CHANG SEONG AN

Reconsidering the Rhetoric of Temporality in Johannine Literature

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640



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List of Abbreviations

1 Apol. Justin, First Apology 2 Apol. Justin, Second Apology

AB Anchor Bible Aen. Virgil, Aeneid

Ag. Ap. Josephus, Against Apion

AJA American Journal of Archaeology
AJP American Journal of Philology
AmJT American Journal of Theology
Ant. Josephus, Jewish Antiquities

Ant. rom. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Roman Antiquities

Apol. Tertullian, Apology

Bib Biblica

BRev Bible Review

BTB Biblical Theology Bulletin
CBQ Catholic Biblical Quarterly

Cels. Origen

Cherubim Philo, On Cherubim Classical Antiquity

Claud. Suetonius, Deified Claudius

Creation Philo, On the Creation of the World
CurBR Currents in Biblical Research
Decl. Quintilian, The Lesser Declamation

Dial. Justin, Dialogue with Trypho Did. apost. Didascalia apostolorum

Ecl. Virgil, Eclogues

Embassy Philo, On the Embassy to Gaius
Flight Philo, On Flight and Finding
Gen. an. Aristotle, Generation of Animals
GOTR Greek Orthodox Theological Review

GR Greece and Rome

Haer. Hippolytus, Refutation of All Heresies

Hist. Herodotus, Histories Hist. Tacitus, Historiae

Hist. ecc. Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History

Abbreviations XV

HTR Harvard Theological Review
Is. Os. Plutarch, On Isis and Osiris
JBL Journal of Biblical Literature
JECS Journal of Early Christian Studies

JOTT Journal of Translation and Textlinguistics

JRS Journal of Roman Studies

JSNT Journal for the Study of the New Testament

JTS Journal of Theological Studies

J.W. Josephus, Jewish War LCL Loeb Classical Library

Leg. Athenagoras of Athens, A Plea for Christians

LXX Septuagint

m. Pesahim Mishnah tractate Pesahim m. Zevahim Mishnah tractate Zevahim Man. Augustine, Manichean Debate

Mart. Pol. Martyrdom of Polycarp

Moses Philo, On the Life of Moses 1, 2 Names Philo, On the Change of Names

Nat. Pliny, Natural History

Nat. d. Cicero, On the Nature of Gods

NovTNovum TestamentumNTLNew Testament LibraryNTSNew Testament Studies

OJA Oxford Journal of Archaeology
Or. Graec. Tatian, Oratio ad Graecos
Pasch. Origen, Peri Pascha

Pasch. Origen, Peri Pascha
PP Melito, Peri Pascha

PRSt Perspectives in Religious Studies

QE Philo, Questions and Answers on Exodus

Saec. Horace, Carmen Saeculare
SBL Society of Biblical Literature
SCO Studi classici e orientali
Spec. Philo, On the Special Laws
Superst. Plutarch, On Superstition

Unchangeable Philo, *That God is Unchangeable*

VC Vigiliae Christianae

Vit. Apoll. Philostratus, The Life of Apollonius of Tyana

WUNT Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament

A. Problem Statement and Thesis

Each city in the ancient Roman world calibrated its time in a unique way by blending aspects of the imperial calendar with other conventional temporal systems. Ancient writers adapted these temporal systems when constructing their narratives in order to shape their own particular sense of time and temporality. These presentations of time were neither fixed nor neutral, but rather displayed the rhetorical strategies of those who created, employed, and practiced them.¹ By investigating different configurations of time in ancient literary texts, this study considers what was at stake in the temporal systems of the Gospel of John in particular, and those presented in Johannine literature more broadly, by tracing the composition and reception of this literature among Christ believers.² By constructing temporal frames that place Jesus's life within divine as well as earthly time, Johannine literature presents Jesus as the savior of the world (John 4:42; 1 John 4:14) and seeks to secure a sense of group belonging by imagining a shared experience of the past based on a particular understanding of time. In the second and early third centuries CE, this literature was reinterpreted by a group of people known as the "Quartodecimans" (meaning "proponents of the fourteenth day"), who adopted what they considered to be the Johannine

