

**“GLORIFY YOUR NAME...”NAMES
AND NAMING AND THE DISCOURSE
OF POWER IN THE FOURTH GOSPEL IN
RELATIONSHIP TO AFRICAN NAMES
AND NAMING PRACTICES.**

By

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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my wife Tsitsidzashe (Tsitsi) and my two children, Anotidashe (Ano) and Tomiranashe-Jonathan (T.J.); whose names have meanings that are life enhancing. Tsitsi's name helps me to think about God's grace, Ano's name tells me about God's love, and TJ reminds me of the significance of trusting in God and to enjoy gift of life God has given us. May they enjoy life to the full and may their names' significance melt into the essence of who they really are.

DECLARATION

I declare that the research presented in this thesis is my own work unless otherwise acknowledged.

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ABSTRACT

The recurrence of the term ὄνομα, the names and labels used for the Johannine characters including Jesus, necessitated this investigation. With the hypothesis that the Fourth Gospel is produced in a conflict situation at the back of our minds, we wanted to find out how the 1st century Mediterranean nomenclature functioned in a conflict situation. To properly get into the world of conflict and names we had to employ social-scientific models and onomastic science eclectically. Mary Douglass' social body politic model was used to explain the social pressures on the Johannine community. Bryan Wilson's analysis of the sectarian movements was also appealed to, to describe the community of John. The material likely to have informed and formed the naming traditions from which the author(s) of the Fourth Gospel drew his or her material, that is the, Hellenistic, Hellenistic Jewish, Rabbinic, as well as apocryphal and pseudepigraphal writings, were also investigated. Since this thesis is located within the African (Zimbabwean) context, it was imperative to give this thesis an African tinge by teasing similarities between the Johannine and African naming practices.

Through the exegesis of John 12:20-50 in the wider context of the Fourth Gospel, we found out that names are used to set boundaries of different communities. The name and label one is given, determines where he or she belongs. No names in John have neutral value. The names that are used for Jesus by his followers, however, are meant to exalt him above everyone else. He is the possessor of the glorified name. His name gives him the same status with God. While other names may show polarity of conflicting parties, his names and labels are inclusive and uniting.

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¹ *Calling Jesus names* is a title used by Bruce Malina and Neyrey, J. (1999) in their Social-scientific study of the New Testament negative labelling of Jesus by his opponents and his positive appraisal by his followers.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 What is in a name?

Philippians 2:9-10 (NRSV²) *"Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the Name that is above every name, so that at the Name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth."*

Names play a special role not only in defining human individuality, but are also in "symbolic and communicative processes" (Denny 1987:300). That is, apart from a name being a mere identifying tag, it has potential to carry other meanings beyond its referencing function. Even though this is of course relative to cultural disposition, it is true for all societies where communality is the dominant paradigm as compared to societies where individualism³ is dominant. Religious societies⁴ are good examples of such communal settings. Strong religious traditions⁵ tend to use names as expressions of relationships among the people and their relationship with the divine.

In most religions "various rites are used to seek, find and give a name to a child" and new initiates are usually given new names as a sign of their new state of being (Bietenhard 1967:243). Laars Hartman (1997) has dedicated a whole volume to stress the fact that in the Christian tradition⁶, people are initiated into new roles as believers by being given new names at baptism in the Name of the Trinity. It is believed that the Name into which people were (still are) baptised has some intrinsic power which can effect "a new relationship" with God (Hartman 1997:46).

² All quotations will be taken from the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) except where stated.

³ I do not assume here that there are homogenous societies out there which are purely communal. "Members vary substantially in how well they match what are considered to be the typical attributes of their cultural classification. Thus, for example, there are generational and socioeconomic variations in communality in collectivistic cultures with younger and more affluent members adopting more individualistic orientations (Matsumoto, Kudoh, & Takeuchi, 1996) in Bandura, A. 2002. Social cognitive theory in cultural context. *Journal of Applied Psychology: An International Review* 51: 269-290.

⁴ I am again here aware that religious communities are not homogeneous, but I refer here to those, the majority of which are, which are still influenced by the ancient cherished values of community.

⁵ This is not only the case in Judeo-Christian tradition. In most other religions, this generalisation has been proved to be safe.

⁶ Even though some Christians have abandoned this tradition, it is still the norm in other contexts.

Recently the newly elected Roman Catholic Pope had his name changed from Joseph Ratzinger to Benedictus XVI. Popes usually take up new names in imitation of St. Peter's change of name, as change of name is considered among the Catholics to symbolize the new life that the new pope is ushering into the Catholic Church. Typically, the new pope selects the name of his favourite Saint or a former pope who inspires him. This new name is expected to positively affect the one named. So names serve as links with powerful traditions.

It has been a familiar religious disposition to have human beings appeal to some "names of gods and goddesses" for their salvation (Lewis 1999:199). This is attested to by a popular Christian verse; "There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among mortals by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). It is common that "these names are used to invoke power to assist" individuals in confronting malevolent powers (Lewis 1999:199 cf. Acts 19:13). Exorcisms are done in the name of some powerful figure, depending on religion. However, one must be able to unlock the powers of the name by appealing to the correct formulae. In Acts 19:13 we are told that "some itinerant Jewish exorcists tried to use the Name of the Lord Jesus over those who had evil spirits, saying, 'I adjure you by the Jesus whom Paul proclaims'". Unfortunately the demons did not recognize their authority behind the name formula and responded, "Jesus we know and Paul we know but who are you?" So Paul's name was powerful because he had a close relationship with Jesus' Name. But these unfortunate priests did not 'know' the Name in its depth, and hence were unsuccessful.

In the African context, names could make people vulnerable to witchcraft. It is believed that by chanting the right formula and mentioning the name of the intended victim, witchcraft could be effected (Koopman 2002). As a result, when babies are born in some cultures, they are given temporary names (usually ugly names) so that the witches will not be interested in the child, as they assume the child is not loved by its parent and killing it will not invoke any jealousy (Obeng 2001:90-112). In such communities names are a guarded secret since one's enemies may use one's name to have access to the person himself.

The idea of a 'new name' forms an important theme in the Judeo-Christian tradition. After the vindication and salvation of Zion, the people of Yahweh shall be called with a new name (Isa. 62:2). It was common in the OT for people to have their names changed when they encountered the divine or when they were transported to a new position by God. Abram's name is changed to Abraham and his wife Sarai to Sarah (Gen. 17:5-15). The same spirit is carried into the NT. It reads that, "To everyone who conquers I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give a white stone, and on the white stone is written a new name that no one knows except the one who receives it" (Rev. 2:17). This eschatological 'new name' seems to be a strong tradition encapsulated in Eastern Mediterranean nomenclature.

The slavery of Africans to the New Worlds up to the 19th century of this era saw slave masters give their acquired slaves new names not only as a sign of change of identity from freedom to bondage but also as a sign of new ownership. For ethnographers, the use of names has helped tracing the origins of some of those slaves who maintained their names (Bateman 2002, Burnard 2001, Durand 2001, etc). Names have played an important role in power dynamics where the conquered were either re-named as a sign of defeat or refused to be renamed and maintained their names as a sign of insubordination and resistance.

During the Nazi era, Holocaust victims were deprived of names as the first step before being incarcerated. Having been taken to Auschwitz, Poland, by the Nazi SS police, all victims were assigned numbers in place of their real names. One survivor put it into his diary this way:

We were first told to undress-clothes on one side, shoes on other - then we entered the room, naked as the day of our birth. It was here that we were given a number and heard the Konzentrationslagerfuehrer [Concentration Camp Commandant] say: *'From this day forth, you are all numbers. You no longer have names.* You have no identities. You have no nationalities. All you have is your number, and besides your number, you have nothing at all' (MFA news 2001, italics added).⁷

⁷ This is from the Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs news release 11 June 2001. The objectivity of this source could be doubted but the idea still remains.

By the time the concentration camp inmates were executed, they had suffered loss of who they really were; they no-longer had names. Being Jewish most of them, this was a very humiliating situation as they remembered the OT scriptures like Psalm 9:5 saying "You have rebuked the nations, you have destroyed the wicked; you have *blotted out their name forever and ever*" (italics added) and would wonder what this meant for them. They would wonder if suddenly they had become the enemies of God. Before their torturers these inmates no longer had any identity since they had no names. Thus, their incarceration did not mean much to their killers.

Mary Phillips has revealed a similar sociological trend employed in animal research laboratories where the experimental animal has to be assigned a number so that the one using it for his or her experiment does not feel guilty of killing it (Phillips 1994:119). It is also a common practice that prisoners have numbers for their identity. In some situations these prisoners give each other gang-numbers in order to re-affirm their new identity. Different gangs are usually in conflict as a result of competition for social space and identity left void as a result of people losing their names.

One common characteristic in countries that get their freedom from colonialism is change of names of important places. At the time I am writing this thesis, a wrangle is going on in South Africa whether the name of Pretoria must be changed to Tshwane. During the Apartheid period, one onomastician used to Pretoria and Johannesburg as examples of names that had become so entrenched that they could not be changed!!! (Raper 1987:82). But since naming depends on people's power to name, almost all names can be changed as new people ascend to power.

It is with this background of names and how they function in society we choose to investigate how the Fourth Gospel is organised around names. We would particularly want to see how these names function in conflict situations. In situations of conflict, members of the community use names as a means to communicate their dislike of their foes and appraisal for their friends. This is common in Africa where the universe is laden with forces of evil and where one's neighbour is likely to be a witch or wizard. The African context and particularly the Zimbabwean (Shona) culture could provide a fertile ground where an exegesis of the Fourth Gospel. The working assumption of this thesis is that the Fourth Gospel is a witness to controversy, and names and labels are used by conflicting parties to honour one another and to shame the opponents. Names and labels are used to

draw boundaries of those who are within and without the community of John. It is assumed that in John names function in a way that can help us know more about the community from which the text was produced. This would enhance our understanding of the Fourth Gospel.

1.2 Brief review of Johannine scholarship on naming.

Very little work has been done in the Johannine scholarship on how names function in conflict situations. It is an undisputed fact that biblical studies as a discipline is dominated by western scholars, most of whom come from communities that no longer attach much meaning to names. Like everyone else who is involved in any discipline of study, they bring the baggage of their context to the study of the bible; hence a neglect of such 'insignificant' areas as names. Onomastics as a science of names itself could have opened a new way of looking at names in biblical studies in general and in the Johannine studies in particular. But it has not, maybe largely because the multi-disciplinary nature of names deters scholars schooled largely in historical critical methods. I would think an approach of the Fourth Gospel from the perspective of names will open new ways thorough which we could understand John.

Among the few scholars who have directly appealed to the function of Names in Johannine exegesis is Charles Quarles (1999). In this insightful, though short, contribution, Quarles capitalises on the recognition by most Johannine scholars of the gospel as the "most artistic" (1999:2). Noting the use of *inclusio*⁸, chiasm, irony, symbolism etc., he points out the neglect of Johannine scholars to investigate the "Onomastic play" in John as a literary device useful for the exegesis (:3). He traces back the use of this device in the OT where names played more of a theological than an identity role. He goes on to point out how the device was made use of by later interpreters of the OT texts like Philo and Josephus and subsequently by the NT and other related texts.

Quarles's otherwise excellent work has a few weaknesses. The use of names in the Fourth Gospel, a tradition from the OT, is not merely a literary device as suggested by Quarles. If

⁸ All non-English words will be italicised from here on.

we are to benefit from the device it must be located within the whole sociology of sectarianism and group dynamics in the Gospel of John (Meeks 1972:44-72, Brown 1979:14-16). It is from this milieu the Johannine text and community are likely to have been produced and hence can be understood (see also Segovia 1981, Draper 2004, etc). The Johannine community can also be understood as a community dealing with conflict from the outside and trying to maintain its internal coherence and names and labels are used to depict this conflict and its scope (de Jonge 2004, von Wahlde 2004).

Methodologically, Quarles does not fully use the Onomastic theory. So his work suffers an incomplete use of a very important tool. Recognising the tool is one thing but a failure to explore how it works theoretically may leave many gaps in the analysis. So Quarles does not see how names function in John as part of a wide name-calling, appraisals, and labelling trends in a context of conflict. The use of naming in this case, without locating it within the sociology of labelling and deviance will not offer one maximum possibilities. What Quarles has done is to see John as a text and not as the product of a community. I would suggest that it would be insightful to see John not only as a text as one that simultaneously reflect a context.

1.2.1 Introducing the problem

It is commonly attested in Johannine scholarship that the Fourth Gospel is “coloured by conflict” and that there is “distinctive use of names” in John (Brodie 1993:10, 160; cf. J. L. Martyn 1968, 1978, 1979). A close reading of the Fourth Gospel will surprise the attentive reader with regard to the frequency, subtlety and regulated, calculated, and conscious use of ὄνομα (name) and its linguistic derivatives. The harbinger of Jesus’ ministry is introduced by name (1:6). Those who will come to Jesus must believe in his Name and there is evidence that “many believed in his Name” (1:12, 2:23). These will proportionally grow in knowing the Name which Jesus is progressively making known only to them (17:6, 17:26). Each of those who believe is known by name and also called by name (10:3). On account of Jesus’ Name, the disciples would be ill-treated (15:21).

Those who believe have the privilege to come to God in worship (12:13) and to make supplications through Jesus’ Name (14:13-14, 15:16). Through his Name, they shall ask and be granted all they ask for (16:23). As for now they have not yet made use of his Name in prayer (16:24). In case they forget what Jesus has taught them, the Paraclete will

be sent in Jesus' Name to aid their remembrance (14:26). God will protect them by his Name⁹ (ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι) (17:11) since it is by this same Name that Jesus used to protect them while he was still with them (17:12). If they persevere in this faith they will have life through Jesus' name (20:31).

Those who do not believe in the name of Jesus are condemned because they have not believed in the name of the Son of God (3:18). One of those who are not ready to publicly profess his name comes to Jesus at night (3:1). Another one also comes at night to invade Jesus' camp and has his ear cut off (18:10). Both these men's names are mentioned with the ὄνομα phrase. These are the people who have found it difficult to accept the one coming in the "Father's Name" (5:43). The proof that Jesus has not come on his own are the works he does in the Father's Name (10:25). The climax of the mission of Jesus is to glorify the Name of the Father and so he prays at the turning point of his ministry that God should glorify his Name and God instantly accepts that he will glorify it once again (12:28).

1.2.2 The hypothesis

Names and labels significantly influence the flow of the Johannine plot, and understanding their social function could open up possibilities of a better hermeneutics of the Fourth Gospel. Reading this with African lens is advantageous as the naming and labelling practices of the two contexts (1st century Palestine and Africa) have striking similarities.

The author of the Gospel of John reveals some overt and covert affinities to names and labels. These names and labels play a social role whose investigation may illuminate, for an attentive reader, how the Johannine community understands itself and how it understands those outside it. This social role is that of using negative labels for those outside and positive ones for those inside. This social function of names and labels affect the Johannine theology. Names and labels are a means to articulate the Johannine community's theology. Names and labels reveal how individuals' and the Johannine community relate with God.

⁹ In this thesis 'Name' is used for the name of God and that of Jesus and 'name' used for people.

In John 12:28, Jesus prays that the Father may “glorify” his Name (πάτερ, δόξασόν σου τὸ ὄνομα). We know that δόξα is understood as a term of honour and shame in the Eastern Mediterranean world of the 1st century culture¹⁰. Not all names have the same glory (δόξα) in the Fourth Gospel. I would suggest that names in John are a platform of power contests as they constitute honour and shame. Those who lose in this riposte and challenge contest are negatively labelled while winners are positively labelled and named and hence assuming a new position of honour. In John naming is vitally political as it is religious¹¹. People’s names and titles are closely related to the religious links. New religious encounters entail new names and titles of honour. The more powerful one’s God is, the more His name is glorified and enthroned. Names are a battlefield for honour. Unfortunately, the consequences of one losing in this contest of honour may be detrimental as will be seen later¹².

Besides names playing a very important role in mapping the social landscape of the Fourth Gospel, anonymity also speaks volumes in the Gospel of John. It is not always as negative as it has been portrayed in some liberation (particularly some feminist) hermeneutics. In some instances in John anonymity is exaltation depending on who is employing the skill. If anonymity simply equates to marginality, then what do we make of the ‘Beloved Disciple’ whom Bultmann (1971: 11) identifies as the “enigmatic figure” and who is considered a key figure in the gospel by most Johannine scholars. In John these symbolic figures are made “nameless, which enhances their power to represent collectivities without losing their particularity” (Schneiders 1991:198). This thesis will point out that naming is more subtle than meets the eye and therefore useful for the interpretation of the Fourth Gospel.

¹⁰ Moxnes (1996:19-40), in an article contributing to a book on sociological interpretations of the New Testament, reveals that the honour-shame cultural classification is ‘key to the social and cultural systems of the Mediterranean region’ when it is used ‘within the larger religious, social, and economic context’ (1996:19). He goes on to show how imperative this classification is for New Testament interpretation. What should make a social analysis classification useful for exegesis is its comprehensiveness in considering all the relevant factors, what Draper (2001:156) dubs the ‘diachronic and synchronic considerations’. The anthropological analysis becomes one of the many tools to make the task successful. Reading δόξα in this sense will open up possibilities of understanding its sociological significance in the Johannine community.

¹¹ In the 1st century Mediterranean world view, the religious, political, and economical ideas are inseparable.

¹² The fact that when Jesus was negatively labelled he was crucified with his label in three languages is significant.

The use of names and labels to set out social boundaries seems to be common in the 1st century Eastern Mediterranean as revealed from anthropology. This is a probable context that enriches the language of the author of the John. *Merkabah* mysticism is a latter development of speculative interpretation of mystical texts of Ezekiel, Daniel and has some links with the Qumran material and even some Gnostic overtone¹³. That it has some ideas discernible in John is not surprising therefore as they come from the same milieu. For example, the Johannine Jesus could be understood as the “name-bearing angel” of the *Merkabah* (“chariot”) Mysticism. In the *Merkabah* mysticism, the angel that bears the Name can act on behalf of God. Actually, he represents God as a messenger bearing God’s name and therefore equal or synonymous with Godself (Draper 1997). This is a reflection of the 1st century Palestine’s strong symbolic usage of names. By using a name one assumed the role of that name. “Through the possession of the Divine Name”, one assumed the position of God (Gieschen 2003:123). It was therefore common to have people taking up new names in order to assume new social status. It is said that one Joseph ben Matthias (37 - 98 AD) had his name changed to Flavius Josephus when he had earned for himself new honour by aligning himself with the colonial masters, the Romans.

Unlocking how the author of the Fourth Gospel generally employs these naming and labelling conventions is therefore crucial in understanding how the social fabric of the Johannine community functioned. Johannine scholars have raised this function of naming and labelling in the Forth Gospel with Raymond Brown sensing a “Johannine interest in the name” (1966:33). In other words, this respected Johannine scholar sees a trend that warrants an investigation. After him, Brödie (1993:160-161) also points out the tendency in John to have names used in a way different from the synoptic gospels. However, all these scholars only note the feature but do not make any investigation of it. We wish to complement their work by following through why John uses this concept.

In the next section we will look at how we are going to carry out the task of answering this question.

¹³ See Rowland, C. 1981. *The Open Heaven: A Study of Apocalyptic in Judaism and Early Christianity*. London: SPCK.

2. METHODOLOGY USED IN THIS RESEARCH

Paul Julian is correct in saying that, “The Fourth Gospel is a multi-storey phenomenon calling for a multi-disciplinary methodology” (2000:5). The way Johannine scholarship has evolved over the last century, leaving a legacy of different methods¹⁴ is evidence of its nature to be adaptable to different methods. There are many methods that have been tried and employed in New Testament studies in general and maybe even more for the Johannine text in particular. To pick a methodology is not a very difficult exercise, given such a wide range of choices. However, the choice of an appropriate one remains a nightmare as each methodology has its own strengths and weaknesses.

2.1 Social-scientific methodology

The social-scientific or anthropological methodology merits employment in our task because of its comprehensiveness, scope, and versatility. A brief explanation of the methodology is important here. Reference for further reading on this methodology is given in bibliography since a limited discussion of the methodology is given here proportional to the size of this research.

Even though the methodology has not yet managed to take precedence over other methods of biblical research, the social-scientific methodology has been in use as a tool for analysis of the biblical text for more than two decades now. Others have used it without necessarily mentioning it, hence acknowledging its usefulness. This method does not look at one aspect of exegesis only i.e. (diachronic or synchronic), but “the amalgamation of all the aspects” (Julian 2000:8). The presupposition of this methodology is that the author of the text to be investigated “was writing for a particular Christian community or an ensemble of communities with pronounced structural similarities” (Esler 1994:6). Even though this methodology is historical, the social “structural similarities” that it raises go beyond historicity. The historical fact in the New Testament context, for example, could be that of poverty, that many people in 1st century eastern Mediterranean world were poor. The social-scientific method will go further and ask why those people were poor and “trace the

¹⁴ Methodologies that have been in use in the exegesis of the New Testament include the theological approach, historical-critical method, canonical criticism, literary criticism and many others.

underlying factors and the complex connections between those factors” (Julian 2000:8). This marriage of the “historical evidence with a creative and eclectic use of sociological theory” will enable “the reader to interpret the Gospel in a way that would be fair to its original author and audience, because the distance between to-day’s reader and the bible is as much social as it is temporal and conceptual” (Horrell 1999:8, Julian 2000:8).

Bruce Malina and his student Jerome Neyrey have been the leading scholars in social scientific and anthropological approach to the bible. In one of their works (1988) they specify the goal for social-scientific methodology to be mainly that of developing “an understanding of the process that involves the creation, maintenance and change of social relations that invariably occur in patterned ways” (: xii). As such human interaction can be underscored in three categories. If the human relations are measured according to how and why their social system works the way it does, this emphasis is called *functionalism*. The main key for this analysis will be the “behaviour and its determinants” (: xii). In *conflict theory*, we are concerned with “how and why” the social structures are the way they are, *i.e.* observing the conflicting persons and highlighting their motives. The *symbolic* or *interpretive* approach is concerned with making sense and finding meanings of the actions of people that constitute the society. Since we are focusing on the issues of labelling and deviance, we will concentrate on the conflict dimension of society. We will look at the language of naming and labelling as it conveys the degree of conflict in and around the community of John.

2.1.1 Methodological procedure.

1. My task in this thesis is the interpretation of a biblical text. As rightly pointed out by Malina and Neyrey (1988), this task of interpretation is always happening and my task as a ‘trained reader’ (to use the terminology of West 1995) is to make all my presuppositions about this process very clear. Since the interpretation of the biblical text arises from the fact that it is “either not understood or misunderstood”, I will have to provide the relevant “scenarios” that enhance its proper understanding (Malina and Neyrey 1988: xiii). These reading “scenarios” begin by the presupposition that all readers have a particular understanding of how the world works (: xiii). In my case, as an African reader, I have some pre-understanding as to how the world of names works and this is from an African perspective (this

comes from both my experience and from my interaction with literature on the subject). I will own this by giving space to explaining how naming works in Africa. So even in my use of the social-scientific models, I will employ them as an African reader. For example, while the anthropological models serve to “emphasise the ‘strangeness’ of the New Testament world” for the Western mind, I will read them as revealing striking similarities between the African and the New Testament world (Horrell 1999:30).

2. The text for my interpretation will be the Fourth Gospel and particularly chapter 12:20-50 as the main exegetical texts. Since this pericope will not exhaust everything about the subject in John, I will use other texts to put the exegesis into perspective. What we note in John is that the interaction of people with people and people with the divine is characterized by the way they use names and labels. In John 10:3 the shepherd of the sheep “calls his own **sheep** by **name** and leads them out.” Obviously ‘sheep’ here should be understood to represent people. The social analysis of this will help us to imagine a situation where there are some people who belong to the community of John and others who do not. This pericope is fertile ground for testing and applying the anthropological models of Mary Douglas (1966, 1967, 1970) dealing with group dynamics in communal societies. In John 20:16 Mary only recognizes Jesus after his resurrection when he calls her by her name. In John 12:20-50, Jesus prays for the glory of the Father’s Name at the coming of the Greeks to inquire from him. This seems to be the climax of the gathering of the “other sheep” (10:16). By reading these texts we want to find out what more they can tell us about the Johannine community and their theology. We want to see how this recurrence of the word ‘name’ and the use of names of people and those used for God and Jesus could tell us about the level of conflict in John.
3. I will look at this task of interpretation from a conflict perspective. There seems to be deep-seated conflict in the Fourth Gospel. The language of “light” as opposed to “darkness” is striking (1:5; 3:19; 8:12; 12:35; 12:46)¹⁵. The cosmos is a battle field and human relations are only evidence of this since the children of light have to seriously contend with the children of darkness. There are children of God (1:12) and children of the devil (8:44). There seems to be conflict within the

¹⁵ I am aware of the ‘dualism’ traditional interpretation associated with these opposing motifs in the history of religions. But reading these sociologically is not necessarily illegitimate.

followers of Jesus as the former disciples of John find it hard to accept Jesus' ministry (3:26). Peter is also not comfortable with the 'Beloved Disciple' (21:20-21). The list could go on, but the above cited pericopes suffice to give us a starting point.

4. This thesis has to do with how names and labels depict these deep conflicts. The underlying argument here is that naming and labelling constitutes a long tradition which is here appealed to by conflicting parties to communicate their dislike for their opponents or appraisal for their allies. So the deliberate investigation of names is necessary. However, the final purpose will not be names *per se*, but the people who use these names and how they use them for their ends. So the ultimate task has to do with people.

