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THE MEANING OF ζωή (αἰώνιος)
IN THE GREEK FOURTH GOSPEL
IN LIGHT OF ITS SYNCRETIC MILIEU

by

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INTRODUCTION: Method of Procedure and Discussion of Sources

My method of procedure in this study into the meaning of "Life" in the Fourth Gospel has been limited to the observation of the word "Life" in context.

This method follows upon the presupposition that there exist "axial" words in the gospel around which other "satellite" words orbit. These "satellite" words (i.e. "light", "death", "darkness", "knowing" ["believing"], and "water"), when seen in the context of the "axial" word "Life", reveal a wider field of meaning than the axial word alone is able to convey.

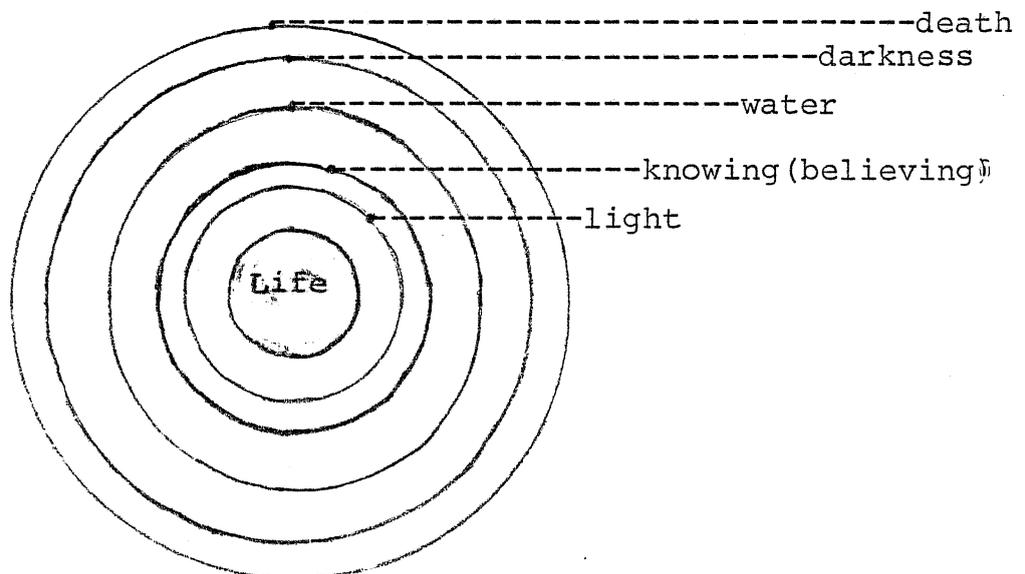
A particular advantage which has been afforded me by this method is in not giving in to the temptation of projecting my own theological, philosophical, psychological, and cultural attitudes into an ancient milieu about which I know conclusively little. Nevertheless, a limitation has confronted me as a result of the demands of this method; i.e. a lack of proficiency in biblical languages. Since I am only a beginner in the study of biblical languages I have relied strongly on the work of several scholars (such as J. Molitor, H. Hill, G. Bertram, and T. Boman) for the meanings of Semitic words. These scholars are convinced that any sound theological construct must be biblically based, and, moreover, built with the stones of philological analysis.

Also, what need be mentioned here by way of introduction, are the reasons for my employment of The Odes of Solomon in connection with the Fourth Gospel.

H.J.W. Drijvers has noted that Ode 19 "should be regarded as a very sophisticated elaboration of the poem of St. John's Gospel and the Annunciation to Mary [of Luke's Gospel], which both show great similarities of wording, especially in the Old Syriac Version...The combination of the Fourth Gospel's Prologue and Luke's Annunciation is to be found in exactly the same order...in Tatian's Diatessaron (A.D. 175)." ¹

J.H. Charlesworth has concluded from his analysis of parallels between the Fourth Gospel and the Odes that "both were probably composed in the same community." ² Charlesworth prefaces his own translation of the Odes with the statement "The Odes of Solomon is, I contend, the earliest Christian hymnbook." ³ He bases his contention on his discovery of Ode 11 within a collection of early Christian documents termed the "Bodmer Papyrus XI(G)". Although the codex is in Greek, Charlesworth observed that within Ode 11 there are "a number of features suggestive of a Semitic origin." His working hypothesis, of course, is that the Greek is a translation of a Semitic Vorlage.

