1

The Uniqueness of John's Gospel

> Ezekiel, prophet in exile, is perhaps destined in Biblical scholarship to remain in a foreign land. From time to time he has been transported by a venturesome scholar from dismal Babylonia to the scholastic elevations of Jerusalem. There he has glimpsed the world of scholarly scrutiny that Isaiah and Jeremiah have known so well. But he always seems to end up again in Babylonia. One may wonder if those three hundred barrels of oil were well spent by Chananiah ben Hezekiah when he composed his commentary on Ezekiel to prevent the book from sinking into canonical obscurity (*b. Sabb.* 13b). In fact, the prophecy of Ezekiel has largely been viewed as an apocalyptic resource. And we may admit the truth of that without disparaging the book in the least. In that respect the influence of Ezekiel on the NT has most readily been detected in the Apocalypse of John.[1]

Hassell Bullock's assessment of how the book of Ezekiel is used in New Testament studies highlights well the major lacuna, which this present work seeks to address. I believe that many of its unique

1. Hassell Bullock, "Ezekiel: Bridge between the Testaments," *JETS* 25, no. 1 (1982): 23–31 (23).

literary features will make sense when the Fourth Gospel is viewed through the lens of Ezekiel.

That the Gospel of John is unique goes without saying. Some of this uniqueness rests in the reality that John "discusses only about twenty days in the life of Jesus, a story encompassing more than thirty years of time. . . ."[2] Conversely, throughout the Synoptic Gospels we find accounts covering Jesus' birth to his death, albeit selectively.[3] But John has fashioned his Gospel in more distinctive ways than just the chronology of Jesus' life: John has also included accounts unique to his Gospel, while eliminating key features present in the Synoptics.[4] In some cases, the ordering of the material within his book finds no parallels in the Synoptics. There is also the issue of Johannine theology/Christology and the author's rhetorical outlook. These are just a few of the larger literary features peculiar to John's Gospel. When one begins to focus on pericopae germane to all four gospels, we will see that, even on the micro level, there are variations in how John relates his accounts vis-à-vis the Synoptics.

In light of these peculiarities related to the Gospel, in this opening chapter I want to briefly introduce the reader to some of these specific literary "problems" associated with John's Gospel.[5] Here I will refrain

2. Kenneth K. Maahs, *The John You Never Knew: Decoding the Fourth Gospel* (New York: Peter Lang, 2006), 1. Maahs appears to be focused on the last portion of Jesus' ministry. According to the appearance of three Passover feasts in John, John, unlike the Synoptic Gospels, covers three years of Jesus' ministry as opposed to one to one-and-a-half years. For a detailed chart covering the period of Jesus' Johannine ministry, see Andreas J. Köstenberger, *John*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004), 11–13.
3. Although Mark's treatment of Jesus' life is the closest to the Fourth Gospel, it still has the rhetorical flare of the Synoptics in its presentation of the ministry of Jesus. Indeed, the theories of Markan priority and a Q source derive from a close study of the Synoptics.
4. While there is some debate over whether John used, or was familiar with, the Synoptics, some scholars, myself included, believe that it is indeed possible that the author of the Fourth Gospel knew of these accounts (see more in discussion below). See also the discussion by John Marsh, "John: A Very Different Gospel?," in *A Companion to John: Readings in Johannine Theology (John's Gospel and Epistles)*, ed. Michael J. Taylor (New York: Alba, 1977), 3–31.
5. For a discussion on the theological differences/similarities between the Synoptics and John, see James D. G. Dunn, "John and the Synoptics as a Theological Question," in *Exploring the Gospel*

from entering into a detailed discussion on the numerous proposed solutions to these apparent enigmas, as I will handle the most relevant of these proposed solutions in the chapters that follow. In this chapter, I will also outline in broad strokes the solution I am proposing in this work. I am convinced that many of these differences can be attributed to John's theological and rhetorical purposes in light of his use of the book of Ezekiel.[6]