It is one thing to say what one will do, but another to see how that will work as a unit. How all this above procedure will work, functionally as a unit, in the social-scientific model, is attempted here below.

The use of social-scientific methodology is justifiable in probing the claims of this thesis because of the historical and social significance of features of naming and labelling in the Johannine text and the community that produced it. This implies that for one to effectively use the social-scientific methodology to answer this research question, the exploration of the function of names in the milieu that produces and interacts with the Johannine text and community is vital. This exploration will, therefore, start with locating general naming and labelling to the phenomenon as we have it from sociologists. We need to have a general frame work of how names and labels function sociologically.

The exegesis of the Gospel of John must take into cognisance the different milieus which could have influenced John's community in using the same language or from which the author got his or her language. An investigation of the naming and labelling practices in the texts emanating from Hellenism, Hellenistic Judaism, Rabbinic Judaism, Ancient Near East (ANE), Apocalyptic and pseudo-epigraphic works will be carried out. The aim is to locate the roles naming and labelling play in the thinking of this period of history and identify possible traces of naming and labelling traditions that filter into the process of the Fourth Gospel's production. The whole undertaking is carried out in the full knowledge that we are dealing with some material whose dating is not agreed upon in New Testament scholarship. It is, however, still useful to make use of some such material since it either

emanated from the Jewish tradition or the Hellenistic traditions, or are result of their interpretation, which are important traditions to which the Fourth Gospel owes its language and world view. The place of African naming practices needs special mention here.

2.1.2 Africa as a context

The general use of names in the whole Johannine corpus is appealing to someone who comes from the African context where names define relations between humans and humans and between humans and God. One of Jesus' disciples is labelled "the Beloved Disciple". This makes sense in my context where people acquire names depending on relationships. Names tell you how people relate in my Shona context.

The section on African naming conventions sets up the anthropological reading of the text. There is a significant amount of African literature on African Onomastics. Why this knowledge is necessary for the exegesis of 1st century text demands some methodological explanation. Familiarising ourselves with the African naming conventions will not necessarily give us any contextual background to the naming practice for the Fourth Gospel, but will locate this reader and lay bare his pre-understanding. The point is that this reader is not coming to the practice of naming as a *tabula rasa*. The reader's symbolic naming background attracts him to the Johannine text that also has symbolic naming tendencies. The task of looking at this African naming practice will be done to help the reader to appreciate the similarities and differences in the naming conventions of these two different texts (the African and the Johannine) and allow them to inform one another. This has an inculturating effect. The meeting of the two horizons "will help to illuminate the 'social script'" and so produce meaning (Malina and Neyrey 1999:29).

2.3 Theoretical framework

2.3.1 Onomastic theory

Studying names and how they are used falls under the general rubric of socio-linguistic studies called Onomastics or Onomatology¹⁶. These are usually personal names (anthroponyms) and place names (toponyms). Onomastic theory could be understood from three distinctive branches, namely, the semantic, functional and systematic theories (Koopman 2005).

The semantic theory finds the value of names from their meaning. These meanings are either referential (relationship between the object and its name), lexical (the dictionary meaning), etiological or underlying (reasons behind the naming), associative (relating meaning to other associations) or personal meaning (subjective meaning) (Koopman 2005). Our reading of the Fourth Gospel affords us to come across almost all these uses of names. It is not surprising that Nicodemus is referential name (See discussion below.). Examples of etiological and associative names also abound (See the discussion of Nathanael below).

Functional theory deals with how names function. In Africa, names usually function to identify or refer, to establishing kinship links or contact and to express belief. In most African cultures, a child can be named after a relative to show how people relate. In Kenya where kinship naming is strong, there are only few names for all females, as these names have to be recycled among the kith and kin¹⁷. In conflict situations in Zimbabwe, the Shona people can give a child a name to communicate their hate and dislike of their enemies' activities (usually witchcraft) (Chitando 1998:29, Pongweni 1983:30).

Names can also play a systematic function in a society. Names constitute a system made of categories or units or members or constituents which operate in a constant dynamic relationship. For example, all the disciples could have had personal names, but they would constitute a system together defined by how each of them related to the person of Jesus.

¹⁶ This section on Onomastics is a product of my discussion with Prof. A. Koopman (2005). I greatly appreciate his guidance to P. E Raper (1987) who has done some work in South African Onomastics.

¹⁷ This is a result of my discussion with a Kenyan PhD student. This information was verified orally from other Kenyans.

Examples in point are “The Beloved Disciple” and the other “The Betrayer”. They shifted from being known by their particular names, to being known by the ones acquired through interaction with the other disciples and Jesus. The systems analysis is significant for our study as we try to reveal these systemic power relations in the Fourth Gospel.

2.3.2 Deviance

Apart from Onomastic theory, social deviance and labelling theories help us to understand how names function when they are used in situations of factionalism and marginalisation. Clinard and Meier (1985) have defined deviance as that behaviour of an individual or individuals that a society may consider to be out of the norm. This definition works in a situation where there is a dominant society with enough social resources to label someone deviant. The group can become dominant by the fact of sheer number, what sociologists call a ‘statistical’ advantage. If in a community certain values are considered absolute, some people may become dominant by being the custodians of these values. The usually agreed upon dominance in that which comes from the societies interaction and reaction to certain behaviour Clinard and Meier 1985:4-6). This is usually the dominant view because it takes the dynamics of values seriously. Almost all values are meant to change.

Social deviancy as a result of how communities react to certain behaviour could help us as we read the Fourth Gospel. This view points out that “societies apply their own norms differently, selecting and stereotyping those they choose to mark as deviant, so that only some norm-breakers are actually treated as deviant” (Barclay 1995:115-116). It states that a deviant is only so when a society or its agents of social control have successfully labelled him or her (Clinard and Meier 1985:6). This means that the whole process of labelling is never fixed and could change from time to time and when circumstances change. In other words, this view denies the idea that deviance could be objectively defined. While many people “drink heavily,” only a few will be labelled reckless drinkers and hence labelled ‘alcoholic’; the argument goes (:116). Therefore, deviance, according to this interactionist view, “cannot be predicted of acts as such, (but) only of acts as they receive a negative social response or reaction” making it a “product of social interaction” (:115-116). This is interesting if one looks at a situation where Jesus would be labelled as demon possessed by some and celebrated as Lord by others. But only those who were successful in labelling

him as a deviant led him to his death. In turn his followers celebrated him as the resurrected.

2.3.3 Labelling

Labelling is not always negative, as will be shown in the exegesis. Sometimes it is appraisal of individuals or communities to whom and with whom one belongs. Malina and Neyrey (1988) call this type of positive labelling “prominence”. The supporters of the ‘deviant’ will conduct “ritual(s)” of this elevation. In the case of Jesus, while he was labelled as demon possessed by his opponents, those who believed in him saw him as “Lord”¹⁸ and conducted rituals like singing the enthronement “Hosanna” song as he entered Jerusalem (Jn 12:13).

When a person has been labelled a deviant, he can either try to “negotiate” the label by behaviour change or he adopts a ‘deviant career’ and forms an association with those with whom he has been co-labelled. When such actors come together because of their identity, they form ‘deviant associations’ and the cycle continues as new roles are always being assumed by both the labelling society and the labelled actor. In the case of Jesus, then, those who called him “Lord” constituted a deviant association with respect to the *status quo* (Malina and Neyrey 1988).

In the Fourth Gospel, and 1st century Palestine, the agent of social control was the temple aristocracy which was in charge of the local economy and hence had power to reward and punish all members of the community, as they were considered to be subject to the system. If one conformed to the temple cultic regulations, one would be rewarded by staying as a member of the cult with all the benefits of attending the synagogue meetings. Those who would not conform were expelled from the system and would lose the privilege of being members of the local synagogue. Members of the community of John were victims of the system as they had chosen to be identified with the man labelled a “deviant” by the system. Those who were not willing to risk being expelled would not qualify to be members of the Johannine community. What you were called determined where you belonged (John 12:42). Your label would determine the social space you may occupy.

¹⁸ The Lord of the New Testament is also seen as the Yahweh-Kyrios of the Old Testament and LXX (Gieschen 2003:117)

We hope to understand the labelling of Jesus in the light of a wide 1st century Mediterranean worldview in which so powerful a social group continually intends to entrench its hegemony in all aspects of life. Life in this set-up was a big whole where the sphere of religion, politics and economy were an integrated entity. As Ricks (1995) rightly points out, Jesus' actions of power (signs in John) could rightly be classified under the ambit of magic, not that magic was something irreligious¹⁹, but because it "deviated sharply from the norms of the dominant social group", and hence was considered "antisocial, illegal, or unacceptable" as it threatened this centralisation of power (Ricks 1995:131). What we wish to do with labelling here is to highlight the plight of those considered outsiders by the dominant system. We hope to see how the 'survived' the labels and how they retained their honour. We want to see whose name remained glorified.

2.4 Models

Anthropological models are employed to represent "similarities among properties for the purpose of clarification through comparison; that is, presenting the less well known in terms of the more well known" (Elliott 1986:3). As such, models help us to communicate abstract ideas in more familiar language. Two anthropologists provide us with the models we can use in our reading of the Johannine text and world. These are Mary Douglas (1966, 1992) and Bryan Wilson (1975).

2.4.1 Mary Douglas: The social body and control

Mary Douglas (1966, 1992) has concentrated her work on how communal societies exercise control over the social body. The real physical body serves as the microcosm of the social body. She points out that in this social configuration, the way the physical body and its functions are perceived reflect the controls on the social body. The pressure of this control is largely on the orifices of the body as they limit the entrances into and the exits out of the body. Certain objects may be considered out of place and thereby making the

¹⁹ Quite some amount of work has been done in Western scholarship portraying magic as a separate development in the history of religions e.g. Valerie I. J. Flint 1994. *The Rise of Magic in Early Medieval Europe*. Princeton University Press; Thomas Keith, 1971. *Religion and the Decline of Magic*. New York: Scribners. This Enlightenment approach is clearly superficial as separating religion from magic is like peeling an onion. The two are almost inseparable in antiquity and the modernist separation of the two is only an anachronistic interpretation of religion.

body to be unclean. To maintain the purity of the body, certain controls have to be in place. In case the body gets contaminated, certain rituals have to be carried out to purify it²⁰.

In here other work in relationship to labelling, Douglas (1970) could also help us in her findings on the sociology of witchcraft accusations in communal cultures. She points out that "the function of the" witchcraft accusation was meant to "reaffirm group boundaries and solidarity" (Douglas 1970: xxviii). In this sense, the witch was portrayed as someone from outside, wishing to use his²¹ magic to extend his political boundaries and the community must be made to feel the need for a patriotic position. The label "Samaritan" on Jesus in John 8:48 is meant to label him an outsider, hence a threat to the internal well-being of Israel.

For one to use the social body model correctly, they must decide what kind of society the Johannine community is. Bryan Wilson's (1975) study on sectarian sociology helps us to fit the community of John community into such a scheme. The Johannine community is a sect because it is it comes from the dominant religious community, the temple-run system. Below is a summary of how this sectarian movement functioned.

2.4.2 Bryan Wilson: Introverted sectarianism

Johannine scholars are generally in agreement that the community set-up of John was sectarian (Meeks 1972). Using the sectarian anthropological model of Bryan Wilson, many scholars have approached the Johannine text from the sectarian perspective (see Segovia 1981). Wilson says that sectarianism as a general phenomenon usually comes up as a result of some level of tension or disagreement with the 'world'. The 'world' being

²⁰ (Mary Douglas configures the control system in two variables whose usefulness is not going to be realised here because of the nature of the small size of this thesis. It is however mentioned here in the footnote because it forms the whole with the other part we are going to make use of in the thesis). The configurations used by Mary Douglass are the grid and the group. The "group" variable represents the pressure a social system exerts on its members to conform to its norms. Where the "group" is "strong" the pressure to conform is high and there is a strong degree for order and control. The "grid" variable is the degree to which people are able to comply with or fit into the norms of the society. If the "grid" is "low" it means that individuals do not fit in well as their experiences are not harmonised with those of the other members of the society. This configuration is not going to be used here because of the magnitude of this thesis. It is mentioned here however to show familiarity of it.

²¹ The masculine pronoun here is deliberate as I am referring to male witches. The view on female witches was different from that of male witches.

reacted against may be a dominant tradition or society at large. There are seven²² typical reactions which include the conversionist, revolutionist (millennial), introversionist, Gnostic-manipulationist, thaumaturgical, reformist, and utopian. Of interest to us is the introversionist model into which the Johannine community could fit.

Draper (1997) summarises Wilson's profile of introversionist sects as follows:

1. *It succeeds a failed millenarian revolutionary movement* (:267). Introversionist sects sometimes arise as a result of a failed millennial expectation. In this case it would have started as a botched revolutionist sect whose revolution has been squashed forcing the sect to adapt.
2. *It reconstructs central elements of the indigenous traditional symbols into a new system* (:267). The introversionist sect sees the world as irredeemably evil with no chance of being saved, so the best response being withdrawal. Esler (1994:85; cf Schnackenberg 1968) sees this 'world' for the Johannine sect as Judaism. This does not seem to come from the text though as the text suggest a 'world' beyond Judaism. In John 1:29 Jesus is said to have come to take away the sins of the 'world' because God love the 'world' (3:16). Jesus is the bread of the 'world' (6:51) and also the light of the 'world' (9:5). This seems to be more than just an

²² "Conversionist responses tend to view the corruption of the outside world as an epiphenomenon of the corruption of individuals. The world will change if only individuals will change. Conversionist discourse often carries a moralizing tone because deterministic explanations that attribute behavior to environmental factors are rejected and personal responsibility for one's actions is stressed. A revolutionist response, by contrast, explains the state of the world and of individuals in deterministic terms. It maintains an eschatological orientation that looks to the impending overturn of the present order of things from the outside. Members of the religious group may participate, but the initiative and ultimate responsibility for changing the world rest with God. Insofar as they both emphasize personal holiness, the introversionist response is similar to the conversionist. The former lacks the evangelical zeal of the latter, however, and shows little interest in actively changing the world through changing individuals in the world outside. Gnostic-manipulationist responses maintain a positive orientation towards the general goals of the world, but they typically advocate distinctive, highly spiritualized means to broad ends shared with others outside the group. Claims to special knowledge go along with the special techniques prescribed to attain salvation. The thaumaturgical response seeks to procure compensation in the here and now for personal injury or loss by means of miraculous intervention, rather than seeking to attain broader cultural goals. Special dispensations whereby normal cause-effect relationships are suspended for the benefit of specific individuals are seen as a privilege of group membership. The reformist response is related to the revolutionist response in that both tend to see the corruptness of the world as a function of corrupt social structures that sanction behaviors at odds with salvation. Instead of concentrating upon bringing others inside, reformist groups go out into the world to be the "leaven in the lump," so that altered structures will make altered patterns of behavior a real possibility. Finally, the utopian response seeks to reconstruct the social order in such a way that the potential for evil is radically diminished. There is a decided emphasis on human initiative in this project and less expectation of some divine intervention; thus utopian groups maintain a vigorous yet occasionally adversarial engagement with the world" Patrick Gray (2001) *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 9.3: 313-337.

address focused to Judaism although the Jewish tradition is being employed at different levels. The term Judaism itself is problematic, as it is not a fixed issue.

3. *It is more corporate and communal than it is individual* (:268). The individual denounces his or her independent position. Using the 'social body' configuration, expectations for the individual to conform to the community norms is very high.
4. *It withdraws from the world to form a new community* (:268). By renouncing the 'world' and leaving it, the sect members are renewed. They get preoccupied with the quest for holiness and hide into such insulating communities which are sometimes separated geographically or socially from the 'world'. The example of the Qumran community is a good example in terms of geographical separation. The Johannine community is also separated in terms of the way they understand the Jewish tradition. They understand the 'temple' in a different way, as an example.
5. *It is simultaneously conservative as well as accommodationist* (:268). Usually the introversionist sect would draw from both the indigenous culture and the culture of the dominant invader. The culture of the dominant invader may be imbibed unconsciously, but the sect will keep the culture in a separate way of self determination. The worship of Caesar could have been denounced, but yet used in the worship of Jesus.
6. *This new way is only accepted by a few people from the indigenous populace* (:268). The result is that the sect is persecuted by those who have fully given in to the invading force and from those who wish to hold on to the lost system.
7. *The community does not see itself in a supernaturalist sense as opposed to political and economic, since these categories do not exist in the primitive cultures* (:268). In a worldview where reality is perceived as a single unit, the self-understanding of the sect is also not divided into categories of the "mundane and the magical". The understanding of physical matter is also understood as embodying a spiritual meaning, e.g. 'bread', 'water' etc.
8. *Voluntarism is stressed by the fact that religious affiliation is paramount, even though the sect is in theory open to all indigenous people* (:269). The most important aspect for our study is the boundaries set for the membership. One is either in or out. The boundary lines are clearly marked although new challenges will confuse the clarity of these boundaries. A good example is that when Jesus is talking about the sheep, he says that there are 'other sheep' which have to come into the fold (10:16). The community is still open to new entrants. Some who are

in are supposed to be out, for example, Judas, The-one-to-betray-him. So there are names and labels for those who belong and the same for those who are out. For example, Judas is known as “the one who would betray him” (Jn 6:64; 6:71; 12:4; 18:5) and wherever his name is mentioned his role of betrayal is not omitted.

9. This community becomes the seat of salvation for those who belong to it, although eschatological horrors are used to instil ethics to members (Esler 1994:73).
10. *Even though it operates in private, the sect is concerned with issues of power mediated through inspirationalism* (Draper 1997:269). What drives the sect is the direct experience of the divine through superior means of attaining knowledge.
11. *The immediate rise of schisms within the introversionist sect is always imminent* (:269). As new knowledge is generated and new realities experienced, new actions are postulated and this results in a new sect coming up. One of the main tasks of the sect is to “overcome these divisions and to weld previously hostile and separate groups together into a new unity” (Worsley 1968:228).
12. *The sect also reflects and promotes inter-tribalism* (Draper 1997:269). Within the sect itself, there are some who have ‘truer’ experiences of the divine, the experiences which reflect the ethos of the sect than others.

2.4.3 Convergences of Onomastics, labelling, Mary Douglas, and Bryan Wilson for our task:

The idea of arraying all these theories and models is not the end in itself. We want them to aid us to a “better understanding of how and why Jesus had been labelled as a deviant” by his opponents or promoted to “prominence” by his followers in this social set up (Malina and Neyrey 1988:39). The most important convergences between Douglas and Wilson for our work lie in the aspect of social control. Three clear areas of control are boundary making, boundary maintenance and boundary redrawing.

2.4.3.1 Boundary making and marking

Both Wilson and Douglas show the need for a group to have its own identity, hence making boundaries around itself. It must have membership and this membership must be conscious of their belonging to this group. In John they know each other by certain names or labels. First they have collective names and labels that identify them as followers of

Jesus. Secondly, individuals also have names and labels and these have to do with how the individual relates to Jesus.

To mark the uniqueness of their community these followers of Jesus must openly have decided not to be part of the membership of another community, that is the temple system. The names and labels with which they call the other people who do not belong with them is meant to mark them as outsiders. In the same way, the names and labels with which they are called by those who still affiliate to the temple leadership set them apart as deviants and outsiders, together with their leader, Jesus. Belonging has very serious ramifications in John, yet no one can afford the choice of not belonging because there are set boundaries into which everyone must fit into. Labelling is consistently polarised, although sometimes ambiguous. Some characters in John fail to strictly fit into their boundaries and this gives an interesting discord to the naming and labelling trend in John. This makes the boundaries of conflicting parties not only too fluid to follow but also impossible to maintain.

2.4.3.2 Boundary maintenance²³

Even though the group knows its boundaries, members constantly respond to issues of reality by crossing these boundaries one way or the other. There is hence a need for continual guarding and redrawing of the boundaries. Names are always intensified to make sure that those who are outside are not mistakenly identified with those inside. The insiders who may exhibit characteristics of outsiders may be labelled together with outsiders so that this new stigma will make them conform to the rest of the group or leave to go where they belong (John 15:19).²⁴ Statements like 'if you love me...' (14:15) are meant to mark these boundaries. In John 7:48-52 we are presented with a situation where the neat boundaries are now blurred. This is a trend in the whole Fourth Gospel, while it seems as if the boundaries are becoming clearer, someone crosses these boundaries.

²³ The term and idea is borrowed from Draper (1997:266) where he discusses the Johannine community.

²⁴ In the contemporary world politics, one does not want to be called a 'Terrorist' if they believe themselves to be an ally of the USA.

2.4.3.3 Boundary redrawing

When trends fail too frequently in trying to maintain the boundaries, the community has to readjust by allowing new boundaries. If many members of the group have shown many signs of the outside world, names may have to be changed. If the group has to grow through recruitment, boundary checks may have to be slackened. There are names reserved for the outright enemies. These are never used to describe those who remain loyal to the community. That is why in John no one is ever addressed as “get behind me Satan” in John as in the other gospels, even though we see more disciples reflecting the characteristics (the characteristics of not knowing the plan of God) of Peter of the synoptic gospels. Only those who have gone out of the community, like Judas, can have Satan enter them and hence become children of darkness (Jn 13:27).

In setting the boundaries, we may need to know which particular communities we will investigate in our exegesis. These are briefly looked into below.

2.4.4 Important social groups

For our study, Jesus will be a significant character, as he will be labelled and also label others. His disciples will also form an important community, as they will have to deal with the labels conferred on Jesus and themselves. They in turn will also be using positive names and labels for themselves and negative ones on those belonging to the Jewish temple system. Most of their opponents, the Pharisees and all the Jewish authorities, will be called by particular names meant only for people who are in conflict with Jesus and his followers. The Roman authorities will also play an important role as they are involved in interpreting the ministry of Jesus in the light of their role as maintainers of order and law. The Roman authorities will also be interested to know who belongs where in Jewish micro-politics and at the same time not wanting to be directly part to the nitty gritty of this local politics (Jn 18:35).

2.5 Conclusion

The Social-scientific methodology seems to be satisfactory for the purpose of this research. It will allow the investigation of the social world of the text as well as a reflection of the African context, which is the context of the exegete. The Onomastic traditions of both the world of the text and my context will inform and dialogue with each other, allowing a more familiar platform for discussion. The sociology of names, deviance and labelling provides a theoretical frame within which conflict in the Fourth Gospel could be understood and examined.

The social worlds and social control of the 1st century Palestine are well represented in the model of body image and witchcraft accusations by Mary Douglas. The community of John is a sect which has weaned itself from the temple control. It will have to live with the consequences that go with such a decision. Members must belong to either the community of John or must remain under the control of the temple aristocracy. No one can afford to remain neutral. In this social scenario, the way the social body is controlled is well represented by the way the physical body is managed. Rituals of entry and exclusion are always performed. Boundaries are closely monitored so that those who belong to the community of John will be distinguished from those who do not. Important as these boundaries may be, they are not easy to maintain as standards are always changing. The boundaries are hence very fluid and it is not easy to categorise people according to where they belong.

3. ANCIENT NAMING PRACTICES

3.1 Greek Background

ὄνομα was a word commonly used in the Greek world. It was expected of a stranger asking for alms to state his or her name before he or she was helped (Bietenhard 1967:243). The human being was constituted of many components of which one was his name. Therefore, not to have a name or to have one's name lost was to have one's "whole nature destroyed" (Bietenhard 1967:243). There were notable opposing philosophic views concerning names among the early Greeks. While for some, names were descriptive of the nature of things, for most pre-Socratic philosophers, names were not derived from the nature (φύσις) of things, but by convention (θέσις) (Bovon 2001:273). In other words there were some philosophers for whom there was nothing in a name apart from it being a tag. Yet for others, the name meant everything about someone.

For the latter view, one could act in the name of someone. It is interesting, however, to note that in the ancient Greek usage the constructions ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι and εἰς τὸ ὄνομα (in the name of) "with the genitive of the person as modal definition" were not in common use (Bietenhard 1967:244). The common idea during this time is that of 'calling someone by name', 'to give someone a name', or to 'name' someone. In this sense the name is understood only as a reference to someone. In the ancient Greek world names were also used in the sense of 'repute' or 'status'. In this sense one could gain or lose a name.

While ὄνομα was also used nominally as opposed to reality, it was also used, especially with the genitive, to mean the actual person or item referred to (Bietenhard 1967:244). This became a later pre-occupation for philosophers who postulated "whether human speech with its names for things is a true reflection of reality" (:244). The belief that humans had names for reality different from the names ascribed to the same reality by the gods, led to a later development of etymological searches by philosophers to encrypt the 'true' names of reality, that is the names used by gods. Knowing the real names of either gods or reality was thought to be opening chances for someone to access magical powers hidden in these names. Plato was one of those philosophers who believed that "the nature of things is best known from their names" (:245). In other words, even though names were given by convention, they were "the only way to reach reality" (Bovon 2001:273). This

view was, however, later abandoned when it became clear that names of certain realities had etymologies that did not give a correct account of the object itself. Aristotle was one of those philosophers who came to the later conclusion.

There was a strong fondness in ancient Greek mythology to know the names of gods. It actually became an unacceptable practice, even atheistic, to worship a nameless god. The etymologies of the names of gods were studied in order to “learn about the nature and essence” of these gods (Bovon 2001:248). Since the only names considered to be true were the names that these gods used to call themselves, it was not possible to know the real name of the gods as these gods kept their names a secret for fear of being manipulated (:249). Since Stoics had an obsession in this “intrinsic relationship between names and reality”, the search of these true names was not optional (:273). For them, one could bestow the divine with many names (also in agreement with the Hermetic writings) as a sign of respect and humility showing that one was not sure of the proper name.

