

but the ones listed are those that represent the greatest number of problems to the translator.

(As the title indicates, this article is part of a longer paper on the subject of non-literal meanings. We hope to be able to present a further article in the next issue of Practical Papers for The Bible Translator.—Editor)

BARCLAY M. NEWMAN, JR.

SOME OBSERVATIONS REGARDING THE ARGUMENT, STRUCTURE AND LITERARY CHARACTERISTICS OF THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

Dr. Barclay Newman is a UBS Translations Consultant based in Malaysia, and a member of the TEV Old Testament Committee.

It is essential for the translator to have some idea of the structure of the Gospel of John, and also of some of the literary characteristics of the Gospel, before he begins to translate. But even before this he should be made conscious of the fact that he is translating a Gospel, and not a "biography" of Jesus. This observation is important in the translation of the Synoptic Gospels, but it is even more important in the translation of this Gospel of John. For John there is a close connection between an event and its interpretation, and so he will combine narrative and discourse in a way that may sometimes seem odd to the modern reader. This is because for John it is the Spirit that gives life; the mere presentation of the deeds of Jesus without the significance given these events by the Spirit is meaningless indeed. Edwyn Hoskyns expresses it this way:

"In other words, the theme of the Fourth Gospel is the non-historical that makes sense of history, the infinite that makes sense of time, God who makes sense of men and is therefore their Saviour . . . Moreover, the non-historical cannot be dismissed as Johannine interpretation. It is, rather, the veritable meaning of the history that has been set forth." (*The Fourth Gospel*, pp. 129–130.)

The Argument and Structure of the Gospel of John

In what follows there are two presuppositions:

(1) The present arrangement of the text of the Gospel (with the exception of 7.52–8.11, which has severe textual problems connected with it) stands as the author (or final editor) intended it, and the arrangement is intentional and intelligent. None of the suggested rearrangements of the text have any manuscript support, and it is doubtful if any of these theories really make any better sense of the text than that of the present order.

(2) The manner in which John presents his material is closer to a symphonic masterpiece than to a logically ordered argument. No one has stated this more aptly than C. H. Dodd in his comments on chapters 2–12:

“A continuous argument runs through them. It does not move along the direct line of a logical process. Its movement is more like that of a musical fugue. A theme is introduced and developed up to a point; then a second theme is introduced and the two are interwoven; then a third, and so on. A theme may be dropped, and later resumed and differently combined, in all manner of harmonious variations. The themes are those of life, light, judgment, the passion and the glory of Christ, and the like. Each is enunciated and exemplified in various ways, and by the end of ch. xii they have all been brought into a unified presentation of the whole truth about Christ and His work; the whole truth, for although the story of His death and resurrection remains to be told, and there is much to be said about its far-reaching significance, yet in principle the Christ of the Book of Signs is the Christ who dies and rises again; and this truth about Him is the essential presupposition of the whole picture of his ministry.” (*The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, p. 383.)

On the surface the structure of John's Gospel may appear to be quite simple, but at a deeper level it is extremely complex. For example, almost all commentators who have written on the Fourth Gospel see a natural break after chapter 12. And, beyond that, the prologue (1.1–18) and the epilogue (21.1–25) are acknowledged to be self-contained units. Moreover, there is an easily recognizable division within chapters 13–20: 13–17 tell of Jesus' last hours with his disciples, while 18–19 narrate the events of the arrest, trial, and crucifixion, which are followed in 20 with the accounts of the resurrection appearances. A brief overview of the argument and structure of the Gospel should enable the translator to understand better the “deep structure” of the Gospel, and so make somewhat easier the task of translating this challenging book.

1. *The Prologue* (1.1–18)

The prologue is far more than an introduction to the Gospel; it is a summary of all that the Gospel itself has to say. Not only is the special relation of the Son (spoken of as the Word) to the Father made clear, but the themes of light, life, witness, the world, glory, truth, and revelation are introduced, if not that of judgment. It is truly the Gospel of John “in a capsule”, and all that is said in the body of the Gospel must be understood in the light of verse 14: “The Word became a human being and lived among us. We saw his glory, full of grace and truth. This was the glory which he received as the Father's only Son.”