Not having either ancient papyruses or, for that matter, the ability to read and understand Syriac, I was curious as to whether the method which was accessible to me (i.e. the study of contextual patterns--"axial" words and their "satellites") might shed some light on the discussion at hand. After several readings of the Odes, I discovered that the notion of "Life" was central; moreover, after studying its contextual patterns I found closely connected to the word "Life", the satellite words "light", "death", "darkness", "knowledge" ("belief") and "water"--a contextual pattern evident in the Fourth Gospel. Perhaps the following diagram will make this more clear:



[cf. the Table for categorical guideline on page 35]

When I say that the notion "Life" is an "axial" notion, I mean to say that "Life" (in those writings I wish to discuss) is the central motif around which other key words find their full meaning. These "key words" I will call "satellites" (i.e. "light", "death", "darkness", "knowledge" ("belief") and "water") as a way of attempting to describe their dependence upon the more all-embracing term "Life". Also, when I use the axial word "Life" and a satellite word (such as "light") together, I wish the reader to understand this combination in terms of "constellation" (e.g. the "Life-Light" constellation). All of the constellations (when taken as a whole) reveal the full contextual pattern.

A large part of this essay has been devoted to the study of "Life" in the Old Testament literature, especially its development in the Wisdom literature (Psalms and Proverbs), the Prophetic literature (Jeremiah and Isaiah), and in the Pentateuchal literature (Genesis and Deuteronomy).

The contextual pattern of "Life" and its "satellites" which I have already briefly mentioned in connection with the Fourth Gospel and The Odes of Solomon, appears (as we shall see) throughout the Jewish Scriptures.

It is on the basis of this contextual pattern (one which all three writings share) that I intend to further the hypothesis that the Fourth Gospel and The Odes of Solomon arise out of a similar religious environment that is strongly Semitic in character.

I. A Philological Investigation into the Meaning of "Life" in the Syriac and Greek Texts of the Fourth Gospel according A.F.J. Klijn and J. Molitor

1. A.F.J. Klijn's Investigation

In Klijn's article of 1952 "The Term 'Life' in Syriac Theology", the author took up F.C. Burkitt's question that "it is still more surprising and instructive to find that 'salvation' is identified by the Syriac usage with 'life'...May we not therefore believe that this identification of 'salvation' and 'life' is the genuine Aramaic usage, and that the Greek gospels have in this instance introduced a distinction which was not made by Christ and his Aramaic-speaking disciples?"⁴

Upon investigation of ϰωτῆρῖα and ϰωζειν and their counterparts in the Syriac New Testament, Burkitt found that the "Old Syriac" Version regularly expressed the Greek words denoting "salvation" by "life" and "cause to live".⁵

Taking his cue from Burkitt, Klijn did a study of the Syriac biblical translation of ϰωζω and found that in "the Old Syriac Versions..." "to be saved", "to be healed", and "to live" are synonymous terms."⁶ Moreover, Klijn cited the fact that S. Lyonnet found several places in the Armenian New Testament where the verb "to live" is substituted for the verb "to save", among them John 10:9

2. J. Molitor's Findings

It was the German J. Molitor in 1968 who presented his philological investigation of the Syriac, Old Georgian, and Armenian translations of the gospels.⁸ It need be noted that Molitor's study is thus far the most exhaustive one, superceding Klijn's less extensive analysis. Although Molitor does include the Synoptics in his study, due to the limited scope of this essay I wish only to summarize the author's findings in the Fourth Gospel material on the meaning of "Life".

Molitor observed in the Syriac translations of the Greek that ϰωζειν ("to save") and ϰωτῆρ ("Saviour") are rendered "to live" and "life giver".