The interest in ‘true’ divine names continued to grow in popularity among the ancient Greek philosophers as knowledge of the true divine name was believed to help one to manipulate them for his or her benefit. The *Greek Magical Papyri (GMP)* are replete with these beliefs “in the power and efficacy of names”, knowing which could give one “power over their bearers”, since the “simple utterance of a name puts a spell on its owner and brings him under the power of the speaker” (Bovon 2001:250). So anyone who knew the name of a god (which was always changing) could invoke that god. Because of the mingling of the Jewish and Egyptian magic in this period, it was advisable not to translate the name of the god from one language to the other, as this would ruin the ‘password’. It was important that one used the name familiar to the god. In this sense the name was believed to have power on its own. In John, Jesus claimed to do all his works in the name of his Father. When, in John 10:25, he says, “The works that I do in my Father's name testify to me,” he must be understood in the 1st century Mediterranean sense of using powerful names for magical purposes. In antiquity, magic was “not regarded as a separate institution with a structure distinct from that of religion, but was rather a set of beliefs and practices that deviated sharply from the norms of the dominant social group” (Ricks 1995:131).

The *GMP* as well as Coptic and Demotic texts are a collection of magical spells and formulas, hymns, and rituals from Greco-Roman Egypt, dating from the second century

B.C.E. to the fifth century C.E. They must be viewed as “underground literature” or “suppressed literature” of antiquity which can open for us the other side of human conception of the divine and the use of names in antiquity. This material represents the practice that was considered a threat to the belief system of the dominant social group, hence the destruction of most of this material in the 1st century of the Christian era (Betz 1986: xli). Since the “daily life” of the people, their religious practices and other social activities were not divided, people’s lives were largely embedded in magic, not in the negative sense it has accumulated with time. In the *GMP*, we realize that names of divinities were invoked in all spheres of life that included “individual spells and remedies”, as well as various collections made use of by magicians, reflecting an “amazingly broad religious and cultural pluralism” definitive of the 1st century Mediterranean (Betz 1986: xlv).

For our purpose, we realize that names of people and other divinities are employed to deal with all the illusive issues of life influenced by a cosmology laden with strife and struggle. Among the divine names invoked are the familiar Hebrew divine names. In hourly prayers “to establish a relationship with Helios” one was meant to call the name “ADONAI” and that of the Name-bearing angel “GABRIEL ALLOA” (*PGM* III. 530). These Hebrew divine names found in the *GMP* have other variant angelo-morphic forms like “Adonael, Adonail, Adoniel, Adonaiel” (Betz 1986: 331). One could call upon the given name according to need since each particular need could be met by calling the relevant name. If one wanted to propose love to a woman, he was to call the name of “Aphrodite” (goddess of love) over “an offering of frankincense” and would definitely be successful in getting the person he or she loved (*PGM* IV. 1265-74). For protection from evil spirits, some powerful divine formulae were written on phylacteries and worn, and were known to be “terrifying to every daimon” (*PGM* IV. 3015). Even names of Christian characters found in the Gospels are also used in the *GMP* as important ‘passwords’ to solicit the favour of particular people and the divine. This is evidence, that in antiquity, names both of divinities and of people played a very significant role in moulding the human tragedy and pleasure.

3.2 Hebrew Old Testament and LXX backgrounds

It is well attested that in the OT, people and place names are not arbitrarily placed, but “rather that there is meaning behind a name giving; and sometimes the author fits it into the text as an integral part of the literary texture” (Garsiel 1991:13-14). It is normal in the OT to find names of places and people given some explanations for the names given. The following examples of such texts could be illuminating: ‘The man *named* his wife Eve, *because* she was the mother of all living’ (Gen. 3:20)²⁵. The etymology may be coming from what the characters of the people were going to become when they grew up²⁶ or other circumstances surrounding, what Hartmann (1972:680) calls “folk etymology” (also see Gertoux 2002:38-40). The etymologies of most OT names were not necessarily lexical, they were functional.

In general, the Hebrew word שֵׁם for ‘name’ occurs just below a thousand times in the Old Testament and was used originally to denote an “external mark to distinguish one person or thing from others” (Bietenhard 1967:252). Name also encapsulated the idea of ‘reputation’ and ‘honour’ in the Hebrew, as well as the notion of ‘remembering’. Since a person can only be remembered by name this connection makes sense. The name was closely connected with remembering since what was remembered was the name even though the thing remembered was the person. There was therefore a need to have a male child through whom the name of the tribe would be remembered. It was a crisis in the Jewish culture if a marriage could not produce a child (particularly a male child) since there would be no one to perpetuate the name (Gen.21:12). The option for the Levirate marriage was meant to take care of this shortcoming (Bietenhard 1967:252).

The significance of naming in the Jewish culture is evident in the way stories of human origin were conceived (Gen. 2:19). Adam is instructed to name the animals, thereby giving him power over them. Human beings were given the same authority which Yahweh had as it was Yahweh who knew the stars and heavenly bodies by name as their creator (Ps.147:4) (Gertoux 2002:8).

²⁵ Other such texts are Gen. 3:20; 4:25; 29:32ff; 30:18ff; Exod. 2:10; 1 Sam. 4:21ff; 2 Sam. 12:25; 1 Chr. 4:9; 7:23; Dan. 1:7 etc

²⁶ Since no-one knew what the people were going to be when they grew up, the etymologies of the names were sometimes imposed on the names. Sometimes the name and its real meaning were different from the etymological allusions ascribed to it by the story teller.

Naming also meant having ‘authority over’ as typified in the OT where conquered cities were given new names (2 Sam.12:28)²⁷. Women needing male protection could submit to be named after them for both protection and sustenance (Is. 4:1). Hence Yahweh’s name was over Israel as his bride and possession (Is. 63:19). Yahweh’s name is also over the temple and ark (Jer.7:10; 2 Sam.6:2). Yahweh even knows his servants by name, as he has commissioned them (Ex. 33:12, 17; Jer. 15:16). In this Hebrew thought, the “name denotes the person, establishes its identity, and is a part of it” (Bietenhard 1967:254).

Morphologically, most Hebrew names were formed from “theophoric compounds” usually consisting of “a divine name which is prefixed or suffixed to a non-theophoric predicate” (Fowler 1988:29). Jewish names were “composed either from El (god) as in Daniel (God is my judge), Eliezer (God is my help), Eliya, etc. Names were also formed from the Tetragram YHWH” (Gertoux 2002:8)²⁸. Most of the favourite Jewish theophoric names tended to be male, for example, Jonathan (*Yaho +natan*) meaning Yahweh has given (Jg 18:30) (Stamm 1972:805). Female theophoric names were “scarce” (:804). The use of theophoric names in naming people is a sign of them identifying with, belonging to, and believing in God. It is said this idea was also common in Greek mythologies (Matthews 1996: 1023)²⁹.

Some of the Jewish names do not necessarily have the theophoric suffix or prefix, but may be having a “divine appellation” (Fowler 1988:28). The appellation may be represented by *mlk*, for example, from the construction of *melech* (in this case Yahweh being the king). In some cases the appellations were combined with the theophoric compounds to make “nominal sentence names” shared by a large number of characters in the OT (Fowler 1988:71). It is important to note that for Jewish people this construction conveyed “a particular kind of relationship between name-bearer and deity” (Fowler 1988:173).

²⁷ Alexander the great named a city Alexandria after conquering Egypt.

²⁸ If the first person to receive a proper theophoric name formed with a Tetragrammaton was Joshua (Stamm 1972:805), it is likely that the use of theophoric names is a latter development.

²⁹ More insight into this use of names has been enhanced by the “contribution of angelomorphic traditions, which include traditions about possession of the divine Name” (Gieschen 2003:119).

Because of the closeness between the name and the bearer, people who had special encounters with Yahweh in the OT were given new names expressing their new state. “God changed the name of Abram to Abraham (Father of a crowd or multitude) and that of Sarai to Sarah (Princess), both new names being prophetic (Gn 17:5, 6, 15, and 16)”. This defined their new state or confirmed it (Gertoux 2002:12)³⁰.

3.2.1 The divine name

Gertoux’s (2002:44) study indicates that the history of the Tetragrammaton³¹, יהוה (YHWH) is a long one. The Tetragrammaton is Greek for *word with four letters*, which letters are (*Yod, He, Waw, and He*) and traditionally pronounced³² “Yahveh (or Yahweh)” (Yadin 1985:67). At least until the destruction of the First Temple in 586 B.C.E., the Name (YHWH), the Tetragram, was freely used and this use became limited by the third century B.C.E. (Hartmann 1972:680). Later, this ineffable name of God enjoyed limited pronunciation only at the temple’s feast of Tabernacles (*M. Sukkah 4.5*)³³. In the reading aloud of the scripture or in prayer, it was later replaced with ‘Adonai’ (“my Lord”) in order to make sure that the Tetragrammaton itself was not said. Other written forms such as *Hashem* (The Name), for the same reason, were also used (Gieschen 2003:118).

The request by Moses to know the name of God at the burning bush experience (Ex. 3) “bears traces of the idea of a magical constraint” prevalent in antiquity (Bietenhard 1967:255). Names were used to invoke gods for particular favours, and Moses’ request fits into this category. The answer that God gave to Moses’ request has become a “riddle which camouflages the divine name” (Bovon 2001:271). Gieschen (2003) is right in pointing out the problem of the research into the divine name. He says that the problem of the study into the divine name has been compounded by later Christology studies that have been trying to conform the LXX translation of יהוה as a future verb ‘to be’ of the ἐγώ εἰμι

³⁰ Other names that were changed include Jacob to Israel, and the trend continued with the disciples of Jesus.

³¹ The study on the Tetragrammaton is extensive work which cannot be afforded enough space by the nature of this research. Because of the focus of this work, we will try to narrow it to names of the OT Jewish background even though we are aware of the fact that “the biblical name stock has parallels in the culture of the contemporary neighbouring peoples, especially the West Semitic name stock” (Garsiel 1991:13).

³² The contention raised by a minority of scholars, recently revived by Gertoux (2002), will not be dealt with here as it does not contribute much to our thesis. In this work we will however consider Yahweh as our position of pronunciation due to wider consensus from scholars (J. Barton Payne 1962:147). According to the *Gesenius’ Hebrew Grammar*, the pronunciation ‘Jehovah’ is ascribed to Peter Galatin as late as the year 1516 C.E (1995:218).

³³ We discuss this change in the section 3.4.

NT designation of Jesus in his 'I AM' declarations³⁴ (Gieschen 2003:116). "The phrase *ego eimi* is regularly used in the Septuagint to translate the Hebrew phrase *ani hu*. In Isaiah, the first occurrences of the phrase *ani hu* occur in trial scenes where, over and against the gods of the world, YHWH asserts his singular sovereignty. 'I am YHWH, the first and the last; I am (*ani hu*)' (Is 41:4). In these trial scenes YHWH summons his servant Israel to bear witness, to know, believe and understand. 'You are my witnesses, says the Lord, and my servant whom I have chosen, so that you may know and believe me and understand that I am (*ani hu*)' (Is 43:10)" (Coloe 1999:7-8).

Before Moses' encounter with God, we come across the descendants of Adam, who are said to be calling upon the name of Yahweh (Genesis 4:26)³⁵. The sense here has to do with worshiping Yahweh with commitment and "asking for protection" (c.f. Rm 10:13; Ac 2:21; Jl 2:32) (Gertoux 2002:19). Even though the Jewish people could call upon the name of Yahweh, in the OT Yahweh forbids people from misusing and blaspheming his name (Ex. 20:7). The punishment of this misuse would be death (Lev. 24:16). The LXX, on the other hand, forbids even the naming of the Name (Lev. 24:16). It is not clear from this what it means 'to name the Name' (ὀνομάζων δὲ τὸ ὄνομα) as opposed to the Masoretic Text (MT) which uses the word כָּנָה ('pierce' meaning to blaspheme when used in context) in place of the verb, "name". In the MT it is clear, though, that in addition to the prohibition of blaspheming the name of Yahweh, the Israelites are also prohibited from calling upon the name of other gods (Ex. 23:13), although a clear reason is not specified (Gertoux 2002:20).

Particular memorable places were designated for the calling of Yahweh's name (Ex. 20:24). Some of these places could be temporary, depending on what the Lord had done for his people. Calling upon the name of Yahweh could be a result of his self revelation or imploring him to reveal himself to his people Israel (Gen. 12:8). The sons of Levi are appointed to minister in the name of Yahweh in the Hebrew bible (Deut. 18:5). If anyone swears (1Sam.20:42), curses (2Ki. 2:24), or blesses (2 Sam. 6:18) in the name of Yahweh,

³⁴ ἐγὼ εἰμι as designation of Jesus is found in the following Johannine texts: Jn. 4:26; 6:20, 35, 41, 48, 51; 8:12, 18, 24, 28, 58; 9:9; 10:7, 9, 11, 14; 11:25; 13:19; 14:6; 15:1, 5; 18:5f, 8. It must however, be pointed out that this effort has not been illegitimate as it is clear that the NT ἐγὼ εἰμι motif is built on this OT tradition. More attention is going to be given on how these I AM declarations function in the naming and labelling in John.

³⁵ Some scholars have suggested that this calling upon the Name of God "bear traces of the idea of a magical constraint which can be exercised on the deity by utterance of the Name" (TDNT 1967:255).

then Yahweh guarantees his “presence, attention, and active intervention” (Bietenhard 1967:255). It will be argued that in the Fourth Gospel, the Father has put his name, not in the temple to be worshipped, but on the Son (Draper 2001, Rowland 1984, and Fossum 1995).

As pointed out above by Gieschen (2003:119), Yahweh’s name was also conferred on angels representing Yahweh in the OT, and largely in Jewish mysticism. Yahweh promised one such ‘name-bearing angel’ who was going to accompany the children of Israel in the wilderness (Ex. 23:20-21). He would be a full representative of Yahweh as the name of Yahweh resided in him (Ex. 23:21). Maybe he is the same as the angel of Isaiah 63:9 named ‘the angel of the presence’. This angel would have the same authority with that of Yahweh and the Israelites would do themselves a favour by obeying him (Ex. 23:21). The role of this angel was later going to be equally carried out by the prophet raised by Yahweh himself after Moses. This prophet would speak in the name of Yahweh and people would be expected to listen to him (Deut. 18:18-19) (Gertoux 2002:26).

By the time we come to the NT Johannine community, both the name of Yahweh and of his people had been desecrated many times and at some point led to his glory (his Name) departing the place of his dwelling (Ezek. 3:12ff). The ultimate desire for all Jewish people was the promise in Isaiah 65:15, “You shall leave your name to my chosen to use as a curse, and the Lord GOD will put you to death; but to his servants he will give a different name”. Instead of a “curse,” as the name of the Jewish people had become, the elect Jews would have a new name, becoming God’s delight, “Hephzibah,” and married to Him, “Beulah,” instead of “forsaken” and “widow” (Isa. 62:2-4).

3.3 OT Apocalyptic and Pseudo-epigraphic writings

In the OT apocalyptic material, we find that the “angelo-phormic traditions, which include traditions about possession of the divine name”, are an important characteristic of Jewish mysticism which could be of value in the study of Johannine naming (Gieschen 2003:119). Angelo-morphic traditions have been considered the “highroad for developing Christological thought” of the Johannine literature “until the Book of Revelation at the end of the first century” (Gieschen 2003:119). This is an area well trodden with early works of Quispel (1957) then Dunn (1989) and lately his student, Carrell (1997). In one way or the other these scholars agree to the basic idea “that YHWH can and does appear in the form

of an “angel” who bears the Divine Name” (Gieschen 1999:313). Christopher Rowland (1982) has taken this further by showing that “the quest for the knowledge of God which is so characteristic of the Jewish apocalypses is a key element in the Christological portrait of the Fourth Gospel” (Rowland 1982:498). It is in the light of this view point that we try to see how the apocalyptic tradition influenced the Johannine understanding of names.

In the *Apocalypse of Abraham*, the date of whose original composition may be placed at the end of the first or the beginning of the second century C.E., we are told that the patriarch Abraham was taken to the throne of God by an angel Iaoel.

“The angel he sent to me in the likeness of man came, and he took me by my right hand, and stood me on my feet. And he said to me, “Stand up, Abraham, friend of God who has loved you, let human trembling not enfold you! For lo, I am sent to you to strengthen you and bless you in the name of God, creator of heavenly and earthly things, who has loved you. Be bold and hasten to him. I am Iaoel and I was called so by him who causes (to move) those with me on the seventh expanse, on the firmament, to shake, a power through the medium of his ineffable name in me...” (*Apoc. Ab.* 10:4ff; from Charlesworth 1983:693-694).

The description of this angel who visits Abraham is worth looking into. He has the “likeness of man” and yet he is in such an “exalted status” because of the “possession of the divine name” Iaoel, meaning ‘Yahweh is God’ (Rowland 1982). This angel is always moving, as God is always moving all things that move with the angel. Rowland notes this in saying that in *Apo. Ab.* Chapter 1, there is no figure sitting on the throne as Iaoel is moving with that which exists with the angel, just as Wisdom (*Wisd.* 9.4) was “the companion of God’s throne” (Rowland 1982:103). In this tradition, the angel who bears the name of God is moving with the chariot of the glory of God and executing all the plans of God in the world.

Of note also is that, as Abraham is taken up in the spirit to the uppermost (seventh) heaven and shown mighty and wonderful things, there seems to be a clear testimony of a multi level universe where there is something above and something below, similar to that of the Fourth Gospel.

We read in the *Apocalypse of Abraham* 13:4-9:

“And the unclean bird spoke to me and said, ‘What are you doing, Abraham, on the holy heights, where no one eats or drinks, nor is there upon them food for men. But these all will be

consumed by fire and ascend to the height, they will destroy you.' And it came to pass when I saw the bird speaking I said this to the angel: 'What is this, my lord?' And he said, 'This is disgrace, this is Azazel!' And he said to him, 'Shame on you Azazel! For Abraham's portion is in heaven, and yours is on earth, for you have selected here, (and) become enamoured of the dwelling place of your blemish. Therefore the Eternal Ruler, the Mighty One, has given you a dwelling on earth. Through you the all-evil spirit (is) a liar, and through you (are) wrath and trials on the generations of men who live impiously.'" (from Charlesworth 1983).

There are striking similarities here with John³⁶. Abraham's portion is said to be in heaven, just as Jesus and all those who are his, in John, are not of this world (John 8:23; 11:9). Azazel has his dwelling on earth, just as the evil one is the prince of the world and he is condemned (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11). This Azazel is a liar and has produced generations of those like him destined to judgement (see John 8:44).

The Hebrew Apocalypse of Enoch³⁷ became a basic document in Jewish Merkabah throne mysticism³⁸ which depends heavily on passages in Ezekiel (Scholem 10:591). In the Hebrew Enoch tradition, Enoch ascends to heaven to participate in the "divine council" (Himmelfarb 1993:13). Enoch is transfigured into Metatron, becoming one of those called "by the name of their king" (3 *En.* 10:4), hence becoming "The lesser YHWH" (3 *En.* 12:5). This name given to Enoch is the most powerful name as shown in 3 *Enoch* 42. As Rowland (1982:110) puts it, Enoch is "bestowed with divine honour and glory", for Yahweh's "name is in him" (3 *En.* 12:5). We note that the divine names are engraved "with a pen of flame on the throne of glory" and they "fly off (from the throne of glory) like eagles" (3 *En.* 39:1). Also to note is the heavenly curtain "on which are printed all the generations of the world and all their deeds, whether done or to be done, till the last generation" (3 *En.* 45:1f; cf. Exodus 26:31, and 2 Chronicles 3:14.). This heavenly curtain

³⁶ A debate has been going as to whether these similarities are not evidence of later Christian interpolations into the Apocalypse of Abraham (Hall 1988). However, due to the limited scope of our study, we cannot fully participate in this important debate.

³⁷ This has normally been dated around the fifth or sixth century C.E. (Charlesworth 1983), but the Enoch Tradition is much earlier than has been believed. Some scholars actually date them as early as the first century CE or even before. For example Andrei Orlov (2000). See *Seminar Papers* 39:130-147, *Society of Biblical Literature*.

³⁸ Fossum (1995:3-4) would suggest that "Many statements about Jesus in the Gospel according to John can be paralleled by what is said about Metatron in 3 *Enoch* and the Son in Valentinian Gnosticism. Perhaps the most striking similarity is that they all are represented as the possessor of the Name of God, the concept of which plays an enormous role in Judaism. As the figure of Metatron appears to be some sort of systemization of and elaboration upon everything that was said about the principal angel in older sources, works outdating even John, it would seem that both Johannine and Gnostic Christology owe to mystical Judaism", he concludes.

was seen as a heavenly counterpart of the temple veil, which in the earthly tabernacle and temple divided the holy place from the Holy of Holies. It was a veil that had on it the “blueprint” of the whole course of human history (Scholem 10:591).

From the apocalyptic tradition we realise that once the name of Yahweh is received by angels or some privileged people, they assume the high role of representing God in the universe. They assume positions of authority and exaltation not equalled by anyone. They are only lesser than God. If this is the tradition which John is drawing his understanding of names from, then the conflict with the Jewish authorities cannot be avoided as this tradition would allow him and his community to see Jesus as the angel bearing the name of Yahweh.

From the above discussion we note that the Fourth Gospel’s use of names and naming is influenced by his Targumic interpretations of the OT tradition³⁹. We also realize that these traditions needed new interpretations with new circumstances. The interpretations would then become sources of conflict as a result of some people diverting from the traditional interpretation of the dominant Jewish temple cult. Since the theology of the temple cult was framed around the Name, hence Yahweh himself, an investigation around the Name and names in general in the Fourth Gospel could tell more about how God was understood and how people related to him. In this investigation, names and naming must be understood to be part of the conflict of interpretation between the Jewish temple tradition and the Johannine tradition. For the Jewish temple system, the temple in Jerusalem is the place where Yahweh has chosen to have his Name dwell. For the Johannine community, the former argument is true, only that the meaning of this temple or the presence of the glory of Yahweh is now in the person of Jesus and nowhere else⁴⁰. “Both the Johannine Christians and their temple Jewish opponents legitimised their position by appealing” to the available traditions (Menken 1996:7). The examination of other Jewish traditions and interpretations of names and the Name tradition could open up new insights into the understanding of the Fourth Gospel, as we assume that its author(s) drew from these traditions.

³⁹ There are scholars who speculate that John had access to the LXX, but there is no evidence to support this argument.

⁴⁰ “According to the Fourth Gospel, Jesus manifests the glory of God (1:14) and the presence of God (1:51) in such that he can be identified with the temple, the symbolic dwelling place of God (2:21-22). Hence, worship in that holy place is necessary, not optional” (Thompson 2001:224).

3.4 Rabbinic Judaism

Rabbinic literature shows that the understanding of names for the rabbis was largely consistent with the OT. The Hebrew word שֵׁם (name) is upheld in the Rabbinic writings. A person is given a name by his parents at birth and then by other people as he grows up, but must “win” the third name for himself by his own exploits in life (Bietenhard 1967:267). Emphasised therefore in the rabbinic writings is the good name one achieves in life. So in Rabbinic tradition, name was largely used in the sense of repute and honour in this material.

Names in general were understood according to “folk etymology” among the rabbis. In discussing the names, the rabbis said of Israelite midwives, Puah and Shaphrah, “Of whom the name of one was Shiphrah---because she used to make the baby good-looking (*me-shapereth*); for when the baby was born, it was full of blood” (*Exod.Rab.* 1.13). Up to about five etymological explanations are given for these two names (Grabbe 1988:55). These etymological explanations are meant not to give the rabbinic understanding of the names but in order to bring in some “haggadic” traditions (:55). Many other interpretations of names from the rabbinic material show an expanded etymology of the names from the OT. The etymological explanations given to names were meant to express a theology and not a lexical meaning (Grabbe 1988:55, cf. Hartmann 1972:680)

The rabbis held the Jewish identity very highly as revealed by the way they expected people to use Jewish names. The rabbis discouraged Jews, even in the Diaspora, from giving their children gentile names. Using gentile naming practices was seen as cheap assimilation, as shown in the Targum to Amos 6 which says, “they give their children same names as do gentiles” (Rabinowitz 1972:807). In *Gen. Rab.* 49:1 some names of Jewish patriarchs to be used for Jewish children are given. The strange thing however is that “not a single rabbi” was “known by the name of Moses, Abraham, Israel, David, or Solomon”, even though the list they provided included these names (Rabinowitz 1972:809).

Most scholars believe that the rabbis were responsible for the excessive prohibitions to the pronunciation of the Name and superstitious links with its secrecy (Scholem 1946:37). The Talmud ordered the reader to refrain from pronouncing the Name and to say *Adonai* instead. The statement, “This is my name forever, and this my title for all generations”,

in Exodus 3:15 was read, "This is My Name, to be hidden", in the Talmud (*Pesahim* 50a), and "to be kept secret" (*Kiddushin* 71a.). The rabbis believed that the Torah was a text of secret codes. Scholem (1946:37) points out that Rabbi Eleazar said in the Midrash on Job 28, "The various sections of the Torah were not given in their correct order, for if they had been given in their correct order, anyone who read them would be able to wake the dead and perform miracles". In Rabbinic literature, says Scholem, there are allusions to people being healed through the invocation of the secret Name discovered in rigorous study of the Torah (Scholem 1946:37).