Finally, while scholars have attempted to account for the unique features of the Fourth Gospel by utilizing source-critical theories—John did not know about or use the Synoptics, or John had his own written and/or oral sources—this perspective is now being reexamined within Johannine scholarship. This is in large part due to close linguistic analyses, which have demonstrated an apparent mutual dependence on a similar source(s) or at least a similar tradition. Therefore, many Johannine scholars are now coming to the conclusion that John was aware of the Synoptic Gospels and/or the similar source material of Mark and Luke.[7] As such, the theory that John is less historical than the Synoptics is being challenged. As I will note below, in some cases, the Gospel is actually the preferred perspective when trying to recreate the events of Jesus' life.

of John: In Honor of D. Moody Smith, ed. R. Alan Culpepper and C. Clifton Black (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1996), 255–73.

6. Contra Barnabas Lindars, *The Gospel of John*, NCBC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 27.
7. Ibid., 27. So too Richard Bauckham, "John for Readers of Mark," in *The Gospels for All Christians: Rethinking the Gospel Audiences*, ed. Richard Bauckham (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 147–71 esp. 159–60. See also the work of Thomas L. Brodie, *The Quest for the Origins of John's Gospel: A Source-Oriented Approach* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 67–120; Howard M. Teeple, "Methodology in Source Analysis in the Fourth Gospel," *JBL* 81, no. 3 (1962): 279–86 (282); Edwin D. Freed, "The Entry into Jerusalem in the Gospel of John," *JBL* 80, no. 4 (1961): 329–38; and Edwyn Hoskyns, *The Fourth Gospel Vol. 1* (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1940), 87.

Features Peculiar to John's Gospel

As just noted, the uniqueness of John's record of Jesus' life and ministry when compared to the Synoptic Gospels has fostered a number of debates and theories as to why the author organized his material in such a distinct fashion. Even though I will be handling these topics in more detail in the chapters to follow, a few of the most notable examples of these literary anomalies can be categorized under three main headings: 1) material in John and the Synoptic Gospels, but presented differently in the Fourth Gospel (points 1 and 2 below); 2) material that is absent in the Fourth Gospel but present in the Synoptics (points 3–5 below); and 3) content unique only to the Fourth Gospel (points 6–13 below).

1. The abrupt and exalted introduction of Jesus in John 1 stands in stark contrast to Matthew's and Luke's presentations, which begin with Jesus' early life (Mark comes the closest to John's abrupt beginning but that Gospel falls far short of the explicit promotion of Jesus' divinity).
2. The cleansing of the temple appears early in the ministry of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel as opposed to its appearance late in the Synoptics (John 2:13–22; cf. Matt. 21:12–17; Mark 11:15–17; Luke 19:45–46) (note John's use of ten verses to describe the temple cleansing as opposed to the use of two or three in the Synoptics).
3. The absence of Jesus' temptation and transfiguration is striking when compared to the Synoptics (Matt. 4:1–11; Mark 1:11–13; Luke 4:1–13 and Matt. 17:1–9; Mark 9:2–8 respectively).
4. The failure to include an exorcism by Jesus[8] in the Fourth Gospel

8. Cf. Robert T. Fortna, *The Gospel of Signs: A Reconstruction of the Narrative Source Underlying the Fourth Gospel*, SNTSMS 11 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 100. The absence of "narrative" parables, perhaps with the exclusion of John 15:1–8, also falls into the category of

is surprising compared to the prevalence of exorcisms in the Synoptics.

5. The absence of the institution of the communion meal (cf. Matt. 26:26–29; Mark 14:22–25; Luke 22:17–20).[9]
6. The narrative content of John 2–4 is absent from the Synoptics.
7. The "I Am" Sayings are distinctive to the Fourth Gospel.
8. John's reliance on signs to prove Jesus' divinity is unique to John.
9. In John, Jesus makes three trips to Jerusalem for Passover as opposed to one in the Synoptics (John 2:13; 6:4; 11:55—12:1 cf. Matt. 26; Mark 14; Luke 22).
10. The raising of Lazarus in John 11 is absent from the Synoptics.
11. The extended treatment of Jesus' last few hours and the Farewell Discourses do not find parallels in the other gospels (John 13–17).
12. John's insufflation[10] in chapter 20 and the putative appendix of John 21 is glaringly absent from the Synoptics.
13. The post-cross call of Peter in John 21[11] is only recorded by John.

