught up in a cosmic battle, as emphasized in the chiasmic climax and highlighted by the complex chain-link interlock structure.

Four commentators, Edwards, Lieu, Perkins, and Trebilco, specifically refute that 1 John has a polemic purpose. They fail to recognize the central importance in 1 John (and the Gospel of John) of a cosmic battle, as shown in the inner texture and inter-texture studies above. In the contemporary western world, heavily influenced by the Enlightenment era, there is a distinct reluctance to acknowledge the reality of spirit beings, much less a battle between such beings and human beings.

With that unstated ideological assumption in the background of most commentators' thinking, it is not surprising that they have failed to explore the possibility that 1<sup>st</sup> century believers would have recognized that the devil himself might sin in ways not connected to human will. The ancient commentators such as Origen had no such ideological difficulties with belief in demonic activity.<sup>387</sup> Brown represents the majority of Johannine scholars whose Enlightenment ideology predisposes them to view the works of the devil as human sin.

Lingad's personal experience in the Philippines with Catholicism and animism being mixed in religious practice prepared him to postulate that the opponents of 1 John might be a group that mixed Jewish and Christian beliefs but did not fully recognize Jesus as the Christ. This proposal agrees with the findings from the present research that the opponents may have been "insider" Essene (or Ebionite) believers who remained within their original cultural group while adopting some beliefs from Johannine Christians. The fact that the Essene believers did not make a full commitment to the beliefs and practices of the Johannine community led to conflict and the accusation by the author that they were children of the devil and that their behavior represented works of the devil.

Comparisons of these commentators' viewpoints demonstrates a sample of the wide range of ideological presuppositions that have been brought to the study of the text of 1 John and how those presuppositions influence the way the text is interpreted.

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<sup>387</sup> "To [demons] belong famine, blasting of the vine and fruit trees, pestilence among men and beasts: all these are the proper occupations of demons, who in the capacity of public executioners receive power at certain times to carry out the divine judgments" (Origen, *Contra Celsus* 8.31).

#### 4.4.4. The Present Interpreter's Presuppositions

Presuppositions are shaped by the group or groups to which a person belongs.<sup>388</sup> The presuppositions of the present interpreter have been shaped by membership in the organization, the Frontier Mission Fellowship, a Protestant missionary order founded by North American missiologist Ralph D. Winter. This organization has a number of similarities to the Johannine community, as described in the social-cultural texture, including the characteristic of high group/low grid. This profile indicates strong commitment among group members to one another and a decision-making style of consensus rather than strong top-down leadership. Both groups are at a time of life when the founder is either not with them, or soon will not be with them any longer. Concise statements of founding principles and beliefs are needed to remind the community of their founding purposes, core values, and guidelines for future community life.

Other parallels between the Frontier Mission Fellowship and the Johannine community include the following:

- a. Guidelines exist for knowing who is “in” and who is “out” of the community.
- b. Community values of knowing and obeying God are openly discussed.
- c. Characteristics of group members are clearly articulated.
- d. Evils to avoid are specifically stated.
- e. Defeating the works of the devil is emphasized.
- f. Relationships characterized by love are considered normative.

These perceived similarities in belief and practice influence the way the present interpreter views and explains the Johannine community's group dynamics, including in-group and out-group distinctions, and the biblical author's readiness to characterize those who do not fit group norms as “children of the devil” who are doing the “works of the devil.”

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<sup>388</sup> Robbins states, “a special characteristic of ideological analysis is its focus on the relation of individual people to groups. For interpreters of ideology, it is not very satisfactory to talk about ‘one person's ideology.’ A person's ideology concerns her or his conscious or unconscious enactment of presuppositions, dispositions, and values held in common with other people” (*Texture*, 95).

#### 4.4.5. The Present Interpreter's Ideological View of Salvation History as the Context for the Ideology of 1 John

The word picture at the center of 1 John, in 1 John 3:8, conveys an image that is found throughout Scripture, the cosmic war, the battle for earth: “The Son of God appeared for the purpose of undoing/destroying the works of the devil.” The overall flow of sacred history is the context for the rhetorical purpose of 1 John. From Genesis to Revelation, the consistent theme of Judeo-Christian Scripture is God’s purpose to win a people for himself back from the ruler-ship of Satan. This summary of the biblical narrative is based on the view of biblical history shared by members of the Frontier Mission Fellowship, which in turn has shaped the present interpreter’s understanding of the perspective of the author and audience of 1 John.<sup>389</sup> After the following narrative analysis of the big picture of the biblical story, the focus will shift to three composite word pictures within 1 John, with the intention of showing how these images, within the larger biblical context, serve as an ideological strategy for the author of 1 John to move his audience to a desired response.

##### Prior to the Coming of Jesus

Before the appearing of Jesus, according to the Johannine writers, no one had ever seen God (1 John 4:12, John 1:18). These writers believed God wants to be known to people who choose to be in fellowship with him (1 John 1:3, 4; John 1:12), but the people to whom he had chosen to reveal himself in most detail, the people of Israel, did not recognize him, in the form of his Son Jesus, when they saw him (John 1:11.) What was blinding and deceiving them, keeping them from recognizing their Creator (John 1:1-4)? The beginning of Scripture, Genesis 1:1, 2, points to the answer.

The first thing recorded in the Hebrew scriptures, with which the Johannine community would have been very familiar, is that God is having to re-build a world that was in chaos following some sort of disastrous judgment (*tohu wabohu* תהו ובהו)<sup>390</sup>. This was

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<sup>389</sup> The perspective of the implied author and audience of 1 John, is based on what the interpreter is able to glean from the written text. All interpretation is filtered through the ideology of the community or communities with which the interpreter identifies. The present author identifies with the missiology of the Frontier Mission Fellowship which includes the necessity of intentionally fighting to destroy the works of the devil in order to accomplish Jesus’ mission on earth: to release captives, open the eyes of the blind, free the oppressed (Luke 4:18).

<sup>390</sup> See the explanation in the word study section which is taken from the present author’s paper, “Exegesis of Genesis 1:1, 2,” (Research Paper; William Carey International University, 2006). The condition of the earth prior to creation is described in Genesis 1:2 as “*tohu wa bohu*, תהו ובהו” which can be translated

apparently due to the sinning of the devil “from the beginning” (1 John 3:8a), prior to the sin of the first humans. Could it be that in an earlier period of time before Genesis 1:1, Satan turned against God and distorted God’s good creation into the suffering and violence now seen throughout nature? According to Genesis 1:26 God created humans to take charge of the creation on his behalf. But at some point the devil, who is a liar and has been a murderer from the beginning (John 8:44), deceived the first humans into joining him in rebelling against God’s will. The devil’s murderous, hateful nature is illustrated by Cain, who was of the evil one and killed his brother because his deeds were evil, while his brother’s deeds were righteous (Genesis 4:3-8; 1 John 3:12). The success of the devil’s pervasive influence is seen by the fact that the whole world is said to be under the influence the evil one (1 John 5:19), who is called the “ruler of this world” in John 12:31.

God’s plan to reverse the evil one’s influence (Genesis 3:15), as recorded in the Pentateuch, called for humans to freely choose to obey him as their rightful ruler. This plan was delayed numerous times by humans making wrong choices and experiencing the consequences, such as the Flood, or when the Israelites asked for a human king and ended up in Exile. Each time judgment was followed by a fresh beginning.

### Jesus’ Life and Death on Earth

Finally, at the right time, God made a radical new beginning: the Word became flesh (John 1:14). Jesus appeared to take away sin and to destroy the works of the devil (1 John 3:5, 8b), loosing people from slavery to sin (John 8:34-36), and making it possible for people to choose obedience to God as their father. (See John 1:12: he gave them the authority or the power to become sons of God.) First John emphasizes two commandments requiring obedience from true children of God: love for one another, and belief in Jesus as the Christ, the Savior of the world (1 John 3:23; 4:14).

The author of 1 John and his inner circle were eyewitnesses that the Father had sent the Son to be the Savior of the world (1 John 1:1-3, 4:9, 14; John 4:42). Jesus’ ministry began with his baptism by John (1 John 5:6-8; John 1:32-34) and his temptation by the devil, whom

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“destroyed and desolate,” or “topsy turvey,” or, traditionally, “formless and void.” The Appendix of the “Exegesis” paper gives a comprehensive chart of the context of the 17 occurrences in the Hebrew Bible of the Hebrew word, “*tohu*. תהו” (The word “*bohu* ביהו” never occurs alone, perhaps because it was coined to rhyme with *tohu* תהו.) In each of the other 16 occurrences of the word “*tohu* תהו” the context is judgment on rebellion

he successfully overcame (Matthew 4:10, 11). His ministry included defeating the works of the devil by casting out demons and healing the sick while demonstrating a life of love and obedience to God.

Jesus' life set an example for the believer to follow (1 John 1:7; 2:6; 3:2, 16). His command to his disciples "from the beginning" was to love one another (1 John 4:7, John 13:34, 15:17), one demonstration of which was washing his disciples' feet (John 13:14-16). Not only would his disciples ideally follow his positive example, but they would also experience similar consequences. Jesus warned that since the world hated him, it would hate them also (1 John 3:13; John 15:18-24). But the ruler of this world had no hold on Jesus (John 12:31; 14:30) and ultimate will have no hold on Jesus' followers (see 1 John 5:18 which promises that the evil one does not "touch" the believer). Jesus' successful accomplishment of the Father's will led to the driving out and defeat of the evil one. Jesus appeared to take away sins (1 John 3:5) and in doing so, broke the hold that the devil had on humankind (1 John 3:8b, 5:18). Jesus' atoning death on the cross (1 John 2:2) was the turning point in the battle against Satan.

#### After Jesus Returned to the Father

As a result of the devil's works being undone in the lives of Jesus' followers, believers are able and obligated to follow his example by laying down their lives for those in need (1 John 3:16, 17). These demonstrations of love are intended to continue in a chain reaction of destroying the devil's works across time and culture by bringing love where there is hatred (1 John 3:11-17), truth where there is falsehood (1 John 4:1-6), and life to overcome death (1 John 3:14). The missiology of the Frontier Mission Fellowship recognizes that humans were created to join God in rescuing Creation from the kingdom of darkness, including the physical and social results of intelligent evil, and in bringing transformation that represents the advance of God's kingdom.

#### The End of History

At the end of the New Testament, in the Book of Revelation, the fulfillment of God's purposes in history is described in terms showing that the state of *tohu wabohu* תהו ובהו has

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against God. It seems logical that the first occurrence of the term would also have been in the context of judgment, setting the tone for the remaining usages of the term in the Hebrew Bible.

finally been reversed: there is no more death, crying or pain; and darkness and night have been permanently replaced with “good” light (see Revelation 21:3, 4; 22:5). By describing the opposite of God’s intentions in the context of the Creation account, *tohu wabohu* תהו ובהו points toward the goal of that creation—a place that can be inhabited by humans in purposeful fellowship with God. An adversary that is hostile to life and who opposes God’s intentions exists. The biblical story shows humans are to fight back against the enemy who orchestrates disorder and chaos in opposition to God. The rest of Genesis 1 points the way in showing that it is possible to restore order with creativity and patience, showing how to overcome evil with good. Sailhamer’s insight illustrates this theme: “*tohu* תהו” describes the land before God made it “*tob*” טוב/good.<sup>391</sup> As believers follow God’s and the Son’s example and as they demonstrate what God’s will is and what He is like, the members of the Frontier Mission Fellowship believe the peoples of the earth will be attracted to follow that kind of God.

#### **4.4.6. The Ideology of the Author of 1 John**

Within the context of this biblical story and purpose, as understood from the present author’s ideological perspective, the text of 1 John (as examined in the inner texture) shows the author of is particularly concerned about confirming his audience in their belief in Jesus, their love for one another, their loyalty to the truth, and their confidence in having eternal life. This is his ideological purpose, as defined earlier, and it can be seen through a kalaidoscope of verbal images which will serve as the means of organizing and presenting the ideology of the author of 1 John, as viewed through the ideological lens of the present interpreter.

Three composite images will be examined in detail to see how their rhetorical effect contributes toward the overall ideological purpose of the author. “Visual scenes create a rhetoric or rhetograph that affects audiences and that can serve to create understanding, even to bring about new or changed social views and behaviours.”<sup>392</sup> As noted previously, ideological texture specifically seeks to understand the changes an author is trying to bring about and the images described next are part of the author’s strategy to bring about those changes.