Even though the Name was suppressed, it was retained in most of the places in the copied Scriptures as shown in the Mishnaic Text (*Sota* vii. 6): "In the sanctuary they (the priests) were accustomed to pronounce the Name as it is written; in the town, by disguising it." This reveals to us that the Tetragrammaton was still pronounced, but only in the Temple (at Jerusalem) by the *Kohen Gadol* (High Priest) in the temple on the Day of Atonement. This he would do having undergone elaborate preparations for self-purification. The High Priest would then say, "Ani Waho! Save us we pray! Ani waho! Save us we pray!" (*M. Sukkah* 4:5). He would offer three times such certain formulae containing the Name. For the priest, the experience was considered awesome, even perilous. Imminent danger as well as redemption was at stake. The pronunciation of the name was thought to bring him into direct contact with the Divine (Scholem 1946:37). After the third recitation, "the priests and the people who stood in the Court at the time when they heard the Name, coming forth from the mouth of the High Priest, bent the knee, prostrated themselves and fell on their faces"⁴¹ and said: 'Blessed be the Name of His Glorious Kingdom forever and ever.'" (*M Yoma* 3:8; 6:2) (Abrahams 1967: 25)

The Qumran community, a century and a half before the birth of Jesus, considered themselves a righteous remnant plucked from the midst of a corrupt temple culture. Even though they claimed to have a register of all the people of the community, none has yet been found, apart from names of people signing particular documents. Even though the community is also known to have celebrated the Name, its pronunciation was prohibited (Yadin 1985:279). People were expelled from Qumran for pronouncing the Name, even if they did it by accident when reading the scripture. So to aid people never to pronounce it

⁴¹ This could be the reason why the people who had come to arrest Jesus fell down when he said, "I Am" in John 18:6. In say this Jesus was literally saying the Name, *ani hu*, if we take the LXX translation seriously.

by mistake, in the Qumran texts, the Name was usually written in Paleo-Hebrew script (cf plate iv-v of Isa^a from Palestine Archaeological Museum: Discoveries in the Jewish Desert of Jordan. V *Qumran Cave 4* 1(4Q158-4Q186). By John Allegro. 1968. Oxford: Clarendon Press). When the reader came to that script he would not read the Name.

3.5 Hellenistic Judaism background

3.5.1 Philo

It is known that Philo had special interest in names “for his exegesis” of the sacred texts available to him (Grabbe 1988:3). He used names to show their usefulness in the interpretive task of the text. Philo’s exegesis was almost all in all allegorising, which was not an uncommon way of interpretation for his time. Actually he wrote a whole treatise on the change of biblical names⁴². He saw an important role played by Adam in naming animals⁴³. According to Philo, Adam only named the animals according to their species while respecting the genre categories that are only known by God. Philo saw ambiguity of language and how it distorted the reality of the object being named, even though he had high regard for the biblical names which he felt corresponded correctly to “things”. For Philo, the name was the “second thing attaching to the basic matter, like a shadow which accompanies the body” (Bietenhard 1967:264).

In calling God ‘one who is’ (ὁ ὢν), Philo followed the LXX translation of Ex. 3:14. It also went along his philosophical position (mainly Stoic) that saw no vocabulary adequate enough to name God, as he alone is the true ‘being self’. Philo saw all designations of God in the OT only as denotations of his power. His understanding of the Tetragrammaton is also not very clear. So he did not believe one could swear by God since people did not know the essence of God.

⁴² Philo, *De mutatione nominum*.

⁴³ Philo, (*Legum allegoriae* 2.9) says that Adam only named the species (εἶδος) and not the genre (γένος) taking his discussion from the differences produced by the LXX translation of Gen. 2:19-20. Philo respected the LXX for its ability to bring into harmony its text and that of the Hebrew bible.

3.5.2 Josephus

Josephus on the other hand, who was likely from a priestly background, was more conformed to Jewish nomenclature concerning the divine, but more Greek in general naming practice. His writings on the desecration of the name of Caesar are definitely influenced by his Jewish monotheistic background⁴⁴. He shows his Jewish background when he also points out that he is not supposed to pronounce the secret name of Yahweh which he also considered to be dreadful⁴⁵. For Josephus it was part of the spirit of Yahweh and not his name which now dwelt in the temple⁴⁶.

3.6 Conclusion

In this section, we have examined the naming conventions of the 1st century Mediterranean world. We have seen that among the ancient Greeks names carried varying but significant value. For some, names were merely tags with which individuals were identifiable. But for others, one's name was either his honour or his shame. You were what your name signified.

In the many different Jewish traditions, people's names were linked to their theology. Theophoric names demonstrated Israel's relationship with YHWH. The Name of Yahweh was considered powerful and was revered among the Jewish people. The tradition of revering the Name of Yahweh seems to have been developed with time. People participated in the powerful nature of Yahweh by taking theophoric names. Angelic beings could also assume exalted status by assuming the Name of Yahweh. Those angelic beings would act with Yahweh's authority.

If the Fourth Gospel is drawing from this rich tradition, we assume that Jesus' conflict with the guardians of the Jewish tradition, the Jewish temple authorities, is unavoidable, as both

⁴⁴ Josephus, *Antiquities* 16.364.

⁴⁵ Josephus, *Bell.*, 5.438.

⁴⁶ Josephus, *Antiquities* 8, 114.

parties are holding to mutually exclusive interpretations of the tradition. If the Johannine community ascribes to Jesus the privileges of being the angel bearing the Name, then we understand why the community of John is composed of people who can no longer participate in the mainstream Jewish religious life. The labels that the Jewish authorities use for Jesus demonstrate that they can detect a deviant leading a community bent on blaspheming the Name of Yahweh. These labels are meant to socially displace Jesus and his followers, as their presence continues to demean the Name of Yahweh.

4. AFRICAN NAMING CONVENTIONS

4.1. Introduction to African naming conventions

In Africa one has value if he or she has a name. Only when a child has been named is he “considered a person” in the African naming practices (Chuks-orji 1972:76). It is problematic to talk of African naming conventions as if Africa is a culturally homogeneous entity. However, when it comes to “traditional naming practices many common threads can be traced” in Africa (Stewart 1996:3). These “common threads” have to do with the significance of context, the intention to communicate with neighbours, and the common origin and nature of most Bantu languages. For a long time names in Africa also have been used to “show human relationships and social roles” (Obeng: 2001:146). As such, they communicate the society’s circumstances, kinship ties, and beliefs all camouflaged in a thicket of proverbial concealment.

4.2. Nature of African personal names

African names are known to carry meanings that are not very obvious, even if the interpreter knows the language of the name. Apart from the hidden meaning of African names, as in the 1st century Mediterranean honour-shame culture, one has to earn their name in society. In the 1st century Mediterranean world honour was fundamentally the public recognition of one’s social standing. Honour was your name. It came in one of two ways. One’s basic honour level, usually termed *ascribed* honour, was inherited from the family at birth. Each child took on the general honour status that the family possessed in the eyes of the larger group, and therefore ascribed honour came directly from family membership. It was not based on something the individual would have done. By contrast, honour conferred on the basis of virtuous deeds was called *acquired* honour. By its very nature acquired honour could be either gained or lost in the perpetual struggle for public recognition. Since the group was so important for the identity of a Mediterranean person, honour status came primarily from *group* recognition (Malina and Neyrey 1991, Moxnes 1996). This evaluation of the 1st century Mediterranean worldview could be used for the African context, where honour can safely be replaced with name. The analysis below could demonstrate the interesting similarities.

4.2.1 Indirectness of names

In the African culture, communication is not meant to be confrontational. Great communication skills are exhibited by those who are able to 'diplomatically' share their concerns without ruffling anyone's feathers. Obeng terms the names that emerge from this attitude of indirectness, proverbial (2001:49-68). He says that these names are given in situations that have "potentially difficult communicative" freedom (:49). My cousin was named *Ndaizivei* in our Shona language, meaning 'I wish I knew'. The possibility of the meaning of this name is that the giver of the name realised he or she had made wrong assumptions which had been just proved wrong by the current scenario. It is most likely that the vitriol was directed towards a close relative who could not be directly confronted. Obeng rightly observes that in the African culture, provoking open confrontation is shunned and is usually severely punished (:50). Names are, therefore, used to communicate "specific messages to other people in the family or community" (Stewart 1996:4).

In an analysis of the sexuality and socialisation in Shona praises and lyrics, Herbert Chimhundu (1995:149) points out that most Bantu languages, and particularly the Shona language have "built-in" gender "differentials". In this social setting "names and complex nominals for kinship titles ... are reflective of basic assumptions about status, roles, responsibilities and even capabilities sometimes" (:149). In other words, the level of relationship is preset and every individual knows his or her place. In this set up some people have power over others and, therefore, cannot be directly challenged. For example, the daughter-in-law cannot stand up to her mother-in-law in direct riposte. Her socialisation does not allow it. The only acceptable language she could use in raising any complaints to her mother-in-law is through the name medium "in order not to risk provoking an open confrontation" (Obeng: 2001:50). For example, among the Shona people, if her mother-in-law did not like her when she first arrived, she may call her first born child *Tigere*, if he is a boy, meaning *We are here to stay - so go to hell*. She will not be answerable to anyone as this is not direct confrontation, thereby fostering "healthy relationships within the community" (Stewart 1996:3).

As Chimhundu (1995:149) says, indirect communication using names is not only confined to naming children. Animals are also named to indirectly communicate with one's

neighbours in the African set-up. In my own experience of the Shona culture, one can name their dog *Zvavamwe*⁴⁷ literally meaning, *The things belonging to others*, to reprimand a neighbour who is always begging or at worst stealing. When the dog owner is calling this dog, the neighbour will hear that it is him who is being referred to, hence the need for him to change his behaviour. Sometimes the purpose is not for the person referred to know, but so that people can talk about his weaknesses while he thinks that they refer to the dog. This was common during the colonial periods in Africa where “Europeans working with African people were all given secret names known only by the African people who could thus gossip amongst themselves without being overheard”, says Haar (1999:56).

I have, however, experienced that indirect communication of names is meant to protect the family secrets from the outsiders. A child given the name of a living or a deceased family member becomes an archive of valuable secrets of the family’s past and present. Names become secret codes to unlock the social interactions of a particular family. This communication, of course, can go beyond the confines of the family if need arises. In this later case, the code is made more accessible to the general public for which the name communication is intended (Obeng 2001:50).

4.3 Acquiring a name

People are named at different stages of their life in different African cultures. There are, however, generally two ways one is named. Either you get named after birth as a child or you acquire a name for yourself according to your exploits or lack of them as you grow up. Even at birth, an infant can earn a name depending on the member of the family he or she resembles or whose name may be politically correct at the time of birth. Children are generally named in line with “family ties” (Burnard: 2001:333), family beliefs, family ambitions for the family or the child, intended riposte or response to a member of the community, and response to some circumstances around the birth of the child. Because of high infant mortality rate some children are given survival names to protect them from death.

⁴⁷ These Shona names are a result of my personal reflection on my community’s use of these names.

4.3.1 Survival names (infants).

In some African cultures, children may be given what Obeng coins the “survival names” (2001:90-112). These are names that are given to children, particularly infants, to confront the spiritual powers to ward off any dangers that may lead to these powers killing the child. These are meant to be ugly, funny, and negative names that will not attract the “jealousy of the ancestors who might wish to take back” the child to themselves (Chuks-orji 1972:76). “The Luo of Kenya believe such survival names as *Akamu* and *Okumu* ‘to throw away’ serve to fool the Death God and there by cause the infant to survive” (Obeng 2001:91).

“In traditional Shona society no one dies of natural causes,” they are caused to die (Pongweni 1983:42). Deaths are categorised into either “good” or “bad” (Muchemwa 2002:31). Children’s deaths are considered bad deaths and associated with the works of an enemy (witchcraft) or the work of ancestors (punishment) (Chitando 1998:29, Pongweni 1983:30). A child born after the death of another can be named *Tinoziva*, meaning *we know what you want to do* (maybe referring to the witch who may want to kill the child). One child was named *Tirivavi* (we are ugly) among the Varembe of Zimbabwe “hoping they would mislead death so that it thinks that” the child was “unwanted” (Kimenyi 1989:31). The trick is to make sure the spirit world is deceived by the name since they would not want any company with the detested. So as long as the name carries with it anything negative, outrageous, insulting, and a tone of anger and frustration, it will do the trick.

4.3.2 Acquired names: - adults

Apart from the names given to infants, elderly people also acquire other names. As in the ANE, the African culture is governed by honour-shame relations to some extent. In Chinua Achebe’s (1986) book, *Things Fall Apart*, Okonkwo’s father is blamed for not acquiring a name for himself while still alive. It is said that his children had to work very hard in order to cover up for what their father could not do while he was alive. The African culture has set expectations for men to achieve for their families’ sake before they die. Before the current era, all men were expected to go to war and bring medals of victory. In my culture, I am told that in earlier periods, a man would not be given a wife in

marriage before he was able to kill a lion. There are folk stories among the Shona people in which some people are said to have been killed in the process of being examined to see if they were man enough to look after a family.

Pongweni (1983:19) shows how the Shona people earn great names for themselves and consequently for their families or the other way round. As we have seen from the bible, a good name was to be sought even by those of old⁴⁸. A man who is known for his farming prowess may be called *Hurudza* meaning a *great harvester*, in addition to his birth name as opposed to Karimanzira literally saying, '*The one who ploughs the road*' meaning a lazy person who never goes to the fields but is always on the road on futile errands⁴⁹. He could also be called *Hombarume*⁵⁰ (real man) if he is a great hunter (Pongweni 1983:19). The list goes on. What is characteristic of these acquired names is, like any other African names, is that they are very fluid. One could be called by one name today and called by the other tomorrow, depending on his achievements or lack of them. So names are used by African societies as rewards for those who achieve and or punishments for wrong doers (Pongweni 1983:20).

4.4 Other names

4.4.1 Circumstance names

Varying circumstances determine the name given to a child in Africa and other communal cultures in Asia and indigenous cultures of Australia and America. Circumstance names serve as reminders of what happened at the time of the child's birth. For example, *Kofi* is the Akan name for a boy who is born on a Friday (Obeng: 2001:25). The day names are quite common in areas where clans revere particular days of the week. Apart from the day the child is born, "naming children according to the time" or to the "seasons in which" the child is born is also a "convention of many African cultures" (Stewart 1996:4). An

⁴⁸ Proverbs 22:1, Ecclesiastes 7:1 and Sirach 41:13

⁴⁹ Pongweni makes an important observation then, which is relevant today, when he points out that the majority of Shona names "referring to farming are derogatory, indicating the laziness, coupled with consequent begging" (1983:19-20). The current state of hunger and destruction of the farming sector is interesting here.

⁵⁰ It is interesting that in Shona and many other Bantu cultures, it is not common to have names denoting positive achievement for women. The ideology of the African naming conventions is investigated later.

Ethiopian baby girl born at night would be named *Dukan* (darkness) and *Chausiku* (darkness) in Swahili (:4).

Circumstances may include some form of tragedy. One of my uncles was named *Nyamayevhu* (meat for the soil) after many children had died before him. This name worked as a survival name because whoever was causing the deaths was meant to be discouraged as the woman giving birth was prepared to continue sowing meat for the soil. This circumstance was believed to be caused and a response name was necessary. After being given that name, he did not die. A child born during a festival or at a particular memorable function may also be named thus. Circumstances from which names are drawn may include birth order, birth place, and birth complications (obeng 2001:26).

4.4.2 Kinship tie names

Kinship is very strong in some African cultures and is, of course, stronger in other tribes than in others⁵¹. “Kinship terminology” reveals “how members of the same kinship” system relate (Kimenyi 1989:22). As a sign of strong kinship ties in Africa, many children are named after their relatives, both the living and the dead with the hope that “the child will take after” his or her relative (Pongweni 1983:3). Boy children, for example, could be named after their deceased paternal grandfather, what Levy-Bruhl (1928:211) calls reincarnating “of deceased relatives”. Apart from using the name “to show descent” (Bateman 2002:235), the name is used to maintain continuity with the deceased and to pay “homage to the ancestors” (Stewart 1993:x).

Naming a child after a deceased relative may be done after the elders have noticed some behaviour or a “sign that he is crying for a deceased relative’s name” (Levy-Bruhl 1928:324), what in the Shona nomenclature is referred to as *zita rejemedzanwa*, literally ‘the crying causing name’ (Pongweni 1983:2). “Crying” signs include a misfortune in the family which has to be interpreted by the *Sangoma* (traditional healer) to mean that a particular ancestor is complaining. After the naming ritual, this child bears the deceased relative’s name exalting him to the position that mandates his family to respect him with the same respect they give to the deceased relative as seen by the use of “honorific plural” address (Pongweni 1983:3). This creates social tension as members of the community are not sure the amount of respect the child may be given since he is only a child. In my own experience this complication was manifest at a school where I once taught, when a student who bore the “revered name” was disciplined at school. His family made very strong complaints to the school, as they felt that the school did not respect the ‘head’ of the clan.

Elderly people are normally called by the name of their children, coined ‘teknonym’ in Onomastic practice. For example, if my name was *chipo*, *Gift*, my mother would be called *Mai Chipo*, literally meaning, *Mother of Chipo*. My father would be *Baba Chipo* and the same for my grandfather or grandmother. In so doing, my mother is tied to me by the

⁵¹ In the Kikuyu tribe of Kenya particularly, children are named after “close relatives, thus recycling names within one family and resulting in a relatively small pool of names within the society” (Stewart 1996:3).

name she is called with. The implications of these ties go beyond a mere tag or convenience.

4.4.3 Theophoric names

In Africa people discuss the different understanding of the divine rather than the existence of God since every aspect of life is linked with some all-powerful force. Many African names are replete with either divine prefixes or endings showing “how real God is to Africans” (Idowu 1973:150). In Zulu one would find names like *Musawe + nkosi, the Lord’s mercy*, where *Nkosi* means *Lord* or *King* and *Musa* means *Mercy*. In Shona you have the same name *Tsitsidza + she, the Lord’s mercy* where *She* is short for *Ishe* meaning *Lord* or *King*. The argument here is that the Lord being referred to here is the Christian God “to the extent that their bearers and the parents who gave them confess to the Christian influence” (Chitando 1998:26). The way African and Shona people use the divine name in their names is evidence that they “are a highly religious people” (Stewart 1996:3). We realise that theophoric naming practices were also common in Greek mythology and Jewish religious system.

4.4.3.1 Naming the divine

One current challenge in bible translation into the vernacular has been the idea of God. One reason is that many Bantu languages are finding it difficult to use the same designations for the Christian God using the designations used for the African Traditional religious deity. Idowu (1973:147) states the obvious in saying that the African people had “a concept of the one Supreme Deity” well before the advent of the missionaries. Other scholars would concur (Kimenyi 1989:23). Idowu goes further to claim that there are similarities between the African conceptions of the divine and that of the 1st century Mediterranean world. While many African and non-African scholars will agree with Idowu about these similarities, they would be cautious in putting it across as already pointed out by Sanneh (1989:182) who prefers to see continuities and not similarities.

The names Africans use for the divine have more to do with his purported attributes than any ontological concept. God is related to as Father (Mbiti 1975:4, Carmody 1981:143) in terms of African conceptions of authority. This relationship can be manipulated into an obedience-reward ethic of relationship (Carmody 1981:144). As father, in the African

understanding, God is also the originator of all things as revealed in a myriad of creation legends in Africa. *Musikavanhu*, *The one who creates*, is one word used to designate God in addition to the formal *Mwari*, *God*, in the Shona culture.

God is also named after his qualities as the giver of protection from sickness, and all spirits of misfortune. Even though God cannot be seen in the African worldview, he is normally addressed and consulted at particular holy sites or through consulting those through whom he speaks (mediums). In such circumstances, he may be addressed through the known departed ancestors although it is not clear whether he “is always personal or not”, since he can only be accessed by those in the other world (Carmody 1981:143). It is most likely that God is considered more than human in terms of some theophoric names of “total surrender” like *Kudakwashe* (the will of God) in Shona nomenclature (Chitando 1998:28).

There seems to be no proper personal name for God, in the Shona language and, most likely, in other African languages. God is not known by his name, but by his relationship with people.

4.5. Ideology and Power of African names

4.5.1 Engendering African names

Morphological analysis of names is common with African Onomasticians, since most Bantu names are formed morphologically (Pongweni 1983, Kimenyi 1989, Koopman 2002, Obeng 2001, Rapoo 2000 etc). Usually names are formed by either adding a prefix or a suffix or both to a verb or noun. The result is usually a natural alteration of the middle construction (noun or verb) in forming the name⁵². To determine the gender of the name, a particular prefix or suffix has to be added. In Shona *mira*, *wait*, is a verb. To form a male name one has to add the prefix *Ta* and the theophoric suffix *She* to form *Tamirirashe*, *we wait for the Lord*. To form a female name we just add the suffix *-royashe* to form *Miroyashe*, *a waiting for the Lord* or usually *Miro*, *a waiting*.

Rapoo (2000) gives the same illustrations using Setswana names to show that once the final name is formed, the meanings do not only show gender differences of names but that the meaning of the names show some superiority of male names to female names. She points out that this gender specificity of Bantu names in general and Setswana names in particular, “depict gendered attitudes and sexist discourse” justifying a “critical analysis of names from a gender perspective” (:14). Using the morphological construction of names she shows that the two names *Mogomotsi* (one who brings me comfort) is a male name while *Segomotso* (that with which I am being comforted) is a female name. Another example she uses is for the name *Mogami* (the one who milks) for boys and *Segametsi* (the vessel or calabash for drawing water) for girls (:14). From this she concludes that these language uses “legitimise gender imbalance”, as female names seem to reduce them to objects and male names refer to people.

This analysis is very important in showing how interested the African naming convention is. It is gender biased and, therefore, used as a “powerful ideological tool” (Clark 1992:209 in Rapoo 2000:14). This has very serious implications of power since “encoded in names” are “traditional and cultural norms, beliefs and practices” of the African people.

⁵² The whole wide discussion of word construction is beyond the scope of this paper; following examples will suffice in showing the idea.

Names become “institutionalised” form of oppressive language “reflective of basic assumptions about status, roles, responsibilities and even capabilities” (Chimhundu 1995:149).

4.5.2 Names as social labels

In my Shona community if a woman is labelled *Hure*, *prostitute*, she is contrasted to an “esteemed” and respected married woman (Chimhundu 1995:151). So names are used to make everyone conform and they are given to produce expected “norms of behaviour in specified role-relationships” (:161). They set boundaries within which members of the community are meant to conform. Names are used to distinguish those considered out of place and those at the right place.

4.5.3 Ambivalent, malevolent, and benevolent effect of names

Most societies in Africa “believe that names can affect a person’s destiny” (Stewart 1996:22). Names are purported to have powers that are not easy to categorise. One relative of mine recently changed his family name from *Nhamo*, *poverty*, because he believed that his name was pulling him back from prospering⁵³. Names are also believed to carry either blessings or curses. When parents give their child the name *Kubona* (Priest) in Tanzania or Kenya, they hope that he will be a priest (Abel 1992:14). The name gives “make auspicious predictions for the child’s future” (Chuks-orji 1972:76). Some names, particularly from modernised families, are not meant to mean good or harm, as they are given just for their aesthetic purposes.

4.6 Conclusion

Names in the African context communicate everything people believe in. As such, people give their children names that express what they feel about their immediate neighbours, relatives or other people with whom they share in the economy of honour and shame. Some people make achievements in these contexts and achieve names or exaltation; and the other people fail to meet the expectation of the norms of the society and are labelled

⁵³ Negative names (“loaded names”) to insult one’s neighbours, says Chitando (1998:29), are not usually acceptable in Zimbabwean Christian communities since it is not justifiable to “lord it over” the heavy name on an “innocent child”.

negatively. In a world believed to be invaded by evil forces and in which the ancestral world makes demands that the living may fail to meet exposing them to retribution by these ancestors, people give names to their children to express this economy. Names also function as link between the dead and the living. Children are named after their living and deceased relatives. Since names and labels are the litmus of African relationships, they express ambivalent, malevolent and benevolent nature of the symbolic universe. Names and labels are the signs of the intensity of conflicts, domination, and fears in Africa.

Reading the Fourth Gospel from this context is significant, as there are many striking similarities in understanding of names and labels. Since in the Fourth Gospel people are using names in conflict situation, a situation familiar to an African reader, the gospel story and its nuances become clearer. If the background of the Johannine community has to do with names reflecting the essence of the named, then the text of the fourth evangelist will appeal to an African reader.

It is clear that in the Shona and many other African cultures, names denote people's relationships. So they form a communicative landscape following whose contours one could actually tell what is going on. In this case, like in John, one could use names and labels as litmus of the level of conflict in society. By evaluating the names given to children in an African family, one could tell how healthy the family relations are.

We have also seen that like in John, the theophoric names in Africa tell us a lot about the families' religiosity. By looking at the names given to children one could easily see the people's journey in the faith. It will also tell of other challenges the family went through and how their faith saw them through. In this sense, one who reads and looks for how names function in John will benefit from a similar African background offered here.

5. JOHANNINE LABELLING AND NAMING

5.1 Deviance, naming and labelling in John.

In this section, I will show that since the Fourth Gospel is a gospel of conflict, names and labels are used to advance this conflict laden narrative. The “controversy” is discernible between the Johannine community and those outside (commonly labelled those who “do not believe” and the οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι) and also within the Johannine community itself (Whitacre 1982:1). In such a scenario, people must belong, and they are in conflict with those who do not belong to and with them, whom they must call with negative labels. The semantics and etymology of such names intentionally push the conflict agenda, with the pendulum always swinging in either in favour of Jesus and his followers or their opponents⁵⁴.