As noted, these are just a few of the more blatant literary peculiarities. If one were to include all the micro-level comparisons, the list would stretch on for pages. Now to be sure, John's uniqueness certainly did

unique features in John. On this latter issue, see Eduard Schweizer, "What about the Johannine 'Parables'?," in *Exploring the Gospel of John: In Honor of D. Moody Smith*, ed. R. Alan Culpepper and C. Clifton Black (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1996), 208–19.

9. Jesus' call in John 6:48–66 for the people to eat his body and drink his blood should not be seen as an allusion to the Eucharist as much as it is an allusion to Deut. 8:3. Jesus is thus speaking in a metaphor about trusting God for their provision and spiritual wellbeing.
10. "Insufflation" is a technical term used to denote an act of blowing on or into something or someone. The word is used frequently in the discussion of John 20:22.
11. For a list of the unique features of the Fourth Gospel, see Paul N. Anderson, *The Riddles of the Fourth Gospel: An Introduction to John* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2011), 12–18; and Maahs, *The John You Never Knew*, 12–14. See also the discussion by Craig L. Blomberg, *The Historical Reliability of John's Gospel: Issues and Commentary* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2001), 19–22, 46–52.

not stem from merely a reordering of a pre-set group of pericopae employed by the Synoptic writers—John 21:25 dispels that belief.[12] John certainly had numerous events from Jesus' ministry to choose from when fashioning his Gospel. However, many of these omissions or re-orderings may be connected to the influence that the book of Ezekiel had on John.[13]

A Proposed Alternative Solution

The increased interest in the topic of the New Testament authors' use of the Old Testament, as well as Jewish Intertestamental literature, has paved the way for a fresh understanding of many New Testament passages.[14] In this vein, Johannine scholars have looked at a wide array of literary and non-literary influences in an attempt to explain the uniqueness of the Fourth Gospel. These include, but are not limited to, the Essene community from Qumran, various Second Temple and first-century C.E. literature (e.g., Hermetica, the Gospel of Thomas, the Palestinian Targumim), oral tradition, rhetorical needs based

12. Others have also noted the independent nature of the Johannine content. See, for example, Craig A. Evans, "The Function of Isaiah 6:9-10 in Mark and John," *NovT* 24, no. 2 (1982): 124–38, esp. 125–26; and idem, "The Hermeneutics of Mark and John: On the Theology of the Canonical Gospel," *Bib* 64, no. 2 (1983): 153–72, esp. 158n22, and the bibliographic entries there.
13. For a discussion that focuses on Exodus as the literary influence on John, see Jacob J. Enz, "The Book of Exodus as a Literary Type for the Gospel of John," *JBL* 76, no. 3 (1957): 208–15 esp. 209–11. While some of Enz's parallels are noteworthy (e.g., the use of signs), the majority of the connections are not as convincing as they are when compared to the book of Ezekiel. Cf. also the theory by Harald Sahlin, *Zur Typologie des Johannesevangeliums* (Uppsala: Lundequistska bokhandeln, 1950). For a critique of both, see Robert Houston Smith, "Exodus Typology in the Fourth Gospel," *JBL* 81, no. 4 (1962): 329–42, esp. 329–33.
14. The bibliography for this topic is immense. See, for example, Andreas J. Köstenberger, "John," in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, ed. G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 415–512; and D. A. Carson and H. G. M. Williamson eds., *It is Written: Scripture Citing Scripture: Essays in Honor of Barnabas Lindars* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), esp. 245–64 for an essay dealing with John. For a fuller bibliography, see Stefanos Mihalios, *The Danielic Eschatological Hour in the Johannine Literature*, LNTS 436 (London: T & T Clark, 2011), 1n1.

upon anti-Christian hostilities in the synagogues, pro-Samaritan sympathies, and anti-Gnostic agendas.