In the conversation between Jesus and Nicodemus (Jn. 3:17), $\kappa\omega\theta\eta$ in all the Syriac Versions of the Fourth Gospel, is rendered with "to live" :

aramäische Überlieferung ...sondern damit die Welt in ihm (durch ihn) <u>lebe</u> syc + sys ...sondern <u>damit lebe</u> die Welt durch ihn syp	griechische Überlieferung ...sondern damit <u>gerettet</u> werde die Welt durch ihn
---	---

(A brief note to the reader: syc=syriac gospel--Curetonianus[4th-5th century]; sys=syriac gospel--Sinaiticus[5th century]; and syp=syriac gospel--Peschitta[Syriac Vulgate])

In the passage of the "Samaritan woman" at the well (Jn. 4:42), $\kappa\omega\tau\eta\pi$, in the Syriac is rendered with "life giver" :

aramäische Überlieferung: und wir haben erkannt, dass wahrhaftig er selbst ist (dass er selbst ist wahrhaftig syp) <u>der Lebendigmacher</u> der Welt syc (sys Lücke + syp)	griechische Überlieferung und wir haben erka dass dieser ist wa haft der <u>Retter</u> (Erlöser der Welt 10
---	---

In the "Good Shepherd" pericope (Jn 10:19), $\kappa\omega\theta\eta\acute{\kappa}\epsilon\tau\alpha\iota$, in the Syriac Fourth Gospel is rendered with "to live" :

aramäische Überlieferung: und durch mich jeder, der eintritt, wird <u>leben</u> sys (syc Lücke) und durch mich, wenn jemand eintritt, wird er <u>leben</u> syp	griechische Überlieferung durch mich, wenn jemand eintritt, wird er <u>gerettet</u> <u>werden</u> 11
--	---

And finally, in the "Raising of Lazarus" story (Jn. 11:12), $\kappa\omega\theta\eta\acute{\kappa}\epsilon\tau\alpha$ in the Syriac Fourth Gospel is rendered with "to live" :

aramäische Überlieferung: Unser Herr (=Herr), wenn er eingeschlafen ist, wird er <u>leben</u> : sys (syc Lücke) Unser Herr (=Herr), wenn er eingeschlafen ist, wird er gesund werden: syp 12	griechische Überlieferung Herr, wenn er eingeschlafen wird er <u>gerettet werden</u> 13
--	---

As we see in the previous instances, where the Aramaic tradition utilizes a word which translated into English means "to live", the Greek tradition employs a word which means "to save". What is to account for this variation in meaning between the two traditions ?

3. A Contextual Study of ἄωζεν - ζωή in the Fourth Gospel

It is remarkable that out of the six times that ἄωζεν appears in the Fourth Gospel, it appears five times with ζωή (αἰώνιος) in the same context. The first occurrence happens within the dialogue between Jesus and Nicodemus:

For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life (ζωήν αἰώνιον). For God sent the Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved (σωθῆ) [3:16,17].

And we read the following in a dialogue between Jesus and a gathering of Jews:

I say this that you may be saved (σωθῆτε)... You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life (ζωήν αἰώνιον) [5:34,39].

The third time a form of ζωή and ἄωζεν appears in like context is during Jesus' "Good Shepherd" discourse to his disciples:

I am the door; if any one enters by me, he will be saved (σωθήσεται)...The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life (ζωήν) [10:9,10].

The fourth occurrence we find bracketing the "Raising of Lazarus" passage, ζωή, γάω, and ἄωζεν :

The disciples said to him, "Lord if he has fallen asleep, he will be healed [also saved] (σωθήσεται)...

Jesus said to her [Martha], "I am the resurrection and the life (ζωή). He who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live (ζήσεται)... [11:12,25].

The final ζωή - ἄωζεν pattern fittingly occurs towards the end of Jesus' public life:

...for I did not come to judge the world but to save (σώσω) the world...the Father who has sent me has himself given me the commandment...and I know that his commandment is eternal life (ζωή αἰώνιος) [12:47,50].

It is also significant that the one time that σωτήρ appears in the Fourth Gospel, it does in the same context with ζωὴν αἰώνιον. It is found in the discourse between Jesus and the Samaritan woman, a discourse that is interrupted by a statement by Jesus to his disciples, and concludes with a confession by the Samaritan elders concerning Jesus' status:

...the water that I shall give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life (ζωὴν αἰώνιον) [Jesus to the Samaritan woman--4:14].