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<sup>391</sup> J.H. Sailhamer, *Genesis Unbound* (Sisters, Ore.: Multnomah, 1996), 63.

#### 4.4.6.1. “Keep yourselves from idols”

Through a series of antithetical labels throughout the text, the author urges the believing community to disassociate themselves from those who are trying to deceive them. The closely paired stark contrasts in the imagery of these lists leave the audience with only one real choice. “Keep yourselves from idols” is the summary image in the last scene of the book, in which the ancient image of idolatry serves as a metaphor for all that is opposite to the Word of life. Psalm 115:4-9 describes the futility of following false gods and teachers: “Their idols ... are man-made. They have mouths, but cannot speak, eyes, but cannot see, ears, but cannot hear, noses, but cannot smell, hands, but cannot touch, feet, but cannot walk. ... Those who make them will end up like them, as will everyone who trusts in them.” “Little children, keep yourselves from idols,” urges the author of 1 John in 5:21, as a summary of one of his two main goals: to persuade his audience to disavow the false teachers and avoid ending up like them. (“The one who does not love remains in death” [1 John 3:14].)

#### 4.4.6.2. “Abiding”

The author of 1 John had as the second of his two main goals to confirm in the minds of his audience that they were God’s children and should keep on obeying and remaining in him in order to have eternal life (see 1 John 2:17). The metaphor of “abiding” or “remaining” (μένω), found throughout chapters 2 – 4 of 1 John, calls to mind the imagery of John 15 in which the branches abide in the vine in order to have life and bear fruit. The metaphor of abiding in 1 John is reciprocal: believers abide in God and God abides in the believers who meet the conditions of belief and love (1 John 4:16). In 1 John those who are in right relationship with God are described using the imagery of abiding as:

- walking as Jesus walked (2:6)
- loving the brothers and abiding in the light (2:10)
- having the word of God abide in them (2:14)
- doing the will of God and abiding forever (eternal life) (2:17)
- letting what they have heard from the beginning abide in them (2:24)
- abiding in the father and the son, resulting in eternal life (2:24, 25)
- experiencing the anointing abiding in them (2:27)

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<sup>392</sup> Jeal, “Blending,” 2.

- having God’s seed abide in them (3:9)
- keeping God’s commandments and abiding in God and God in them (3:24)
- loving one another and God abiding in them (4:12)
- confessing that Jesus is the Son of God with God abiding in them and they in God (4:15)
- abiding in love and abiding in God and God in them (4:16)

The rhetorical effect of this imagery is to persuade the audience of the desirability and possibility of staying in close fellowship with God, one of the author’s purposes in writing to the community of believers (1:3), which is a matter of (eternal) life or death.

#### **4.4.6.3. *Defeating the Devil: a Three-Part Collage.***

Using a sound-alike word play to describe the first element of a three-part collage, the author portrays the young men (νεανίσκοι) of his audience having victory (νενικήκατε) over the evil one (1 John 2:12, 14). This image illustrates an example of the fulfillment of the purpose of Jesus’ appearing in 1 John 3:8b, depicted by the second image of this collage: to undo or destroy (λύση) the works of the devil. In the third part of this collage, in the background of the images of Jesus’ and the young men’s defeat of the devil, the “whole world” can be seen lying “in the power of the evil one” (5:19). In addition, an echo of Jesus’ words in speaking of his death and resurrection in John 12:31, “now the ruler of this world will be driven out,” would likely have been called to the minds of the Johannine community by the visual imagery of this collage in 1 John.

The implication of the contrasting images of the Son and children of God (the young men) defeating the devil/evil one (2:13, 14; 3:8b) and the whole world lying in the power of the evil one (5:19) is clear: neutrality is not an option. Believers have to decide whether they will continue to follow Jesus and join him in overcoming the evil one’s influence in the world, or if they will give in to following the ways of the world which are “not of the Father” (2:16). The third of the composite images emphasizes the role of the Son of God in defeating the evil works of the devil in the lives of those who choose to abide in God. The work of the Son of God makes it possible for the children of God to have victory over the world that lies in the power of the evil one. (See 2:14; 5:4, 5, 19.)

The image of the manifestation of the Son for the purpose of destroying the works of the devil comes right at the center of the imagery of 1 John, as shown in the chiastic chart

below.<sup>393</sup> The chiastic parallels, as shown below, are helpful to have in mind for understanding the author's intentions which constitute his ideology.

### **Chiastic Chart of Images in 1 John:**

A THE WORD OF LIFE APPEARED; WE SAW, HEARD, HANDLED, TESTIFIED (1:1-5)  
 B WALK IN LIGHT OR DARK; CLEANSSED FROM UNRIGHTEOUSNESS (1:6 – 2:2)  
 C KEEP COMMANDMENTS: Love (2:3-8)  
 D LOVE vs. HATE (2:9-11)  
 E OVERCOME EVIL ONE (2:12-14; 15-17)  
 F ANTICHRIST vs. LIKE CHRIST (2:18--3:3)  
 DENY OR CONFESS THE SON  
 G LAWLESSNESS, ... BEING OF THE DEVIL  
 BEING RIGHTEOUS AS HE IS RIGHTEOUS (3:4-8a)  
 H SON OF GOD MANIFESTED TO  
 DESTROY THE WORKS OF THE DEVIL (3:8b)  
 H' MANIFESTED: WHO ARE THE CHILDREN OF GOD &  
 CHILDREN OF THE DEVIL: THE LATTER DO NOT PRACTICE  
 RIGHTEOUSNESS OR LOVE (3:9, 10)  
 G' MURDER, REMAIN IN DEATH  
 LOVE, GIVE UP OUR LIVES AS JESUS DID (3:11-16)  
 F' ANTICHRIST vs. LIKE CHRIST (love in works)  
 DENY OR CONFESS THAT JESUS CAME IN THE FLESH (3:17 – 4:6)  
 E' OVERCOME THE WORLD (4:2-6)  
 D' LOVE vs. HATE (4:7-21)  
 C' OBEY THE COMMANDMENTS: Belief (5:1-12a)  
 B' TRUTH, EVIL ONE, UNRIGHTEOUSNESS IS SIN (5:13-20a)  
 A' THIS IS THE TRUE LIFE; LITTLE CHILDREN, KEEP YOURSELVES FROM IDOLS (5:20b-21)

The central emphasis of this chart assists in understanding what the author might have wanted his audience to believe and do about “the works of the devil.” The negative images and/or the opposite of positive images throughout 1 John, describe the influence and work of the evil one. Starting from the inner sections and working outwards, these works of the devil can be seen to include:

H': unrighteousness, lack of love

G, G': lawlessness, murder, death, not giving of oneself for others

F, F': denying that Jesus is the Son of God who came in the flesh

E, E': the desires of the world

D, D': hatred

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<sup>393</sup> See the justification for a chiastic structure for 1 John in the section earlier in this chapter on inner

C, C': not keeping God's commandments (to love and believe)

B, B': walking in darkness, unrighteousness, lies

A, A': death, false approaches to God

In short, the works of the devil, according to the imagery and other strategies used by the author of 1 John, can be equated with that which leads to death, whether physical, as in the example of Cain, or spiritual, as in the example of idols which represent unbelief and false approaches to God.

#### **4.4.6.4. *Summary of the Ideology of the Author of 1 John***

The word pictures examined here have all pointed to the same conclusion related to the author's ideology: that love and belief are the essential requirements for and indicators of life through the Son of God; and that the exact opposite, namely hatred, unbelief and death, are the characteristics of the children and work of the devil. The undoing of the works of the devil is at the center of the imagery of 1 John, reversing the long history "from the beginning" (1 John 3:8a; John 8:44) of death and destruction under the ruler-ship of the evil one. God's children participate in this victory (2:14; 4, 5) which is a manifestation of the eternal life already at work in them. "Abiding" is the metaphor for the life experienced in fellowship with the Father, the Son, and other believers. Intentionally keeping oneself from idols (all that is opposed to God) is the means of continuing to abide, to have life, and to have victory over the evil one. Aided by the persuasive imagery of his text, the author hoped to have the joy of seeing the confidence and commitment of his audience increase in their experience of life and rejection of death.

#### **4.4.7. Conclusions Related to Ideology**

In the author's assumptions and choices, the present writer's background, and the various presuppositions of other scholars, ideological texture emerges and influences the meanings, interpretations, and answers to questions asked of the text. In the discussion of the biblical author's ideology, it can be seen that the goal driving the author of 1 John is to increase the confidence and commitment of his "children" to fellowship with God and with each other. In order for this to take place, the author's assumption is seen to be that the works of the devil

need to be destroyed and the children of the devil need to be avoided. This is the author's solution to the problem facing the community, demonstrating his ideological purpose.

In an interpretive conversation between the present interpreter and other interpreters of the text, one ideological conclusion that has emerged is that many biblical scholars have been influenced by the Enlightenment to discount the influence of the spirit world, and as a result they have not paid much attention to the meaning of the phrases, "the devil has been sinning from the beginning," or "the works of the devil." An anthropocentric perspective has led many scholars to conclude that the devil's work consists simply of instigating humans to sin. The present interpreter is inclined to widen that interpretation to include evils not caused by humans, in line with ancient Mediterranean beliefs in an evil spirit world that needed to be fought against and that was responsible for such things as disease, natural disasters, and societal problems.

#### **4.5. THEOLOGICAL OR SACRED TEXTURE**

Robbins explains the nature and function of theological or sacred texture by saying, "people who read the New Testament regularly are interested in finding insights into the nature of the relation between human life and the divine. ... [They are] interested in locating the ways the text speaks about God ... or talks about realms of religious life."<sup>394</sup> This section of the thesis addresses that interest, from the ideological perspective of the present reader and interpreter of the New Testament, in what the original readers and hearers of the text of 1 John may have understood the text to be saying about how believers are intended to relate to the divine, to the evil spirit world, to each other, to their opponents, and the ways in which they were to live holy lives. In particular, this section addresses the question of what the audience of 1 John would have understood when they heard the phrase, "the works of the devil." What do those works include, how were they to be destroyed, what role would believers have in destroying those works? In this section, a theology of "the works of the devil" will be proposed that integrates insights from the preceding texture studies.

In the midst of a pastoral emergency, as his congregation was being divided and confused by conflicting beliefs about the Son of God and how to live as a follower of Jesus, the author of 1 John wrote with the theological purpose of confirming in his hearers their

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<sup>394</sup> Robbins, *Texture*, 120.

status as children of God (their relationship to the divine). As part of this confirmation he affirms their victory over the evil one (their relationship to the evil spirit world), and their need for a divorce from their opponents who are labeled, “children of the devil” (one aspect of the believers’ relationship with other humans). At the same time, the theological theme of love demands that they relate well to each other and to the potentially believing world, including joining the Son of God in destroying the works of the devil, as one aspect of holy living. The fact that the author expects conflict as part of holy living is an example of Robbins’ point, that “the sacred texture of a text often emerges in the context of conflict between good and evil spiritual forces. The manner in which this battle is resolved sheds yet more light on the relation of human life to the divine in the text.”<sup>395</sup> Drawing all these themes together, the findings of previous texture studies will be placed in relationship to each other, in a process similar to that of piecing together individual pieces of a quilt, resulting in an overall pattern from which a Johannine theology of the works of the devil can be discerned. This theology represents one way in which the author resolved the conflict he was addressing, showing how the divine relates to humans.

#### **4.5.1. Relationship to the Divine: Status as Children of God Who are Closely Related to the Unique Son of God**

In piecing together an overall pattern of theological texture, the first of four aspects that will be considered is the relationship between humans and the divine, expressed with a family metaphor in 1 John 2:28 – 3:18.<sup>396</sup> Children of God, or those born of God, are those who abide (μένετε) in God/the Son and in whom God/the Son abide. Inner texture studies have shown that it was a primary purpose of the author to strengthen confidence in his hearers in their status as children of God, encouraging them to remain or abide in the Father and in the Son.

In this family relationship, according to 1 John, the children of God demonstrate the characteristics of God, namely righteousness and love. In the inter-texture word studies it was seen that the Qumran literature, the Gospel of John, and 1 John, all express the common

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<sup>395</sup> Robbins, *Texture*, 123.