2. *John the Baptist and the First Disciples* (1.19–51)

Here the theme of “witness” is continued, first by John the Baptist (1.19–34), and then by the first disciples (1.35–51). Jesus is declared to be the bearer of the Spirit (1.32–33), the Son of God (1.34; 49), the Lamb of God (1.35), the Messiah (1.41), the one Moses and the prophets wrote about (1.45), a real Israelite (1.47), the King of Israel (1.49), and the one through whom God's revelation to the world comes (1.51).

3. *The “Book of Signs”* (2.1–12.50)

Although this section may loosely be referred to as “the book of signs”, even a glance at the distribution of the signs throughout these chapters will

indicate that the signs do not offer an adequate basis for division. More than signs are involved; and in general one might say that these chapters both continue themes introduced earlier, and introduce the theme of "fulfillment".

In a real sense the first sign, the changing of water to wine (2.1–11), sets the stage for what is to follow, for through this sign Jesus reveals his glory (2.11). The final revelation of Jesus' glory can only take place through his death and resurrection, but this first sign is at least a partial and preliminary revelation of his glory. At this same time the changing of water to wine clearly marks out Jesus as the one in whom the Jewish religion finds its consummation and fulfillment.

The next scene takes place in the Jerusalem temple, the heart of the Jewish religion, where Jesus cleanses the temple of its sacrificial animals and promises to replace the Jerusalem temple with the true temple, the temple of his body (2.21). The theme of the replacement of the Jewish temple will be picked up again in the conversation with the Samaritan woman (4.21), but first John introduces the conversation between Jesus and Nicodemus.

Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews, a Pharisee (3.1), and a great teacher of Israel (3.10), symbolizes the best that Pharisaic Judaism has to offer. But even he cannot understand the necessity of the new birth, the birth from above (3.4). Then Jesus reveals further mysteries to Nicodemus: this birth from above is made possible through the Son of Man who came from heaven, who in turn is identified as the Son whom God sent into the world. The conversation suddenly breaks off with the theme of judgment (3.18–21).

Some scholars have wanted to remove 3.22–30 from its present position and to place it elsewhere, but this is not necessary, for it suits the context well. In the conversation with Nicodemus Jesus has spoken of the necessity of birth through water and the Spirit, and this is perhaps the clue to the inclusion of this passage at the present place. John intends his readers to see a contrast: John the Baptist offers a baptism of water, indicating repentance, but this is not enough; one must also be born of the Spirit, and this comes only through faith in the One whom God has sent (3.31–36).

In the conversation between Jesus and the Samaritan woman Jesus affirms that he is not only the fulfillment of orthodox Judaism (represented by the water jars, the Jerusalem temple, and by Nicodemus), but of heretical Judaism as well (represented by the Samaritan temple). Both temples will be replaced by Jesus, and through him the real worshipers will worship the Father in the way made possible through God's Spirit (4.23).

In the healing of the official's son (4.43–54) and of the lame man (5.1–18) the primary focus is on Jesus as the one who gives life (5.21), and this theme is developed in 5.1–25, which speaks of the origin of the Son's authority, and in 5.30–47, which introduces once again the theme of witness. But another aspect is also in focus, and this is important for the unfolding of the following events: Jesus has done something on the Sabbath that only God has the authority to do, thus making himself equal with God, and at the same time claiming authority over the Jewish sacred day. So then, John has presented Jesus as the fulfillment of the Sabbath, and he now proceeds to show how Jesus is the fulfillment of other of the Jewish holy days.