...He who reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit for eternal life (ζωὴν αἰώνιον) [Jesus to his disciples--4:36]

...Many Samaritans from that city believed in him because of the woman's testimony...And many more believed because of his word. They said to the woman, "It is no longer because of your words that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves and we know that this is indeed the Saviour (σωτήρ) of the world [the Samaritan elders to the Samaritan woman--4:39,41,42].

In part I.2 of this essay we summarized J. Molitor's philological investigation into the meaning of "Life" in the Syriac Fourth Gospel. We read that Molitor found that in those passages where σωζειν appears (e.g. Jn.3:17;10:19;and 11:12), the Syriac renders σωζειν with "to live". Moreover, where σωτήρ occurs in the Greek gospel (i.e. in Jn.4:42) the Syriac Fourth Gospel renders σωτήρ with "life giver".

The results of our study of ζωή-σωζειν (in context) in the Greek Fourth Gospel show that σωζειν (Jn.3:16,17;5:34,39;10:9,10; 11:12,25; and 12:47,50) is closely connected to ζωή (αἰώνιον). Moreover, in the one passage where σωτήρ occurs (Jn.4:4-42), it is found together with ζωὴν αἰώνιον.

The question then arises, why did the editor(s) of the Greek Fourth Gospel deem it necessary to use both "to save" and "Saviour" (σωζειν and σωτήρ) rather than using Greek words more clearly connoting the meaning of "to live" and "life giver"--words which take the place of σωζειν and σωτήρ in the Syriac Fourth Gospel? Are the Greek and Syriac Fourth Gospels then mutually exclusive and irreconcilable, perhaps emerging out of two very distinct Johannine traditions?

II. The Meaning of "Life" in the Old Testament (חַיִּים-חַיָּה)
in the Context of Its Axial Position and Satellites

1. The Emergence of the LXX and Its Understanding of "Life"

Before we draw any hasty conclusions concerning the relationship between the Syriac and Greek Fourth Gospel, perhaps a prior question needs to be asked; i.e. What can ultimately be said about the meaning of "Life" (חַיָּה) as it is rendered in the Greek Fourth Gospel? Moreover, what tradition(s) undergird the religious thought of the Fourth Gospel?

C.H. Dodd has observed that scholars who claim that the Fourth Gospel is rooted in Semitic thought are still "far from agreement among themselves" as concerns the exact wording of the Aramaic original which they believe existed prior to the extant Greek Gospel.¹³ Yet there is no disagreement amongst them over what they refer to as an underlying Semitic idiom which is said to correspond to the general linguistic structure of the gospel.

What can be said of the relationship between the Fourth Gospel and the LXX in this regard ?

It has been noted by S. Jellicoe that already by the first centuries succeeding the completion of the final edition of the Fourth Gospel, the LXX was generally considered "the preacher's authority; and on its text, or its derivative the Old Latin, the early Fathers based their dogmatic and homiletic writings."¹⁴

Whether one tends toward the theory of the Alexandrian origin of the LXX (P. Kahle) or its Palestinian beginning (M. Gaster), the point of agreement at which both scholars arrived is important for our discussion.¹⁵ Kahle and Gaster both agree that the basic motivation behind the Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures most likely was the belief that a Jewish text in Greek would have

provided greater insurance against possible extinction of Jewish culture already in the throes of syncretic development.

Consequently, if the early centuries (before the time of Christ and the writing of the Gospels) were fraught with the intermixing of cultures, it would have been no less true that certain religious thought patterns expressed in one language would be adapted to other prevalent languages in the hopes for survival and renewal.

A specific example of this phenomenon can be found in the Hebrew word for "Life" (חַיִּים) as it received its expression in the Greek word ζωή. ζωή appears two hundred seventy-eight times in the LXX, of which one hundred ninety-one are in the books of the Jewish canon; the Hebrew equivalents being חַיִּים and חַיִּים. ¹⁶

G. Bertram has pointed out that "Life" in the LXX is conceived often in the sense of "eternal life". This is most clearly seen in the LXX translation of the famous passage in Job 19:25, where the LXX renders the Hebrew word חַיִּים, "living", by αἰώνιος, "eternal". ¹⁷