This paper seeks to demonstrate that in John, names and labels are the communicative tools for insult and appraisal of allies and foes respectively and that they are used to show a distinction of warring parties. In such a scenario, no one can be neutral or be found in the wrong camp. Interestingly however, some people are sometimes found in the ‘wrong’ category. I will show that while much effort is exerted by the author to show distinction of conflicting parties, some characters are in limbo and cannot be easily labelled. The traditions of interpretation and transmission of the Fourth Gospel have struggled with (or sometimes tried to cover up) these issues of conflict as a look at certain textual variants will reveal. The scope of this work will, however, not allow an investigation of the whole Fourth Gospel toponyms and anthroponyms. The few selected for discussion will be used to highlight the conflict tendency that they are meant to convey. Some scholars (Brodie, 1993:161) are a bit too strong in claiming that names used in the Fourth Gospel have a fragile hold on history. Most of the names are actually historical, as will be argued, although they are used to articulate particular views.

⁵⁴ This is contrary to Brodie’s assertion that John’s use of names is “subordinated” to his “literary and theological” interest or purposes” (1993:161). I would argue that these can not be “subordinated” one under the other. I would think that the relationship between names, theology and literary flow in the Fourth Gospel is more cyclical than hierarchical.

5.2 Conflict in John

Many Johannine scholars agree to the fact that the community of John was “certainly Jewish Christian” with the former members of John the Voice⁵⁵ forming the earlier core (von Wahlde 2004:379, cf. De Jonge 2004:341). The background of the conflict in John could even be sensed from the Prologue language of light and darkness. The inclusion of the Samaritan in the gospel could also indicate not only the Samaritan membership, but also women, among the Johannine disciples. There is enough evidence that Jesus had relative success in his ministry among the general public but faced resistance from the “religious authorities” (von Wahlde 2004:380). If the inclusion of the destruction of the temple (Jn. 2:19) is an indication of the milieu of the composition of the Fourth Gospel, it should have been produced under very hostile circumstances.

The story of John must be understood to be a reflection of the existing “conflict between Jesus and his Jewish opponents” based on the former being seen to mitigate the legitimacy of the temple aristocracy (Whitacre 1982:5). If the early Johannine community was composed of Christian Jews, they needed to deal with their new theology in the light of the existing parent Jewish theology. Any divergence from this tradition would be considered as deviance. If they were using the synagogue (Jn 5:59 also see 16:2)⁵⁶, they needed to accommodate this tradition or risk being thrown out (Jn 9:22). If the synagogue served as a meeting place for the whole community, then leaving it meant being cut off from the mainstream community, hence losing one’s identity. In addition to this, if the community of John is of those from the simple people, this would worsen the community’s chances of conflict with the temple authorities.

The other potential of controversy could have come from within the Johannine community. The relationship between Jews and Samaritans was not at its best. The presence of such conflicting people in the Johannine community meant that this community was shunned at by the mainstream Jewish community and posed tension within itself. If some of these followers were women, then the community could have been struggling with accommodating them. Apart from these issues, some scholars have also posited that the

⁵⁵ I preferred not to use the usual ‘John the Baptist’ as this is never used in John.

⁵⁶ Commenting on this scripture, Thompson (2001:220) has noted how this verse “or more accurately, the word *aposynagōgos* (ἀποσυνάγωγος; “out of the synagogue”) – has played an important role in recent reconstructions of the history of the Johannine community”

issue of the Spirit, Christology and ethics could have caused tension within the Johannine community which finally led to real divisions evident in the Johannine epistles (Brown 1982, von Wahlde 1990).

The conflict in John, however, is based on whether Jesus is what he claims he is or not. Therefore, those who believe Jesus to be what he claims to be will go out and witness to him. His opponents will discredit this witness. No one is neutral. This will be revealed by the quest for identity of those who witness to Jesus. Jesus' identity is being questioned, hence that of his followers, based on how his opponents consider the way he is not obeying the Torah. This is a proof for them that Jesus is not from God. The credentials of all who witness contrary to this accusation are investigated. They start with the first man to witness for Jesus, John.

5.2.1 "Who are you?" - Quest of identity in John

The book of John is a book of testimony to Jesus by those who believe in him, and a denial of this testimony by those who do not believe, causing a conflict between the two. John came as the first of the many witnesses to come. He was sent from God to testify to the light so that people may believe. He himself was not the light (Jn 1:7-8). The quest of the Jews (οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι)⁵⁷ to find out who John the Voice is forms the background of locating people according to whether they conform to the temple system or they belong to the Johannine community. Those who belong to the Johannine community will be revealed by giving a witness (ἡ μαρτυρία) to Jesus and ultimately to God.

How John responds to the questions of his identity in the Prologue sets a pattern that will follow in the whole gospel. All the gospels agree to the idea that John is "the voice of one crying in the wilderness." But the Fourth Evangelist's "citation of this Old Testament passage, like his overall portrait of the figure of the Baptist, bears numerous features indicative of a treatment of Christian tradition thoroughly independent of the Synoptics" (Schuchard 1992:1). As Schuchard rightly observes, unlike in the synoptic tradition where it is the "gospel writer who editorially refers to the Baptist as this "voice"", it is John himself in the Fourth Gospel who, "in response to the queries of a delegation from

⁵⁷ The Jews (οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι) are addressed below as a derogatory name in most situations in John, though not always so. In this thesis 'Jewish authorities' will be used for the derogatory use of Jews.

Jerusalem and its desire to know who it is that he claims to be (1:19-22), applies to himself a text from the prophet Isaiah” (1992:1). In other words, the Johannine John understands himself as the Voice of the one who is to come, not that he is understood to be so by the narrator of the story. From memory⁵⁸ he remembers the OT scripture which is getting fulfilled in himself. John forgets his name because of his new role. He is here as the Voice of witness. So he must decrease (in terms of his personal name) as Jesus must increase.

One man, Nicodemus, comes to Jesus representing those who do not believe or receive the testimony (Jn 3:11). The Johannine Jesus witnesses to what he has “seen and heard”, those outside John’s community do not receive this witness (3:32)⁵⁹. All the people must stand to testify for Jesus in the Fourth Gospel as the Messiah who is to come, since he is a witness to the truth or God (3:33; cf. 18:37), as opposed to those who witness to the bad (μαρτύρησον περὶ τοῦ κακοῦ) during his trial (18:23). Jesus claims that he does not testify about himself (5:31), an accusation made against him by the Pharisees (8:13); and he recognises the testimony that John the Voice gave, even though he does not receive (λαμβάνω) such human testimony because it comes from people (5:34). The testimony of people cannot be relied upon, since he knows what is in all the people (2:25). The OT, which the Fourth Gospel author uses extensively, also witnesses to Jesus (5:39) (Whitacre 1982:43). The Father and the Paraclete witness to Jesus (Jn 8:18, 15:26). Apart from these two important witnesses, the works done in the name of the Father also witness to Jesus (10:25). All these witnesses are meant to legitimise Jesus. If the Father, the Paraclete, the OT and even the OT figures witness to Jesus, then “he is not a deceiver” and any other designation used for him is not legitimate (Whitacre 1982:38).

From now on, the Johannine Jesus shall appoint those who are to witness to him and appoint them disciples (15:27). These must clearly belong to the community of believers. Their testimony or witness is seen by the designation they use for Jesus as opposed to his opponents. We closely look at the disciples and their interaction with Jesus in the next section.

⁵⁸ Cf Burney, C. 1922. *The Aramaic Origin of the Fourth Gospel*. Oxford: Clarendon Press. page 114.

⁵⁹ “This distinguishes Jesus not only from his contemporaries, who are said never to have seen God” (Thompson 2001:110-111).

5.2.2 “Calls his own by name”: labelling disciples

5.2.2.1 Individual labels and names

What Jesus calls his own witnesses and what the author wants them to be called is an intentional project which does not only present them in positive light but also presents them as an “important salvation-history development” of the OT Israel (Köstenberger 1998:143). This communal presentation of the followers of Jesus is also presented as the way they understand their own community. Scholars have seen this presentation as a manifestation of the Johannine community of disciples as a “school” reminiscent of the 1st century Palestinian contemporary rabbinic schools (Culpepper 1983). Some have seen them as a “community” (Brown 1979) or a “circle” (Cullmann 1976). Whichever could be the correct origins of their designation, we may only give academic speculations. What is clear is that from the onset, the disciples (οἱ μαθηταί) (used more than seventy times) and “the twelve” (used only four times) are presented as a unit or as a team and must make their belonging to the group unambiguous.

The first disciples come from John the Witness (Jn 1:35-37). Once the disciples come to Jesus, they go with him (2:2, 11, 17), get involved in his activities (4:2, 8, 27, 31, 33, 38), and become fulltime companions and core-workers whom Jesus exposes to the apprenticeship of independent witnesses (6:5ff). In the process of their training some of them could not cope and at some point there were many dropouts (6:66). Some scholars have tried to produce some reductionist categories into which all the disciples mentioned by name fit (Collins 1990). Each disciple represented a particular type of faith or lack of it and was appealed to for catechetical purposes in the Johannine community pedagogy, so goes the argument. But as Köstenberger rightly points out, it is true that “not all appear to fit this pattern” (1998:154). It is, however, true that apart from being historical beings, there are named and unnamed individuals or groups that are meant to represent the Fourth evangelist’s theology. A brief look at some of these disciples as individuals interacting with one another could be illustrative, before we look at their designation as a community. The interaction of interest for us is that which exhibits conflict leading to labelling.

The first two disciples to come to Jesus after being urged by their superior, John the Witness, are Andrew who is always subordinated by the clause “Simon Peter’s brother”

(1:40), and another anonymous disciple. The reason Andrew is named after his brother may be that “Peter is presumed to be better known to the reader” (Brown 1966:75). But beyond this belittling reason, it is a common way of naming people in John that individuals are mentioned in relationship to someone else (we deal with this issue below). Disciples must have some kind of relationship based on parentage or place of origin which later undergoes a transformation, giving way for discipleship without any other ties except faith in Jesus. In that light, Andrew finds his brother Simon Peter whose name is changed by Jesus to Cephas from the word for *rock* in Aramaic (*kepha*) and Greek (*petra*), respectively. The Aramaic version of this name is never used again in the Fourth Gospel. The other disciple also named is Philip whom Jesus calls to follow him at Galilee (1:43). He was from Bethsaida, Andrew and Peter’s home area. Then Philip found Nathanael, and has to struggle to convince him that they have found the Messiah (1:47). From Nathanael, the crux of call that leads to true experience of God is developed.

The above pattern of calling disciples “differs from the other Gospels, which say that Jesus himself called his first disciples”, since in the Fourth Gospel the ministry of witnessing is shown to be paramount, hence the task of calling disciples is assumed by every believer (Koester 2003:62). Nathanael does not readily accept that anything good can come from Nazareth (1:46). Why Jesus sees in him a “true Israelite” when he starts as someone sceptical is not very easy to explain. It may lie in the fact that Nathanael comes to Jesus despite his doubts. He comes by faith. The significance of Nathanael (נְתַנְאֵל, *gift of God*) lies in the OT theological allusions hinted explicitly and implicitly to point to Jesus as the true gift of God (cf. 4:10). The promise of Jesus to Nathanael is that he will see greater things than what he has already seen, i.e. the one who saw him while he was under the tree (Jn 1:48). Nathanael and those who believe like him shall “see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man” (1:51), an allusion to the story of Jacob and his experience of the dream of angels going up and down (Gen. 28:12). Further investigation of this text in the light of rabbinic interpretation of Genesis 28:1, presents Jesus as the “revelation of the divine *kabod*”, and hence making invalid the mystical quest for “heavenly ascent to view the glory of the throne of God” in Jewish mysticism (Draper 2002:65, cf. Rowland 1984:505). This reading of Nathanael exposes

Thomas⁶⁰ as “the false hero who misunderstands the way to God to be that of ascent and who needs visions of Jesus to believe”, a possible sign of conflict within the Johannine community over who had the true experience of Jesus (Rowland 1984 in Draper 2002:65).

In contrast to Nathanael, Peter comes to Jesus without any resistance as he responds to an invitation of a family member (1:41). He has the privilege of coming to Jesus not only with his brother, but is soon to be joined by someone from Bethsaida his home area (1:44). Peter’s spontaneous response comes when many disciples desert Jesus because of his “eating the body” teaching (6:68). He earns himself the position of discipleship by his witness saying “We have come to believe and know that you are the Holy One of God” (6:69), yet he remains the “man of contradictions and ambivalence” (Collins 2004:365). Peter’s altercation with Jesus over foot washing exposes him as volatile and unstable disciple (13:6ff). Peter then asks if Jesus can wash his whole body. To this, Jesus answers that those who have been washed by Jesus are clean even if it is the legs only. He, however, points out that not everyone among the followers of Jesus is clean (13:10).

From this exchange between Peter and Jesus, some scholars speculate existing conflict between the Johannine community’s Beloved Disciple group and the followers of Peter. It has been postulated that there is “explicit or implicit comparison of the Beloved Disciple with Peter” with the “Beloved Disciple consistently” emerging superior and preferred by Jesus and left in custody of Jesus’ mother (von Wahlde 2004:383, cf. Brown 1979:59). These issues suffice to conclude that there was controversy brewing within and without the Johannine community with Peter and the Beloved Disciple representing the two parties (cf. Koester 2003:70). Before the death of Jesus, the “impetuous Peter proclaims his willingness to follow Jesus to death”, even though Jesus warns him that he will deny him (Collins 2004:366). Collins is correct in saying that Peter is presented as a disciple who does not “comprehend what Jesus is about” (:366). He uses his sword to fight because he does not understand that Jesus’ kingdom is not of this world. Peter does not stand by his word that he will not deny Jesus, proving that he had not understood Jesus’ prediction as a prophecy. So he has not yet realised Jesus as a Prophet. He goes back fishing after Jesus’ death and influences others to do the same, even though he has seen the evidence of Jesus’

⁶⁰ The role of Thomas in the Gospel of John is suggested by I. DUNDERBERG, “John and Thomas in Conflict?”, *The Nag Hammadi Library After Fifty Years* (ed. J.D. TURNER – A. MCGUIRE) (NHMS 44; Leiden – New York – Köln 1997) 361-380.

resurrection (20:5-6). Peter is then rehabilitated by Jesus and given the admonition to shepherd the flock, yet Peter shows concern about the presence of the Beloved Disciple (21:21). At this Jesus reminds him to mind his own call and "follow Jesus in a way he has previously not done" (Collins 2004:367). We look at the Beloved Disciple later, but for now we look briefly at one disciple around whom the conflict between the Johannine community and the Jewish authorities centred around. This is the man born blind but gets healed by Jesus (Jn 9)

As Koester rightly puts it, even though the "man born blind" (Jn 9:1-41) is not one of the twelve, he definitely "serves as a paradigm of discipleship" and source of conflict with the Jewish authorities (Koester 2003:63). The blind man's story "sums up in a remarkably lucid and compact way what the Fourth Evangelist had to say about his community's relationship to Jesus, to the synagogue authorities, and to the secret believers" (Rensberger 1988:41). When the disciples saw this blind man, they asked Jesus who had sinned, this man or his parents that he had been born blind (9:2). Jesus does not accept that anyone sinned but takes the blindness as an occasion of the glory of God. It is a Sabbath and in Jerusalem where any act by Jesus is under the watchful eye of the temple authority. Once Jesus heals the man, there is a division among the Pharisees whether Jesus could be a prophet or not, since he does work on a Sabbath. The blind man declares that Jesus is a prophet and is thrown out of the synagogue system; his parents refuse to openly support him because they are afraid of being thrown out too. The man is appraised as a follower of Jesus as he gives the witness that, "If this man were not from God, he could do nothing" (9:33). He is witnessing for Jesus and as a result he is thrown out, another sign for those who have put their faith in Jesus. He is indeed a disciple but who remains nameless. Another nameless disciple is only identified by the place of her origin. She is the woman of Samaria.

The reason we explore the Johannine women as a unit is not because they are not individual characters or to belittle their role in the conflict situation. On the contrary, these women share an identity of anonymity which is not considered here as marginalisation, for it is not. Our focus here is on the woman named 'the mother of Jesus' and the one on the other named 'the woman of Samaria'. The study on women in John has generally generated from some scholars views of women-disciple legitimization which is assumed to be threatened in the Johannine community (de Boer 1992). For Schneiders (1991), the whole

project of reading texts from a feminist perspective must be a strategy to, (a) give rise to gender sensitive “translation” of the texts, (b) highlight texts liberating to women, (c) highlight the presence of women and feminine ideas in texts, (d) “extract from the biblical text the “secrets” about women that are buried beneath its androcentric surface”, and finally (e) rescue the text from misinterpretation (Schneiders 1991:184-186). In this the feminist movement raises very pertinent issues for biblical scholarship. The focus in this thesis, however, not to highlight the presence of women, but the role their labels or lack of them play in the Johannine conflict with outsiders and within itself. Contrary to rules of testifying in a Jewish court of law where women were not allowed, the women in the Fourth Gospel give witness to Jesus⁶¹.

Scholars consider the avoidance of the name of the mother of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel as one of the “most striking features” (Lieu 2001:62). She is simply called “the mother of Jesus” (ἡ μήτηρ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ) by the author (Jn. 2:1, 3) or “his mother” (ἡ μήτηρ αὐτοῦ) (2:5, 12; 19:25, 26). She is also simply addressed by Jesus as “woman” (γύναι) (Jn. 2:4), the term also used for the anonymous Samaritan woman. It is possible that the “consensus of the early church that her name was Mary might suggest that the evangelist and his community would have known it” (Lieu 2001:62). I would go further and argue that the other possibility is that there were too many Marys and confusion was not fitting for a person who was so close to Jesus. If the other Marys had signs of lack of faith befitting the Johannine mother of Jesus, then in reading the Johannine narrative people would ascribe that weakness to an ‘important’ character. It is possible that those who denigrated Jesus constantly did so by showing their knowledge of his mother by name (cf. Matt. 13:55; Mk 6:3). This analysis is supported by the use of the titles “Mary, the mother of Jesus” (Acts 1:4) where she has to be distinguished from the other Marys. A similar trend is discernible in the synoptic tradition⁶².

The mother of Jesus plays “a leading role” as a witness, as she exposes Jesus, if we read it in the context of conflict, as one who can provide the desired taste to a tasteless Jewish tradition, hence a sign of faith in Jesus (Lieu 2001:63). Other disciples only get involved in Jesus’ ‘works’ only later in the narrative. She is the first to allow her word and Jesus’

⁶¹ In his book *Jesus on Trial*, Harvey (1976) sees the Fourth Evangelist’s concern to conform to the Jewish laws of evidence admissibility in a Jewish court.

⁶² Cf. for the title “his mother” Matt. 2:13, 14, 20, 21; 12:46; Mk. 3:31; Lk. 1:60; 2:48, 51; 8:19.

works to witness to Jesus. She does it by reporting the situation to Jesus (trust) and then giving the servants the encouragement to obey Jesus' instruction (witness). When the witness goes through despite Jesus' response⁶³ and produces faith (Jn 2:11), she proves herself a true disciple. She ushers Jesus in as the husband of Israel in the next chapter (3:29) and as the true husband to the Samaritan woman in the chapter that follows (Jn.4). She must, therefore, occupy a very high position in the Johannine community which exalts those who witness to Jesus. She has played her part in separating those who believe in Jesus from those who will not. She seals her discipleship by witnessing the crucifixion and finally left in the custody of another great witness, the Beloved Disciple, which is the climax of all relationships - all disciples becoming children of God together under the cross (Culpepper 1983).

Next, but not subordinate to the mother of Jesus is the Woman of Samaria (Jn 4:4-42). In this episode Jesus encounters a woman at the well in Samaria, a tribe whose dealings are not favourable with the Jews (Jn 4:9). This encounter is controversial, as "Jesus transgresses Jewish customs by interacting with the Samaritan woman" (Maccini 1994:38). We can see this from the reaction of the disciples when they come back and they find Jesus talking to the woman. But the woman's question, "How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?" (4:9) seems to point the nudge to be ethnicity and maybe not gender as attested to by Jn 8:48. Jesus seems to have crossed the ethnic boundary by giving audience to a Samaritan woman to the surprise of the disciples (4:27). The cause of rift between the Samaritans and the Jews deserves a wider discussion not possible in this limited work. It would, however, suffice to point out here that Jesus' choice of going through Samaria is a serious act of outright rebellion against the common Jewish practice. During this time the Jews would avoid going through Samaria but Jesus did because it was necessary (ἐδεῖ) to do so (Jn. 4:4).

What makes this woman deserve a place in the annals of true discipleship is that her conversation with Jesus produces the necessary results; (a) she sees Jesus as a prophet (4:19), (b) Jesus reveals to him that he is (4:26), (c) she goes out to witness for Jesus (4:29) or maybe sent out (ἀπέστειλα) to reap, and she has converts (4:41). The statement in John 4:42: "They said to the woman, "It is no longer because of what you said that we believe,

⁶³ It is now widely agreed among Johannine scholars (e.g. Lieu 2001) that Jesus' reaction and using "woman" to his mother was "not rude", as it was an affectionate way of addressing one you loved

for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is truly the Saviour of the world", follows a common witnessing tradition in John. "John the Baptist (1:35-39) testified to Jesus; two of his disciples followed Jesus and remained with him that day; and they came to believe in him on the basis of that interchange" (Schneider 1991:193). The same happens with all the effective witnesses. They must witness until people 'remain' with Jesus. From the anonymous women witnesses, we go to the ultimate witness in the Fourth Gospel.

The Beloved Disciple seems to be playing a minor role as he is always mentioned in a limited way. But his significance for the Fourth Gospel is shown to be incomparable towards the end of the narrative. He features at the all major moments, namely, the last supper, the crucifixion, the resurrection, and the appearance of the risen Lord to the disciples. The Beloved Disciple is obviously very close to Jesus as he could even recline next to Jesus (21:20). Since it is the Beloved Disciple who is the final witness and an "eyewitness", so he is the ultimate disciple (Lincoln 2002). "He stands in contrast to Thomas, the named doubter" and to Peter an inconsistent disciple (Beck 2001:154).

He is 'the' disciple because he is close to Jesus, so can have a true knowledge of the Father. His qualities of discipleship are manifest in his courage of walking the path of agony and death with Jesus up to the cross. He is a true witness who goes to the tomb and sees an empty tomb. When Jesus shows himself at the sea when the disciples have gone fishing, he is the one who sees and recognises the Lord. Scholars speculate that his death "created a crisis within a circle of believers who thought he would survive until Jesus' return" (Koester 2003:242). For us to address this speculation we could look at the anonymous designation as a trend in the Fourth Gospel.

5.2.2.2 Discipleship and Anonymity

There have been many speculations as to why the name of the disciple is not mentioned and a comment on all anonymous disciples in John is poignant here. Moxnes in an article (1996:19-40) contributing to a book, *Sociological Interpretations to the New Testament*, reveals that the honour-shame cultural classification is 'key to the social and cultural systems of the Mediterranean region' when it is used 'within the larger religious, social, and economic context' (1996:19). In the honour-shame culture, the individual is born in a family tradition that has its own social standing and has this honour ascribed to him. But lest they lose it, they will always have to challenge other people of the same social standing to acquire more honour for themselves and their kith and kin (Moxnes 1996:20).

It is with the above understanding that we evaluate the social role played by the Beloved Disciple. The Beloved Disciple is not only a historical but also a symbolic figure meant to instil "unity and continuity" within the Johannine community (Watty 1979 in Beck 2001:154). The Beloved disciple also plays a role of true discipleship; as someone who really knows how to believe and at the same time calling others to faith. The name of the Beloved Disciple was well known by his community, so was the name of the 'mother of Jesus', the 'man born blind' and maybe even the 'Samaritan woman'. The way the Beloved Disciple related and understood Jesus made him acquire a new status, that is; The-disciple-whom-Jesus-loved. There was no longer any need for those within the Johannine community to call him by his birth name because those who knew him, knew his new title of closeness to Jesus as shaped by this honour-shame culture. In a closed-in community, it would be easy for people to earn or lose a name based on how they fared in their relationship with one another and especially with Jesus.

5.2.2.3 Group appraisal of the Johannine community: How they see themselves.

In one of his works, Fernando Segovia (1981) examined "the use of and the understanding of the love for and the hatred of Jesus that the other parties exhibited in the Fourth Gospel in order to see whether that relationship of love and hatred confirms and illuminates further the proposed sectarian nature of the community" (Segovia 1981:259). He comes to the right conclusion that in John relationship with Jesus is "always defined or presented in

terms of belief in Jesus and his claims, or its opposite, unbelief" (:269). In other words, those who love Jesus are known by their belief in him and those who hate him are known by their unbelief. The community of John serves to define those who are in, those who believe. So the Fourth Evangelist gives those who believe positive appraisal in his designation of them. This is the only way they can understand themselves as they are faced with rejection from their fellow Jewish folk for following a heretic. One option for the Johannine community is to find a way of negotiating their way back into the mainstream Jewish temple aristocracy; doing which will be legitimating the negative labels put on Jesus by his opponents. Instead of further negotiation to get rid of a negative label, the Johannine community gets "caught up in the deviant role indicated by the label and increasingly live out the demands of the new role" entrenching it by giving it positive names and negatively labelling those outside this community (Malina and Neyrey 1988:39).