<sup>396</sup> See van der Merwe, “Fellowship,” in *Identity*, 538: “By reminding his adherents of their fictive kinship, of their common identity, (ἀδελφοί), and the values, conduct and doctrine that set them apart from other groups (e.g. the deceivers) in their society, the Elder entrenches their identity as a group, and serves to continue to regulate social (ethical) behavior in this group.”

theme that the appearing or visitation of God results in His nature being experienced by those to whom He is revealed. In 1 John this concept is most developed, that those who are known as God's children can expect to participate at the present time in His character as well as in the future (3:1, 2, 10). God's character includes his life-giving nature as seen in a comparison of 1 John 3:8 and 4:9 that makes it clear that the ultimate purpose of Jesus' appearing is to give life to the children of God,<sup>397</sup> replacing death that is a work of the devil in the present age.

From the imagery in the ideological texture section, the following characteristics of God's children, who are experiencing His life, can be seen. God's children: walk in the light (1:7); have fellowship with each other, God, and Jesus (1:7); keep his commandments (2:3); love the brothers (2:10); overcome the evil one [world] (2:14; 5:4); do the will of God (2:17); confess the Son (2:23); do what is right (2:29); do not sin (3:6); give up their lives for the brothers (3:16).

In each case, the opposite of these characteristics is spoken of as being something to avoid. The chiasmic climax of 1 John in 3:10 labels those who are not demonstrating love and righteousness as "children of the devil."<sup>398</sup> A text in circulation at the time 1 John was written summarizes the relationship to the divine that characterizes the text of 1 John: "Keep, therefore, yourselves, my children, from every evil work.<sup>399</sup> ... Depart, therefore, from all unrighteousness, and cleave unto the righteousness of God, and your race will be saved for ever" (*T. Dan* 6:6, 8, 10).

#### **4.5.2. Relationship to the Evil Spirit World: Victory over the Evil One**

The opposite of a group of people having eternal life ("being saved forever"), is, of course, death. The struggle envisioned by the author of 1 John is literally a battle between life and

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<sup>397</sup> Also see Jesus' statements about himself in the Gospel of John related to his purpose to give life to those who might be thought of as the "other" sons, or children, of God. These statements include, "[the Father] has granted the Son to have life in himself" (5:26); "I am the bread of life" (6:33); "I have come that they may have life" (10:10); "I am the resurrection and the life" (11:25); "I am the way, the truth, and the life" (14:6). This life is the antithesis of death, which is associated with the works of the devil in 1 John.

<sup>398</sup> The ethics found in 1 John are to obey the two Johannine commands, to have right belief and right behavior which can be summed up as loving God and loving one another. Obedience to these commands are the "right doings" or "righteousness" (δικαιοσύνη) characteristic of the children of God. This can be seen in the use of a related term in Psalm 104:45 (Septuagint), δικαιώματα, which the Net Bible translates as "commands" and the LXX interlinear translates as "ordinances." The commands of God were "right doings." Practicing "right doings" comprised the right relationship to the divine according to Johannine theology.

<sup>399</sup> Compare 1 John 5:21: "Dear children, keep yourselves from idols."

death. Coetzee describes this battle: “Confrontation between Jesus and Satan has an essential place in John’s Christology. In the cross the great conflict between the Christ of God and illegal prince over God’s creation is brought to a climax. This results in the casting out of Satan and the revelation of the kingship and glory of Christ over this world.”<sup>400</sup> In the inner texture study of transitions in 1 John, it was pointed out that the chain-link interlock transition highlights reference to the Son of God coming to destroy the works of the devil. A similar structure and theme at the center of the Gospel of John indicate that the cosmic battle between the Son of God and the evil one are of central importance to Johannine theology.

In both 1 John and the Gospel of John the authors point out that the “illegal prince” has been sinning, murdering, and refusing to acknowledge the authority of God “from the beginning.” In addition to recognizing the evil one’s role in inciting humans to join him in sin and rebellion against God, 1<sup>st</sup> century Mediterranean people considered that the evil one, variously labeled, was associated with distortions of nature, including disease and natural disasters. In fact, as pointed out earlier, Charlesworth summarized the understanding of the evil spirit world in the pseudepigraphal literature by saying, “almost all misfortunes are because of the demons; sickness, drought, death, and especially humanity’s weaknesses about remaining faithful to the covenant. ... Humanity is often seen as a pawn, helpless in the face of such cosmic forces ...”<sup>401</sup> The practice of magic as an attempt to manipulate the spirits to refrain from evil was pointed out in the historical inter-texture section. Ignatius’ letter to the Ephesians (19:3) highlights the dissolution of magical practices with the appearing of God in human form.<sup>402</sup> Apollonius’ account of the plague-demon in Ephesus, the authority attributed to Artemis over harmful spirits of nature, and Heracles’ renown as a defender against disease and death are examples of the common belief in evil spirits and attempts to avoid their influence. In the cultural inter-texture section Heracles was proposed as a Greco-Roman metaphor for the strong young men in 1 John 2:14 who have overcome the evil one.

Intentional struggle is the relationship with the evil spirit world that the author of 1 John envisions for the children of God, as they actively resist and overcome hostile spiritual

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<sup>400</sup> J. D. Coetzee, “Christ and the Prince of This World in the Gospel and the Epistles of St. John,” *Neot* 2 (1968): 117.

<sup>401</sup> Charlesworth, *Pseudepigrapha*, 66.

<sup>402</sup> As discussed earlier, the presence of God in human form could either refer to Jesus, the Son of God, or to God’s children in whom the Father and Son abide. Ignatius to the Ephesians 13:1, 2 shows the expectation that believers gathered together to give glory to God cause Satan’s destructive works to be nullified.

forces (2:13, 14; 4:4; 5:4, 5). In the inter-texture study it was seen that the inter-testamental literature demonstrates this same worldview. *T. Levi* 17:11, 12 gives encouragement to fight evil: “He shall give to the saints to eat from the tree of life, and ... Beliar shall be bound by Him, and He shall give power to His children to tread upon the evil spirits.” In *T. Naphtali* 8:4-6, quoted in previous sections, the good works of the “children” result in God being glorified, the devil fleeing from them, and the wild beasts fearing them. Also see *T. Issachar* 7:7: “Every spirit of Beliar shall flee from you/ And no deed of wicked men shall rule over you/ And every wild beast shall ye subdue.”<sup>403</sup>

New Testament texts picture this struggle as not only against flesh and blood, but also against evil spiritual forces (Ephesians 6:12). This struggle is not only offensive, but also defensive. Of the six pieces of armor offered by Paul for believers engaged in spiritual warfare, five are defensive (Ephesians 6:10-17). The epistles of the New Testament are full of warnings to watch out for the tricks and snares of ὁ διάβολος who has “power of death” (Hebrews 2:14). James advises his readers, “resist the devil and he will flee from you” (James 4:7). Ignatius also warns about the snares of the devil in his epistle to the Trallians (8:1): “I am guarding you in advance because you are very dear to me and I foresee the snares of the devil. You, therefore, must arm yourselves with gentleness and regain your strength in faith ... and in love.”<sup>404</sup>

In the Qumran literature a struggle is also envisioned between evil and good spirits, but without active participation by humans. In the inter-texture section, 1QS IV, 15-25 was portrayed in chiasmic format, highlighting the longed-for apocalyptic climax in which injustice, wicked deeds and abominations will be done away with through the purifying and cleansing activity of the spirit of truth. In the in-between time, while truth and injustice struggle, the Qumran believers were warned throughout their literature to avoid and “hate” those associated with unrighteousness.<sup>405</sup> In the Qumran community the relationship of

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<sup>403</sup> In this context, and in Ignatius to the Ephesians, it is likely that the evil deeds of humans are in view, as representative of the spirit of Beliar. Ignatius spoke of the soldiers accompanying him to his execution as “leopards” (Ignatius to the Romans 5:1): “From Syria all the way to Rome I am fighting with wild beasts, on land and sea, by night and day, chained amidst ten leopards (that is, a company of soldiers) who only get worse when they are well treated.” But a few lines later he refers to literal wild beasts awaiting him in Rome who will devour him. It seems that the term “wild beasts” can be used of anything evil in the early Mediterranean world.

<sup>404</sup> Holmes, *Fathers*, 109.

<sup>405</sup> See 1QS I, 1-5: “He shall admit into the Covenant of Grace all those who have freely devoted themselves to the observance of God’s precepts, ... that they may love all the sons of light, ... and hate all the sons of darkness. ...”

humans to the evil spirit world was more passive than that of the Johannine community, although each of these groups used personifications to describe evil forces to some extent, and each related to other humans in accordance with which spirit-world those humans were allied.

#### 4.5.3. Relationship to Other Humans: Divorce from “Children of the Devil”

Based on the principle of the author’s rhetoric that God’s children become like Him and the devil’s children become like the devil, it was necessary, in the author’s view, for God’s children to disassociate themselves from the devil’s children. Polycarp’s vitriolic term for heretics, “the first-born of Satan,” (Philippians 7:1) illustrates the strong feelings in Asia Minor during this time period against those who opposed what was considered to be right belief and practice.

In the inner texture study, antithetical labels were listed that were later referred to in the social-cultural texture as demonstrating the ideal group norms and deviance from those norms in the Johannine community. The list of norms and their opposites reaches a climax at the chiasmic center of 1 John when the author states that the manifestation of who is a child of God and who is a child of the devil is based on the fact that the one who does not do what is right and who does not love the brother is not of God. What the audience of the author of 1 John can see or hear each group doing includes, among other actions:

##### Children of God:

Walk in the light (1:7)  
 keep his commandments (2:3)  
 loves his brother (2:10)  
 overcome the evil one [world]  
 confesses the son (2:23)  
 does what is right (2:29)  
  
 we ought to give up our lives  
 for our brothers (3:16)

##### Children of the Devil:

Walk in darkness (1:6)  
 do not keep his commandments (2:4)  
 hates his brother (2:9)  
 loves the world, (2:15)  
 denies that Jesus is the Christ (2:22)  
 Everyone who does sin also does  
 lawlessness (3:4)  
 sees his brother having need  
 and closes his affections from him  
 (3:17)

The closely paired stark contrasts in the imagery of these lists leave the audience with only one real choice. The last verse of the book describes in one last word picture what the author intended to persuade the audience to do, “little children, keep yourselves from idols” (5:21), i.e., from those who will lead you into false ways of believing and acting. The social-cultural texture study proposed that the portions of 1 John that speak about those who were

deviant from group norms comprise a ritual in which the status of the opponents was degraded to “children of the devil.” The ritual, if successful, would have resulted in a divorce between the two groups. This intended negative relationship to other humans with whom stark differences exists is similar, but not identical, to the expectations of the Qumran literature.

#### **4.5.4. Relationship to Other Humans: Love for the “Brothers,” Including the Potentially Believing World**

The Qumran literature shows that the mindset of 1<sup>st</sup> century Jewish-Christian believers may have included the feeling that love and loving deeds were not owed to those who were not part of one’s group. But both the Essene believers and the Johannine believers believed strongly that love should be demonstrated to in-group “brothers.” The Gospel of John and 1 John both emphasize the command to love one another as Jesus loved. First John 3:17, 18 shows the practical implications of showing love, while the inner texture comparison of 1 John 3:8 with 4:9-11 proposed an expanded understanding of the term, “brother,” for the Johannine community. The author subtly enlarges his audience’s understanding of who the brother is to whom love should be shown, to include the potentially believing world. In other words, those who have not deliberately rejected right belief and right conduct, as defined by Johannine tradition, can be included in the term, “brother.” Ignatius’ letter to the Ephesians supports this interpretation: “Let us show ourselves [to hostile unbelievers] their brothers by our forbearance” (Ignatius to the Ephesians 10:3).