¹ Concerning the multi-dimensional aspects of time, see Michael G. Flaherty, *The Texture of Time: Agency and Temporal Experience* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2011), 2–13; William Gallois, *Time, Religion, and History* (Harlow: Pearson, 2007), 1–4; Robert Hannah, "Calendar," in *The Routledge Encyclopedia of Ancient Mediterranean Religions*, ed. Eric Orlin et al. (New York: Routledge, 2015), 159–60; David Lowenthal, *The Past Is a Foreign Country – Revisited*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015); Patrick Dawson and Christopher Sykes, *Organizational Change and Temporality: Bending the Arrow of Time* (New York: Routledge, 2016); Donald J. Wilcox, *The Measure of Times Past: Pre-Newtonian Chronologies and the Rhetoric of Relative Time* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 1–15; Eve-Marie Becker, *The Birth of Christian History: Memory and Time from Mark to Luke-Acts* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017), 1–33. Katherine Clarke keenly analyzes temporal frames as political, social constructs by expounding the various local frames of time in the ancient Greece. *Making Time for the Past: Local History and the Polis* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 27.

² Karl Gerlach, *The Antenicene Pascha: A Rhetorical History* (Leuven: Peeters, 1998), xix.

chronological arrangement of Jesus's death and resurrection to give meaning to their Easter celebration, which they observed by correlating their own feast with the Jewish Pascha.³

The importance of temporal markers for some Christ believers is clear from the very first words of the Fourth Gospel. The Gospel of John opens by declaring that, in his role as "the Word," Jesus was present "in the beginning" (John 1:1). This temporal marker simultaneously references primordial time in Israel's history (Gen 1:1, "in the beginning") and the Roman imperial calendar, codified in the inscription commemorating the Emperor's birthday ("beginning"), which was understood as a beneficial day for all living beings (the ruler's birthday marks the beginning of a new epoch). Paralleling the Torah's teaching that God was the beginning (Exod 3:14) and John's understanding that Jesus, as "Word," appeared at the beginning, the emperor's birth was considered a "beginning" in the Roman context. By alluding to both beginnings, the Gospel of John constructs a distinctive, varied temporal frame that intertwines temporal references drawn from the setting in which it was composed to arrange past events in a way that shapes the portrait of Jesus. The first letter of John (hereafter 1 John) reiterates and transforms this temporal framework, also employing the temporal marker "from the beginning" (1 John 1:1), which rhetorically mirrors Genesis and echoes the Prologue to the Fourth Gospel. By invoking the time of creation as represented in Genesis 1:1, 1 John 1:1 addresses the believers' communal origin and, by linking the past with the present and future through imaginative genealogical strategies, invites them to participate in a temporal frame that distinguishes them from other Jesus followers. This imagined genealogy situates the audience in relation to divine time and the "beginning," and defines the status of the opponents that 1 John imagined: namely that they held no legitimate link to the ancestor to whom 1 John belongs because they belong to another ancestry – that of the devil. This literature legitimated the true believers' self-definition through a belief in Jesus as a reconfiguration of time that collapsed the past, present, and future. Jesus is also

³ Leaders like Polycarp of Smyrna, Polycrates of Ephesus, and Melito of Sardis – later categorized as "the Quartodecimans" – claimed that the 14th of Nissan, the start of the Jewish Passover, was the appropriate day to celebrate Christ's resurrection. According to these writers, the Johannine passion was the proper source for the calendrical calibration of Easter, a practice maintained by some long after other Christ believers began to celebrate Christ's resurrection on Sunday (*Ecclesiastical History* 5.23–24). Alistair Stewart-Sykes, *The Lamb's High Feast: Melito, Peri Pascha, and the Quartodeciman Paschal Liturgy at Sardis* (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 1–29; Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History, Volume I: Books 1–5*, trans. Kirsopp Lake, LCL 153 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1926), 503–13; Roger T. Beckwith, *Calendar and Chronology: Jewish and Christian Biblical, Intertestamental and Patristic Studies* (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 51–70; J. A. Cerrato, *Hippolytus between East and West: The Commentaries and the Provenance of the Corpus* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 203–18.