Typical of the nature of this positive labelling that the community receives from itself is an exclusive characteristic which is "radically dualistic"⁶⁴ (de Jonge 353:2004). Whatever this community is, their opponents are not. They are binary opposites. In other words, the way the Johannine community is presented is in such a way that one has to belong to them or to be on the opposite camp. Yet as will be shown below, this dichotomy is always shifting and the boundaries are not always black and white. In general the disciples are described by all positive language that entails unity, monopoly of access to God, eternal destiny, protection and enlightenment⁶⁵ presented in family ties or linked by place of origin, measured by how each of them relates to Jesus.

The naming of the Johannine community starts in the prologue as they are called the "children of God" because they received Jesus (Jn 1:12). Children of God are those "born" of God, not of the will of human beings (1:13). These were "born from above" with "water and spirit" (3:3-4). This takes place when someone has publicly put his faith in Jesus. This new birth that makes one a child of God may take preference before real

⁶⁴ Dualism is a subject of much discussion in the Fourth Gospel among scholars. For a long time scholars had taken the dual nature of the book to link it to an exclusively Greek provenance. This position can now be contested as the Qumran discoveries reveal some dualistic tendencies in Jewish thought. Due to the magnitude of the idea of dualism, it cannot be fully addressed here. Whitacre (1982:169) addresses it more adequately.

⁶⁵ *Enlightenment* is a term borrowed from Koester (2003:141-149) where he explains the use of 'light' in John as symbolic tradition connecting the "lingering primeval darkness with human sin."

physical birth as demonstrated by the blind man who is separated by his parents because they cannot stand with him in faith in Jesus.

Since these are children of God, the Johannine community has the sole access to God because no one goes to the Father except through the Johannine Jesus and unless this Jesus' Father draws them to Jesus (Jn 14:6; 6:44). Since this community has access to God they know the Father because Jesus has made him known to them (1:18). Jesus has not only made the Father known to them, but also everything he has heard from the Father (15:15). These have the greatest privilege of even knowing the name of the father and will continue to know it, as it is continually revealed by Jesus (Jn 17:6, 26). They know the Father because they first knew Jesus. When he speaks, they can recognise his voice as he also knows each one of them (Jn 10:4, 14). At first even John the Witness did not know him until baptism when the spirit descended on him (Jn 1:32). So when the Johannine community testifies, they know what they are talking about (Jn 3:11). And their worship is true since they know what they worship (Jn 4:22). All those who have believed have also come to know that Jesus is truly the saviour of the world (Jn 4:42; 6:69; 7:26).

The Johannine community is not only constituted by the children of God who know and are known by him, these also walk in the light, i.e. in Jesus who is the light that enlightens the whole world (Jn 1:9). Their collective name is "children of the Light" (Jn 12:36). These came to the light since their deeds were done in God (Jn 3:21). They do not walk in darkness, but in the light of life and hence they do not stumble (Jn 8:12; 11:9). Because they have chosen the light instead of darkness, they have also escaped the judgement. The word they have believed will deliver them on the judgement to come (Jn 12:48). If someone has escaped judgement they have life in them.

So the community of John is made up of those who have life everlasting (ζωὴ αἰώνιος) because they have put their faith in him (Jn 3:15-16; 6:47). The life in them is sustained by eating and drinking the flesh and the blood of the Son of Man (6:53-68). They will continually bubble from within with

water gushing out to eternal life (4:14). For these, death is not a problem any more (11:25). Jesus will give them life even if they die. The giving of life is demonstrated in the Fourth Gospel by having people physically raised from the dead (Lazarus, Jesus). The life they have now is going to see them raised to eternal life at the resurrection (6:40). To

gain this life (ζωή), one must be prepared to lose their own life (ψυχή) (12:25). This they learn from their master who can lose his ψυχή so that he can get it again (10:17), since it is not possible for him to lose the ζωή as long as the spirit is within him (1:32). Peter claims that he is prepared to lay down his ψυχή for his master (13:37), a new ethic for the Johannine community (15:13), but finds that he is not able too when Jesus is faced with death. This fulfils Jesus' prediction and confirms that he knows all people (13:38).

Ζωή is life that only the spirit can give (6:63), a reason why the Johannine community has it since the spirit is with them (3:6). The reason why the world cannot have life is because they cannot receive the spirit (14:17).

This collective positive labelling of the children of God under His protection must be understood in the sociological sense of witchcraft accusations, where the "male witches are expected to use their powers" in order "to protect their dependents against attacks" from outside malevolent forces (Goody 1970:211). The language of the thief who comes to steal to kill and to destroy (Jn 10:10) must be understood in this light. The world out there is considered a dangerous place. The dichotomy of 'them' versus 'us' is strong and the language of "hatred and love" is meant to communicate the attitudes expected (Segovia 1981).

This Johannine community must start to use language that identifies them with one another and with Jesus. As a deviant association, in the eyes of the Jewish aristocracy, they must even aim at conforming in word and in deed to Jesus. So the promise of "greater works than these" (Jn 14:12) is not meant to be language of competition but of conforming identities. In witchcraft and magical practices in antiquity, "secret knowledge of sources of power" was the essential precondition of a successful magical activity (Versnel 1996:908-809). One has to know the correct "utterances" consisting of "powerful words and formulae" (Versnel 1996:908-809). One must also know correct material objects to use like "mud" and water, in the case of Jesus' healings and wine miracle. If these are "manipulated in a special way" the result of the magical act would be successful (Versnel 1996:908-809). If the Johannine community operates in this mode based on the accusations made against them, they seem to be poised for success (in their thinking) since they are the only ones who "know" where the wine comes from (Jn 2:9), where the wind comes from and where it is going (Jn 3:8), what they worship (Jn 4:22), and know the

Father (Jn 8:55); they are the only ones who can do greater things. Those who see them from outside see them negatively and as dangerous, even though the community of John's self description sounds positive.

5.2.3 "I am": How Jesus named himself.

Jesus' self designation with "I am" (ἐγώ εἰμι), has been a subject of interest to Johannine scholars. This designation asserts "that in offering the gift of life Jesus exercises a unique divine prerogative" identifying himself with the Father (Thompson 2001:87). It is clearly associated with "the LXX's rendering of the Hebrew **אני יהיה** " where Yahweh is speaking emphatically from his position of being God of Israel (Köstenberger 1998:47). This is the title that is used when Yahweh is reminding the children of Israel his delivering power and his sustenance during difficulty⁶⁶. The fact that the "I am" sayings are situated after or within a 'sign' allude to the OT great works of Yahweh, a reason why these designations are a source of conflict in John. Among the accusations that Jesus receives from his opponents is the notion that he claims equality with God. We briefly look at these "I am" designations and how they are meant to portray Jesus as God.

Jesus uses the "I am" saying when the woman of Samaria shows her expectation of the Messiah who is to come. Jesus openly states, "ἐγώ εἰμι" (Jn 4:26). He again claims to be the "bread of life" (Jn 6:35) alluding to the provision of manna to the children of Israel in the desert wanderings. In the desert they were given manna, but he is the real bread that comes from heaven (Jn 6:41). Again Jesus claims being the light of the world, the first step of creation (Jn 8:12). The world was in darkness until there was light and Jesus claims to be that light. He also claims to have been there before Abraham was even born (Jn 8:58). He points out that his current presence is a continuation of some past eternity,

⁶⁶ Some of the LXX translations that use ἐγώ εἰμι for the Hebrew **אני יהיה** include Gen. 17:1; 23:4; 24:34; 26:24; 27:32; 30:2; 31:13, 38, 41; 45:3f; 46:3; Exod. 3:6, 14; 4:10; 7:5; 8:18; 14:4, 18; 20:2; 29:46; Lev. 11:44f; 19:10, 12, 14, 16, 18, 25, 28, 30, 34, 36; 21:23; 22:30; 24:22; 25:17; 26:1f, 13, 44; Deut. 5:9; 31:2; 32:39; Jda. 6:8, 15, 18; 9:2; 16:17; 17:9; Jdg. 5:3; 6:8, 15, 18; 8:5; 11:27, 35, 37; 16:17; 19:18; Ruth 2:10; 3:9, 12; 4:4; 1 Sam. 1:15; 4:16; 9:19, 21; 17:8, 43; 22:22; 30:13; 2 Sam. 1:8, 13; 2:20; 3:8, 39; 11:5; 12:7; 13:28; 14:5; 15:26, 28; 18:12; 19:36; 20:17, 19; 24:12, 17; 1 Ki. 2:2; 3:7; 19:4; 21:4; 2 Ki. 1:12; 4:13; 10:9; 22:20; 1 Chr. 21:17; Est. 10:3; Tob. 12:15; Tbs. 12:15; Ps. 34:3; 38:13; 45:11; 108:22; 118:19, 63; Odes 2:39; Cant. 1:6; Job 30:9; 33:31; Hos. 5:14; 11:9; Joel 2:27; Jon. 1:9; Zeph. 2:15; Hag. 1:13; 2:4; Zech. 13:5; Mal. 1:14; Isa. 41:4; 43:10, 25; 45:8, 18, 22; 46:4, 9; 47:8, 10; 48:12, 17; 51:12; 52:6; 56:3; Jer. 1:6ff, 17, 19; 3:12; 9:23; 23:23; 24:7; 26:28; 49:11; Ezek. 7:6; 28:22ff, 26; 29:6, 9, 16, 21; 30:8, 19, 25; 32:15; 33:29; 34:15, 27, 30; 35:4, 9, 12, 15; 36:11, 23; 37:6, 13, 28; 38:23; 39:6f, 22, 28. These are taken from Rahlfs's Septuagint and they include the apocrypha.

making himself God. He is the entrance for and the shepherd of sheep (Jn 10:7, 11). Just as Yahweh looked after his flock Israel, so Jesus watches over his new covenant people and see their going in and their going out. He is the resurrection and the life (Jn 11:25). In him is life and even if anyone dies, Jesus can give them life again, something only God can do. In the desert, Israel needed to be guided on the way. During the day God's presence was guiding like a cloud above them and during the night, a pillar of fire was above them to show them the way. Jesus claims to be that way (Jn 14:6). Those who go by him will never be lost and will never be alone. When God's Name was given a place to rest, it was in the temple in Jerusalem.

At the entrance to the Jerusalem Temple, there were carvings of vines on the doors of temple. Jesus says he is the true vine, and not the imitation on the doors of the temple, making himself the new presence of God (Jn 15:1). Finally, those who come to arrest him fall back on the ground when he says the Name of Yahweh by saying, "I am" (Jn 18:6). The Name of Yahweh is so powerful that they fall down at its utterance. While Jesus and his followers seem to be convinced of the efficacy of these titles about Jesus, their opponents have the labels they find appropriate in describing Jesus' behaviour which they find both untrue and blasphemous. These labels are both negative and derogatory.

5.2.4 The *Shaliach* in John

It is important for our background study to note that true membership either in the Johannine community or the Jewish party is characterised by being "sent". John is sent from God and so are the Jewshs sent from Jerusalem (Jn 1:6-24). John is sent to baptise with water and to go before him who was to come. His identity is to be dissolved into the image of him he is witnessing to. Jesus is also sent from the Father (Jn 4:34). Jesus' authority, identity, and being will also have to melt into that of the one he is coming to represent. The rabbinic tradition at play here is that of the *Shaliach*, where the one sent is like the one who sends him. When Jesus says "I and the Father are one", those familiar with the tradition know the seriousness of it. Since the one who is sent truly represents the one who sends him, "not just formally but in a legally binding relationship, he is to be received and respected as the one who sent him" (Thompson 2001:126). The reason why this identity causes discomfort among the Jewshs is understandable.

5.3 Negative labelling in John

5.3.1 "Calling Jesus names"

The Jewish authorities see Jesus and his followers as a threat to the truth of the Torah and the tradition of the elders. As such they are considered deviants and deserve the punishments reserved for such. But by what names is Jesus called by his opponents?

The opponents of Jesus label him demon possessed four times (Jn 7:19-20; 8:48, 52; 10:20), insane (Jn 10:20) and a Samaritan (Jn 8:48). It is noteworthy that the label of being insane is mentioned where demon possession is also mentioned and the same with the label of being a Samaritan. This means that this language is designed to insult Jesus apart from being his opponents' assessment of him. One does not necessarily become demon possessed because they are Samaritan, even though they are likely to be insane as a result of demon possession.

The labels used on Jesus may also have to be located within the context of the whole Gospel. In the Fourth Gospel there is no incident of demon possession, hence no exorcism. This is noteworthy bearing in mind the rampant cases and allusions to demons in the synoptic gospels⁶⁷. There are reasons why Jesus is accused of demon-possession. In the first instance, it is the crowd that says Jesus has a demon because he points out that there is a plot by the Jews to kill him (Jn 7:20). We are however aware of the plot to kill him for "making himself equal to God" (Jn 5:18). If there is such a plot, the crowd is not privy to it, so they are surprised of such a revelation. This is an innocent accusation. The second label comes from the Jews who say that Jesus is demon-possessed because he says they are not out from God (ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ), maybe meaning that they are not children of God (Jn 8:47; cf. 3:34; 6:33; 7:17; 8:42). Since it is obvious for them as a result of being children of Abraham, any claim that excludes them from this connection with him should not make sense. The third accusation is a result of Jesus' claim that whoever keeps his word does not die (Jn 8:51). This is strange for the Jews since Jesus seems to be claiming to be a messenger of God and as such should have his words binding even to the heroes of faith

⁶⁷ Some texts where demons are mentioned are Matt. 9:33; 11:18; 15:22; 17:18; Mk. 7:26, 29; Lk. 4:33, 35; 7:33; 8:29; 9:42; 11:14; and where unclean spirits are mentioned are Matt. 12:43; Mk. 1:23, 26; 3:30; 5:2, 8; 7:25; 9:25; Lk. 8:29; 9:42; 11:24.

like Abraham and the prophets. If the previous Jewish patriarchs obeyed this word, as Jesus claims, why are they dead? It is either they did not keep his word, which is not possible, or Jesus is demon possessed and therefore making crazy claims. The last accusation comes after his claim of laying down his life only to take it up again (Jn 10:18). The Jews get divided because of these words. For the Jewish authorities, Jesus' words, accompanied with the opening of the blind man's eyes, must either be coming from a great prophet or from someone using demonic powers. So the Jewish authorities are divided as a result (Jn 10:19, 21).

It will also be worth noting that Jesus denies being demon-possessed, but does not deny being a Samaritan (Jn 8:49). In other words, he sees no offence in being labelled a Samaritan as already he accepts a Samaritan witness in John 4. The Johannine community is definitely showing that among the accusations they will put up with are those of ethnicity. They will, however, deny demon-possession as a label, but not mind being associated with Samaritans. Apart from denying this label of demon-possession, the Johannine community uses counter-labels that distinguish them from their opponents.

5.3.2 "Children of the devil": naming Jesus' opponents

At the centre of labelling of the those out of the Johannine community is the issue of their progenitor, out of whom they come, the devil (ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς τοῦ διαβόλου) (Jn 8:44). It is from their parentage that all the other labels must be inferred. As children of the devil they are murderers like him and that is why they want to kill Jesus (Jn 8:37). The devil is a murderer from the beginning and his descendants cannot be different. The whole gospel is littered with allusions of the Jews seeking to kill Jesus⁶⁸. Besides being murderers, these people are also liars like their father and cannot stand in the truth (Jn 8:44, 55). And because they do not do what is true, they do not come to the light (Jn 3:21). They "love darkness rather than light because their deeds" are evil (Jn 3:19). They also walk in darkness; they do not know where they are going (Jn 12:35). If they will not believe they will remain in this darkness and have already been judged together with their father (Jn 12:31, 46). Those who are not part of the Johannine community represent the world, as they are of the world (Jn 8:23). As such they are loved by those of the world and they in

⁶⁸ Some of the allusions to killing are in Jn. 5:18; 7:1, 19, 25; 8:37, 40; 10:10; 16:2.

turn hate the children of God (Jn 15:19; 17:14). Those belonging to the world do not know God (Jn 1:10; 17:25). So even if they worship, they worship what they do not know (Jn 4:22). They do not even know what the messenger of God, Jesus, is talking about (Jn 16:18).

But who are these people given such negative labels? The term “Jews” (οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι) is a common term used for these people. This is a term that has raised significant discussion in Johannine scholarship. The quest by biblical scholars either to explain away or smooten Anti-Semitism has not helped much in the efforts to find out who the Ἰουδαῖοι of the Fourth Gospel were. Some scholars have worked very hard to try to “defend the New Testament against allegations of Anti-Jewish bias” (de Jonge 2004:342 referring to Gregory Baum 1961). Such scholarship would take the cue from many other disciplines that make an effort to be politically correct in the light of the genocide of the Jews under Hitler. Not that this position is illegitimate, but a reading of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι which is not aware of this historical occurrence could easily be anachronistic.

Other scholars have also fallen into the old but mild trap of Anti-Semitism. For Segovia, the term οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι in John is simply equal the “world” (Segovia 1981:270, *footnote 40*). In this section, Segovia sees the term as not referring to any other people if one takes it from the immediate context of the Farewell Discourse. In the “farewell discourse as well as in 7:1-9, the category ‘the world’ is, in my opinion, presented as being synonymous with that of ‘the Jews’” (:270 *footnote 40*). This respectable scholar quotes L. J. Martyn, who says that “the history of the Johannine community from its origin through the period of its life in which the Fourth Gospel was composed forms to no small extent a chapter in the history of Jewish Christianity” (Martyn 1961 in Segovia 1981:270). Trying to understand Martyn will lead us to sum up his argument as someone dealing with a complex issue of reading the Fourth Gospel at two levels of history: the history and life of the historical Jesus and the history of Johannine community of the evangelist’s time. If this is true, it would be impossible for the historical Jesus to label all Jews as the world as he himself was a Jew (Jn 4:9). The Johannine community is likely to have been initially composed of Jews and would not have labelled any Jew in a derogatory way without undermining themselves. Then how would one be true in categorizing οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι in the Fourth Gospel without importing personal feelings and without being too reductionistic? One way would be to take it from the Johannine text.

In the Fourth Gospel, the term's frequency points "to a usage that results from theological reflection" (Schnelle 1992:34). In its 71 occurrences⁶⁹ in the Fourth Gospel alone, this term could be linked to scenes of conflict between the Jesus and "the Jews" (34 times), and to other neutral situations where it is used to refer to crowds that are present at a scene (14 times). The term is also used to refer to Jewish practices or to distinguish them from other ethnic groups (Jn 18:33, 35, 39; 19:3, 19, 21). It is sometimes used positively for the Jews who put their faith in Jesus (Jn 8:31; 11:45; 12:11). This brief analysis shows that this group, though involved in conflict with Jesus, cannot easily be classified as the embodiment of the "world". The Jews who do not believe are the world, so are the Gentiles who will not believe also. This should lead us to a notion of interest to this thesis that naming and labelling is not a straightforward business in the Fourth Gospel. We look at this category that refuses to be categorized in the next section.

5.3.4 Called by the wrong name: - "I have other sheep" "yet one of you is a devil": named in the wrong place.

The most difficult category in the Fourth Gospel is that in which people seem to be in wrong camps. One finds people who are given names and labels of Jesus' opponents while they are in the Johannine camp. One would also find people in the Jewish camp exhibiting those traits reserved for the Johannine community. This makes naming and labelling in John interesting. The breaking of normative categories makes for a new category in John.

Jesus makes the boundaries shift when he says, "Did I not choose you, the twelve? Yet one of you is a devil" (Jn 6:70). Someone is in the wrong place, yet Jesus does not call for his expulsion. Another confusing statement by Jesus is when he makes the statement that he has other sheep not in the Johannine fold (Jn 10:16). From these statements we can see a trend that seems to be breaking the black and white categories that we have been seeing throughout the labelling and counter-labelling of the Johannine group and its opponents.

⁶⁹ Jn. 1:19; 2:13, 18, 20; 3:1; 4:9, 22; 5:1, 10, 15, 18; 6:4, 41, 52; 7:1, 11, 13, 15, 35; 8:22, 31, 48, 52, 57; 9:18, 22; 10:19, 24, 31, 33; 11:8, 19, 31, 33, 36, 45, 54; 12:9, 11; 13:33; 18:14, 20, 31, 33, 36, 38; 19:3, 7, 12, 14, 19, 31, 38, 40; 20:19

This thesis argues that this refusal of labelling is deliberate in the Fourth Gospel and is meant to provide a new inclusive option.

Trying to position Judas with the Johannine community becomes difficult as he is always mentioned as a traitor, even though he belongs with the Johannine community (Jn. 6:71; 12:4; 13:2, 26, 29; 14:22; 18:2f, 5). Besides Judas being a traitor, he is also known to be a thief (Jn 12:6). Should such a man be numbered with the Johannine community? He clearly seems to be in the wrong camp. One would wonder why Philip could ask Jesus, "Lord, show us the Father" when Jesus had always been saying "the Father and I are one" (Jn 14:8; 10:30). Disciples seem to be belonging to the world, as they do not know where Jesus is going, even though Jesus has always been telling his disciples that he is going back to the Father (Jn 13:36; 14:5, 12). Thomas seems to be belonging to those of the world because he does not even know the way (Jn 14:5). He also does not believe; he must see first (Jn 20:25). There are other characteristics showing that those who are known as Jesus' followers did not understand Jesus even to the point of his death.

Apart from disciples showing characteristics of those who do not belong to the Johannine community, one is also surprised by those who are said to belong to the world, yet they exhibit the traits of the children of God. We hear of the Jews who believed in Jesus (Jn 8:31; 11:45). Even some of the Jewish authorities put their faith in Jesus (Jn 12:42). If it is faith in Jesus that qualifies people as the children of God in the Fourth Gospels, then it is not easy to name and label this group of people. We also see a Jewish teacher Nicodemus defending Jesus before his colleagues, and then participating in Jesus' burial (Jn 7:50; 19:39). These are public actions which must be considered to be very dangerous in this polarized context, yet Nicodemus remains in the camp of the opponents of the Johannine community. In the Johannine community he will always be known as one-who-came-to-Jesus-by-night (Jn 19:39). But is this the correct label for him?

5.4 Conclusion

The Fourth Gospel has emerged as a conflict-ridden narrative. The inception of the ministry promises high levels of conflict as indicated by the literary positioning of the cleansing of the temple. The language of hate for opponents and that of appraisal for one's community is very clear. The community of John is clearly out of sync with the mainstream temple system and are rightly, according to the Jewish authorities, labelled deviants. This community is, however, going to see itself as the community of witnesses, to Jesus as the true presence of God. John the Voice is the first successful witness as the products of his witness (his disciples) are the first to convert to be followers of Jesus. The rest of the disciples assume their roles as witnesses, as they each receive their new names or labels from Jesus and their fellow community members. Disciples are purported to be having a relationship with Jesus which a Jew with an OT background can discern to be similar to that between Yahweh and the eschatological people of God. The community of John uses appraisal labels for each other and for Jesus in the face of hostile labels from outsiders. Becoming a member of this community is not easy as you must openly denounce your allegiance to the temple authority control system. So the positive labels have much to do with how the Johannine community members are connected to Jesus. Individuals seem to dissolve into group appraisal. Even the most significant members of the community are anonymous and almost symbolic. All the labels the community uses for itself are also the names of some disciples who never receive proper names. Jesus also receives positive appraisal from his community. The positive appraisal is equal to the titles also used for God in the OT tradition. Jesus himself uses these positive and exalted titles for himself. There is no wonder that he is accused of blasphemy. He is the shepherd, as his followers are the sheep. He is the true vine as his disciples are the fruits. He is the Truth, the Way, Life, Light, and he and the Father are one.

The community of John and their leader receive negative labelling from the Jewish authorities. They are demon-possessed and insane. They are also accused of being Samaritans. We note that these are common labels in the witchcraft accusation cultures.

The Jews believe that Jesus is using his witchcraft powers to perform miracles⁷⁰. But Jesus, in typical riposte and challenge of the honour-shame culture, retorts by saying that these acts of power witness to his relationship with the Father. Jesus does not deny being a Samaritan as the Samaritans in John seem to represent successful witnesses. The Samaritan woman witnesses to Jesus and brings converts to Jesus; a hallmark of Johannine discipleship.

Jesus and the Johannine community also use labels that malign those outside their community. These they call them children of the devil. These are also called the Jews (οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι). As the children of the devil, they are not children of God. This is the irony of the label, as Jews are expected to be children of God. In other words, they are not called by His Name. They are lost forever. This is a very serious insult to Jewish people who look forward to a day when, as prophesied in Isaiah 62:2, "The nations shall see your vindication, and all the kings your glory; and you shall be called by a new name that the mouth of the LORD will give." (Also Isa. 63:19; 65:15).

Apart from the obvious binary opposites in the Fourth Gospel, there are labels that do not seem to fit in the two categories. There are disciples in the community of John who receive the description of the Jewish authorities. These show a lack of recognition of Jesus as God in flesh. They have difficulties believing and will only believe when they have seen. So it is a member of the Johannine community who finally sells Jesus out to the authorities who have him executed. Some in the Jewish authorities' camp seem to be exhibiting the characteristics of members of the Johannine community. We hear of Jews who believe in Jesus. We hear of Jewish authorities who seem to be defending Jesus in a very dangerous environment, like Nicodemus who questions the motive of judging someone before giving them a hearing. Judging from these actions, it is not easy to label people in John as either in or out. This situation is compounded by the assertion raised by Jesus that "I have other sheep" which are not in the fold. This makes the labels in the Fourth Gospel ambiguous.