E.K. Lee has noted that "the phrase ζωὴ αἰώνιος ὁ Θεὸς ὁ Ἰησοῦς first meets us in the LXX versions of the Book of Daniel in connection with the coming of the Messiah..." ¹⁸ D. Hill has noted that "in the important "resurrection" passage (Dan. 12:2), the first mention of the "eternal life" of the pious is rendered in the LXX by ζωὴν αἰώνιον this being the only place in the canonical Old Testament where this conjunction of noun and adjective occurs." ¹⁹

According to Kittel's Wörterbuch the term "Life" (חַיִּים) "implies far more than an objective assertion of a natural fact... it is indeed a supreme good... (Prov. 3:16; cf. also Job 2:4)... God is the Lord of life and death (Num. 27:16; Job 12:10; and Deut. 32:39)... only by faith i.e. by cleaving to the God of salvation, will the righteous have life (Hab. 2:4; cf. also Am. 5:4, 14; Jer. 38:20)." ²⁰

What Bertram is saying is that one cannot understand the notion of "Life" in the Old Testament save in the wider context wherein the word "Life" (חַיִּים) abides; the "wider context" being those satellite words which orbit round the axial word "Life". Bertram observes that "death" is precisely one of these "satellite" words, which finds its meaning in so far as it is juxtaposed with "Life".

Hence, "Life (Eternal)" in the Old Testament cannot be fully understood outside the context of God. Later, we shall see that the Fourth Gospel has a similar understanding of "Life (Eternal)".

2. The "Life-Death" Constellation (חַיִּי-מָוֶת, ζωή-θάνατος)

In the last section I mentioned briefly that I understood Bertram's "definition" of "Life" in the Old Testament in terms of an "axis-satellite" structure, whereby "Life" is the "axis" word around which other "satellite" words are positioned in relation to it. I believe that Bertram's principal insight into his "definition" is that "Life" for the Hebrew consciousness can only be understood in so far as it is juxtaposed with its opposite, "death".

A good example of this juxtaposition appears in Prov.5:5,6:

Her feet go down to death (מָוֶת) θάνατος).
She does not take heed to the path of life (חַיִּי ζωή)

And the juxtaposition appears again in Prov.8:5,6:

For he who finds me finds life;
All who hate me love death. [cf. also Prov.8:35,36;11:19]

The contrast is evident as well in Ps.6:4,5:

Turn, O Lord, save my life;
For in death there is no remembrance of thee.[cf.Ps.1:6]

The "Life-Death" constellation appears with some frequency in the prophetic literature. For instance in Jer.21:8 :

And to this people you shall say:
Thus says the Lord: See, I am giving
you a choice between life and death.

It appears also in the prophetic Book of Habakkuk 2:4,5,:

...but the just man, because of his faith,
shall live...
...the proud, unstable man, who opens wide
his throat like the nether world, is insatiable
as death... (cf. also Am.5:4,5)

It is important to note here that the "Life-Death" pattern not only exists in the Wisdom and Prophetic Books, but is rooted in the Pentateuch, particularly in the Book of Deuteronomy 30:15, in Moses' appeal to Israel:

"Here then I have today set before you
life and prosperity, death and doom..." [cf. verses 16-20]

This juxtaposition of "life" and "death" for the Semitic consciousness is rooted in the Genesis story:

You shall not eat it [the tree of Life and Knowledge...],
or even touch it, lest you die, [Gen.3:3b].

It appears that the Book of Genesis, wishing to explain the origins of "good" and "evil" (cf. the tree of Knowledge of good and evil--Gen.3:3b), places the final responsibility for it within the human person, that is, in the free decision to be either obedient or disobedient to the law of the Lord. If the "tree of Life and Knowledge of good and evil" is eaten, this act of human freedom shall actually sever the once intimate connection between "Knowledge" and "Life".

This will be discussed further in Part II.4 of this essay.

3. The "Life-Light" and "Light-Darkness" Constellations (ἡ ζωὴ καὶ τὸ φῶς)

Continuing our study of "Life" in the Old Testament in view of its wider contextual pattern, we find that "death" is not the only satellite around "Life", but that it is one among many. We have only to look with a broader lens. For instance, in Prov.6:23 we see "Life" closely connected to the symbol of "light":

For the commandment is a lamp
and the teaching a light.
And the reproofs of discipline
are the way of life.