#### **4.5.5. Holy Living: Joining the Unique Son of God in Destroying the Works of the Devil**<sup>406</sup>

It may seem contradictory to claim that, as one facet of holy living, the Johannine believers, known as those who demonstrated love to one another in imitation of God’s love, expected to participate in a cosmic battle by destroying the works of the devil. But, as was pointed out in the inner texture study, the repetitive–progressive texture charts show that the theme of love

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<sup>406</sup> It is important to note Kostenberger’s caution that the “signs” in the Fourth Gospel are unique to Jesus, not intended to be imitated by his followers, since the miraculous signs function as symbols pointing to “God’s glory displayed in Jesus, thus revealing Jesus as God’s authentic representative” (*Missions*, 60; see also 52, 54, 73). However, the argument in this thesis is that in his miraculous works or “signs,” Jesus demonstrated general principles for revealing God’s glory that his followers can imitate, joining him in banishing the darkness associated with the “works of the devil.”

is an important part of the “cosmic battle,” and may even be a means of defeating the devil and his works.<sup>407</sup> These works were shown in the word study on the word, ἔργα, to be directed against humans, keeping them from participating in God’s will for humankind. Love would then be the opposite force that would intentionally draw humans into participation in God’s will. In the cosmic battle at the heart of 1 John and the Gospel of John, it is clear that the Johannine authors envision God intentionally counteracting this opposition to his will because of the extent to which He loves the people of the world (John 3:16; 1 John 4:9-11). The appearing of Jesus as “the light of the world” was seen in the inter-texture word studies to have begun the process of overcoming, nullifying, and destroying evil works of darkness, hatred and death.

The question to be answered here is whether, in the Johannine worldview, the children of God are expected to join the unique Son of God in destroying the works of the devil. Progress toward an answer to this question was found in Jesus’ statement in John 14:12: “the person who believes in me will perform the works that I am doing and will perform greater works than these.” 1 John 4:17 echoes this saying, “as he is, so are we in this world.” Also see 1 John 2:6: “he that abides in him [Jesus Christ the righteous; 2:1] ought himself to walk even as he walked;” 1 John 1:7: “if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another ...”; and 1 John 3:2: “we know that when he is revealed, we will be like him.” Each of these passages shows an expectation that children of God will imitate the Son of God.

The Gospel of John portrays the way Johannine believers would have envisioned Jesus’ “walk,” or way of life. In the inter-texture word study on the word, ἔργα, the point was made that in the Gospel of John Jesus’ miraculous and caring good works were done for the purpose of generating belief in his followers and that these works (of God) had the result of overturning the works of the devil.<sup>408</sup> The following syllogism, proposed earlier, shows it is reasonable to postulate that followers of Jesus, according to the Johannine understanding, were expected to participate with the Son of God in overturning the works of the devil and

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<sup>407</sup> This is also hinted at in the passage quoted above from Ignatius’ epistle to the Trallians, in which he encouraged his readers to find strength for the spiritual conflict through faith and love.

<sup>408</sup> In the inter-texture word study, the assumption was made, based on the antithetical worldview found in the Johannine literature, that the devil’s work can be viewed as being the opposite of Jesus’ works. For example, since Jesus met physical and social needs by providing drink and food; the devil’s work must be to cause physical and social chaos (i.e., famine). Jesus healed the sick, crippled and blind; this represented an undoing of the devil’s work which was to cause sickness, crippling and blindness, etc.

restoring order and God's will on earth. This is one aspect of holy living expected of Johannine followers of Jesus:

1. Jesus' works were intended to destroy the devil's work on earth.
2. Jesus said his followers would do the works he was doing and even greater works.<sup>409</sup>
3. Therefore Jesus' followers are expected to participate in the destruction of the devil's work on earth.

The work of the Son of God, ultimately, was to give up his life out of love for humankind, according to John 3:16 and 1 John 4:9, 11, in order to give life to believers, which represents an overturning of death, the main work of the devil. The children of God, according to 1 John 3:16, are also supposed to give up their lives, in another sense, out of love for the brothers, in this way imitating Jesus by demonstrating love and overcoming the devil's intent to kill and destroy. The practical outworking of this love is to be in ἔργῳ καὶ ἀληθείᾳ (1 John 3:18). Through such practical demonstrations of love by the children of God, the works of the devil can be overturned, nullified, and destroyed.

#### **4.5.6. Conclusion: a Proposed Johannine Theology of “the Works of the Devil”**

“The works of the devil” have been discussed from a variety of standpoints in the previous texture studies in an attempt to understand what the Johannine community would have pictured in their minds when they heard that the Son of God had come to destroy those works. One approach from the Gospel of John, based on the antithetical principle seen throughout Johannine and Qumran literature, was described in the inter-texture study of the word, ἔργα. After listing the works of God done through Jesus, each work was summarized as a general principle, and the opposite of the generalization was listed as a work of the devil. These can be said to be the “sins” of the devil that he has been doing “from the beginning” (1 John 3:8):

- Causing physical and social chaos (i.e., famine)
- Causing sickness, crippling and blindness
- Causing death
- Deceiving and confusing people
- Turning people away from belief in Jesus (or from righteousness)

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<sup>409</sup> The inter-texture word study showed that in the book of Acts, deeds similar to those done by Jesus in the Gospel of John were done by followers of Jesus.

- Demonstrating hatred that results in human neediness.

Another way to summarize the works of the devil is by looking through the lens of the hinge verses of the chiasmic structure of 1 John (verses 3:8-12). Here it is possible to see that the sins, or works of the devil, have been discussed both before and after the central verses in those antithetical labels associated with the “children of the devil,” which feature lack of belief and lack of right conduct.”<sup>410</sup> The list of the works of the devil based on the chiasmic structure of 1 John, as described in the ideological texture section, include:

- Unrighteousness, lack of love
- Lawlessness, murder, death, not giving of oneself for others
- Denying that Jesus is the Son of God who came in the flesh
- Being devoted to the things of the world, which pass away
- Demonstrating hatred and murder
- Not keeping God’s commandments (to love and believe)
- Walking in darkness, unrighteousness, lies
- Associations with death, false approaches to God

A third approach to identifying the works of the devil was developed in the historical inter-texture section. Here the following conclusions were reached about what 1<sup>st</sup> century Mediterranean believers living in a Hellenistic city such as Ephesus would have had in mind when considering the phrase, “the works of the devil”:

- The connection of the goddess Artemis of the Ephesians with the underworld links death with opponents to the true God.
- The depiction of the goddess Artemis taming wild beasts and the imitation of casting out evil spirits in Jesus’ name by Sceva and his sons are examples of the felt need of the people for deliverance from evil spirits, including diseases thought to be caused by them.
- The accounts in Acts 19:19 and Ignatius to the Eph. 19:3 demonstrate that the practice of magic was considered by early Christian leaders to be evil, a work of the devil, that needed to be destroyed.

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<sup>410</sup> In John 8:41, speaking of the Jews who were trying to kill him, Jesus articulated the Johannine principle that people do the deeds of their spiritual father. In this case he specified in 8:44 that these Jews were of their father the devil who was a murderer and liar from the beginning.

- The beliefs in Artemis and all the other Greco-Roman gods and goddesses would have been seen by the Johannine believers as opposition to the true God, and therefore a work of the devil.

Finally, Charlesworth's summary of the results of the work of demons found in the pseudepigraphal literature reinforces the findings listed above: sickness, drought, death, and especially humanity's weaknesses about remaining faithful to the covenant.<sup>411</sup>

In short, the works of the devil, according to 1 John and the Gospel of John, supplemented by historical evidence of ancient culture and writings, would have been seen by early Johannine believers as equated with that which leads to death. Examples show that this could be physical death, as in the example of Cain or of disease, or spiritual death, as in the example of idols which represent unbelief, evil work, false approaches to God, and disobedience to God's commands.

In the aspect of Johannine theology proposed here, the destruction of the works of the devil has three stages. The first was initiated with Jesus' death on the cross ("now is the prince of this world cast out"). But according to the findings of these texture studies, that was not the end of the battle.

Although it is not explicitly stated, the Johannine literature leaves room for the understanding that in a second stage, followers of Jesus are expected to participate in continued destruction of the works of the devil.<sup>412</sup> Ignatius' statement in his letter to the Ephesians summarizes an aspect of holy living that believers in the Johannine community and other early believers expected of themselves: "When believers meet together frequently, the powers of Satan are overthrown" (13:1).

The powers of Satan, or works of the devil, have been seen to operate at both a personal and collective level. The *Testament of Asher* summarizes the personal level understood by believers in the 1<sup>st</sup> century: "but from wickedness flee away, destroying the evil inclination by your good works" (*T. Asher* III. 2). At the collective level, the author of 1 John envisions society (the κόσμος) as being in need of rescue from the hold the evil one has upon it (1 John 5:19: "the whole world lies in the [power of] the evil one"). He seems to

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<sup>411</sup> Charlesworth, *Pseudepigrapha*, 66.

<sup>412</sup> This unstated understanding is parallel to the latent assumption described in the inner texture, that the potentially believing world is included in the Johannine command to love the brother. Both of these theological points allow room for expansion in understanding of how to obey the Johannine command to "love one another" on the part of the original audience and for readers of the text throughout history.

allude (in 2:13, 14) to the need for strong champions, in the tradition of Heracles, to overcome evil wherever it is found and contribute toward the final cosmic overthrow of Satan.

This final overthrow is the third stage, proposed in this theology, of the destruction of the works of the devil. It is described in the Revelation 20:10: “And the devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of burning sulfur, ... for ever and ever.” In this hope of final deliverance, the Johannine authors were in agreement with the thinking of other Jewish believers at the beginning of the 1<sup>st</sup> century in the Mediterranean world. Authors of the Qumran literature, the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, and the New Testament as a whole, all looked forward to the day when a visitation or an appearing of a Righteous One would bring a final end to evil and death (destruction of the works of the devil) and usher in the unending reign of peace, righteousness and truth.

In proposing this theology of “the works of the devil,” the findings from a variety of studies in inner, inter-, cultural, historical, and ideological texture, have been stitched together as one example of how Johannine believers may have viewed the statement by the author of 1 John that “for this purpose the Son of God was revealed, in order to destroy the works of the devil.” As the texture studies were progressing, looking for answers to specific questions and particularly aiming toward understanding the phrase, “the works of the devil,” a variety of other insights were gained into the text of 1 John and its historical context. In the final chapter a summary of the contributions from this research to the Johannine literature will be presented along with suggestions for further study.

## **CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS: A SYNTHESIS OF EXEGETICAL FINDINGS AND ORIGINAL INDUCTIVE RESEARCH**

In addition to the conclusions directly related to the research questions, presented in the theological texture of the preceding chapter, other insights have been gained that can contribute to the Johannine literature. These will be reviewed in this final chapter, in a final piecing together of the quilt or tapestry being constructed through a Socio-Rhetorical investigation of 1 John.

### **5.1. INSIGHTS RELATED TO THE OCCASION FOR THE WRITING OF 1 JOHN**

In the discussion of the occasion for the writing of 1 John, new insights were presented about the identity of the opponents, the relationship between the Gospel and First Epistle of John, and the genre of the text. Each of these contributions are summarized here.

#### **5.1.1. Identification of the Opponents of 1 John**

Regarding the opponents, an hypothesis was presented in the form of a narrative picturing a group of Essenes, who were displaced in 68–70 C.E. by the Roman destruction of the land, being attracted through missionary activity to the Johannine community in Ephesus. Lingad's description of the Ebionite sect fits well with this hypothesis which further postulates that these new believers, who remained Essene, eventually realized they were not able to participate in the beliefs about Jesus as the Christ and as God. These disenchanted Essene or Ebionite believers have been proposed in this thesis as the "opponents" written about in 1 John.

#### **5.1.2. A Relationship Between the Gospel and First Epistle of John**

A key relationship between the Gospel of John and 1 John, for the purposes of this research, was the finding that at the center of each book is an emphasis on the cosmic battle between the Son of God and the evil one. In each case this central emphasis occurs as part of a similar complex transitional device.

### **5.1.3. A New Proposal for the Genre of 1 John**

A new proposal was given for the genre of 1 John, namely, that it is a liturgy resulting from the combination of two separate rituals that label the believers as “children of God” and the opponents as “children of the devil.” Ritual theory, in the social-cultural texture section, was drawn upon to describe one of the two rituals and its purpose.