⁷⁰ On the increasingly intensified conflict arising from the performance of the miracles cf. Bittner, W. (1987) First in *Jesu Zeichen im Johannesevangelium* (WUNT 2.26) and then in *The Theology of the Gospel of John* (New Testament Theology; Cambridge 1995:110).

6. EXEGESIS OF JOHN 12:20-50

The purpose of the following exegesis is to get to the heart of the meaning of this particular passage using the insights of naming and labelling theory. The wider, immediate, and theological contexts of this passage will be explored in order for us to gain a wider appreciation of the text. The previous section provided us with many contextual issues which apply in this section also. Where issues have already been discussed, they will just be noted for reference and applied in the study where relevant. The exegesis will mainly focus on issues of naming and labelling emanating from conflict between those who believe and those who do not⁷¹. The thesis is that, even among those who believe, there is some level of competition and conflict⁷². This is a context already assumed for the Fourth Gospel. We intend to examine how people are constantly moving from one social space to the other as a result of the name or label they are given. The hypothesis here is that people are always mobile in John. Some are moving 'into' and others 'out of'. There are destinations for all the people who are moving. Some are moving into the complete grip of the Jewish temple system, others into the community of John, while others cannot be accounted for.

6.1 Literary context of John 12:20-50

This thesis takes the "content" of John 12:20-50 as a single unit (in agreement with Ridderbos 1997:426) despite reservations by some scholars (Bultmann 1971:419ff). Even though there is no unanimity among scholars as to the proper order of the verses⁷³, a majority of scholars take the section as the composition of the Fourth Evangelist (Moloney 1978: 144ff). What we see here is the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem where the

⁷¹ There are scholars who understand the conflict between belief and unbelief as the core of the Johannine narrative. See Zumstein, J. (1997:352).

⁷² Schenke, L. (1992:105-121) NTS 38: "The Johannine Schism and the 'Twelve' (John 6:60-71)", in *Critical Readings of John 6* (ed. R.A. Culpepper) Biblical Interpretation Series 22.

⁷³ The section of vv. 20-36 is "viewed by some as incoherent or as a composite of originally separate pieces" (Ridderbos 1997:426). Schnackenburg (1980:380) considers the "whole section 12:20-36" as the "work of the evangelist" and the "only outside material he uses, and that with complete freedom, is some 'synoptic logia' (vv. 25-26) and the Mount of Olives scene (v.27)". Barrett (1978:429) sees no necessity of rearranging the closing verses 44-50 "between vv. 36a and b" since vv. 44-50 "are not a continuation of the earlier speech", he says.

crowd that has come for the festival⁷⁴ meets him and receives him like the Messianic king, with the song “Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the Name of the Lord-- the King of Israel!” (Jn 12:13). In fulfilment of scripture, Jesus rides on a donkey as a sign of humility, an act which his disciples do not understand until he is glorified (Jn 12:16). We are told that this crowd comes to meet him in response to the witness that was given by those who were at Lazarus’ raising (Jn 12:17)⁷⁵. This causes the Jewish authorities to panic, and they realize the need for him to die (Jn 12:19). After our exegesis pericope, the devil uses Judas to betray Jesus, something which has been predicted throughout the gospel. Jesus is now very sure that he has to accomplish the father’s program through death and he conducts a ritual⁷⁶ to wash his disciples’ feet so that he leaves a legacy of a new order of servant-hood (Jn 13:3-4). Disciples are supposed to be as cooperative as possible as by now they should know what is going to happen. Even though Judas is the one to betray him, and hence could be supposed to be out-rightly opposed to everything Jesus does, it is Peter who seems not to understand what Jesus is doing in this symbolic act. He is told that he does not know what he is doing and that the cleanliness they have just experienced is not for everyone, as one of them is going to betray him (Jn 13:10). The Shepherd has already started revealing those who are truly his and these must be clean.

6.2 Summary of John 12:20-50

Among those who come to the festival are those labelled “Ἕλληνες (Jn 12:20). These have been mentioned before when Jesus’ enemies were speculating whether Jesus was going to go to the “Dispersion among the Greeks and teach the Greeks” (Jn 7:35). Besides these two scriptures, we do not have this group of people again. These people come to Philip because they want to see Jesus (Jn 12:21). Bethsaida in Galilee⁷⁷ is mentioned as Philip’s

⁷⁴ “The mention of the feast in vs. 20 binds this scene to the general context of Passover, which has served as background from xi 55 on” (Brown 1966:469). With this in mind, Brown sees no much “factual setting” as the author’s intent is to “situate the scene immediately after the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem” (Brown 1966:469).

⁷⁵ It is this Lazarus miracle which has begun “a chain of actions pointing toward Jesus’ death; now the hour has come for Jesus to be lifted up in crucifixion (xi 32-33)” (Brown 1966:469). Wagner, J. (1988) in Lee, D.A. (1995), *The Symbolic Narratives of the Fourth Gospel* (JSNTSS 95:189) says that the story of the raising of Lazarus “is the central, pivotal scene of the gospel, holding together narrative structure and theological meaning”.

⁷⁶ This ritual and the other rituals like Jesus’ anointing at Bethany in the preceding chapter (12:1-8) are “climactically festive” and at the same time “symbolizing of his (Jesus) burial and resurrection, and they indicate what an impact he made on the world” (Brodie 1993:412).

⁷⁷ If “Bethsaida Julias is meant, and not an otherwise unknown town, it was actually in the district of Gaulanitis, just over the border from Galilee” (Sanders 1968:291 footnote 5). Some scholars favour the idea

home, as has been pointed out in John 1:44 (Jn 12:21). Philip does not go straight to Jesus to tell him about these people wanting to see him, he goes to Andrew and then both of them go to tell Jesus (Jn 12:22). Jesus responds in a strange way that his hour has come for him to be glorified (Jn 12:23). He alludes to his death as the falling of the seed into the soil so that it can multiply (Jn 12:24)⁷⁸. For Jesus, "Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life" (Jn 12:25). Even though he seems to see the advantage of his death, he is at the same time worried about it (Jn 12:27). So he prays to his Father to glorify his Name, to which a voice answers, "I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again." (Jn 12:28). Those who hear think that it is a thunder but others think that an angel has spoken and Jesus tells them that this voice is for their sake and not for his (Jn 12:29-30). He states that judgment has now begun and when he is lifted on high, he will draw many to himself. This lifting up, the evangelist tells us, means the kind of death with which he will die (Jn 12:33). The crowd asks, out of ignorance why he has to die when the promise states that the Messiah would live forever. Their ignorance is linked with Isaiah's prophesy (Jn 12:34-42). Even though some of them believed, they loved people's glory more than God's glory, so they did not go public. In saying this they prove the prophetic condemnation of Isaiah (Jn 12:44-50).

that this pericope witnesses to the coming of the Gentiles alluded in Matt 5:15, citing Isa 9:1 (Brown 1966). Brodie (1993:413) tries to draw some lesson from the etymological construction of Bethsaida, to hint that it is a Semitic name used for a Gentile territory, hence invoking a sense of assimilation of the Gentiles into the fold (cf Edwards 2004:126). However, Draper (2000:353) has cautioned that we "know very little about the population of the area" to enable us to make "confident assertions" concerning the identity of the 'Greeks'.

⁷⁸ It is very possible to interpret this usage of fertility language from a "Mystery Initiation" perspective. "The meaning of the Eleusinian Mysteries is often named as one of the best secrets of history. It has often been interpreted as an agricultural myth in which the Corn Goddess alternately withholds and guarantees the fertility of the earth. The mythic cycle of Persephone, the Corn Maiden, parallels the annual cycle of grain. For two-thirds of the year, corresponding to the times in which the fields of the Thriasian Plain are fertile, the Corn Maiden may be with her mother, Demeter. But for the remaining one third of the year, from June to October, when the sun-scorched fields of Greece are barren and the seed grain is stored in subterranean silos, the Corn Maiden is with Hades, the Lord of the Underworld. This assumes that the agricultural meaning of the myth later evolved an allegorical significance in which the annual sprouting of the new crop is taken as a symbol of eternal life", paralleling the use of the seed in John 12 (Luther H. Martin 1987: 67-68; *Hellenistic Religions: An Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press). I owe my appreciation for this section to my young brother, Kupakwashe who alerted me to this book after his *Ritual* class with Prof. Draper (August 2005).

6.3 Names, Deviance and Labelling in John 12:20-50

Our focus in this thesis is to see how conflict⁷⁹ will result in some people being successfully labelled and named as deviants, resulting in them being dislodged and placed in the periphery of social space. Those who are successfully labelled deviants by the Jewish authorities will be removed from the synagogue and they may finally be removed from all spheres of the social control of the Jewish authorities. Jesus will end up being removed completely as he is successfully labelled a blasphemer and demon possessed. He will cease to belong with the physical people of Israel. In other words, the Jewish authorities have constructed their norms and boundaries that define those within and those outside. Those who do not conform to the norms will be expelled. The logic is based on the understanding that people who have powers other than the power from the temple system are using demonic powers; hence they are "outsiders" (Ricks 1995:131). We will go on to realise that names and labels relocate people to new social spaces which can be categorised as "inside" or "outside" space⁸⁰.

The Johannine community on the other hand has its own space and boundaries that define those who belong and those who do not. The names given to those who belong are positive and show some kinship to Jesus and the father. Those who belong to this community must be willing not to belong to the Jewish synagogue system. They now occupy new space which they must remain (μένω) in. Negative labelling for those who

⁷⁹ Peter Tomson (2000) says that the Johannine community was living "through external duress and inner conflict" (p302 'Jews' in the Gospel of John as Compared with Palestinian Talmud, the Synoptic and Some New Testament Apocrypha; in *Anti-Judaism and the Fourth Gospel: Papers of Leuven Colloquium*, 2000).

⁸⁰ We could replace "space" with "place", to use Halvor Moxnes' terminology (*Putting Jesus in His Place: A Radical Vision of Household and Kingdom*; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2003.). Moxnes uses the *place* and *queer* theoretical approaches, which are quite new to many New Testament scholars; both of which rely on postcolonial thought. Place theory argues that human identity is located, developed, and sustained in *place* and that *place* is not limited to the material (homes, imperial palaces, cities) but extends also to the ideological (family, gender, power). Place, according to Moxnes, is not only geographical but also social, cultural, and ideological. Queer theory is related to place theory (and, for the record, has little to do with sexual identity) in that queer theory destabilizes the self-evidence of power and periphery. To question who establishes the rules of society, who decides what is normal and who is powerful, and where center and periphery sit on the socio-cultural map is to participate in queer theory, and with this definition in mind Moxnes suggests that Jesus was queer. Moxnes writes that identity has a place and that one who is dislocated from his or her place or identity would be queer. Therefore, to heed the call to follow Jesus, one who dislocates and is dislocated, meant to enter that queer space. Cf Claude Nicolet, *Space, Geography, and Politics in the Early Roman Empire* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1991)

belong to this community must be used to make sure all remain focused on the norms of their community.

This grid may not address all the concerns of our pericope, hence the large amount of footnoting to show some important theological issues in the text which, however, do not allow the flow of the argument. The first characters we encounter in the passage are the Greeks.

The understanding of who the Greeks were has been rather homogeneous among Johannine scholars. This—unfortunate—agreement comes in the light of a long debate, which has largely been characterised by how scholars wanted the conclusions to fit in their universalistic missionary interpretations. The coming of the Greeks is understood to allude to the universal missionary intention of the Fourth Gospel. This is inferred from the coming of the Greeks as representative of the Gentile world.

Scholars have been divided between two positions. Some scholars posit that these Greeks were the Greek-speaking Jews from the Diaspora, while others seem to see them as Greeks who were converts to Judaism. Most scholars⁸¹ unfortunately take the second option because of obvious reasons stated above; it will be easy to build a missionary trajectory from this⁸². Barrett (1956) does not see the necessity of knowing the difference as he assumes the evangelist had not yet developed a distinction between the two categories. Bultmann (1971) and others (Dodd 1963) see the salvation history trend where the Greeks

⁸¹ Schnackenburg (1980:381) says "The 'Greeks' are not Greek-speaking Jews, but Greeks by birth...who have adopted Judaism as full or semi-proselytes." In a different nuance, but similar trend, Barrett (1978) says that the word 'Greek' "signifies not one strictly Greek race but one of non-Jewish birth". He goes on to speculate that these Greeks "speak as representatives of the Gentile church to which John and his readers belong" (p421). Also Brodie (1993:413) sees the 'Greeks' representing the "inclusion of the Gentiles". In this same trend, Brown (1966:470) boldly states that the Greeks reflect the Johannine view of "universalism". It is clear from this sample that the majority of scholars see in the Greeks, the fulfilment of Gentile introduction into the church. The whole idea of Gentiles coming to Jewish faith has been taken for granted for quite some time in New Testament studies. But recently, some caution raised by Andrew Overman (1988) taking after A. T. Kraabel's (1981) article in 'The Disappearance of the God-fearers' in *Numen* 28:113-126, must be taken seriously. Other works have since followed including Wilcox, M. (1981: 102-122), 'The "God-fearers" in Acts: A Reconsideration', *JSNT* 13. It is true that there were Gentile converts in the early church, but caution must be taken equating all Greeks with Gentile believers as the social context reveals that it was not obvious.

⁸² It will be important to point out that the missionary trajectory is not necessarily inconceivable here. Only that it cannot be promoted exclusively at the expense of other possible interpretations.

inquire on behalf of the Gentiles if they qualify for the kingdom in the light of the pending *krisis* (Bultmann 1971:424)⁸³.

Among the scholars of the previous generation, Robinson (1959), seems to believe that these were Jews from the Diaspora as the gospel in its current form was meant to raise Jesus' profile as the true Messiah among the Jews in the Diaspora, a position refuted by Kossen (1970). Kossen's work suffers the weakness of assuming that the LXX was the evangelist's source of OT Isaiah citation (1970:103), a postulation not accepted by many other scholars (Reim 1974⁸⁴ in Draper 2002, Ridderbos 1997:204-205).

Even though Draper (2002:67) agrees with other scholars (e.g. Ridderbos 1997:427) that the coming of the "Greeks" seeking Jesus is the "turning point" of Jesus' ministry, he offers an approach considered more comprehensive for this pericope than other scholars have offered, as he takes further Robinson's work in the light of "further evidence from the Targum of Isaiah" (Draper 2000:347). It is very likely that John did not have access to any targumic material, although the targumic tradition of interpreting the OT cannot be ruled out. It could have been the more "effective method of applying the Scriptures of the people of Israel to a new situation, which is enabled by the "gaps" presented when Aramaic speaking people read unpunctuated Hebrew texts" (Draper 2000:348).

Draper reads this passage within the wider Johannine invitation to discipleship that starts with the promise to Nathaniel and the disciples that they would "see heaven open" and "angels of God going up and coming down upon the Son of Man" (Jn 2:51) (Draper 2002:65). This promise of "mystical ascent and descent and heavenly vision" must be understood in the light of the Johannine Jesus "as the revealer who bridges heaven and earth" (:65). Read in this way, themes of Jesus as the "way" to God attain a richer meaning since one can only get access to God when one has had the experience of Jesus, i.e. when one has used the bridge. Sociologically, the Johannine community, in positively

⁸³ Of late, Kiyoshi Tsuchido (1990:348-356) has tried to push forward this understanding basing his argument on, what I consider to be an incomplete analysis of J. L. Martyn's work. See Tsuchido (1990) "ΕΛΛΗΝ in the Gospel of John: Tradition and Redaction in John 12:20-24. R. Fortna and B. Gaventa (ed.) *The Conversation continues: Studies in Paul and John in Honour of J. Louis Martyn*. Nashville: Abingdon Press.).

⁸⁴ Though I got Reim's thoughts through the second medium, since the book is written in German, I still got his logic as used by later scholars. Reim, G. 1974. *Studien zum alttestamentlichen Hintergrund des Johannesevangeliums... Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Johannesevangeliums*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, (SNTS Monograph 22).

labelling Jesus as the “truth” and the “way”, legitimate their community as the one experiencing the true God.

In reading the pericope of John 12:20-50 in the light of the Targum of Isaiah 6:1⁸⁵ and 6:13, one would notice an interesting connection between the coming of the Greeks and the saying of grain of wheat⁸⁶ since the “Aramaic Targum of Isaiah 6:13 refers the saying to the ingathering of the Jewish Diaspora” (Draper 2000:347). Linking the Greeks of 7:35 and those of 12:20 in the light of the targumic readings of Isaiah 6, Draper notices that those who survive the exile would increase in number and a tenth of those who have been in exile shall return, having been “purified by fire” (2000:350). Barclay (1995) makes a point by alluding to the struggles the Diaspora Jews were facing by the mere fact of being outside of the physical Israel. They were faced with the “necessity to define their identity in social environment shaped by non-Jewish cultural norms” (Barclays 1995:90). It is well attested that the process of Hellenization “respected no geographical boundaries”, although the Jews in Hellenistic territory, geographically, had to contend with more day-to-day issues. As Draper (2000) rightly argues, the Diaspora Jews needed to deal with what they were called by their own people and those from the Gentiles. In the Diaspora they would be called “Jewish” and since the “Israelites”⁸⁷ in Palestine called any other Israelite who had settled in the wider Graeco-Roman world and lost their mother tongue and lost contact with motherland, “Greek”, the Diaspora Jews would also be called “Greeks” (Draper 2000:355). Draper furthers the efforts of our investigation by asking the question “what exactly does John mean by “the Jews”, and how does he understand “the Samaritans” and “the Galileans”?”

⁸⁵ Christopher Rowland (1984:499) sees a targumic interpretation of Isaiah 6 here. He says that the vision of Isaiah 6 “is understood by the Fourth Evangelist not as a vision of God but as a vision of Christ” “for a vision of God without reference to Christ would be unthinkable”. “All visions given to the prophets of old are invalid if they are understood without reference to Christ”. (*New Testament Studies* Vol. 30, 1984, pp. 489-507).

⁸⁶ The idea raised by Wes Howard-Brook (1994) to allude to ‘the grain of wheat’ to “subversive agriculture” could be very interesting; unfortunately he does not carry the whole sociological analysis through.

⁸⁷ Peter Tomson (1986:120-140) ‘The Names Israel and Jew in Ancient Judaism and in the New Testament’ in *Bijdragen, tijdschrift voor filosofie en theologie* 47, points out that the names ‘Jew’ and ‘Israel’ “have distinct social function. A Jewish speaker refers to ‘Jews’ in speech addressing or quoting non-Jews, but when communicating with fellow-Jews calls them ‘Israel’” (p120). He goes onto show that this “phenomenon of differentiation in ethnic appellations” is not necessarily restricted to ancient Judaism.

The Jews, in John 7:35, sarcastically link Jesus with a mission to the Diaspora of the Greeks to teach them⁸⁸. As Draper (2000:354) says, the word “Greek” is likely not to refer to a “true Greek” but was a “generic reference to outsiders”. We should not forget that the people who suggest that Jesus could go away are his opponents and that they control the dominant view. In so doing they are labelling Jesus as an outsider. We have already noted where they label him a Samaritan, another term for outsiders. But the fact that Jesus does not reject both labels is a hint that the Johannine Jesus has concerns for a wider community than the one represented by the Johannine community. Opposed to the Jewish temple state which maintains its allegiance through expulsion of the deviants, the Johannine Jesus is showing another possibility of expanding the boundaries by gathering in the other children of God in the Diaspora into one flock (τέκνα τοῦ θεοῦ τὰ διεσκορπισμένα συναγάγει εἰς ἓν.) (John 11:52). This is in line with the prophetic tradition of Isaiah, which is in John interpreted targumically.

If, as Draper argues, the author of the Fourth Gospel understood the holy seed of Isaiah 6 to “refer to the time when the calamity of the destruction of the holy land and the Diaspora of its people” would be “reversed”, then the meaning of the text is that “the Diaspora will be brought back, and the holy seed springing up to new life” (Draper 2000:351). Draper sees a literary and theological *inclusio* framed by the promise to Nathanael that he and the other disciples would see angels going up and down the ladder and its fulfilment in the angels that were seen by the disciples in the tomb. The coming of Greeks also is the fulfilment of the prophecy of the return of the Diaspora Jews, the scenario which is a moment of glory (Draper 2000:351).

The understanding of the ingathering of the sheep could also be understood in the light of the “other sheep” of John 10:16. Draper is right in saying that the “in the light of the theme of gathering, it is again likely that the primary reference would have been understood as a reference to the ingathering of the scattered sheep of Israel, so that the returning exiles would again be united with Jewish and other Palestinian people”, and, I would suggest, this should

⁸⁸ Draper says “It is, to my mind, very likely that Jewish teachers or thinkers who got into trouble with the Jewish authorities in Jerusalem would seek refuge, hearing and sympathy among Diaspora Israelites abroad, particularly since we know from Hellenistic Jewish writings that they were much more open to exploring new ideas and even syncretisms than were Jewish Israelites” (Draper 2000:354).

include the Samaritans (Draper 2000:356). This fits well with the prophetic figure of Jesus as the good shepherd who lays down his life for the sheep.

The moment of the ingathering of the children of God becomes the moment of honour (glory) (Jn 12:23). If we read “glory” (δόξα) from a social-scientific perspective, it carries all the significance of the honour-shame culture we cannot exhaust in this limited study. This article assumes that word δόξα⁸⁹ as it has come to be used in the New Testament in general,

⁸⁹ The Greek δόξα has its history in the Greek classical world. Used in the secular Greek language, the word carries the meaning from its root verb (δοκέω) which is, ‘I think or I have an opinion’ (Kittel 1964:233). In this secular usage the noun comes therefore to mean opinion or conjecture (Brown 1986:45). In this sense, the term could be used in the subjective sense to mean ‘according to my opinion’ or ‘the view which I represent’ (Kittel 1964: 234). By the time this word finds its way into the bible, it is via the LXX. At this point most scholars quickly recognise the semantic evolution this word has gone through (Kittel 1964: 237; Brown 1986:44; Balz H. and Schneider G. eds. 1990: 245; Thayer H. J. 1982:156; Green B. J. and McKnight S. 1992:269). Only once in the LXX (Eccl 10:1) is the word used with the δοκῶ root implying opinion. In the LXX δόξα is used to translate the Hebrew root כבוד meaning ‘heaviness’ invoking the idea of weight and hence esteem or respect as a result of material possession, wealth or power. So Yahweh is the ‘King of glory’ in Ps. 24:7-10, Isa. 24:14, 26:10, 30:30. Yahweh has the respect due to him since he is able to do mighty deeds and to intervene gloriously in service to his people (Ex. 14:18) (Spic 1994:363).

Throughout the Greek Old Testament (OT) however, δόξα becomes the radiant and fiery description of God (Kittel 1964:240). From Moses, Ezekiel and Isaiah, God is only manifest in his δόξα since no one can see God and live (Ex.33: 20). Light and fire become characteristic features of δόξα (Kittel 1964:242). Others conjecture that the idea of radiance is present in the secular Greek sense. Some scholars however argue that this LXX usage borrows the radiance idea from the secular Greek names for woman and ship denoting ‘light’ or ‘radiance’. But others reject this conjecture as baseless (Kittel 1964: 235 and Ramsey A. M. 1949). In the Targum and Talmud יקר (honour, worth, splendour) is often used for כבוד (Kittel 1964:245). A further development is shown in the Targum to the ‘radiance of Yahweh’ to have ‘radiance of the Shekinah of Yahweh’ (Chilton 1983:70). In Rabbinical Judaism כבוד plays a key role denoting both divine and human honour (Kittel 1964: 244). However the participation of human beings in the כבוד of God is very rare in the rabbinical writings. The example of Moses becomes an exception (Ex. 34:29). Humans are actually sometimes accused of profaning the Shekinah of Yahweh for example when Rabbi Aqiba (*bChag.* 14a) speaks of David sitting on the diving throne, Jose the Galilean accuses him of profaning the Shekinah (Thayer 1982:156). The Rabbis hint to us that before the fall the first man had the Shekinah of God intermingled with his humanity. After the fall it got back to God and would unfold and be restored in the end of the salvation history, hence the Messianic anticipation in the rabbinic tradition is replete with the idea (Kittel 1964: 247). The Rabbis describe salvation as beholding God’s glory (Brown 1986:45). The idea is very rife in John where one has seen Jesus he/ she has also seen the Father. No one can see God. One should be satisfied by seeing God’s glory, John would say.

The notion of heavenly δόξα characterised the Inter-Testamental period due to its eschatological tinge. In this sense the idea of glory is more than the self-revelation of God but also the reality of the heavens, the throne of God and angels (Brown 1986:45). The Qumran (1QS4¹⁸⁻²³) community has high hope of inheriting all the glory of Adam. The Qumran community’s angelic figure of light leads the children of light to all truth. It resonates with angelic powers, the Cherub in Ezekiel 9 who is the bearer of δόξα (Kittel 1964:251). This angelic figure could be what Isaiah sees in his angelic theophany in Isaiah 6 (Draper 2004). The idea of angelic figures is also not foreign in the NT where the angelic figures are addressed as the δόξα (Jude 8 and 2 Pt 2:10).

and in the Johannine corpus in particular, has undergone some changes from its original meaning as understood in an honour and shame culture.