We find the connection again in Ps.27:1:

The Lord is my light...
The Lord is my life's refuge. [cf. Ps.13:8,9]

In the Book of Job the Life-Light constellation is employed, although ironically:

Why is light given to the toilers,
and life to the bitter in spirit ? [3:20; cf. also 33:28]

The "Life-Light" constellation appears in the prophetic Book of Zechariah 14:7,8:

There shall be one continuous day,
known to the Lord, not day and night,
for in the evening time there shall be light.
On that day, living waters shall flow from
Jerusalem...

As with the "Life-Death" constellation, the "Life-Light" pattern is rooted in the Pentateuch, originating, of course, in the Genesis story. "Life" and "light" are seen as the basic elements of God's creativity and, as well, deep symbols of the Hebraic theological/cosmological structure of reality:

God made the two great lights,
the greater one to govern the
day, and the lesser one to govern
the night; and he made the stars...
to govern the day and the night,
and to separate the light from the
darkness. God saw how good it was.
Then God said, "Let the water teem
with an abundance of living creatures..."
[Gen.1:16,18,20a]

In the Book of Genesis, as well, the "Light-Darkness" constellation appears for the first time in the Old Testament in the context of God's creative life-giving energy. Similar to the "Life-Death" constellation, the meaning of "light" is discovered in view of its juxtaposition with "darkness". In Gen.1:3,4b we read:

Then God said, "Let there be light
and there was light..
God then separated the light
from the darkness.

But in Genesis we only have the seeds of what later becomes a metaphorical way of speaking about "good" and "evil". This development appears in the prophetic Book of Isaiah 5:20:

Woe to those who call evil good,
and good evil, who change darkness
into light, and light into darkness...

The "Light-Darkness" constellation appears in a similar form in the Wisdom literature, i.e. in the Book of Job 3:4:

May that day be darkness:
Let not God above call for it,
nor light shine upon it! [cf. also Job 12:22]

And again, in the Book of Sirach 11:7,8 "light" and "darkness" are symbols of the dichotomy of human existence:

Light is sweet!...
However many years a man may live,
let him...remember that the days of
darkness will be many.

Thus far we have discovered that the meaning of "Life" in the Old Testament is multifaceted. The satellites ("death", "light", and "darkness") broaden the contextual pattern and we begin to sense the richness of the axial notion, "Life". There are, however, two more important satellites, i.e. the notions of "Knowing" (Believing) and "Living" (Water), which complete the basic contextual pattern of "Life" in the Old Testament.

4. "Knowing" ("Believing") in the Context of "Life" ($\frac{\text{ידע}}{\text{ידע}}$ $\frac{\text{ἐπιγινώσκειν}}{\text{πίστεύειν}}$)

The initial appearance of this particular constellation is found in Genesis 2:9:

Out of the ground the Lord God made various trees grow...with the tree of life in the middle of the garden and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

We come to understand from this passage in Genesis that the beginning of the history of good and evil is described in terms of a law given by Yahweh to his first children, and eventually broken by them.

The law is this: that the tree of "Life" and "knowledge" is not to be eaten from(3:3b). Disobeying this dictum severs the once intimate connection between "knowledge" and "Life" enjoyed at the beginning of creation. The implication seems to be that only "knowledge" and "Life" given by Yahweh himself is edible fruit. It is in the self-centered motive of grasping for knowledge in order to be equal to God which defines the origin of evil for Genesis.

In the Book of Isaiah God gives (through the mouth of the prophet) a vision and promise to his fallen children that "knowledge" and "Life" will once again be unified:

There shall be no harm or destruction [=LIFE] on all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord... [Is. 11:9]

Isaiah speaks of a time to come when the people of Israel will be "recreated". The "shoot" (of which Isaiah speaks) that will "sprout from the stump of Jesse" (Is. 11:1) is the "holy remnant" which has its roots in the tree of Life and knowledge in Genesis.