depicted as the end of time in these writings; he is characterized as not only indestructible, but also as returning to his original glorious status following his crucifixion and resurrection (John 17:5 and 1 John 3:2).⁴

Some later Christ believers (e.g., Melito of Sardis) adopted these Johannine temporal frames for their own purposes, defining their celebration of Easter based on John's perspective; Jesus's death and resurrection were interpreted as a "Passover" and the observance of this day became one way to attend to the importance of temporality in the context of ritual performance. Calibrating time and inviting an audience to adopt it, therefore, was a central strategy for these Jesus believers, who sought to foster a sense of bonding, in part, by creating a particular frame of temporality that distinguished their own calendars from what had come before. This process, already present in the Gospel, is reaffirmed in 1 John, and became practiced in liturgical cycles as these believers grew in number and influence.

By using temporal markers and frames, the Gospel of John portrays Jesus as the true Lord of the world and describes God alone as having the prerogative to begin, end, and organize time, which is in turn reenacted in the life of Jesus. The first letter of John both employs temporal markers from the Gospel while developing its own, particular usage; the letter writer imagines that the community that the letter addressed originated at the beginning of time and uses genealogical strategies to distinguish this group from other Christ believers by linking the past with the present and future. The practices of Easter that Jesus followers developed during the second century shows that temporality remained a significant consideration and an important way to distinguish between various groups. Melito of Sardis was a particular proponent of this point of view; he asserted that Passover was the single commemoration of Jesus's passion and resurrection. He also presented an ambivalent and binary attitude towards celebrating Easter according to Jewish time and towards celebrating Jesus as the true Paschal lamb. He recommended a framework of temporal observance distinct from that of other Jesus believers. As the following chapters argue, early Christian writers like Melito of Sardis employed various temporal frames to recommend that Jesus's followers practice and follow the will of God as the writers understood it. These authors also invited their audiences to participate in their conceptions of time, which distinguished them from other groups and "those who do not see God."5

⁴ "So now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had in your presence before the world existed" (John 17:5). Throughout the whole chapters, I will consult NRSV unless otherwise mentioned.

⁵ Melito of Sardis, On Pascha: With the Fragments of Melito and Other Material Related to the Quartodecimans, trans. Alistair C. Stewart, 2nd ed. (New York: St Vladimir Seminary Press, 2017), 75.

B. Significance of the Problem

Ancient people organized time according to a variety of systems, arranging past events and present practices according to both Roman and local periodization schemes; it was thus a challenge for writers to express a synchronized, authoritative sense of time that their diverse audiences could understand.⁶ Those responsible for writing the Gospel of John shared this problem, which inspired a high degree of temporal intricacy on their part. Other scholars have previously noted the importance and complexity of the Johannine presentation of time; however, they have often attributed the apparent complexity of the writer(s)'s temporal frameworks to a lack of caution with chronological arrangement rather than to an intentional and clear textual strategy. 7 I argue instead that the Gospel of John employs a distinct, coherent temporal framework that can be situated within the world of the narrative; the writer(s) intertwine temporal references drawn from contemporary cultures to arrange past events in a way that shapes belief in Jesus and defines an approach to temporality designed to unite readers into a new understanding of divine time. 8 As I show, Johannine literature uses temporal markers to describe Jesus and his life (in particular his death and resurrection) as a world-changing temporal axis that creates a boundary between "us" and "them." The Quartodecimans also used this temporal strategy, employing John's temporal schemes to both associate the Pascha with the passion of Jesus and distinguish their practice of Easter from that of other Jesus followers and "the Jews," despite various historical linkages between these groups and their ritual practices. 9 Existing scholarship on the role of