There can be no doubt that some of these theological needs of the first century shaped the Gospel, but this does not necessarily answer the host of literary peculiarities in John. As such, I propose that Johannine scholars may need to look in another direction concerning John's methodology and literary style. By scrutinizing only the literary style of earlier gospels and the socio-religious peculiarities and genres of the first century to find an answer to this dilemma, scholars have handicapped themselves to a large degree. It is perhaps best to look to the dominant piece of literature that shaped first-century Judaism, namely, the Hebrew Bible and its Greek translation (Septuagint/LXX).[15]

It goes without saying that the Hebrew Bible/LXX served as the primary literary influence for the Gospel writers.[16] Furthermore, while they may have utilized the Greek text of the LXX, the author of the Fourth Gospel appears to have been limited in his ability to use Greek.[17] As such, the Hebrew text would have been the most

15. See, for example, the comments by Gail R. O'Day, "The Gospel of John: Introduction, Commentary and Reflections," in *New Interpreter's Bible: A Commentary in Twelve Volumes*, ed. Neil Alexander (Nashville: Abingdon, 1995), 9:491–865 (505). I am aware that scholars do in fact interact with Old Testament literature when studying the Gospels; however, more often than not, this only goes as far as drawing scriptural allusions and commentary on explicit prophetic utterances and the like. For the range of Old Testament quotations and allusions in the Fourth Gospel compared to the LXX and MT, cf. Johannes Beutler, S. J., "The Use of 'Scripture' in the Gospel of John," in *Exploring the Gospel of John: In Honor of D. Moody Smith*, ed. R. Alan Culpepper and C. Clifton Black (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1996), 147–62.

16. See T. F. Glasson, *Moses in the Fourth Gospel*, SBT 40 (London: SCM, 1963); D. A Carson, "John and the Johannine Epistles," in *It is Written: Scripture Citing Scripture*, ed. D. A. Carson and H. G. M. Williamson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 245–64; Craig A. Evans, *Word and Glory: On the Exegetical and Theological Background of John's Prologue*, JSNTSup 89 (Sheffield: JSOT, 1993), 172–84, esp. 174–75; and Saeed Hamid-Khani, *Revelation and Concealment of Christ: A Theological Inquiry into the Elusive Language of the Fourth Gospel*, WUNT 120 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000), 132–39.

17. So Teeple, "Methodology in Source Analysis," 281. W. D. Davies, "Reflections on Aspects of the Jewish Background of the Gospel of John," in *Exploring the Gospel of John: In Honor of D. Moody Smith*, ed. R. Alan Culpepper and C. Clifton Black (Louisville: Westminster John Knox,

likely option for a reference work.[18] Thus, when John uses the terms γραφή (*graphē* "Scripture" cf. John 2:22; 7:38, 42; 10:35; 13:18; 17:12; 19:24, 28, 36, 37; 20:9) or γράμμα (*gramma* "writings" [of Moses] cf. 5:47); they almost exclusively refer to the "Holy Scripture."[19] John's frequent use of these terms serves as a clue as to his literary purview as he is writing, namely, that he has a view to the Hebrew Bible when he is writing his gospel.

Now, I do not mean to suggest that scholars have failed to see parallels between the Gospels—the Gospel of John in particular—and the Old Testament, for these are legion. For example, C. K. Barrett notes that in Matthew there are 124 references to Old Testament passages, seventy in Mark; and in Luke 109; with only twenty-seven direct references in John.[20] Regarding this anomaly for the Fourth Gospel, Barrett goes on to note that "John is unquestionably using the O.T., but . . . his use is very far from the simple 'proof-text' method of, say, Matthew . . . and we may again draw the conclusion that though John uses the O.T. he uses it in a novel manner, collecting its sense rather than quoting."[21] Similarly, Martin Hengel comments, "In accordance with his esoteric, indirectly suggestive style, the emphasis in John (in contrast to Matthew) is on 'allusions.' He prefers the bare, terse clue, the use of a metaphor or motif more than the full

1996), 43–64, suggests that "the Greek he [John] wrote was influenced by a Hebraic-Aramaic idiom and connotation" (44).