## **5.2. APPLICATION OF GROUP THEORY TO 1 JOHN**

The need for the ritual was explained through application of Douglas’ group theory that showed the importance in low grid/high group societies (such as that of the Johannine community) of dealing with deviance from group norms. The group norms of the Johannine community, that were being violated by the opponents, were demonstrated through a series of closely matched antithetical labels that were characteristic either of the children of God or of the children of the devil. Through a number of separate studies the conclusion was reached that the author’s purpose in writing was to confirm in his hearers their status as children of God and the need for a divorce from their opponents, labeled, “children of the devil,” thus the need for a “Status Degradation Ritual,” as described in the social-cultural texture section. The author of 1 John assumed that the works of the devil need to be destroyed and the children of the devil need to be avoided. This was his solution to the urgent problem facing the community.

## **5.3. INSIGHTS FROM INNER TEXTURE STUDIES**

This rhetorical purpose was analyzed through detailed inner texture studies. At the whole book level the chiasmic structure, rhetorical transitions, and repetitive-progressive texture were analyzed. The study narrowed to an analysis of the pericopes at the center of 1 John: 3:4-10, and 3:11-18, where an emphasis on defeat of the evil one is presented in a chiasmic climax. These pericopes were found to be simultaneously part of a complex rhetorical transition, termed “chain link interlock,” that also focuses attention on the destruction of the works of the devil.

### **5.3.1. Chiastic Structures Within 1 John and Their Interpretive Value**

#### **5.3.1.1. *Elucidating the Meaning of ἁμαρτίαν in 1 John 3:4-10***

The chiastically paired phrases within the two pericopes shed light on relationships and definitions of key terms in the text. The accusations against the opponents were seen to be in a chiastic arrangement, closely matched with positive statements about the believing community, also fitting the chiastic structure. The definition of ἁμαρτίαν is enhanced by the proposal that verse 3:4 (in which ἁμαρτίαν is equated with ἀνομία) is in a chiastic parallel relationship with 3:15, which brings ἀνομία into a parallel relationship with the theme of death, which in turn can be extrapolated to mean the intentional destruction of God's created beings and the opposition to God's creative will. The implication of these parallels is that the type of sin in view in saying that "the devil has been sinning from the beginning" (3:8a) is associated with death, whether physical or spiritual. This insight proved helpful in later studies focusing on the meaning of "the works of the devil," which would logically be directly related to his activities involved in "sinning from the beginning."

#### **5.3.1.2. *Use of the Chiastic Center as a Lens Toward Developing a Theology of "the Works of the Devil"***

One approach used to identify the works of the devil was summarized in the theological texture section of chapter 4. Looking through the lens of the center of the chiastic structure of 1 John revealed chiastic parallels attributed to the devil and his children: unrighteousness, lack of love, lawlessness, murder, not giving of oneself for others, denying that Jesus is the Son of God who came in the flesh, being devoted to the things of the world which pass away, not keeping God's commandments to love and believe, walking in darkness, unrighteousness, lies, false approaches to God. These qualities or works of the devil are opposite to God's character and works.

### **5.3.2. Insights from Rhetorical Transitions**

In contrast to the hatred and murder typical of the devil and his children (such as Cain), love and life are characteristic of God and His children in the worldview of the author of 1 John. In the study of rhetorical transitions, a solution was proposed to the theological problem some have seen with the Johannine emphasis on love for brother to the apparent exclusion of

love for others outside the community. The pattern of the chain-link interlock transition brought two textually separated sections into the same thematic treatment. This led to the finding that since the world is an object of God's love, it must therefore also be an object of the believers' love who are to love just as God did (4:11, also see 4:17: "Just as Jesus is, so also are we in this world"). This contributes toward a solution to the theological problem some have had in thinking that 1 John's emphasis is on loving the fellow believer to the neglect of the rest of humanity.

### **5.3.3. Insights from Repetitive-Progressive Texture Charts**

Repetitive-progressive texture charts yielded insights into the theological purposes and key terms of 1 John. The chart of key terms became the basis for detailed inter-texture word studies. The other chart showed the activities and characteristics of the two camps involved in the cosmic battle implied in the ideology of the text of 1 John. The theme related to participants on God's side shows an increased number of occurrences in 2:28–3:10. This is the pericope in which the devil comes into the picture and it is also where the children of God are first mentioned, joining in the cosmic battle that is part of the ideology of the author of 1 John. The fact that demonstrating love is one of the key things God and the Son can be seen doing, as shown in the chart in the sections following the introduction of the devil's destruction, seems to indicate that love has a role to play in the cosmic battle. Even more activity is charted for what believers are doing, in the sections following the mention of the devil, than for what God/Jesus/the Spirit is doing. This indicates an important role for God's children in the battle, including joining the Son of God in some sense to destroy the works of the devil. Love is shown in this chart to be an important aspect of what believers are seen doing, further evidence of the role of love in overcoming evil in the cosmic battle.

### **5.3.4. Insights from Discourse Analysis of Two Pericopes**

Following these whole book studies, the inner texture studies narrowed to a detailed discourse analysis of 1 John 2:28 – 3:10 and 3:11-18. In the first pericope a basic pattern emerged from the text showing God's righteous nature as the basis for the visible works of God's children, demonstrating that they possess God's nature.

The following basic pattern is repeated four times in this pericope:

A: God's nature (or the devil's)

B: God's children (or unique Son) demonstrate his character through visible works (or the devil's children demonstrate the devil's character through his works)

C: God's children have God's nature (and the devil's children have the devil's nature)

## 5.4. INSIGHTS FROM INTER-TEXTURE ANALYSIS

### 5.4.1. Scribal Inter-texture Insights

#### 5.4.1.1. Key Word Studies

The theme of imitation of God's character was also found in the scribal inter-texture analysis of the themes φανερωθῆ, and δικαιοσύνην. These and the other key words from one of the repetitive-progressive texture charts were analyzed by drawing on relevant passages in other Johannine literature, the New Testament as a whole, the Hebrew Bible, Qumran literature, the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, and the writings of Ignatius and other early church leaders.

#### 5.4.1.2. Original Analysis of IQS IV, 15-25

As part of the inter-textual study of the word, φανερωθῆ, an original analysis of IQS IV, 15-25 was diagrammed in a characteristically Hebraic chiastic format to highlight the central apocalyptic climax which is parallel to the expectations at the center of 1 John: the appearance, or visitation, of one who will do away with what is evil or wicked.

#### 5.4.1.3. Commonalities in Extra-biblical and Biblical Texts

In three sets of texts compared, Qumran literature, the Gospel of John, and 1 John, a common theme was found that the appearing or visitation of God results in His nature being experienced by those to whom He is revealed. The same pattern applies to "the devil" (known by a variety of terms) and his followers who experience the nature of the one they belong to, as shown in the pattern mentioned above that was uncovered in the discourse analysis. In the inter-textual word study focusing on the nature of the devil's sin ἀπ' ἀρχῆς, a technical examination of the Hebrew phrase, *tohu wabohu*, in Genesis 1:2, called attention to the fact that sin, characterized by destruction and death, is an intrinsic part of the devil's

character and always has been, just as righteousness is an intrinsic and eternal part of God's character, according to the Johannine worldview.

#### **5.4.1.4. Chain-link Interlock Transitions in the Gospel and First Epistle of John**

Two of the terms for the evil one that are used in the Johannine literature were compared by means of analyzing chain-link interlock transitions found at the center of both 1 John and the Gospel of John. As mentioned earlier, Longenecker applies the chain-link interlock technique to the Gospel of John. This study proposed a similar transition for 1 John. These complex transitions serve as an "interpretive lens" in each book, giving insights into the cosmic battle between Jesus and "the ruler of this world" (John 12:31) or τοῦ διαβόλου (1 John 3:8).

Although various names are used to represent a main evil being (who has other evil spirits/demons under his rule), there is a consistency in the works and motives attributed by various 1<sup>st</sup> century writers to this being, who is opposed to God's rule. In response to this opposition, the author of 1 John highlights that God has sent his Son to cast out this evil ruler and to destroy his works.

#### **5.4.1.5. Use of the Gospel of John to Interpret the Meaning of the Phrase, "the Works of the Devil," in 1 John**

Arriving at a Johannine understanding of the phrase, τὰ ἔργα τοῦ διαβόλου, was the main focus of this research. The inter-textual study of the term, ἔργα, followed an antithetical approach as an organizing principle:

1. *Positive works*: First the ἔργα of God were listed, particularly those in the Gospel of John performed by Jesus. These were taken as representative of God's will for the κόσμος.
2. *Negative works*: Next the opposite of Jesus' works was attributed to the evil one, based on the antithetical worldview of the Johannine community (which in this respect closely matches that of the Qumran community and the community that produced the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*).

Taking the opposite of the qualities of Jesus' works in the Gospel of John and the opposite of statements about the works of God in the Johannine writings yielded a list of activities characteristic of God's opponent. Two examples are given here from the more detailed list in chapter 4:

Jesus met physical and social needs by providing drink and food.

The opposite: the devil's work would be to cause physical and social chaos (i.e., famine).

Jesus healed the sick, crippled and blind.

The opposite: the devil's work would be to cause sickness, crippling and blindness.

Following this approach, other works of the devil were proposed: causing death, deceiving and confusing people, turning people away from belief in Jesus (or from righteousness), and demonstrating hatred that results in human neediness.

#### **5.4.2. Historical and Cultural Inter-texture Insights**

Drawing on a historical study of the religious background in Ephesus, a strong connection with the works of the devil was seen in the worship of the goddess Artemis and in fear and appeasement through magic of evil spirits thought to cause death, disease and other natural disasters. The myths of the strong young man, Heracles, well-known in Ephesus, were also seen to lend credence to the likelihood that believers in Ephesus would have considered disease and death to be works of the devil that needed to be overcome.

#### **5.4.3. Conclusions of Inter-texture Studies Related to the Works of the Devil**

The summary of the inter-texture studies concluded that the devil is an evil being who has been sinning since the beginning of his rulership over the earth. His inherently sinful nature demonstrates opposition to God's will. While the devil's works can be summarized as bringing death—both physical (disease and deformity, social chaos, mental chaos) and spiritual (unbelief, hatred), the Son of God appeared to give life (1 John 4:9). The appearing of the Son of God was seen to result in works and characteristics that are the opposite of those associated with the sin of the devil, thus nullifying or destroying them.

Three stages in the destruction of the works of the devil were proposed, based on the inter-texture studies:

1. Jesus' appearing on earth demonstrated his mastery over the devil through his works and atoning death on the cross (1 John 2:2; 4:9).

2. The ongoing works of believers overcome the evil one (1 John 2:13, 14) through their faith, through obedience, and through the Father working in them (John 14:10, 12, 20).

3. At a second appearing of a Righteous One, the devil and his sinful works will be destroyed forever, resulting in an unending reign of righteousness and truth (Revelation 10:10).

Based on the reasoning in the key word studies, anything in opposition to God and his will could have been considered by the Johannine community to be a work of the devil that needed to be done away with. The study of the city of Ephesus and its history presented evidence that beliefs in false gods, magic, death, and disease were all likely to have been considered works of the devil by the Johannine believers living there. These believers would also likely have seen a connection between strong young men overcoming the evil one (1 John 2:13, 14) and the famous strong young hero, Heracles, discussed in the social-cultural texture section, who in legends fought wild beasts, thereby overcoming a variety of evils that threatened society. The theme of wild beasts as a symbol for evil is found repeatedly in 1<sup>st</sup> century Mediterranean literature. The *Testament of Naphtali* 8.2-4 speaks of wild beasts fearing believers. Paul said he fought wild beasts in Ephesus, which this research postulated could have referred either to disease or to the dangerous behavior of enraged crowds of people. Jesus was among the wild animals in the desert with angels protecting him (Mark 1:13). Wild beasts, as personifications of evil found in both biblical and extra-biblical literature, are depicted as murderers and agents of death. This is the enemy whose works the Son of God destroys (1 John 3:8). This is the evil one the strong young men are able to overcome (1 John 2:13, 14), indicating that they are stronger, or have access to a stronger power, than the evil one they overcome. “Now is the prince of this world cast out; you have overcome the evil one; the Son of God came to destroy the works of the devil,” one of which this study concludes is disease as a subset of death.

Those believers of the 1<sup>st</sup> century, who were to demonstrate love not just in words, but also in works (1 John 3:18), who expected to participate in destroying the devil’s work of disease, most likely would have been limited to prayer for a higher power to intervene and/or to offering compassionate care. Contemporary believers, with an ideological presupposition that the worldview of 1 John has application to the 21<sup>st</sup> century, have greater capacity in dealing with disease, including the knowledge of microscopic “wild beasts” and awareness of social dysfunctions that perpetuate many diseases. Further study is needed in ideological and

theological texture studies to explore the implications this might have for present-day children of God participating with the unique Son of God in destroying the works of the devil.

