Introduction

Within the early church, the Johannine Community stood outside the mainstream apostolic church and hence, developed a literary corpus distinct from those churches.[1] The Fourth Gospel and the three Epistles of John reveal the distinguishing qualities of this community. Their unique Christology, pneumatology and theology are reflected even in the vocabulary of these works. In the prologue to the Fourth Gospel, for instance, the Evangelist uses λόγος as a title for Jesus Christ to signify the revelatory and pre-existent significance of the incarnate Son of God. Nowhere else in the New Testament is this word used with reference to Christ. Likewise, the Fourth Gospel uses παράκλητος (commonly transliterated, paraclete) as a title for the Holy Spirit. This word is also used in the first Epistle of John as a title for Jesus Christ. In the New Testament, παράκλητος is exclusive to the writings of the Johannine community. This word contains significant theological insight into the person of the Holy Spirit and Jesus Christ as well as providing insight into the Johannine community.

The Origins and Meaning of Παράκλητος

Παράκλητος is the passive verbal adjective form of παρακαλέω. In all five instances that this word appears in the New Testament, παράκλητος functions substantively in either the nominative (Jn 14:25, 15:26, 16:7) or the accusative (Jn 14:16, 1 Jn 2:1) case. Interestingly, the noun, παράκλησις, and the verb, παρακαλέω, do not appear in the Johannine writings. The word is a compound from two separate roots, the preposition παρὰ meaning "alongside" and the verb καλεω meaning "I call." As such, an etymological definition of παράκλητος would be "the one who is called alongside." This definition, however, does not adequately elucidate the sense of the word as it appears in Johannine literature.

Among Johannine scholars, therefore, there are three prevalent source theories that attempt to explain the origin and meaning of παράκλητος as it pertains to Johannine literature:[2]

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[1] See Raymond E. Brown, *The Community of the Beloved Disciple*, New York: Paulist Press, 1979, and J. Louis Martyn, *History and Theology in Fourth Gospel*, Nashville: Abingdon, 1979.

[2] Other suggestions such as comforter, based upon the appearance of the word in Greek versions of the Old Testament in Job 16:2, or a purely etymological suggestion are generally rejected by scholars, see J. Behm, *The Theological Dictionary*

1. R. Bultmann, in keeping with his thesis regarding the origins of the Fourth Gospel, argues that παράκλητος derives its meaning from Gnosticism (Mandaean Literature) and the concept of heavenly helpers.
2. J. Behm connects παράκλητος with the Old Testament, intertestamental and rabbinic concept of advocate. This latter connection is supported as the principal definition in most pre-Christian and contemporaneous literature and by the Latin Fathers who typically translated παράκλητος into the Latin as *advocatus*.
3. In the works of Philo and Josephus, παράκλητος, or its cognates, are used in the sense of intercessor, advisor and/or helper. E. J. Goodspeed generally supports this understanding of παράκλητος, noting that this definition is not as restrictive as the Bultmannian and Behm suggestions and hence, suits each occurrence of the word in Johannine literature.

Given the diversity of the Palestinian religious milieu, evidence of interdependence between the literature of the period and the Johannine literature, it seems entirely possible that each of these theories influenced the Johannine conception of παράκλητος.[3] Yet, in the Johannine literature, the word παράκλητος has evolved beyond the limitations of all these source theories.

The παράκλητος of Johannine literature has many unique characteristics or functions apart from those reflected in these sources. Generally, the Johannine παράκλητος is connected with the Spirit of truth or Holy Spirit who is given, sent to the disciples to abide with them and in them (Jn 14:16-17, 26). He teaches about everything, reminds the disciples about all that Jesus Christ said and he testifies concerning Jesus Christ (Jn 14:26, 15:26). As the Evangelist writes, "He will prove the world wrong about sin, righteousness and judgment" (Jn 15:8). Yet, the παράκλητος does not speak his own words but instead speaks the words of the Father and the

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of the New Testament Abridged in One Volume, ed. Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich, Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1985, 800-14, and G. Braumann, *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology, Volume 1*, ed. Colin Brown, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1975, 88-92. Also mentioned in the latter article is the definition convincer suggested by Snaith. I did not reference Snaith's definition, as it does not find any support in any of my primary sources.

Son. In John 16:13-14, the παράκλητος has an eschatological function, declaring the things to come, guiding the disciples into truth (cf. Jn 16:9-11) and glorifying Jesus Christ. He possesses all that Jesus Christ, the first παράκλητος (Jn 14:16; 1 Jn 2:1), possesses and subsequently, reveals the significance of Christ and the Christ-event to the world (Jn 16:14-15).

Given these varied functions, most English translations cannot convey a complete sense of παράκλητος as intended in Johannine literature. In particular, the common translations, helper, intercessor, advocate, counselor, comforter, do not convey the revelatory and eschatological functions of the Johannine παράκλητος.[4] Yet, given that the Johannine usage of παράκλητος is also distinct from all other pre-Christian and contemporaneous literature, it is doubtful that the word possessed a definition outside the Johannine community that embodied all the characteristics and functions attributed to it in their literature. As with λόγος, the Evangelist has embraced a Greek word and breathed into it profound Christian significance. As such, παράκλητος should either be translated in its common equivalent, advocate, or it should simply be transliterated.

Jesus Christ as Παράκλητος

As noted previously, though the Evangelist primarily uses the title παράκλητος for the Holy Spirit, it is also applied to Jesus Christ. Jesus is implicitly identified as a παράκλητος in John 14:16 and explicitly in 1 John 2:1. The former reference does not provide any significant insight into how the Johannine community understood Jesus as a παράκλητος; the latter reference clearly identifies him as an advocate, providing legal defense and intercession for believers before God the Father.