18. Beutler, "The Use of 'Scripture'," 158, points to the comparative analyses that have been done showing John's use of the LXX in quoting Old Testament texts. Raymond E. Brown, *An Introduction to the Gospel of John*, ed. Francis J. Moloney, ABRL (New York: Doubleday, 2003), 136, notes John's use of Hebrew and the Targumim as well.
19. Beutler, "The Use of 'Scripture'," 148. See also, Francis J. Moloney, *The Gospel of John Text and Context*, BIS 72 (Boston: Brill, 2005), 342–45; and idem, "The Gospel of John as Scripture," *CBQ* 67, no. 3 (2005): 454–68. In the latter work Moloney concludes that the author of John not only referenced the Old Testament as "Scripture," but also understood the very words of Jesus to be "Scripture"; namely, the words that the author of the Gospel of John was writing!
20. Charles K. Barrett, "The Old Testament in the Fourth Gospel," *JTS* 48, no. 2 (1947): 155–69 (155). Barrett draws his frequency list from the appendixes of Westcott and Hort's edition of the New Testament. See also Carson, "John and the Johannine Epistles," 246.
21. Barrett, "Old Testament in the Fourth Gospel," 156.

citation."[22] Finally, George J. Brooke points up that John's use of the Jewish Scriptures "appears veiled to us . . . because the Jewish or Jewish-Christian audience would have been more attuned to what was said than we can be. . . ."[23] Barrett, Hengel, and Brooke are indeed correct in noting John's use of veiled allusions to the Old Testament as opposed to direct quotations.[24] And while this is true, I would add that Ezekiel seems to have been the biggest influence on John. As Bruce Vawter aptly notes, "By influence is meant, rather, the exploitation of certain themes or concepts which John is more likely to have taken from Ezekiel than from any other source."[25]

Now to be sure some may contend that if Ezekiel plays such a dominant role in shaping the Fourth Gospel, why does John fail to quote the prophet directly? While I cannot be certain of John's reasoning for such a lacuna, few would doubt the clear Ezekielian parallels in John. The vine imagery of Ezek. 15 vis-à-vis John 15 and the shepherding language of Ezek. 34 and John 10 immediately come

22. Martin Hengel, "The Old Testament in the Fourth Gospel," *HBT* 12, no. 1 (1990): 19–41 (31–32).
23. George J. Brooke, "Christ and the Law in John 7–10," in *Law and Religion: Essays on the Place of the Law in Israel and Early Christianity*, ed. Barnabas Lindars (Cambridge: James Clarke & Co., 1988), 102–12 (102).
24. So too J. A. Draper, "Temple, Tabernacle and Mystical Experience in John," *Neot* 31, no. 2 (1997): 271; and Hengel, "Old Testament in the Fourth Gospel," 31–32. See further Köstenberger, "John," 419–20. For studies on the explicit Old Testament citations in John, see Bruce G. Schuchard, *Scripture within Scripture: The Interrelationship of Form and Function in the Explicit Old Testament Citations in the Gospel of John*, SBLDS 133 (Atlanta: Scholars, 1992); Maarten J. J. Menken, *Old Testament Quotations in the Fourth Gospel: Studies in Textual Form*, CBET 15 (Kampen: Kok Pharos, 1996); Barrett, "Old Testament in the Fourth Gospel," 155–69; Edwin D. Freed, *Old Testament Quotations in the Gospel of John*, NovTSup 11 (Leiden: Brill, 1965); Anthony T. Hanson, *The Prophetic Gospel: A Study in John and the Old Testament*, second ed. (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 2006); Frederic Manns, *L'Evangile de Jean à la Lumière du Judaïsme*, SBFA 33 (Jerusalem: Franciscan Printing Press, 1991); Claus Westermann, *The Gospel of John in the Light of the Old Testament,* trans. Siegfried S. Schatzmann (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1998); and Raymond E. Brown, *An Introduction to the Gospel of John*, ed. Francis J. Moloney, ABRL (New York: Doubleday, 2003), 115–50 esp. 133–38. These last seven sources are noted by Francis J. Moloney, "The Gospel of John: The 'End' of Scripture," *Int* 63, no. 4 (2009): 357n6.
25. Bruce Vawter, "Ezekiel and John," *CBQ* 26, no. 4 (1964): 450–58 (450).