This theme of restoration is once again echoed by Jeremiah:

But through his own fault only [=LIFE] shall anyone die... I will be there God, and they shall be my people. All, from least to greatest shall know me, says the Lord. [Jer. 31:30a, 33b, 34b]

More directly within the context of "Life" and "faith"

prophet Habakkuk "writes down the vision" from the Lord(2:2)concerning a promise which "presses on to fulfillment"(2:3):

But the just man, because
of his faith(אֱמוּנָה) shall live.

Here we observe that "faith" appears in close context with "living". It is interesting as well that the notion of "knowing" is not mentioned at all in the Book of Habakkuk.

The occurrence of "believing" and "living" in context seems to be highly developed in the Wisdom literature, particularly, the Book of Psalms. "believing" and "Life" are explicitly related in Ps. 16:

Because you will not abandon my
soul to the nether world, nor will
you suffer your faithful(אֱמוּנָה)to
undergo corruption. You will show
me the path of life[Ps. 16:10,11a]

And again in Ps. 13, the one who "trusts" in the kindness of the Lord does so in order to obtain Life:

Give light to my eyes that I may not [=LIFE]
sleep in death...
I trusted(אֱמוּנָה) in your kindness. [Ps.13:4b,6a]

The only time I found the notion of "knowing" and "believing" used interchangeably was in Psalm 4:

Know that the Lord does
wonders for his faithful one... [Ps.4:4]

This interchangeability between "knowing" and "believing" seems to be strongly implied in the Book of Ezekiel, and they occur in the context of "Life" :

I, the Lord, have promised(אֱמוּנָה) and I
will do it...I will bring spirit
into you...so that you may come to
life and know that I am the Lord. [Ezek.36:36;37:5,6]

Although "believing" is not directly mentioned in the above passage of Ezekiel, the fact of the "promise"(if it is indeed to be received)does imply a "believing" or "trusting" in that promise.

I do think that one could safely say that a dominant theme in the Prophetic and Wisdom Literature is this dynamic of (i)promise (ii)believing (trusting) (iii)knowing and living[cf. Gen. 2:9;Is. 11:9; Jer. 31:30a,33b 34b; Hab. 2:3; Pss. 4:4; 13:4b,6a; 16:10,11a,and Ezek.36:36: 37:5,6].

5. The "Life-Water" ("Living Water") Constellation (חַיִּים מֵי חַיִּים וְחַיִּים חַיִּים)

Although this constellation does not occur with as much frequency as the other constellations in the Old Testament, nonetheless, it is an important one. What "water" (as a satellite to "Life") has in common with all the others, particularly "light" and "darkness", is its initial appearance in the creation story of Genesis.

During the first day of creation a "mighty wind" is said to have "swept over the waters" (Gen. 1:2). Then, immediately following, "light" is created and separated from the "darkness" (1:3). At the dawn of the fourth day of creation the Genesis author(s) write(s):

Then God said, "Let the water (מֵי חַיִּים) teem with an abundance of living (חַיִּים חַיִּים) creatures... [1:20]

In the second story of creation wherein paradise with man and woman is depicted, "Life" and "water" are in close proximity to one another:

Out of the ground the Lord God made ...the tree of life in the middle of the garden...and the river rises in Eden to water the garden. [2:9a,c,10a]

We know that for the ancient world biology, cosmology, and theology, were all intertwined. The empirical world, the human psyche and physis, and ultimate reality (i.e. God) were perceived holistically. It was because of this way of experiencing that the milieu out of which the Semitic mind emerged saw the most elemental forms of nature (e.g. "light", "darkness", and "water") "charged with the grandeur of God"; in other words, these fundamental elements of nature were as well theological symbols.

As we saw with the "Life-Knowledge" constellation (i.e. that it is embedded in the creation story of Genesis, and re-emerges in the restoration prophecies of Isaiah and Jeremiah), the "Life-Water" constellation begins also in the creation story of Genesis and re-emerges in the prophecies of Jeremiah and Zechariah. For instance, in the Book of Zechariah one reads:

There shall be one continuous day... for in the evening time there shall be light... On that day, living waters (חַיִּים מֵי חַיִּים) shall flow from Jerusalem... The Lord shall become king over the whole earth. [Zech. 14:7, 8a, 9a]