⁶ D. C. Feeney, Caesar's Calendar: Ancient Time and the Beginnings of History (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 1–6; Michele Renee Salzman, On Roman Time: The Codex-Calendar of 354 and the Rhythms of Urban Life in Late Antiquity (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 3–22; Molly Pasco-Pranger, Founding the Year Ovid's Fasti and the Poetics of the Roman Calendar (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 21–72.

⁷ Raymond E. Brown points out that some chronological descriptions of John are awkward and unsuccessful attempts to relate John to the other three Gospels. *The Gospel According to John I–XII*, AB 29 (New York: Doubleday, 1966), 113; James D. G. Dunn, *Neither Jew Nor Greek: A Contested Identity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015), 356, 774; Herman N. Ridderbos, *The Gospel of John: A Theological Commentary*, trans. John Vriend (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 184; Charles W. Hedrick, "Vestigial Scenes in John: Setting without Dramatization," *NovT* (2005): 354–66.

⁸ Vernon K. Robbins, "Conceptual Blending and Early Christian Imagination," in *Foundations for Sociorhetorical Exploration: A Rhetoric of Religious Antiquity Reader*, ed. Vernon K. Robbins, Robert H. von Thaden Jr., and Bart B. Bruehler (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2016), 329–66; George Aichele, *The Postmodern Bible* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 272–308.

⁹ The term "the Jews" in these documents is rhetorical counterpart to "Jesus followers"

temporality in the Fourth Gospel has often called attention to the literary function of narrative time. ¹⁰ Alan Culpepper's Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel, for example, points out that the Gospel's complex temporal configuration lends meaning to the text's narratives. He argues that characteristics of Jesus's ministry are illuminated through literary devices like plot, time, and an omniscient narrator, each of which involves the narration of a temporal framework. 11 This work stimulated further research on time in John, including studies by Richard Bauckham and Gail R. O'Day, both of whom address the narrator's articulation of a christological understanding of Jesus's life by structuring time. 12 As Bauckham and O'Day argue, the Gospel utilizes time to develop a christological theme and to illuminate the meaning of Jesus's ministry and teaching. Jörg Frey also examines the Johannine understanding of temporality in terms of the eschatology of the present time because he emphasizes the present dwelling of the Spirit with John's readers. 13 He analyzes chronological terms (e.g., time, hour) referring to the temporal movements and researches the usages of verb tenses in the Gospel of John.¹⁴ In spite of the importance of Frey's analysis of the interplay among the past events in the earthly life of Jesus, the present situations of the readers, and their future expectation of the eternal life, he limits his focus on the horizontal perspectives of time and ignores the various ways that the Greek and Roman writers chronologically attempt to map time. Douglas Estes offers another approach, exploring John's multi-dimensional mode of

and therefore cannot be interpreted as a monolithic description of Jewish beliefs or practices. For discussion, see Adele Reinhartz, Cast Out of the Covenant: Jews and Anti-Judaism in the Gospel of John (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2018), 77–78, 103–4; Judith M. Lieu, Image and Reality: The Jews in the World of the Christians in the Second Century (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996), 220–35.

¹⁰ Tom Thatcher, "The New Current through John: The Old 'New Look' and the New Critical Orthodoxy," in *New Currents through John*, ed. Francisco Lozada Jr. and Tom Thatcher (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2006), 1–26; Stephen Neill and Tom Wright, *The Interpretation of the New Testament: 1861–1986*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 433–39; Rudolf Bultmann, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary*, trans. G. R. Beasley-Murray (Oxford: Blackwell, 1971); James Louis Martyn, *History and Theology in the Fourth Gospel*, 3rd ed. (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2003).