The feeding of the five thousand took place at Passover (6.4), a detail that

is not mentioned in the Synoptic accounts (Matt. 14.13–21; Mark 6.30–44; Luke 9.10–17), and this observation is significant for the meaning of the miracle in John's account. The Passover theme is also obvious in 6.51–59; it is implied in the mention of the manna (6.31), which plays an important role in the Passover liturgy, and is perhaps alluded to in the walking on the water (6.16–21), which may be taken as a counterpart to the crossing of the Sea on the way out of Egypt. Thus Jesus is the fulfillment of the Jewish Passover. It is admitted that, in themselves, the arguments presented to support this conclusion may seem a bit fanciful, but when this section is considered in the light of what precedes and what follows, then the conclusion is considerably strengthened. That Jesus is the source of life has been a constant theme of the Gospel, and in the discourse on the meaning of the miracle (6.25–65) this becomes the major emphasis.

Tabernacles was the most popular of all the Jewish feasts, and the events of chapters 7 and 8 are set against the background of this feast. Of importance here is the fact that in New Testament times the celebration of this feast was associated with the themes of life-giving water and of light. If then, in the course of this feast, Jesus declared himself to be the source of life-giving water (7.37–39) and of light for the world (8.12–20), he is declaring that he is the reality of what was symbolized by the Feast of Tabernacles.

The truth of Jesus' words is rejected by the Jewish leaders, and this leads to a heated debate regarding Jesus' origin and destiny (8.13–30), and finally to a judgment against the Jewish leaders themselves, who have no real claim to be the descendants of Abraham (8.31–41). They are in reality the children of the Devil, who from the beginning has opposed the truth; and consequently they are blind to the revelation of the truth in Jesus (8.42–47). And the healing of the man born blind serves as a testimony to Jesus as the light of the world and as a means of proving the spiritual blindness of the Jewish leaders who have rejected the light (9.1–41).

The Feast of Dedication (10.22) celebrated the restoration and rededication of the Jewish temple by Judas Maccabeus in 165 B.C., and it is against the background of this feast that the allegory of the good shepherd (10.1–21) must be understood. The Jews would be willing to follow someone who would lead them in rebellion against Rome in the hopes of gaining national freedom, as the Maccabean leaders did against the Syrians, but they are not willing to follow the good shepherd, who is willing to die for his sheep.

It is not surprising that the chapter on the good shepherd should be followed immediately by the account of the raising of Lazarus from death, because it is this event that leads to the plot against Jesus and ultimately to his death (11.53). The calling forth of Lazarus from the grave is an undeniable proof that Jesus is in truth the resurrection and the life (11.25), a theme closely related to the earlier presentations of Jesus as the water of life and the bread of life.

Chapter 12 tells of the anointing at Bethany (12.1–7) and of the triumphant entry into Jerusalem (12.12–19), and both these events are closely interwoven in different ways with the death of Jesus (see 12.9–11; and 12.19). The chapter is then climaxed with the coming of the Greeks to see Jesus (12.20–26), which the reader is to understand as a foreshadowing of the time when

Jesus would be lifted up and draw all men to himself (12.32). Jesus now knows that the hour of his death is near, and so he makes one final appeal to the Jews (12.27–36a); but they still refuse to believe in him (12.36b–43), so they remain under God’s judgment (12.44–50). Jesus’ public ministry is now closed: he had come to his own people and they had rejected him, but to the few who did believe he had given the promise of eternal life.

4. *The “Book of Glory”* (13.1–20.31)

The main argument of the Gospel concludes with chapter 12. In the following five chapters (13–17) Jesus instructs the Eleven in the meaning of discipleship, promises them the help of the Holy Spirit, prays for them and for future disciples. And then, by the experience of his death (18–19) and resurrection (20.1–29), he reveals to them his true glory. John originally closed his book with a statement of his purpose (20.30–31).