## **5.5. HYPOTHESES PRESENTED IN THIS RESEARCH**

The hypotheses proposed here related to the nature of the “the works of the devil,” have been researched through discrete texture studies that have been drawn together to reach the conclusions proposed in the theological texture and in this chapter. As Longenecker said, “the true test of an hypothesis, if it cannot be shown to conflict with known truths, is the number of facts that it correlates and explains.”<sup>413</sup> The hypotheses presented here, which do not conflict with known truths, represent a reading of 1 John that explains a number of questions.

### **5.5.1. Essenes as Opponents**

The hypothesis that Essene insider believers were the opponents explains why the author felt so strongly that he must combat the teachings and behavior of former members of the community who had never really accepted Jesus as the Christ and who were now demonstrating the hatred of outsiders advocated by the Qumran literature.

### **5.5.2. The Presence of Ritual and Liturgy in 1 John**

The proposed ritual to downgrade the opponents’ status to “children of the devil” and divorce them from the rest of the community, was hypothesized to have been combined in memorable chiasmic format with a separate ritual confirming believers as children of God, to form a timeless liturgy that could be read or recited in gatherings of believers. The central focus of this liturgy was seen to be on the cosmic conflict in which the works of the devil are said to be destroyed by the Son of God.

### **5.5.3. Participation with the Son of God in Destroying the Works of the Devil**

Research confirmed the hypothesis that Johannine children of God would have expected to participate with the Son of God in destruction of the works of the devil, which relate

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<sup>413</sup> Longenecker, *Rhetoric*, 17, quoting Cornford, *The Origin of Attic Comedy*, 1914.

ultimately to physical and spiritual death, including but not limited to instigation of humans to sin, disease, and false beliefs about Jesus.

### **5.6. CONTRIBUTIONS MADE TO JOHANNINE LITERATURE**

The method of analysis followed in this research has made a contribution to the Johannine literature. As deSilva points out, a full exegesis of a text requires the combination and integration of a number of texture studies in order to mine the text and unearth its message and significance.<sup>414</sup> This approach has been used in this thesis to arrive at a rich layer of textures for proposing a Johannine theology of “the works of the devil.” This research has attempted to fill a gap in the Johannine literature that does not include a full exegetical approach to 1 John using the methodology of multiple texture studies.

### **5.7. FUTURE STUDIES**

Many other possibilities exist for applying Socio-Rhetorical Analysis to other aspects of text of 1 John beyond those explored in this thesis. Robbins’ essay, “Rhetography: A New Way of Seeing the Familiar Text,” became available after the time of this writing. Future studies in 1 John can incorporate rhetography in the interpretation of the text. Further study is needed of the elements and structure of the proposed status transformation ritual, as well as further investigation of the proposal that 1 John could be seen as a liturgy. Another area for study could be an examination of evidence that Polycarp may have served in an editorial capacity in the writing of 1 John. In a future study from an ideological perspective, insights gained from this study could become a resource for developing theology and practice for the contemporary church in addressing global societal problems. As further Socio-Rhetorical studies are undertaken, the results will be able to be pieced together with the pattern that has begun to emerge from the positioning of the “quilt squares” of separate texture studies described in this thesis, to result in an expansion in understanding the overall pattern of the rhetorical purposes of the author of 1 John.

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<sup>414</sup> deSilva, *Introduction*, 23.



## APPENDIX 1: COMPARISON OF THE CHARACTERISTICS OF TWO TYPES OF PEOPLE IN 1QS AND 1 JOHN

Those concepts in each list that are not represented in the other are **highlighted**.

paragraphs in 1QS IV, 2-14

**1QS: Sons of Light**

- God ... and the Angel of Truth will help all the sons of light.

paths of true righteousness ... straight before him,

fear of the laws of God ... instilled in his heart:

a spirit of humility

**patience**

abundant charity

unending goodness

understanding, and intelligence;

(a spirit of) mighty wisdom

trusts in all the **deeds** of God and leans on his great loving-kindness;

a spirit of discernment in every purpose,

zeal for just laws,

holy intent with steadfastness of heart,

great charity towards all the sons of truth,

admirable purity

detests all unclean idols,

humble conduct sprung from an understanding of all things,

**faithful concealment of the mysteries** of truth.

Parallel verses in 1 John

**1 John: Children of God**

We have an advocate with the Father,

**Jesus Christ the Righteous** (2:1)

walk in the light as he is in the light (1:7)

does what is right (2:29, 3:7)

as he is righteous (3:7)

we keep his commandments (2:3;

3:22; 3:23; 3:24; 4:21; 5:2; 5:3)

confess our sin (1:9) (a theme in other parts of 1QS)

God's love is completed in him (2:5)

loves his brother (2:10, etc.)

cleansed from all unrighteousness (1:9)

we know ... him; that we are in him (2:3, 5, 13, 14, etc.)

you know it [the truth] (2:21)

you have an anointing from him and you know it all (or you all know) (2:20)

he has given us his spirit (4:24)

love in ... **works** and truth (3:18)

we **do** what is pleasing before him (3:22)

have known him who was from the

from the beginning (2:13, 14)

we keep his commandments (2:3, etc.)

does the will of God (2:17)

does not (make a habit of) sinning (3:6)

loves his brother (2:10, etc.)

we are of the truth (3:19)

purifies himself as he is pure (3:3)

keep yourselves from idols (5:21)

you know it [the truth] (2:21)

you have an anointing from him and you

know it all (or you all know) (2:20)

you have no need that anyone

teach you. (2:27)

The **visitation** of all who walk in this spirit:

healing,

great peace in a long life,

fruitfulness,

every everlasting blessing and eternal joy in  
life without end,

a crown of glory and a garment of majesty in  
unending light.

(Although Community is stressed in other  
parts of 1QS)

### ***1QS: Sons/Spirits of Injustice/Darkness***

• But the ways of the spirit of falsehood  
are these:

greed,

slackness in the search for righteousness,  
wickedness

lies,

have confidence and not be ashamed  
before him in his coming [synonym for  
appearing/visitation] (2:28)

God's seed remains in him (3:9)

Joy may be full (1:4)

passed from death into life (3:14)

he has promised us, eternal life (2:25;  
5:11-13)

God is light (1:5)

### **Not represented in 1QS IV, 2-14:**

fellowship with one another & God  
and Jesus (1:7)

the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses  
from all sin (1:7)

have overcome the evil [one] (2:13, 14)

confesses the son also has the father.  
(2:23)

have confidence and not be ashamed  
at his appearing (visitation) (2:28)

is born of him; children of God (2:29;

3:9; 3:10; 4:7; 5:1; 5:4; 5:18)

the world does not know us; hates us  
(3:1; 3:13)

we will be like him because we will  
see him as he is (3:2)

believe in the name of his Son Jesus

Christ (3:23; 5:13)

has victory over the world, [faith]  
(5:4)

the evil one does not touch him.(5:18)

### ***1 John: Children of the Devil***

is a liar; the truth is not in him (1:6; 1:8;  
2:4; 2:22)

loves the world (desire of flesh, eyes,  
pride of this world's goods) (2:15, 16)

does not practice righteousness (3:10)

practices sin (3:4)

is a liar; the truth is not in him (1:6; etc.)

haughtiness and pride,  
falseness and deceit,

cruelty and abundant evil,

ill-temper and much folly  
brazen insolence,  
abominable deeds committed in a spirit  
of lust,  
ways of lewdness in the service of  
uncleanness,  
a blaspheming tongue,  
blindness of eye and dullness of ear,  
stiffness of neck and heaviness of heart,  
walks in all the ways of darkness and guile.

• The **visitation** of all who walk in this spirit:  
a multitude of plagues by the hand of all the  
destroying angels,  
everlasting damnation by the avenging wrath  
of the fury of God,  
eternal torment  
endless disgrace  
shameful extinction in the fire of the dark  
regions.  
sorrowful mourning  
bitter misery  
calamities of darkness  
destroyed without remnant or survivor.

[although this concept is in other parts of 1QS]

**A few summaries of themes from other parts of 1QS that have parallel themes in 1 John**  
**1QS: Sons of Truth/Light; Themes in common with 1 John (Children of God)**  
**Devil)**

do what is right  
obey God's commands  
love

pride of this world's goods (2:15, 16)  
those who are deceiving you (2:26; 3:7;  
4:6)  
false prophets (4:1)  
hates his brother (2:9; 2:11; 3:13; 3:15;  
4:20)

of the evil (one); his works were evil;  
slaughtered his brother (3:12)

false prophets (4:1)  
darkness has blinded his eyes (2:11)

walk in the darkness (1:6, 2:9; 2:11)

[judgment] (4:17)

remains in death (3:14)

**Not represented in 1QS IV, 2-14:**

his word is not in us  
does not keep his commandments  
denies the father and the son  
deceiving self and others  
does lawlessness  
is of the devil  
remains in death  
does not confess Jesus come in the flesh

**1QS: Sons of Injustice/Dark; Themes in common with 1 John (Children of the**

do not do right  
do not obey God's commands  
hate

practice the truth

walk in the ways of light  
children of righteousness (God, 1 Jn 3:10)  
ruled by the Prince of Light

Johannine believers overcome the evil one

God will then purify every deed of man  
with His truth (destroy works of devil,  
1 Jn 3:8)

1QS V, 1: separate from the congregation of the men of injustice

1 John 4:1: Beloved, do not believe all spirit, but test the spirit if it is from God, because  
many false prophets have gone out into the world

1 John 5:21: Little children, keep yourselves from idols.

liars; not of the truth (1QS: sinful heart)  
lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, pride of  
life (1QS: all manner of evil) 2:16

(1 John: overcome the evil 2:13; 2:14)

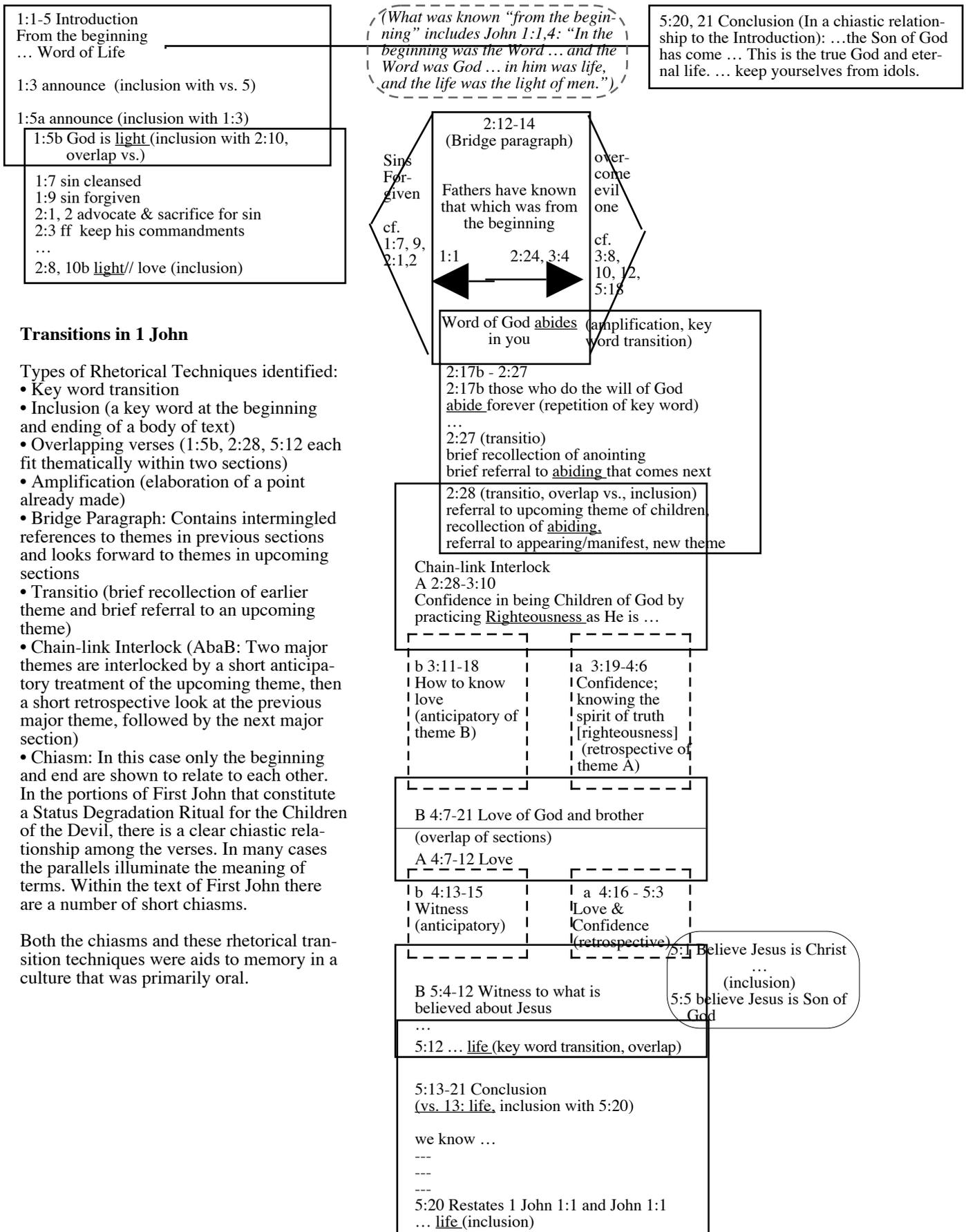
walk in the ways of darkness

children of injustice (devil, 1 Jn 3:10)  
ruled by the Angel of Darkness (cf. John  
12:31; 1 John 5:19)