¹¹ R. Alan Culpepper, *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel: A Study in Literary Design* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983), 53–75, 231; Paul D. Duke, *Irony in the Fourth Gospel* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1985); Gail R. O'Day, "'I Have Overcome the World' (John 16:33): Narrative Time in John 13–17," *Semeia* 53 (1991): 153–66.

¹² Richard Bauckham, *Gospel of Glory: Major Themes in Johannine Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2015), 131–84.

¹³ Jörg Frey, Die johanneische Eschatologie III: Zeitverständnis und Eschatologie in den johanneischen Texten, WUNT 110 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000); Jörg Frey, Theology and History in the Fourth Gospel: Theology and Narration (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2018), 166–70.

¹⁴ Jörg Frey, *Die johanneische Eschatologie I: Ihre Probleme im Spiegel der Forschung seit Reimarus*. WUNT 96 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1997).

time in his work *The Temporal Mechanic of the Fourth Gospel*. But rather than addressing Johannine temporality as a matter of narration and plot, Estes uses relativity theory from modern physics to demonstrate that the temporal dimension of the Gospel is not absolute but rather rhetorically employed for narrative ends. 15 Likewise, in their short studies, Friederike Kunath, Eric Rowe, and Jerome Neyrey examine the temporal configurations of particular passages of the Gospel. 16 Their work argues that the Gospel's temporality shapes a multi-dimensional universe, though they do not attend to the broader context of John's temporal framework. Still, these writers do point out a common theme: John's temporality, they argue, attempts to construct a new framework as an alternative to contemporary, imperial time. Warren Carter and Musa Dube add another perspective, arguing in their postcolonial exploration of the Gospel that John employs temporal frames to address discourses of domination and to both subvert and negotiate power.¹⁷ None of these scholars, however, pay close attention to the wider context of John's temporal framework; as I argue, John's use of time claims absolute, divinely mediated power over the empire.

In contrast to these studies, which focus either on the writers' expression of narrative time or, in the case of scholars informed by postcolonial approaches, on implicit power discourses, I place John's employment of multiple temporal frames within a complex temporal and historical context. Time and temporal rhetoric, I show, was a cultural and historical phenomenon as well as a narrative strategy that furthered John's claim that Christ was the mediator of absolute truth and power.

First John, which echoes themes from the Gospel (e.g., life, light, and darkness), has been interpreted as describing a community of Christ believers familiar with John's Gospel. Both the Epistle and the Gospel use temporal frames to construct the "Johannine community." The "community" has conventionally been framed, in a literary sense, as a unified group belonging to and founded

¹⁵ Douglas Charles Estes, *The Temporal Mechanics of the Fourth Gospel: A Theory of Hermeneutical Relativity in the Gospel of John* (Leiden: Brill, 2008). Concerning the critique of applying a modern conception of temporality to ancient texts see Bruce J. Malina, "Christ and Time: Swiss or Mediterranean?," *CBQ* 51 (1989): 28; Steve Motyer, "Method in Fourth Gospel Studies: A Way Out of the Impasse?," *JSNT* 19 (1997): 27–44.

¹⁶ Friederike Kunath, "Jesus's Preexistence and the Temporal Configuration of the Gospel of John," *Early Christianity* 8 (2017): 30–47; Eric Rowe and Jerome Neyrey, "Christ and Time-Part Three: 'Telling Time' in the Fourth Gospel," *BTB* 40 (2010): 79–92. For an examination of temporal frame in 1 Peter, see David G. Horrell and Wei Hsien Wan, "Christology, Eschatology and the Politics of Time in 1 Peter," *JSNT* 38 (2016): 263–76.