to mind (see more in chapter 5 below).[26] As will be demonstrated throughout the following chapters, it appears that John tends to work on a macro level when it comes to themes and motifs. He uses these allusions in an attempt to draw connections between the Old Testament, the prophets, and Jesus' life.[27] Nevertheless, at particular moments, John narrowed his focus by clear inter-textual clues (e.g., similar words and phrases) to draw the reader's attention to a specific account, many of which find affinity with Ezekiel.

In this regard, clearly John had a strong understanding of prophetic literature, and more specifically, that of the prophet Ezekiel.[28] When one steps back for a moment and considers the fact that almost every person, even today, has a favorite book(s)/pericope(ae) from the Bible, then it is not too hard to imagine that the New Testament authors had their favorites as well (consider the author of Hebrews and his use of Leviticus). Indeed, are we to think that the authors of the first century were any less human in this regard? I think not! With this in mind, I wish for my readers to stop and consider the possibility that John saw something in the life of Jesus that caused him to draw connections to the life and prophetic work of Ezekiel; specifically, Ezekiel's presentation of the majesty and divinity of Yahweh.[29]

26. The recent work of Mihalios (see *The Danielic Eschatological Hour in the Johannine Literature*) is one example of a study that looks at the Old Testament allusions that may have influenced John. Here Mihalios looks at the influence of Daniel on John from the perspective of the "eschatological hour."
27. For example, Carson, "John and the Johannine Epistles," 253, notes that a specific allusion to Ezek. 36:25-27 may be the background for John 3.
28. I am not suggesting that John did not use other Old Testament works; they are numerous in the Gospel. What I am arguing is that the dominant structural parallels and motifs on the macro level point to John's use of the book of Ezekiel. Cf. Beutler, "The Use of 'Scripture'," 147–62.
29. Throughout this book I use Yahweh—the covenantal name of God in the Hebrew Bible—as opposed to the more generic term "God" in order to draw attention to Ezekiel's similar covenantal use and John's desire to show Jesus as parallel to Yahweh when he inaugurates the new covenant of peace. It is true that Ezekiel uses other terms for God, but the predominant term used throughout his prophetic text is Yahweh, which appears approximately 418 times, compared to the paltry thirty-five appearances of Elohim ("God"). Even the use of Adonai ("Lord") only appears ninety times but of those, eighty-seven are used as a compound name with Yahweh.

A clear example of this is John's use of extended discourse and dialogic material as opposed to pithy sayings and shorter pericopae, as is the approach of the authors of the Synoptics. This literary feature of John is more reflective of the oracles of the Old Testament prophets (see John 3; 4; 6; 8; 10; 13–17 etc.).[30] Interestingly, even within the larger prophetic corpus, the extended oracles and metaphors in Ezekiel set his message apart as unique among the classical prophets.[31] Therefore, this literary approach used by the prophets, Ezekiel in particular, could easily have been adopted by John in order to relate the life of Jesus to a first-century audience. This "Old-Testament" style fits well within the larger message of John as he attempts to connect the life and ministry of Jesus with the God of the Hebrew Bible—the God that believing Jews should have recognized in Jesus (cf. John 5:37; 14:9; 15:24).

What is more, Ezekiel, like many of the classical writing prophets, ministered directly to the people. However, Ezekiel's ministry stands out as even more noteworthy in that he ministered to the exiles/outcasts in a *foreign* land. Of course one could immediately make any number of connections between Jesus being a "Foreigner" on the earth and Ezekiel's being a foreigner in Babylon. While this may be legitimate, it is not the connection I want to make. John's Jesus speaks directly to the most unlikely of people; people such as Nicodemus (John 3), the woman at the well, Samaritans, and foreign(?) officials (John 4). In this regard, Craig R. Koester makes a forceful linguistic argument that Nicodemus and the woman at the well are actually

30. See Maarten J. J. Menken, "Observations on the Significance of the Old Testament in the Fourth Gospel," in *Theology and Christology in the Fourth Gospel: Essays by the Members of the SNTS Johannine Writing Seminar*, ed. Gilbert van Belle, Jan G. Van Der Watt, and Petrus J. Maritz, BETL 184 (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2005), 155–76. See 155n1, for an extensive bibliography on the Old Testament use in John.