Qumran believers experience attempts  
of dark spirits to overthrow them

works of injustice (works of the devil, 1  
Jn 3:8)

## APPENDIX 2: RHETORICAL TRANSITIONS IN 1 JOHN



## Appendix 3: Word Associations in Context with Tohu

## Word Associations in Context with Tohu

X = primary meaning of tohu TB = tohu wabohu

	Dark/ No light	Shake	Water Flood or drought	Creation imagery	Refuge Care Shield	Destruction	Desert Wasteland	Worthless idols / foreign goods	Justice	Building/ City	Evil	Inhabited?	Vain Nothing No purpose	Ends of Earth	Jgmt?
Gen 1:2 TB	X	stirring	X	opposite	X	Implied					?	no			?
Deut. 32:10				of a people	X		X	X						nations	implied
1 Sam. 12:21				of a people				X			X		idols		X
Job 6:18	X		both				X symbolic		X						--
Job 12:24	X	stagger	both			insanity	X trackless symbolic				sh. death			leaders of	X
Job 26:7	X	writhing	storm	X	breath	X					death		X empty		X
Ps 107:40	X		storm		saved		X trackless waste	X			X				X
Isa 24:10		X	flood			X				ruined	X	no		nations	X
Isa 29:21	X			potter/ clay	blind see	X		X	X	X	X		false testimony		X
Isa 34:11 TB	X		both	undoing	--	X			X	ruined	X	no		Edom	X
Isa 40:17, 23			X	X	Shepherd		X	X					X nations	nations	X
Isa. 41:29		tremble	X		help	perish	X	X			rage/oppose		idols	X	X
Isa 44:9		tremble	both	X	restore	X	X	X	X	X	X	rebuild	idols		X
Isa 45: 18,19	X			X	set free	disaster	land of darkness	X	X	X	X	rebuild	X empty		X
Isa 49:4	X		X	of servant	restore/ set free	desolate	out of	X	X	X		restore	no purpose	X	over
Isa 59:4	X				salvation	X			X		X		arguments		X
Jer 4:23 TB		quaking		undoing	--	X	X	X	X	ruined	X	no			X

## APPENDIX 4: TERMS FOR THE EVIL ONE

Six terms used to describe the devil in the New Testament and other early Christian literature are:

τὸν πονηρόν (evil one)

ὁ διάβολος (devil)

Σατανᾶς (Satan)

ὁ ἄρχων (ruler or prince)

Βεελζεβούλ, αρχηοντι τῶν δαιμονίων (prince of demons)

Βελιάρ (transliteration of the Hebrew for “worthlessness”)

This chart shows occurrences of each of six terms, where applicable, including brief phrases of text, within the following categories:

1 John

Gospel of John

New Testament books in general

*Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*

Three of the Early Church Fathers

### 1 John:

τὸν πονηρόν (evil one)

2:13; 2:14 I write to you, young men, that you have overcome the evil one

3:12 Cain, who belonged to the evil one and murdered his brother

3:12 his works were evil and his brother's were righteous

5:18 the evil one does not touch him (the one born of God keeps him safe)

5:19 the whole world is under the control of the evil one

ὁ διάβολος (devil)

3:8 He who does what is sinful is of the devil

3:8 because the evil has been sinning from the beginning

3:8 the Son of God appeared to destroy the works of the devil

3:10 This is how we know who the children of God are and who the children of the devil are:

Anyone who does not do what is right is not a child of God; neither is anyone who does not love his brother.

Σατανᾶς (Satan)

ὁ ἄρχων

Βεελζεβούλ, αρχηοντι τῶν δαιμονίων

Βελιάρ

### Gospel of John:

τὸν πονηρόν (the evil one)

17:15 protect them from the evil one

ὁ διάβολος (devil)

**John 6:79?**

8:44 ye are of your father the d

13:2 the d having now put into the heart

Σατανᾶς (Satan)

13:27 after the sop S entered into him

ὁ ἄρχων τοῦ κόσμου τούτου (the ruler of this world)

12:31 now the ruler of this world

14:30 for the ruler of this world is

16:11 judgment, because the ruler of this world

Βεελζεβούλ, αρχηοντι τῶν δαιμονίων (prince of demons)

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Βελιάρ

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### **Other New Testament writings:**

τὸν πονηρόν (evil one)

Mt. 5:37 this comes from the evil one

6:13 rescue us from the evil one

13:19 the evil one comes and snatches

13:38 the children of the evil one

Eph. 6:16 flaming arrows of the evil one

2 Thess. 3:3 and guard you from the evil one

ὁ διάβολος (devil)

Mt 4:1 wilderness to be tempted of the d

4:5 d. taketh him up into the holy city

4:8 again the d taketh him up into

9:52 a dumb man possessed with a d

9:38 when the d was cast out the

11:18 and they say, he hath a d

12:22 one possessed with a d, blind

13:39 enemy that sowed them is the d

15:22 is grievously vexed with a d

17:18 Jesus rebuked the d; and he

25:41 prepared for the d and his angels

Mark 5:15, 16 was possessed with the d

7:26 that he would cast forth the d

9:29 d is gone out of thy daughter

7:30 she found the d gone out and her

Luke 4:2 being forty days tempted of the d

4:3 the d said unto him, If thou be

4:5d, taking him up into an high

4:6 the d said unto him, All this will

4:13 d had ended all the temptation

4:33 had a spirit of an unclean d

4:35 when the d had thrown him in

7:33 win: and ye say, He hath a d  
 8:12 cometh in the d and taketh away  
 8:29 of the d into the wilderness  
 9:42 d threw him down and tare him  
 11:14 casting out a d and it was dumb  
 11:14 to pass when the d was gone out  
 Acts 10:38 all that were oppressed of the d  
 13:10 thou child of the d, thou enemy  
 Eph 4:27 Neither give place of the d  
 6:11 stand against the wiles of the d  
 1 Tim 3:6 into the condemnation of the d  
 1 Tim 3:7 reproach and the snare of the d  
 2 Tim 2:26 out of the snare of the d, who  
 Heb. 2:14 power of death, that is, the d  
 James 4:7 Resist the d and he will flee from  
 1 Pet 5:8 because your adversary the d  
 Jude 9 when contending with the d he  
 Rev 2:10 the d shall cast some of you into prison  
 12:9 that old serpent, called the D and  
 12:12 the d is come down unto you  
 20;2 that old serpent, which is the D  
 20:10 the d that deceived them was cast

Σατανᾶς (Satan)

Mt 4:10, get thee hence, Satan  
 12:26 And if Satan cast out Satan he is divided  
 16:23 Get thee behind me, Satan  
 Mark 1:13 forty days, tempted of Satan  
 3:23 How can Satan cast out Satan  
 3:26 Satan rise up against himself and be  
 4:15 Satan cometh immediately and taketh  
 8:33 saying, Get thee behind me,  
 Luke 4:8 Get thee behind me, Satan  
 10:18 I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven  
 11:18 S also be divided against himself  
 13:16 daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound  
 22:3 Then entered S into Judas  
 22:31 S. hath desired to have you  
 Acts 5:3 why hath S filled thine heart to lie  
 26:18 from the power of S unto God, that  
 Rom 16:20 bruise S under your feet shortly  
 1 Cor 5:5 to deliver such an one unto S  
 7:5 that S tempt you not for your  
 2 Cor 2:11 S should get an advantage of us  
 11:14 S himself is transformed into an angel of light  
 12:7 the messenger of S to buffet me  
 1 Thess 2:18 and again; but S hindered us

2 Thess 2:9 is after the working of S with all  
 1 Tim 1:20 whom I have delivered unto S  
 5:15 are already turned aside after S  
 Rev. 2:9 not, but are the synagogue of S  
 2:13 slain among you, where S dwelleth  
 2:24 have not known the depths of S  
 8:9 make them of the synagogue of S  
 12:9 serpent, called the Devil, and S  
 20:7 S shall be loosed out of his prison  
 Rev. 2:13 dwellest, even where S's seat is

ὁ ἄρχων (the ruler)

Matt 9:34 by the ruler of the demons  
 12:24 Beelzebul, the ruler of the demons  
 Mark 3:22 by the ruler of the demons  
 Luke 11:15 the ruler of the demons  
 Eph. 2:2 following the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those  
 who are disobedient

Βεελζεβούλ, ἀρχηοντι τῶν δαιμονίων (prince of demons)

Matt 10:25 master of the house Beelzebul  
 12:24 It is only be Beelzebul  
 12:27 I cast out demons by Beelzebul  
 Mark 3:22 He has Beelzebul, and by the  
 Luke 11:15 casts out demons by B  
 11:18 out the demons by B  
 11:19 out the demons by B

Βελιάρ

2 Cor. 6:15 what fellowship does Christ have with Beliar

### **Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs**

τὸν πονηρόν (evil one)

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ὁ διάβολος (devil)

*T. Naphtali* 3:4. If ye work that which is good, my children,  
 Both men and angels shall bless you;  
 And God shall be glorified among the Gentiles through you,  
 And the devil shall flee from you,  
 And the wild beasts shall fear you,  
 And the Lord shall love you,  
 And the angels shall cleave to you  
*T. Naphtali* 8:6 But him who doeth not that which is good,  
 Both angels and men shall curse,  
 And God shall be dishonored among the gentiles through him

And the devil shall make him as his own peculiar instrument,  
And every wild beast shall master him.

Σατανᾶς (Satan)

*T. Dan* 3:6. This spirit goeth always with lying at the right hand of Satan, that with cruelty and lying his works may be wrought.

*T. Dan* 5: 6. For I have read in the book of Enoch, the righteous, that your prince is Satan, and that all the spirits of wickedness and pride will conspire to attend constantly on the sons of Levi, to cause them to sin before the Lord.

*T. Gad* 4: 7. For the spirit of hatred worketh together with Satan, ... but the spirit of love worketh together with the law of God in long-suffering unto the salvation of men.

ὁ ἄρχων

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Βεελζεβούλ, αρχηοντι τῶν δαιμονίων (prince of demons)

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Βελιάρ

*T. Dan* 4:7. When the soul is continually disturbed, the Lord departeth from it, and Beliar ruleth over it.

*T. Dan* 5:1. Observe, therefore, my children, the commandments of the Lord, and keep His law;

Depart from wrath, and hate lying  
That the Lord may dwell among you,  
And Beliar may flee from you.

*T. Dan* 5:10. And there shall arise unto you from the tribe of Judah and of Levi the salvation of the Lord; And he shall make war against Beliar,

*T. Dan* 5:11. And the captivity shall he take from Beliar (the souls of the saints)  
And turn disobedient hearts unto the Lord

*T. Dan* 6:1. And now, fear the Lord, my children, and beware of Satan and his spirits

*T. Naphtali* 2:6 As a man's strength, so also is his work; ... so also is his word either in the law of the Lord or in the law of Beliar.