¹⁷ Warren Carter, *John and Empire: Initial Explorations* (New York: T&T Clark, 2008), 3–18; Musa W. Dube, "Savior of the World but Not of This World: A Postcolonial Reading of Spatial Construction in John," in *The Postcolonial Bible*, ed. R. S. Sugirtharajah (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 118–35; Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Time and Timing: Law and History," in *Chronotypes: The Construction of Time*, ed. John B. Bender and David E. Wellbery (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1991), 99–117.

in a particular social environment that the writer both refracted and developed for his own purposes. 18 Scholars such as Raymond Brown, Jan van der Watt and Georg Strecker have interpreted 1 John as presenting a polemic designed to safeguard the community from the writer's imagined opponents. They also argue that the text reflects internal schisms within a social group by focusing on the writer's references to internal, communal tension (1 John 3:8, the children of God and the children of the devil) and those who left his group (1 John 2:19). 19 Judith Lieu, however, argues that even if there were a polemic against outsiders, the letter does not describe who the opponents were, but rather assures the audience of eternal life and encourages it to remain faithful to God (e.g., 1 John 1:2; 5:13; 2:7-8).²⁰ As R. S. Sugirtharajah correctly points out, 1 John engages with a discourse of power and hegemony to undergird the writer's authority to interpret the gospel traditions; this writer addresses and constructs different groups by reinforcing a hierarchical relation between his or her own point of view and that of the addressees while also claiming distinctive theological interpretations of the identity of Jesus in the flesh. 21 Though the practice of imagining a "community" on the basis of a literary work should be undertaken with caution, it is clear that this ancient writer has some imagined audience in mind and that he or she sought to persuade that audience to adopt a specific perspective. The writer also portrays the audience as threatened by an imagined "opponent." In my own reading of 1 John, I focus on how this text projects the sovereign Christ into a divine schema by using temporal frames as a rhetorical mode of thinking to assert the self-definition of Christ believers. This thesis argues that, by presenting him or herself as a superior interpreter of Christ, the writer of 1 John endeavored to create identities of inclusion and exclusion by evoking the memory of Jesus within a shared sense of time.²²

¹⁸ Hansjörg Schmid, "How to Read the First Epistle of John Non-Polemically," *Bib* 85, no. 1 (2004): 24–41; Raimo Hakola, "The Johannine Community as a Constructed, Imagined Community," in *Social Memory and Social Identity in the Study of Early Judaism and Early Christianity*, ed. Samual Byrskog, Raimo Hakola, and Jutta Jokiranta (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2016), 211–14.

¹⁹ Raymond E. Brown, *The Epistles of John* (New York: Doubleday, 1982); Georg Strecker, *The Johannine Letters: A Commentary on 1, 2, and 3 John*, trans. Linda M. Maloney (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996); Jan G. van der Watt, *An Introduction to the Johannine Gospel and Letters* (New York: T&T Clark, 2007), 137–38.

²⁰ Judith M. Lieu, *The Theology of the Johannine Epistles* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 6.

²¹ R. S. Sugirtharajah, "The First, Second, and Third Letters of John," in Bible and Post-colonialism: A Postcolonial Commentary on the New Testament Writings, ed. Fernando F. Segovia and R. S. Sugirtharajah (New York: T&T Clark, 2007), 413–23.

²² Ruben Zimmermann, "Remembering the Future: Eschatology in the Letters of John," in *Eschatology of the New Testament and Some Related Documents*, ed. Jan G. van der Watt (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 529–30.