In 1 John, the importance of the Holy Spirit as παράκλητος is secondary to the role of Jesus Christ. Interestingly, however, the Evangelist seems to conscientiously describe Jesus

[3] Before and especially since Bultmann, intertextual studies by such scholars as Martyn, Brown, Charlesworth, and others have demonstrated relationships between Johannine literature and Gnosticism, Mandeans, Samaritans, Qumranians, Hellenistic Judaism and other religious and philosophical groups of the first century. A simple, undeniable thesis of all these works is that the Evangelist was certainly steeped in the diverse religious milieu of his era.

[4] In order to best describe its function in Johannine literature, παράκλητος should perhaps be rendered revealer. However, as I will point out shortly, the word should not be translated according to the function that its given in the literature but rather it should be translated according to its meaning in the historical context.

Christ in similar language as that of the παράκλητος in the upper room discourses of the Fourth Gospel. Jesus is the Holy One that anoints, teaches and gives all knowledge (1 Jn 2:20, 27). He abides with and in the believers (1 Jn 2:24-27). His incarnation is the standard by which the believers are instructed to discern spirits (1 Jn 4:2) and his command that his disciples are to love one another is the ultimate standard of the Johannine community (1 Jn 3:23-24, 4:20). As such, taken with the words of Christ in the Fourth Gospel, it seems that the relationship between Jesus as παράκλητος and the Holy Spirit as παράκλητος is similar to that of John the Baptist and Jesus Christ. John the Baptist and the Holy Spirit are both lamps that testify to the light. Nevertheless, the Holy Spirit certainly exceeds John the Baptist in importance; the Evangelist, perhaps more than any other New Testament writer, asserts the divine personhood of the Holy Spirit.

Παράκλητος, the Holy Spirit and the Johannine Community

The title παράκλητος for the Holy Spirit is unique to the Fourth Gospel and therefore, enhances the Christian understanding of the Holy Spirit. Johannine pneumatology, as a result of the way in which παράκλητος is applied in the Gospel, uniquely conveys the prosecutorial, revelatory and eschatological mission of the Spirit, the supportive role of the Spirit in the life of the believer and emphasizes the Spirit's personality and relationship to the triune Godhead.

The Spirit of truth, the παράκλητος, in the Fourth Gospel, is presented quite differently from the Holy Spirit of the Synoptics. In Matthew, Mark and Luke, the Holy Spirit is the empowering force behind the ministry of Jesus Christ and the Spirit's role at Pentecost and in the life of the church is only foreshadowed. In the Fourth Gospel, however, the personality of the Spirit is developed. Clearly, the Evangelist conceives of an active and powerful co-regent of heaven that is intimately involved in the life of the believing community. The Fourth Gospel presents the Spirit as revealing the truth and the significance of the unfolding events; he prosecutes and convicts the world concerning that truth; and, he will glorify Christ Jesus. The

Holy Spirit of the Evangelist is a co-equal, co-eternal, co-active person of the triune Godhead and is identified as such with greater clarity than in the Synoptics.

The unique, higher pneumatology of the Johannine literature had practical implications and as such, found expression in community life. The Epistles of John testify to a community that relied heavily upon the revelatory mission of the Spirit. It seems likely that their reliance on the Spirit in governing community life developed as a result of the Fourth Gospel's testimony concerning the παράκλητος. The message of the Fourth Gospel concerning the παράκλητος suggests a helper that teaches and guides individuals into all the truth. In the first Epistle of John, the Evangelist reinforces the revelatory and instructional importance of the παράκλητος to the Johannine community (Jn 2:20, 27).[5] In v. 27, the Evangelist evidently conceives of the παράκλητος as the agent through whom God has affected the promises of the new covenant (Jer 31:31-34); that is, the παράκλητος teaches believers of the Johannine community all things and therefore, it is not necessary for them to teach one another concerning the truth (1 Jn 3:27; cf. Jn 14:26). It was only necessary for the community to discern the teachings of the παράκλητος as the believers received them. This emphasis on pneumatic revelation and instruction, however, appears to have caused divisions within the community as false teachers began to teach false doctrine while claiming pneumatic inspiration. As such, the Evangelist of the first Epistle of John writes his community to set forth guidelines for discerning the right Spirit of truth, the παράκλητος (1 Jn 4:1-6; cf. 2 Jn, 3 Jn). In doing so, the Evangelist sets forward the importance of the first παράκλητος, Jesus Christ, and his earthly ministry as the standard of truth.

Conclusion

The παράκλητος of the Johannine community is one of the most significant titles of the Holy Spirit and Jesus Christ in the New Testament. Due to its origin, its meaning, its varied uses

[5] In these verses, the Evangelist is almost certainly referring to the glorified Christ but nevertheless, Christ is acting in the role of παράκλητος (see 1 Jn 2:1 that begins this chapter) and the language is not dissimilar from Holy Spirit's role as παράκλητος. As such, it is reasonable to draw insight from these passages with regards to the Johannine community's understanding of the παράκλητος in general.

in extra-biblical literature and its context in Johannine literature, the word παράκλητος conveys significant theological insight. The παράκλητος is our intercessor, our helper, our defender, the prosecutor of the world and the Spirit of truth. The παράκλητος is also the revealer and God's chief agent in Johannine eschatology. Without the Johannine understanding of παράκλητος, the New Testament picture of the Godhead and their involvement with humanity would be drastically inferior. The παράκλητος passages teach the believer that God is intimately and personally amongst his children and alongside them in service and in authority.

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