31. See also Brian Neil Peterson, *Ezekiel in Context: Ezekiel's Message Understood in Its Historical Setting of Covenant Curses and Ancient Near Eastern Mythological Motifs*, PTMS 182 (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2012), 173–225.

characterized not only as individuals, but also as representations of their communities/people groups. Thus, Nicodemus represents the religious elite and the woman at the well the Samaritans.[32] This of course could be expanded to the royal official (4:48) as being representative of foreign/political groups.[33] Now, whereas Ezekiel ministered to his own people in exile, the greater connection to be made is that Yahweh came and ministered to his people in a foreign land. Yahweh was not bound by borders—a revolutionary perspective in Ezekiel's era and earlier (cf. 1 Kgs. 20:23, 28). Similarly, even though Jesus, God's divine Son, came to minister to his own people (John 1) in the Fourth Gospel, Jesus was able to go beyond these ethnic and geographical boundaries and minister to those on the "outside."[34]

When Jesus does try to minister to those of his region and the elite in the Fourth Gospel, he is rejected.[35] Jesus even went so far as to acknowledge that a prophet is not without honor save in his home country (John 4:44). Similarly, Ezekiel ministered in Babylon to an equally hard-hearted people in the religious elite/elders (Ezek. 3:8; 20:3, 31; 33:32), and, when they would not listen, he took his message to the common folk through sign acts in particular (e.g., Ezek. 4; 5; 12; 24), a picture strikingly similar to the use of signs (σημεῖα *sēmeia*) in John! Sadly, even then neither Ezekiel's nor Jesus' audiences would listen (cf. Ezek. 33:32; John 12:37).

32. Craig R. Koester, "Theological Complexity and the Characterization of Nicodemus in John's Gospel," in *Characters and Characterization in the Gospel of John*, ed. Christopher W. Skinner, LNTS 461 (London: T & T Clark, 2013), 169–72, esp. 169.
33. Ibid., 169n13. Here Koester adds Nathaniel (John 1:50-51) to this list.
34. Dorothy A. Lee, "Martha and Mary: Levels of Characterization in Luke and John," in *Characters and Characterization in the Gospel of John*, ed. Christopher W. Skinner, LNTS 461 (London: T & T Clark, 2013), 197–220 (207), labels the Samaritan woman as "representing outsiders who respond positively and unexpectedly. . . ." She goes on to include Nicodemus as representative of a group who are "ambivalent" in response to Jesus.
35. Unless otherwise noted, when I speak of the "Gospel" I am referring to the Gospel of John.

Thus, it is my contention that when one begins to do a close analysis of the Gospel of John vis-à-vis the book of Ezekiel, both at the macro level, and at particular junctures, at the micro level, some interesting rhetorical and structural parallels become apparent.[36] The reason John's writing style and ordering of his material is so unique in light of the Synoptics has more to do with his emulation of Ezekiel than some literary agenda by which John sought to be different from his colleagues or the status quo of the first century. Again, it must be stressed that John used the entire corpus of the Hebrew Bible to prove his point that Jesus in fact fulfilled many of the covenantal roles assigned to Yahweh, but most specifically in the book of Ezekiel. Again as Barrett notes, "For him the O.T. was itself a comprehensive unity, not a mere quarry from which isolated fragments of useful material might be hewn. It was not (in general) his method to bolster up the several items of Christian doctrine and history with supports drawn from this or that part of the O.T.; instead the whole body of the O.T. formed a background, or framework, upon which the new revelation rested."[37] Barrett's assertions are correct although I would narrow his understanding of what constituted a guiding "framework" for John's work. It seems apparent that John's message and literary ordering had a guiding structural pattern replete with themes and motifs. This is where I believe the book of Ezekiel comes to the fore.[38]