Those who inherited the Gospel and the Johannine letter displayed their loyalty to these works in part by developing their own temporal frames, in this case by a calendar of feasts related to narrative temporalities of both texts.²³ The absence of a unified calendrical system, however, created discrepancies in the Christ believers' practice as the centuries wore on. Groups of early Jesus followers determined their holiday observances independently of one another, using particular temporal frames that reflected distinctive receptions of earlier traditions. By the fourth century, diverging modes of observance led to a controversy over the commemorative date of Easter, the celebration of the death and resurrection of Jesus.²⁴ As earlier scholars have argued, the alternative dating of Easter by Melito of Sardis and others known as "Quartodecimans" was reinterpreted as a sign of conflict between "orthodoxy" and "heresy," a historical process that, over time, demanded the celebration's institutionalization and standardization. Though definitions of "orthodoxy," as applied to particular temporalities, are sometimes at issue, I focus instead on the significance of temporality for the diversity and fluidity of the early Christ believers' self-definition, developed on the basis of a particular interpretation of the passion and resurrection of Jesus.²⁵ Inspired by the passion narrative in the Fourth Gospel, Jesus believers who celebrated Easter on the Jewish Passover creatively shaped their own interpretation of the significance of Easter represented by Jesus Christ as the creator clothed in flesh. Their unique choice of ritual date occurred before concerns about "heresies" had arisen. ²⁶ Based on a close analysis of the literary and historical contexts of the Quartodeciman debates and Melito's work, I contend that the Quartodeciman Easter, by embodying Johannine temporal frames, carried on the tradition of employing temporality to express group boundaries; like the authors of John and 1 John, Quartodeciman writers employed calendrical observance to convey their rivalry with other groups, particularly with "the Jews," but also with other Christ believers.

²³ Valeriy A. Alikin, *The Earliest History of the Christian Gathering: Origin, Development and Content of the Christian Gathering in the First to Third Centuries* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 40–56.

²⁴ Sacha Stern, *Calendar and Community: A History of the Jewish Calendar, 2nd Century BCE–10th Century CE* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 65–84.

²⁵ Henry M. Knapp, "Melito's Use of Scripture in *Peri Pascha*: Second-Century Typology," *VC* 54 (2000): 343–74; Laurence Broadhurst, "Melito of Sardis, the Second Sophistic, and Israel," in *Rhetoric and Reality in Early Christianity*, ed. Willi Baun (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2006), 49–73; Alistair Stewart-Sykes, "Melito's Anti-Judaism," *JECS* 5 (1997): 279–83; Lieu, *Image and Reality*, 199–240, 271–83.

²⁶ For a study of this theme, see James Drummond, "The Fourth Gospel and the Quarto-decimans," *AmJT* 1 (1897): 601–57; Richard Bauckham offers a more recent assessment. *The Testimony of the Beloved Disciple: Narrative, History, and Theology in the Gospel of John* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 38–40.

C. Methods 9

Early Christian writers (in particular Melito of Sardis and those of the Gospel of John and the Johannine letter) used temporal configurations of time to conceptualize their particular yet fluid group self-definition based on invented intercommunal boundaries. I build on existing scholarly work on this Johannine literature and other early Christian texts that employed Johannine temporality to define the practice of Easter, to show that temporality was rhetorically designed to legitimate the writer's authority to represent the supremacy of Jesus over the world, create a communal temporality encompassing past, present, and future, and exemplify the self-expression of particular groups of Jesus believers through particular interpretations of the death and resurrection of Jesus.

C. Methods

I incorporate methods of historical and literary criticism to investigate the function of temporality and the interactions between groups who used temporal frames to assert superiority over other groups.²⁷ I employ historical criticism to place ancient texts in their historical context and explicate historical land-scapes that are interwoven with the multiple temporal frames invoked in the Johannine literature. In particular, I use this method to interrogate how the Quartodecimans developed their temporal framework for commemorative feasts by referencing that literature. I describe how the Christ believers' mode of thinking was based on the rhetoric of temporality, and the ways that this rhetoric of temporality defined particular Christ believing groups. I also employ literary criticism to highlight the rhetorical dimensions of temporality in these ancient texts and to examine the effects of temporal frames on the narratives in terms of the relation of temporality with the literary structure.²⁸

Lastly, alongside historical and rhetorical critical methods, I use literary critical methods to highlight the subtle ways that Johannine literature (in particular the Gospel of John) interacted with the Roman imperial context. A full understanding of the temporal markers in this literature calls for consideration of the interrelations between writings from different cultures that demanded, selectively employed, and negotiated perceptions of temporality.²⁹ Accordingly,

²⁷ Jane Webster, "Roman Imperialism and the 'Post Imperial Age," in *Roman Imperialism: Post-Colonial Perspectives*, ed. Jane Webster and Nicholas J. Cooper (Leicester: University of Leicester, 1994), 4–9.