*T. Asher* 1:3. Two ways hath God given to the sons of men, and two inclinations, and two kinds of action, and two modes (of action) and two issues. 4. Therefore all things are by twos, one over against the other. ... 7. For having its thoughts set upon righteousness, and casting away wickedness, it straightway overthroweth the evil, and uprooteth the sin. 8. But if it incline to the evil inclination, all its actions are in wickedness, and it driveth away the good, and cleaveth to the evil, and is ruled by Beliar; even though it work what is good, he perverteth it to evil.

*T. Asher* 3:2 But from wickedness flee away, destroying the evil inclination by your good works; for they that are double-faced serve not God, but their own lusts, so that they may please Beliar and men like unto themselves.

*T. Ben.* 3:3 Fear ye the Lord, and love your neighbor; and even though the spirits of Beliar claim you to afflict you with every evil, yet shall they not have dominion over you

*T. Ben.* 6:1. The inclination of the good man is not in the power of the deceit of the spirit of Beliar, for the angel of peace guideth his soul.

- T. Ben.* 6:7. The works of Beliar are twofold, and there is no singleness in them.
- T. Ben.* 7:1. Therefore, my children, I tell you, flee the malice of Beliar; for he giveth a sword to them that obey him. 2. And the sword is the mother of seven evils. First the mind conceiveth through Beliar, and first there is bloodshed; secondly, ruin; thirdly, tribulation fourthly, exile; fifthly, dearth; sixthly, panic; seventhly, destruction. 3. Therefore was Cain also delivered over to seven vengeancees by God.
- T. Levi* 3:3. In the third [heaven] are the hosts of the armies which are ordained for the day of judgment, to work vengeance on the spirits of deceit and of Beliar. And above them are the holy ones.
- T. Levi* 17:9. And the lawless shall cease to do evil and the just shall rest in him. ... 11. And he shall give to the saints to eat from the tree of life, and the spirit of holiness shall be on them. 12. And Beliar shall be bound by him, and he shall give power to His children to tread upon the evil spirits.
- T. Levi* 19:1. And now my children, ye have heard all; choose, therefore for yourselves either the light or the darkness, either the law of the Lord or the works of Beliar.
- T. Judah* 25:3. And ye shall be the people of the Lord, and have one tongue; and there shall be no spirit of deceit of Beliar. For he shall be cast into the fire for ever.
- T. Zebulun* 9:8. And healing and compassion shall be in His wings. He shall redeem all the captivity of the sons of men from Beliar; And every spirit of deceit shall be trodden down.

### Early Church Fathers:

τὸν πονηρόν (evil one)

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ὁ διάβολος (devil)

- Polycarp to the Philippians 7:1: “For everyone who does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is an anti-Christ” [compare 1 John 4:3; 2 John 7] and whosoever does not confess the testimony of the Cross is of the devil [compare 1 John 3:8a];
- Ignatius to Eph 10:13 in order that no weed of the devil may be found among you
- Ignatius to Tral. 8:1 I am guarding you in advance because you are very dear to me and I foresee the snares of the devil. You, therefore, must arm yourselves with gentleness and regain your strength in faith ... and in love.
- Papias, Fragment 11: the great dragon, the ancient serpent, who is called the Devil and Satan, was cast out; the deceiver of the whole world was cast down to the earth along with his angels.

Σατανᾶς (Satan)

- Polycarp to the Philippians 7: 2: “...whosoever perverts the oracles of the Lord for his own lusts, and says that there is neither resurrection nor judgment, this man is the first-born of Satan [compare “children of the devil” in 1 John 3:10]
- Ignatius to Eph 13:1 Ignatius said that when believers “meet together frequently, the powers of Satan are overthrown
- Papias, Fragment 11: the great dragon, the ancient serpent, who is called the Devil and Satan, was cast out; the deceiver of the whole world was cast down to the earth along with his angels.

Papias, Fragment 24: 8 He [Christ] defeated sin and condemned Satan, and through his death he spread abroad his righteousness over all. 9 As this occurred, the victory of Michael and his legions, the guardians of humankind, became complete, and the dragon could resist no more, because the death of Christ exposed him to ridicule and threw him to the earth— 10 concerning which Christ said, “I saw Satan fallen from heaven like a lightning bolt.”

ὁ ἄρχων

Ignatius to Tral. 4:2 Therefore I need gentleness, by which the ruler of this age is destroyed.

Ignatius to Phil. 6:2 flee, therefore, the evil tricks and traps of the ruler of this age, lest you be worn out by his schemes and grow weak in love

Βεελζεβούλ, αρχηοντι τῶν δαιμονίων (prince of demons)

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Βελιάρ

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**APPENDIX 5: OCCURRENCES OF THE WORD,  
"ΕΡΓΑ, IN THE NEW TESTAMENT** <sup>415</sup>

"Εργον

Matthew

5:16 they may see your good works  
11:2 heard in the prison the works of Christ  
23:3 but do not ye after their works  
23:5 But all their works they do  
26:10 for she hath wrought a good work

Mark

13:34 to every man his work  
14:6 she hath wrought a good work on me

Luke

11:48 the deeds of your fathers  
24:19 mighty in deed and word

John

3:19 their deeds were evil  
3:20 lest his deeds should be reproved  
3:21 his deeds may be made manifest  
4:34 and to finish his work  
5:20 show him greater works than these  
5:36 for the works which the Father... the same works that I do  
6:28 that we might work the works of God  
6:29 This is the work of God  
7:3 the works that thou doest  
7:7 the works thereof are evil  
7:21 I have done one work  
8:39 the works of Abraham  
8:41 the deeds of your father  
9:3 the works of God should be made manifest in him  
9:4 work the works of him that  
10:25 the works that I do  
10:32 Many good works have I showed you from my Father; for which of those works  
10:33 For a good work we stone thee not  
10:37 if I do not the works of my Father  
10:38 believe not me, believe the works  
14:10 Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you are not just my own. Rather it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work.  
14:11 Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the miracles [erga] themselves.  
14:12 I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing  
15:24 If I had not done among them the works  
17:4 I have finished the work

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<sup>415</sup> George V. Wigram and Ralph D. Winter, *The Word Study Concordance*. Pasadena, Calif.: William Carey Library, 1972.

## Acts

5:38 this work be of men, it will come to nought  
 7:22 mighty in words and in deeds (Moses; representative of Jesus' followers?)  
 7:41 in the works of their own hands  
 9:36 this woman was full of good works  
 13:2 for the work whereunto I have called  
 13:41 I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe  
 14:26 for the work which they fulfilled  
 15:18 Known unto God are all his works  
 15:38 and went not with them to the work  
 26:20 works meet for repentance

## Romans

2:6 to every man according to his deeds  
 2:7 patient continuance in well doing  
 2:15 show the work of the law  
 3:20 by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified  
 3:27 by what law? of works?  
 3:28 without the deeds of the law  
 4:2 were justified by works  
 4:6 righteousness without works  
 9:11 not of works, but of him that calleth  
 9:32 but as it were by the works of the law  
 11:6 then (is it) no more of works; But if (it be) of works, then is it no more grace; otherwise work is no more work  
 13:3 a terror to good works  
 13:12 the works of darkness (Romans)  
 14:20 destroy not the work of God  
 15:18 by word and deed

## 1 Cor 3:13

Every man's work shall be made manifest... every man's work of what sort it is  
 3:14 if any man's work abide  
 3:15 If any man's work shall be burned  
 5:2 he that hath done this deed  
 9:1 are not ye my work  
 15:58 abounding in the work of the Lord  
 16:10 for he worketh the work of the Lord

## 2 Cor

9:8 to every good work  
 10:11 in deed when we are present  
 11:15 according to their works

## Gal

2:16 by the works of the law, but ... not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law shall no flesh  
 3:2 the Spirit by the works of the law  
 3:5 by the works of the law, or by the hearing  
 3:10 For as many as are of the works of the law  
 5:19 the works of the flesh

6:4 But let every man prove his own work

Eph

2:9 Not of works, lest any man should boast

2:10 created in Christ Jesus unto good works

4:12 for the work of the ministry

5:11 with the unfruitful works

Phil

1:6 he which hath begun a good work in you

1:22 the fruit of my labour

2:30 for the work of Christ

Col

1:10 in every good work

1:21 enemies in (your) mind by wicked works

3:17 do in word or deed/name of the Lord Jesus Christ

1 Thess

1:3 your work of faith

5:13 for their work's sake

2 Thess

1:11 the work of faith with power

2:17 good word and work

1 Tim

2:10 with good works

3:1 he desireth a good work

5:10 Well reported of for good works; ; diligently followed every good work.

5:25 also the good works (of some) are manifest beforehand

6:18 that they be rich in good works

2 Tim

1:9 not according to our works

2:21 prepared unto every good work

3:17 thoroughly furnished unto all good works

4:5 do the work of an evangelist

4:14 according to his works

4:18 from every evil work

Titus

1:16 but in works they deny (him) ... unto every good work reprobate

2:7 a pattern of good works

2:14 zealous of good works

3:1 to be ready to every good work

3:5 not by works of righteousness

3:8 to maintain good works

3:14 to maintain good works

Hebrews

1:10 the works of thine hands

2:7 over the works of thy hands

3:9 and saw my works forty years

4:3 although the works were finished from the foundation of the world

4:4 rest the seventh day from all his works

4:10 hath ceased from his own works  
 6:1 of repentance from dead works  
 6:10 your work and labour of love  
 9:14 purge your conscience from dead works  
 10:24 to provoke unto love and to good works  
 13:21 make you perfect in every good work  
 James  
 1:4 let patience have (her) perfect work  
 1:25 but a doer of the work  
 2:14 say he hath faith, and have not works?  
 2:17 faith, if it hath not works, is dead  
 2:18 and I have works; show me thy faith without thy works and I will show thee my faith by my works  
 2:20 faith without works is dead?  
 2:21 Was not Abraham our father justified by works  
 2:22 faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?  
 2:24 that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only  
 2:25 was not Rahab the harlot justified by works  
 2:26 so faith without works is dead also  
 3:13 his works with meekness of wisdom  
 1 Pet  
 1:17 according to every man's work  
 2:12 by (your) good works, which they shall behold  
 2 Pet  
 2:8 with (their) unlawful deeds  
 3:10 and the works that are therein  
 1 John 3:8  
 might destroy the works of the devil  
 3:12 his own works were evil  
 3:18 but in deed and in truth  
 2 John  
 11 is partaker of his evil deeds  
 3 John  
 10 his deeds which he doeth  
 Jude  
 15 of all their ungodly deeds  
 Rev  
 2:2 I know thy works, and thy labour  
 2:5 repent, and do the first works  
 2:6 the deeds of the Nicolaitans  
 2:9 I know thy works, and tribulation  
 2:13 I know thy works and charity... thy patience and thy works  
 2:22 they repent of their deeds  
 2:23 unto every one of you according to your works  
 2:26 keepeth my works unto the end  
 3:1 I know thy works, that thou has  
 3:2 for I have not found thy works

3:8 I know thy works; behold, I  
 3:15 I know thy works, that thou art  
 9:20 repented not of the works of their hands  
 14:13 and their works do follow them  
 15:3 and marvelous (are) thy works  
 16:11 repented not of their deeds  
 18:6 double according to her works  
 20:12 according to their works  
 20:13 according to their works  
 22:12 according as his work shall be

Ἔργάζομαι, I work

Matthew

7:23 away from me, you evildoers  
 21:28 go and work in the vineyard  
 25:16 at once and traded with them  
 26:10 has performed a good service

Mark

14:6 has performed a good service

Luke

13:14 on which work ought to be done

John

3:21 deeds have been done in God  
 5:17 My Father is still working and I also am working  
 6:27 do not work for the food  
 6:28 What must we do to perform  
 6:30 what work are you performing?  
 9:4 we must work the works of him... is coming when no one can work

Acts

10:35 God accepts men from every nation who fear him and him and do what is right  
 13:41 your days I am doing a work  
 18:3 and they worked together

Additional occurrences from the Epistles are not listed here

2 John

8 lose what we have worked for

3 John

5 whatever you do for the friends

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