In this honour-shame system, the contest is for maintenance and also gaining of one's honour in community challenge-riposte context. When one wins the contest, he wins the honour while the one who has lost it has shame ascribed to him. As stated above, in the Fourth Gospel, the consequence of this loss is more serious than a mere loss of social status. In John it means being physically displaced. If you lose your contest you will be removed from the synagogue, the sacred space, and relegated to any other place befitting your value. For Jesus who seems to be representing all the labels for the Johannine community, the final place for his displacement is the cross. That is where his label will finally be written. Yet Jesus calls that glory. Malina and Neyrey (1988) rightly point out that the labels used are powerful "social weapons" and if they find their way in to the "hands of influential persons or powerful groups, they can inflict genuine injury, since they serve to define a person as out of social place, hence" the need to permanently label him a deviant and to get rid of him (:37). But the positive label could also be "life-enhancing" if used on people (Malina and Neyrey 1988:37). The "Greeks" could have remained negatively labelled as outsiders had the Johannine Jesus not shown that their coming to be the beginning of the ingathering of the children of God. But having ascribed a new honour to the "Greeks", Jesus goes on to show how death is going to honour the Name of the Father.

From 12:24-25 Jesus is now showing how death is not shame, as intended by his labellers, but honour, as will be shown by the honour it will bring to his Father. The labelling of Jesus, as one out of social place, has already been reiterated in the previous passages and the need to get rid of him is clearly stated (Jn 5:18; 7:1, 25, and 50). Jesus, aware of this dangerous state of affairs, must find a way of dealing with his label. In the process of labelling someone as a deviant and therefore deserving displacement, a person is not "helpless in the process" but will have his supporters "employ a variety of strategies to offset the labelling process" (Malina and Neyrey 1988:95). The supporters give the deviant a new status based on the label he is given. For Jesus, the label of blasphemy and demon possession meant he deserved to die. But interpreted by his followers, his death would work for the gathering of the children of God. He is a "grain of wheat" that must fall to the ground so that it can multiply (Jn 12:24). This new status is called "prominence" in deviance and labelling relationships (Malina and Neyrey 1988). We have already seen the two "status elevation" rituals in John

12:9-16 where the crowd welcomes him to Jerusalem as a king after he has been anointed in John 12:3-8. We are aware of the objections to these “status elevation” rituals. So by saying Jesus “answered” (12:23) implies he is aware of the objections to his label of honour ascribed him by his followers. Jesus and his followers reverse the honour-shame values by showing that those who do not contend for their lives gain them, in a context where one gains his status by fighting for it. If any one wants true honour, they must offer their service to Jesus and follow him, then the Father will honour them (12:26)⁹⁰. Even though Jesus knows the consequences of his label—death, and is afraid of it, he nonetheless welcomes it for this is what he has come for (12:27). Again this is assuming “prominence”. The consequences of labelling are shown to be positive thereby rendering the negative label ineffective.

We will remember that among the accusations that Jesus receives is that of making himself equal with God (5:18). Jesus would also claim that “I and the Father are one” (10:30) making him equal with God. We have already seen that the labels that Jesus use are at the same time titles known to address God in the Jewish context. So when Jesus says “I am”, he claims to be the creator of the world and to be pre-existent, hence making himself equal with God. This is considered blasphemous and punishable by death. According to the dominant understanding fanned by the Jewish authorities, people who make such claims are not only dishonouring God, but are also dishonouring themselves by lying. While Jesus’ honour is growing among his followers who see all qualities of God in him, the Jewish authorities are planning to expose his dishonour by giving him over to be killed in a contemptible way. Since he is being labelled by his followers as king, the Jewish authorities will clothe him with the robes of honour and crown of thorns and yet expose him to all shame on the cross. They will mock him using all the gestures of honour he used to receive from his followers. They must finally have his name dishonoured. But when Jesus prays to the Father to glorify his Name (the Father’s Name), the Father answers that he has already done it and will do it again, and this against the plans of the Jewish authorities (12:28). This Name seems to be in Jesus himself as this is the hour for the “son of man to be glorified” (12:23).

A voice was heard which confirmed that the Name had already been glorified and will be glorified again (Jn 12:29-30). But the crowd thought an angel had spoken to him. Here we

⁹⁰ Wes Howard-Brook (1994:281) observes that “our modern ears may not resonate to the power of receiving “honour,”. But “to contemporaries of the gospel, honour was the primary social value to which one might aspire.”

have the "voice" which bears witness again to the fact that the Father sanctions the mission of Jesus. In John 1:23, the "voice" speaking through John was preparing the coming of Jesus. The loud "voice" speaking through Jesus calls Lazarus from the dead and he is brought to life (Jn 11:43). Here Jesus says that the "voice" is to the advantage of those who are present with him, not necessarily for him (Jn 12:30). This is the original voice of God that is testifying to the honour of Jesus. It is to the disciples' advantage that they hear it from the source, from God himself. The voice of John was to prepare people to put their faith in Jesus. The voice that raised Lazarus from the death made many to believe in him. In the same thought, those who have heard this voice must believe in Jesus as it is not John or the miracles, but God himself who is testifying about Jesus. Such a testimony brings honour to Jesus since God's testimony can never be untrue. Those who did not honour the testimony of John or that of the miracles will be judged. But those who are not going to be lead to faith having heard the voice from God himself will even be judged with a higher standard. The judgement has now come because those who have heard have no excuse. Those who have both seen and heard should have no excuse just as those who heard from Isaiah and not believed have no excuse (Jn 12:38). The argumentation here is that, those of old heard and saw what God did in the past as witnessed by the prophet Isaiah. In actual fact, Isaiah saw and heard from Jesus (the glory of God) and spoke of him. The forefathers did not believe then and their offspring do not believe also now. The object of their faith or lack of faith (both the present and the gone generations) is Jesus. The reason they do not believe is because they take human opinion (δόξαν τῶν ἀνθρώπων) more than they want to receive honour from God⁹¹. They are in error because human opinion does not profit because apart from him people alone can not achieve anything. In other words, human beings gain a true opinion of who they are if that opinion is from God. The opinions they give each other are not true. Those who have come to believe Jesus will receive this true opinion of themselves and thus receive true honour. In our context, the Johannine community already has this honour because they have believed. Jesus will receive his honour from God even if he is killed in dishonour by his opponents. They can not take his glory or honour since it is coming from the Father. They cannot be at the same level of honour-shame contest because they are not equals. Jesus is from heaven and they are from the world. He bears the Name of

⁹¹ We must note that there is a play of words here since both 'opinion' and 'honour/ glory' are correct translations of δόξα. The construction is derived from δοκέω which would translate 'I think', hence, 'I have an opinion' cf. Kittel 1964:233.

the Father and they still have their unglorified names. The glorified Name is therefore the Name of Yahweh as it is revealed in Jesus.

This above scenario presents itself as a continuation of the struggle for honour emanating from the John's targumic interpretation of the OT as finding its fulfilment in Jesus. Jesus is God's representative on earth. John would have worked with his knowledge of the Hebrew scripture coupled with his familiarity with the Targumic tradition to see Jesus as the object seen by Isaiah in his theophany, according to Draper (2002:63-64).

Jarl Fossum (1995: 135-151), working on the prologue, would also see the use of Gen. 28:12 in John as a Rabbinic interpretation of Jacob as lying on earth with his image in heaven. So the image in heaven was like Metatron the archangel in 3 Enoch who has the image of divine glory. So when angels moved up and down they were comparing the earthly image with the heavenly glory. So Fossum concludes that following Jacob as a type, Jesus "was in heaven at the same time as he was on earth" (1995:151). So in Jesus the glory of heaven came down on earth and tented (ἐσκήνωσεν) in our midst (Jn 1:14). When John says "Isaiah said this because he saw" the glory of Jesus in his theophany (Jn 12:41), he is offering a "deliberate rebuff to those who would claim to know God by any other means apart from the revelation of God in Jesus" (Rowland 1984:499). Another "roughly contemporary 4 Ezra" also "denies the possibility of an ascent to heaven to see God and his" glory throne (:499).

Jesus' claim to honour draws on the targumic tradition that envisages a Name-bearing angel, representing the glory of God on earth. "Indeed, one could say that the goal of the heavenly ascent, the sight of the throne of God and the glory of God upon it, so cherished by the Jewish apocalyptic seers, is, in the eyes of the Fourth Gospel reached only in Jesus" (Rowland 1984:499-500). But the Jewish authorities would see such claims as extreme blasphemy. But even though Jesus is going to be killed as a result of this label of blasphemy, his resurrection shall be witnessed with angelic visions as testified to by his followers (Jn 20:11-18). Draper (2002) has broken new ground in seeing the angels in the tomb of Jesus to reflect a tradition of possible targumic interpretation of the vision of Isaiah. He sees "a narrative *inclusio* between the promise of a vision of angels to Nathaniel⁹² in John 1:51 and the appearance of angels to Mary Magdalene in the tomb at the head and feet of the body of

⁹² The spelling Nathaniel has been used here because it is straight from the quote. Otherwise the preferred spelling in this thesis is 'Nathanael'.

Jesus in 20:11-18. John reads Isaiah 6 targumically to see the vision of the Lord enthroned on his throne chariot as a prophecy of the resurrected and glorified Jesus in the tomb" (Draper 2002:63). One angel will be at his head and the other at the feet and they shall go up and down as they witness his heavenly glory and compare it with his earthly body (Jn 20:12). The children of God all over the Jewish world must be part of that experience of glory, of beholding the glory of God. Jesus, as the good shepherd, will gather all the children of God to this eschatological experience. This he will do by bringing all the sheep to the fold, he will call his by name and they shall recognise him as they will see the angels going up and down his risen body (Jn 20:16). This last honour of the risen Jesus will nullify and further contest with the Jewish authorities. He will retain his "prominence" and defy the label of being a blasphemer by ascending back to the Father (20:17). Jesus' association with the Father could help us understand how his audience understand his claims.

When Jesus says that the 'son of man'⁹³ must be glorified, it seems as if his audience becomes confused because "We have heard from the law that the Messiah remains forever. How can you say that the Son of Man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of Man?" (Jn 12:34). The 'son of man' expression is given about thirteen times in John and even more in the synoptic gospels. On the other hand, Messiah is found 17 times in John, more than in any other NT text. In Johannine Christology, the son of man exists to glorify the father by "bringing to perfection the task given to him" (TNJBC 2001:1423). The son of man is real man who comes to his own even though his own does not always come to understand him. But as Messiah, he is really the anointed king whose kingdom is not of this world.

⁹³ The title 'son of man' is a development from the OT book of Prophet Daniel: "As I watched in the night visions, I saw one like a human being coming with the clouds of heaven. And he came to the Ancient One and was presented before him. To him was given dominion and glory and kingship, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that shall not pass away, and his kingship is one that shall never be destroyed" (Dan 7:13-14). The title should have been so significant in the Jewish tradition that Jesus made frequent use of it when speaking of himself. The other people never used to call him this, except the deacon Stephen before his stoning (cf. Acts 7:56) and the author of the Book of Revelation in two texts (cf. Rev 1:13; 14:14). C. H. Dodd (C. H. Dodd, *According to the Scriptures*, London, 1952, p. 118) sees Daniel 7 as speaking of Israel as being the representative of human figure with no power and value until God visited it and raised it again to glory. The individual son of man thus represents the communal Israel. For Dodd, the transposition of this son of man to its individuation to mean Jesus of the New Testament deprives it of its original corporate meaning. However, opposed to Dodd is Geerhardus Vos (*The Self-Disclosure of Jesus*, New York, 1926, pp. 228 ff) who maintains that Daniel was individualistic. For him the passage in Daniel is a genuine Messianic prophecy and that the one like unto a Son of man is none other than the Messiah making the individualistic meaning primary and original.

6.4 Jesus, the glorified Name of John 12:20-50

The mission of Jesus is to witness to God or to reveal the glory of his Name. The Name of Yahweh is no longer anonymous as Jesus has used it for himself many times in saying ἐγώ εἰμι. The Name has been seen to be in Jesus as he has managed to do great exploits in the Name. Through the power of this Name Jesus witnessed to the glory of God through the signs and works he did and by the words he spoke. Some responded to these deeds with faith in him (2:23). All the people who believed in his Name received the position of children, i.e., access to God (Jn 1:2). Their new position is going to render the ascribed names they got from their parents of no consequence. They will acquire each one of them, new names by which they will be known by their community (10:3).

Jesus came in the Name of the Father and not in his own Name (5:43) and that is why he can do so many signs in the Father's Name (10:25). When he entered Jerusalem, his hour of glory had come, so those who had seen God in Jesus sang to the Messiah who comes in the Name of Lord (12:13). At this hour he instructed his followers to ask whatever they wanted through his Name when he had gone and he would give them (14:13-14; 15:16; 16:23-26). The Paraclete would also come in the Name of Jesus and remind the disciples of everything Jesus had taught them (14:26) because his words would bring them life (6:63). Disciples will also suffer on account of the Name they now bear; the Name of Jesus (15:21).

The glorified Name is the Name Jesus has already been made known to those who came to Jesus by faith (17:6, 26). To the Samaritan disciple he said "ἐγώ εἰμι", he comforted his disciples saying ἐγώ εἰμι (6:20), he assured the hungry by saying ἐγώ εἰμι (6:35), to those who were lost in darkness he said ἐγώ εἰμι (8:12). Before Abraham was Jesus says ἐγώ εἰμι (8:58). All these and many other 'I AMs' were meant to stress that Jesus was truly *Ani Hu*, Yahweh himself. This is the Name that will protect the disciples to the end and the Name through which they will finally be made into one as Jesus protected them through this Name when he was with them (17:11-12). The Name is Jesus himself. He is the Namebearing figure representing God on earth. If what Isaiah saw was Jesus' glory, then the Name that can be glorified is the angel of the Name, Jesus himself.

6.5 Conclusion

Those who are named by the Name of God are the children of God all over the 1st century Mediterranean world, according to the Fourth Gospel. Those labelled 'Greeks' are Jews in the Diaspora and bring Jesus joy and celebration as he sees them come to be one flock with the children of God in Palestine. The proper glory of the Name is when the work of Yahweh to bring all Israel under one shepherd has been achieved.

The suffering of Jesus and his death is meant to be the final label of his as someone rejected by God because "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree" (Gal. 3:13). If Jesus was what he claimed to be, God was surely going to vindicate him so that he would not be numbered (labelled) with thieves (John 10:8; Jer. 48:27; cf.) or receive a false accusation (κατηγορίαν) (John 18:29) or take the place of a bandit (ληστής) (John 18:40). For the Jewish authorities, Jesus' shameful death will be a proof that he was not on the side of God. The Johannine community take Jesus' death and resurrection as a sign that God was with him and that this is signalled by the coming of the Jews from the Diaspora. In the honour-shame culture, Jesus' death is the climax of shaming him and his community. For his community this is the beginning of the glory of labelling him the Name of God.

In this pericope, Jesus prays for the glory of the Name of God. But we are also told that the hour of his own glory has come. It can safely be stated that the Name of God is also the Name of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel. The glory of Jesus is the glory of the Name. The glory of this Name results in the highest possible appraisal of the Johannine community in its own consciousness, as opposed to the negative labelling as a deviant community which it receives from its detractors. In addition, while the "Greeks" may be despised by the Judaeen authorities, their status in God's eyes will confirm the self-appraisal of the community when these "other sheep" join them and there is flock, one Shepherd. Jesus is the "noble"⁹⁴ shepherd, who will gather all the sheep into one flock. By gathering the other sheep, Jesus is increasing the fold. The same idea of increase is encapsulated in the dying of the seed so that it can multiply. After the death of Jesus, Jews in the Diaspora can

⁹⁴ Jerome Neyrey proposes that the Greek rhetorical literature on "noble death" be examined in order to discover the rich complex of terminology and reasons "whereby the ancients labeled a death as "noble." The "hypothesis is that the labeling of the shepherd as "noble" reflects the rhetorical topos of "noble death" in the rhetoric of praise in the Hellenistic world" (2001:268)

no longer be called outsiders anymore. Nor can the Samaritans, who are now also part of the flock.

At the resurrection, Jesus, as the angel of the Name, having received the Name like Metatron or Jaoel, is ministered to by two angels, one at the head and the other at the feet (John 20:12). This is the highest appraisal of Jesus. His claims have been legitimised and the Jewish authorities are shamed. This is the moment of glory or honour as Jesus is now transported to fellowship with figures who were given the honour of bearing the great Name like Enoch. This is the label which trumps all the other labels. The one ministered to by angels has the Name of Yahweh in him. The Jews believe that Jesus has been 'displaced'. He has been removed from the physical territory of contention⁹⁵. Jesus, however, has moved to a higher territory as this physical territory has temporarily been given to the "ruler of this world" (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11).

⁹⁵ The concept of territoriality has already been suggested in New Testament studies. Cf. Robert D. Sack, *Human Territoriality. Its Theory and History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986) 19. Other important definitions have been given by Godelier (Casimir p. 19), Michael J. Casimir, *Mobility and Territoriality: Social and Spatial Boundaries among Foragers, Fishers, Pastoralists, and Peripatetics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 1992) 19 ; and Ralph B. Taylor, *Human Territorial Functioning: An Empirical Evolutionary Perspective on Individual and Small Group Territorial Cognitions, Behaviors and Consequences* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988) 6).

7 CONCLUSIONS

7.1 Conflict and community

The intention of this thesis was to examine, using social-scientific methods, how names and labels are used in a context of conflict for appraisal of those with whom one belongs and to negatively portray one's opponents. We have argued that the Fourth Gospel emerged from such a context. Conflict in John has been observed to be between the community of John and the Jewish temple leadership. We noted that the conflict is however beyond these obvious binary opposites. There is conflict within the Johannine community and also among the Jewish leadership system. In both cases, names and labelling are used to designate those perceived to be enemies and those perceived to be friends. The significance of individual social position in this tussle is at risk. Since individuals must choose those with whom they should belong, continual movement can be observed throughout the gospel. Individuals are moving into new social spaces depending on the names or labels they are given. The Johannine community comprises of those who are already dislodged from the synagogue system. This expulsion is not only from the physical place called 'synagogue', but from the social, religious and economic benefits that may ensue from relationship with the dominant system. This expulsion spells fatal consequences for the founder of the Johannine community, Jesus. Even though he can no longer belong to the Jewish social space, controlled by the dominant system, he remains a threat to the system so that he is removed from the physical place through death.

7.2 Community, identity, and names

The Johannine community has to interpret this loss of their leader using the same tool of naming and labelling. They have particular names and labels for those who belong with them. By merely belonging to the community every one of them has a new ascribed name to them apart from the one ascribed to them by their parents. They are collectively called children of God, children of the light, the flock under one shepherd, those who know the Father, and many other positive labels. In addition to these ascribed names, individual members of the community have acquired names that far outweigh the ascribed names in the honour-shame context. These acquired names must be saying something about the individual's relationship to Jesus. So most of them are not called by their ascribed names,

but by their newly acquired labels ensuing from their relationship with Jesus. The closer you are to Jesus, the less you are known by your ascribed name, and the more you known by your acquired title or label. Jesus says that every one of his followers is known by name, maybe by his or her acquired name.

Only a few of those who belong to the community of John are known by their personal names. Some of the few who are called by their names have names that can etymologically be linked to Jesus. For example, Nathanael is a Hebrew name referring to the gift from or of God. He is also called the "True Israelite in whom there is no guile". The true Israel is a gift of God to Jesus. None of those whom Jesus has been given must be lost (Jn 17:12). If Thomas is the Greek for the Hebrew *'ta'om'*, then his name means "twin" or double⁹⁶. The three times his name is mentioned it has to do with his double mindedness or lack of faith in Jesus. Others may have continued being called by their names not because of any etymological significance, but because they never really acquired any particular relationship with Jesus that was worthy of any accolade. The harbinger of Jesus' ministry knows himself as "the Voice". Even though we know that his name is given as John, he does not say that when people are sent to ask him of his identity⁹⁷. He is the "Voice" that witnesses for Jesus. Another is called "the Mother of Jesus". Even though she is known as Mary in the synoptic Gospels, she is known only as the "Mother of Jesus" in the Fourth Gospel. Another is called the "Beloved Disciple". He or she is quite an important figure in the Johannine narrative. Another is called the "Samaritan woman". Lazarus was called by his name before his life-giving encounter with Jesus. After the encounter he is known as "Whom-he [Jesus]-had-raised-from- the-dead".

Jesus himself is never called by his personal name by those who belong to the Johannine community. One instance in 1:45 Philip says to Nathanael, "We have found him about whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote, **Jesus** son of Joseph from Nazareth". Otherwise he is known with the titles or labels that articulate his relationship with the Father. He is actually known by the Name and labels reserved for God. His opponents, however, call him a Samaritan (meaning outsider), demon-possessed, insane, and a

⁹⁶ Many speculations have been built on this biblical character, including the conjecture that he was Jesus' twin brother. It will suffice here to point out that we are interested in the role Thomas play in relationship to Jesus.

⁹⁷ One reason why from here on, characters will not have identities (names) of their own, is because of a common saying from the rabbis that "the one who is sent like the one who sent him" (*m. Ber.5:5; b. Menah. 93b; b. Naz. 12b* etc)

blasphemer. These names justify them in treating him with names indicating contempt. Such people must actually be removed from the physical people of God (the Jews) and their territory. Handing over such people to the Roman authorities to be killed is considered a service to God by the Jewish authorities.

The Johannine community also have names and labels for their opponents. They call them the children of the devil. As the children of the devil, they are not the children of Abraham. They are liars and murderers just like their father, who came only to steal, to kill, and to destroy. Since their father is the prince of the world, they also belong to the world and the world loves them. These are blind, and are in sin. They are destined for judgment. These "Jewish" authorities are negatively labelled by the Johannine community and by many other people who are afraid of them because they have sold out to the Roman authorities to effect the Roman rule. They cannot come to Jesus in faith as they consider anyone with a following, a danger to the false peace of the Romans.

Even those who are meant to leave the Johannine community because they have proved to have qualities of outsiders are also known by the labels that describe their relationship with Jesus. Judas is always known as "the one to betray Jesus". Such people belong to the Johannine community but receive negative labels or names. This is a common trend in the Fourth Gospel. There are people who can not be properly labelled. They belong to the Johannine community, and yet they exhibit the characteristics of the outsiders. These are people like Thomas (who doubts and does not know the way), and Philip (who does not know the Father). We also find people out of place in the Jewish camp like Nicodemus (who defends Jesus in the Jewish council putting himself at risk and later burying Jesus), and members of the Jewish authorities (ἐκ τῶν ἀρχόντων) who believe in Jesus. These are the people in the Fourth Gospel who cannot be easily categorised. They are people in the wrong place.

7.3 Jesus, the ultimate Name bearer.

In the midst of the conflict and names resulting from it, Jesus emerges as possessing the name of God and intending to bring all people under one shepherd. He is the good shepherd and even though he already has the flock of the Johannine community, he has "other sheep" that are meant to be brought into the fold. These are, the Israelites in the Diaspora. The Samaritans are already in, and his death is symbolised by the seed that falls

in the ground so that it can multiply. The glory of God or his honour is at its highest when all the children of God scattered all over the Roman world are brought together. The coming of the Greeks is the beginning of the ingathering of the children of God. Even though the priority is the physical people of God, another people of God have been born as a result of the death and resurrection of Jesus. Since the temple, the place where the Name of God dwelt, has been destroyed, all those who will call upon the name of God will not move to the physical Gerizim or the physical Jerusalem, but look at the 'tented presence' of God where God's Name dwells, Jesus (cf. 1 Kings 8:16-19). Jesus is now the angel of the moving chariot of the glory of God, moving among his people. Even though he is killed, in fulfilment of the scripture, his death is a necessary step towards the increasing of the children of God. What Isaiah saw in a vision is about to be fulfilled. God has come to his people, so that, through his Name, Jesus, they could have better access to him.

7.4 Application to Zimbabwe Context: Offering alternative categories

This research has helped me to allow myself and the whole Christian community in Zimbabwe, to see things in more than two categories. Most of the time, how we label or call people is based on our like and dislike for them. Jesus seems to be surpassing these categories of binary opposites. He opens up a new category of people who are on the move. Jesus has assumed the Name of God that allows all people to move towards a unifying labelling or naming system. These are the names that befit believers. Jesus knows his own by name and this is the name he ascribed to us when we believed in him. He expects us to share in the positive and life-giving nature of this name. We are children of God and are destined to live life to the full. We are not called to enjoy this label as a few individuals, but to make sure all are welcome. No tribal differences could exclude other people in what Jesus has done. The categories of conflict are dissolved and all of us could benefit from what Jesus has done.

Apart from the ascribed positions we now have, we are also expected to acquire better labels as we serve God in Jesus. We need to 'grow less' as individuals and Jesus' influence must increase in us (Jn 3:30). We need to demonstrate that we bear the Name of God through Jesus. Individuality must be subordinate to beneficiary mutuality. If we gain good names, let them point people to what God could do. We should do greater works because the Name of God is powerfully working in us. This means we can do more

creative work so that life is lived to the full, so that people come out of ignorance (darkness), and so that people who do not see could see. Jesus situates believers in a new social space, or category. This is a category of mobility to acquiring a new name and even bearing the all powerful Name of God.

7.4 Summary of Contributions

Even though Johannine scholars have been quick to detect conflict in John, they have not seen how names and labels function to articulate this conflict. I think this thesis makes that contribution. An overlap between the 1st century Palestine and African nomenclatures has opened a clearer reading of the Johannine text. The use of Onomastics in this research has also contributed to both literary and social-scientific approaches to the study of John and other gospels.

7.5 Possible Future Research

If it is true that names function to articulate human relationships among themselves and with God in primitive worldviews, then further research in other areas of the New Testament could be of benefit using these findings. Further research could also be carried out to show how names function as aids to memory in the New Testament.

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