5. *The Epilogue* (21.1–25)

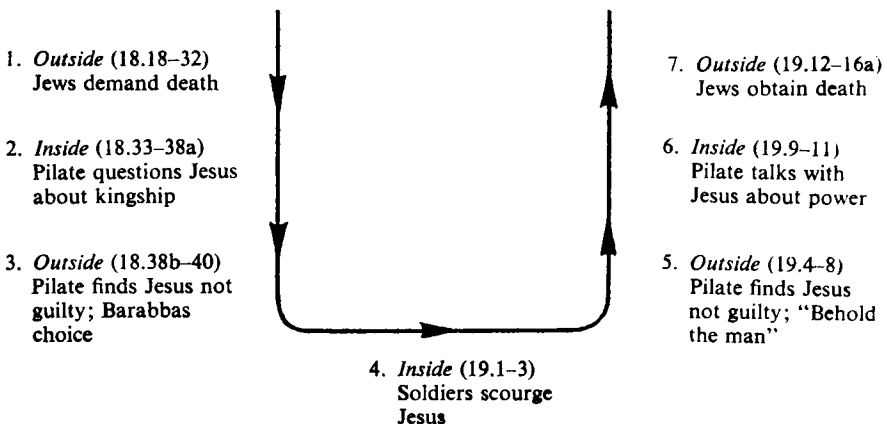
This chapter was added to the Gospel to clear up a misunderstanding (21.20–24) and to include important material that may otherwise have become lost. A second and final conclusion is given (21.25).

Some Literary Characteristics of the Gospel of John

The best single treatment of this aspect of the Gospel is to be found in Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John* (I–XII), p. cxxxv–cxxxvi, and the following presentation is basically a summary of his comments.

(1) *Inclusion*. John will often mention a detail or make an allusion at the end of a passage to recall something recorded at the beginning of the passage, so tying the unit together. Three examples are: the references to the two Cana miracles (2.11 and 4.46, 54); the references to the Transjordan (1.28 and 10.40); and the two implied references to the Passover lamb (1.29 and 19.36).

(2) *Chiasm* (inverted parallelism). In two units that have a number of parallel features, the first part of I is parallel to the last part of II, the second part of I is parallel to the next to the last part of II, etc. Note, for example, John 18.28–19.16a (Brown, p. 859).



(3) *Double Meaning.* John often plays on the double meanings of words. In chapter 3, for example, the Greek word *anōthen* may mean "again" or "from above" (3.3 ff.), while *pneuma*, which normally means "(the) Spirit", has the meaning of "wind" in 3.8a. Note also 1.5, where *katelabon* may mean "to understand" or "to overpower".

(4) *Misunderstanding.* Jesus' audience often fails to understand either his intention (7.4) or the meaning of his words. (See the Nicodemus dialogue, and the entire passage of chapter 14, which moves on the misunderstanding of Jesus' words.)

(5) *Irony.* Jesus' opponents often make derogatory or sarcastic statements against Jesus, which hold a deeper meaning that they do not recognize. Sometimes John points out the deeper meaning and sometimes he makes no comments, assuming that his readers will see the meaning on their own. 4.12; 7.35, 42; 8.22; 9.50 are examples.

(6) *Explanatory comments.* For the benefit of his readers John uses a number of explanatory comments, which are the equivalent either of parenthetical statements or of footnotes. See 1.38, 42; 11.2, 30; 13.11; 18.32.

(Later this year A Translator's Handbook on John, of which Dr. Newman is co-author, is due to be released in the UBS Helps for Translators series. A review of this new book will be published when it appears.—Editor)

R. W. F. WOOTTON

"SPIRIT" AND "SOUL" IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Canon R. W. F. Wootton was formerly Translations Secretary of the British and Foreign Bible Society.

The New Testament terms which deal with the human personality present a number of problems to the translator. This article will deal with two of the most important, the words which have sometimes been translated as "spirit" and "soul". The following table shows the two Greek words with their traditional English renderings and their Hebrew equivalent:

Pneuma	Spirit	Ruach
Psuche	Soul, life	Nephesh

On the whole the Greek translators of the Old Testament had a system of "one for one" equivalents following what is shown here. In the past, translators of the New Testament have often followed something like the same procedure. But it is practically impossible that a single word in another language should cover just the same very complex area of meaning as either of these Greek words.