²⁸ David E. Aune, *The New Testament in Its Literary Environment* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1987), 47–49; George A. Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation through Rhetorical Criticism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984), 97–113.

²⁹ Bernhard Weisser, "Roman Imperial Imaginary of Time and Cosmos," in *Time and Cosmos in Greco-Roman Antiquity*, ed. Alexander Jones, trans. Orla Mulholland (New York: New York University, 2016), 171–83; Feeney, *Caesar's Calendar*, 213; Musa W. Dube and Jeffrey L. Staley, "Descending from and Ascending into Heaven: A Postcolonial Analysis

while situating Johannine temporality within the calendars, feasts, and temporal schemes of Roman, Jewish, and Greek writings, I also employ literary and historical criticism to track narrative time and ancient temporality, respectively. Considering the power relations between the writers and their real or imagined audiences, I also address the ways that hegemonic assertions sought to establish the appearance of a "natural" progression of time.³⁰

This monograph begins with a close reading of four passages from the Gospel of John (John 1:1–18; 1:29–2:12; 19:14–20:23; 21:1–25). I employ historical criticism alongside rhetorical and literary criticism to argue that John developed a unique theology that intermeshed Roman and Jewish temporal frameworks to accentuate a dominant Christ. I argue that the "beginning" in the Prologue (1:1-18) does not only resonate with the archaic time of Jewish tradition but also mimics imperial references to the Emperor's "beginning" in order to construct the temporally superb origin of Jesus. 31 The writer(s) also employed this rhetoric to demonstrate Jesus's power by switching scenes from John the Baptist to Jesus based on the transition from one temporal marker, "the next day," to another, "after that." These phrases signal the beginning of Jesus's earthly ministry (1:29-2:12). While the writer(s) narrate Jesus's crucifixion according to a Jewish temporal frame - mentioning, for example, "the day of Preparation" (John 19:14, 42) - they also invoke a different temporal structure, the length of time between two midnights ("early in the morning" and "evening on that day," John 20:1 and 19) to describe the resurrection scene. I contend that this temporal transition was specifically designed as an alternative to contemporary Roman and Jewish temporal frames. The Gospel's unique temporality alludes to a divine time, as opposed to an earthly time; according to John, earthly time is replaced by the time inaugurated by the coming, death, and resurrection of Jesus. Lastly, the Johannine appendix (John 21:1) connects a new scene to the previous chapters through its setting in the Galilee (where Jesus first met the disciples) and the temporal marker "after these things," a phrase that is repeated throughout the Gospel of John. By repeatedly employing this same temporal marker, the writer(s) rhetorically routinize the appearance of the resurrected Jesus, turning extraordinary time into ordinary time. By going back to the same location where Jesus met the disciples ("Galilee," John

of Travel, Space, and Power in John," in *John and Postcolonialism: Travel, Space and Power*, ed. Musa W. Dube and Jeffrey L. Staley (New York: T&T Clark, 2002), 1–10.

³⁰ R. S. Sugirtharajah, Exploring Postcolonial Biblical Criticism: History, Method, Practice (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 46–51; Sugirtharajah, "The First, Second, and Third Letters of John," 413–23; Dube and Staley, eds., John and Postcolonialism; Beth M. Sheppard, "The Fourth Gospel, Romanization, and the Role of Women," in An Introduction to Empire in the New Testament, ed. Adam Winn (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2016), 123–42; Anna Runesson, Exegesis in the Making: Postcolonialism and New Testament Studies (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 91–110.

³¹ Sacha Stern, *Calendars in Antiquity: Empires, States, and Societies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 299–354.

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