36. Hamid-Khani, *Revelation and Concealment*, 139, rightly notes that John's use of the Old Testament goes beyond ideas to include influencing his "literary style."
37. Barrett, "Old Testament in the Fourth Gospel," 168. For a treatment of many of these Old Testament allusions, see ibid., 162–68.
38. Elizabeth W. Mburu, *Qumran and the Origins of Johannine Language and Symbolism*, JCTCRS (London: T & T Clark, 2010), vii–vii, suggests that the Qumran Community Rule may be the backdrop for the "truth terminology" in John. See also the suggested Essene influence by James H. Charlesworth, "The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Gospel according to John," in *Exploring the Gospel of John: In Honor of D. Moody Smith*, ed. R. Alan Culpepper and C. Clifton Black (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1996), esp. 81–87.

The Structure of Ezekiel Juxtaposed with the Fourth Gospel

A number of structural patterns have been proposed for the book of Ezekiel. Three of the most common are:

1. A chronological structure based upon the specific dating sequences throughout the book,[39] which include: Ezek. 1:1, 2; 3:16; 8:1; 20:1; 24:1; 26:1; 29:1, 17; 30:20; 31:1; 32:1, 17; 33:21; 40:1a, 1b.

2. A structure based upon the literary content (i.e., the changes in basic themes and content),[40] outlined as follows:

   i. Chapters 1–11: The call of the prophet and the plight of the people of Jerusalem in light of their sin and rebellion;
   ii. Chapters 12–24: Oracles against Judah for covenant violations;
   iii. Chapters 25–32: Oracles against the nations;
   iv. Chapters 33–39: Oracles of hope for both Israel and Judah;
   v. Chapters 40–48: Ezekiel's vision of the new temple.[41]

39. For example, K. Freedy and D. B. Redford, "The Dates in Ezekiel in Relation to Biblical, Babylonian and Egyptian Sources," *JAOS* 90 (1970): 462–85; and J. E. Miller, "The Thirtieth Year of Ezekiel 1:1," *RB* 99 (1992): 499–503.
40. For example, Daniel Block, *The Book of Ezekiel: Chapters 1–24*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 23.
41. This perspective has also been argued from a three-part structure: i. Chapters 1–24: Judgment on the house of Israel; ii. Chapters 25–32: Oracles against the nations; iii. Chapters 33–48: Restoration for the house of Israel. For example, see Ellen S. Davis, *Swallowing the Scroll*, BLS 21 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1989), 11; and S. R. Driver, *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament* (New York: Scribner, 1910), 279. On the other hand, some scholars such as Ronald E. Clements, "The Ezekiel Tradition: Prophecy in a Time of Crisis," in *Israel's Prophetic Tradition: Essays in Honour of Peter Ackroyd*, ed. Richard Coggins, Anthony Phillips, and Michael Knibb (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 127; and Brevard Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), 365, divide Ezekiel into four sections (e.g., chs. 1–24; 25–32; 33–39; 40–48). There are also those who use a five-fold division (e.g., chs. 1–3; 4–24; 25–32; 33–39; 40–48); cf. Charles R. Biggs, *The Book of Ezekiel* (London: Epworth, 1996), xiv.

3. A structure based upon the visionary sequences, which divide the book in two parts (see chart below),[42] outlined thus:

I. Chapters 1–24—Impending Judgment;

A. The inaugural chariot-throne vision of Yahweh's glory: Chapters 1–3;
B. The first temple vision followed by the departure of Yahweh's glory: Chapters 8–11;

II. Chapters 25–48—Restoration and Hope;

A. The vision of the valley of dry bones: Ezek. 37:1-14;
B. The second temple vision, the return of Yahweh's glory, and the renewal of the land of Israel: Chapters 40–48.

42. Walther Zimmerli, *The Fiery Throne: The Prophets and Old Testament Theology*, FCBS, ed. K. C. Hansen (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003), 59, offers a variation of this structure.