In the Book of Jeremiah, the prophet rebukes Israel for her idolatrous allegiance to Nebuchadnezzar. As if recounting once again not only the great exile out of Egypt but also the Paradise story, the Lord speaks through the mouth of the prophet Jeremiah:

When I brought you into the garden land
to eat its goodly fruits, you entered
and defiled my land...Two evils have my
people done: they have forsaken me, the
source of living waters; they have dug
themselves cisterns...that hold not water. [Jer. 2:7,13]

This passage from the Book of Jeremiah completes our study of "Life" in the Old Testament in the context of the aforementioned satellite motifs "death", "light", "darkness", "knowing" ("believing"), and "water". There are, of course, many more instances in which these satellite words occur in the context of the axial word "Life". However, due to the limited scope of this essay the few examples which I have given need suffice in order to show that the meaning of the axial word "Life" (and the constellations formed by its satellite words) has a central place in the theology of the Old Testament.

The results of this study show that these five principal constellations ("Life-Death", "Life-Light", "Life-Darkness", "Life - Knowing" ("Believing") and "Life-Water" ("Living Water")) form a web of meaning which is rooted in the creation stories of Genesis, and emerges again and again throughout the Old Testament, with particular force in the Prophetic and Wisdom Literature. That is to say, that the story of "Life" as it is told in the Book of Genesis, gets told in a like manner in other Books, especially in the restoration prophecies and in the sayings of the wise, which show themselves to be in touch with the original story of Paradise.

III. An Analysis of ζωή(αἰώνιος) in the Greek Fourth Gospel and Its Relation to the Meaning of "Life" in the Old Testament

1. The "Life-Death" Constellation (Θάνατος [noun] ἀπολλύω [verb])

Out of one hundred thirty-five occurrences of ζωή in the New Testament, sixty-six of them occur in the Fourth Gospel.²¹ ζωή αἰώνιος is found in the Fourth Gospel seventeen times of the twenty-five total occurrences in the New Testament. The notion of "Life" is central to the Fourth Gospel.²²

The initial appearance of the "Life-Death" constellation is during the dialogue between Jesus and Nicodemus (3:16) where Jesus tells Nicodemus:

...whoever believes in him [i.e. the Son] may not die (ἀπόληται) but may have eternal life (ζωήν αἰώνιον). [cf. also 3:36]

During one of Jesus' discourses on his Sabbath work (5:24b) he says:

...the man who...has faith in him who sent me possesses eternal life.
...has passed from death (θάνατον) to life (ζωήν). [cf. also 6:53,54; 10:9,10]

Just as we saw in the Old Testament (e.g. Gen. 3:3b; Jer. 21:8, Prov. 8:5,6; and Ps. 1:6), the writer of the Fourth Gospel was familiar with this Life-death juxtaposition. Here, especially in Jn. 3:36 and 5:24b, the writer intends to convey a clear sense of non-neutrality. In other words, not believing in the Son results in death in the most ultimate sense. On the other hand, believing in the Son admits the believer into Life (eternal).

2. The "Life-Light" and "Life-Darkness" Constellations (Φῶς / σκοτία)

The "Life-Light" constellation occurs first in Jn. 1:4,5:

Whatever came to be in him, found life, life for the light (Φῶς) of men. The light shines on in the darkness (σκοτία)... [cf. also 3:19-21]

Its next appearance is during Jesus' proclamation to a group of Pharisees in Jn. 8:12:

I am the light of the world.
No follower of mine shall ever
walk in darkness; no, he shall
possess the light of life.

Later in the gospel Jesus tells a group of Greeks, "Walk while you have the light lest the darkness overtake you." (12:35) Shortly after this exhortation Jesus' public activity is drawing to a close. He cries out to his audience in 12:46,50:

I have come to the world as its light,
to keep anyone who believes in me
from remaining in the dark... Since I know
that his commandment means eternal life...
[cf. also 11:10,25]

Similar to what we read in the Old Testament (e.g. Gen. 1:3,4b; Is. 5:20; Sir. 11:7,8;), "light" and "darkness" in the context of "Life" are juxtaposed in the Fourth Gospel. As with the case of the "Life-Death" constellation there is evident in the Fourth Gospel a clear sense of non-neutrality in the "Life-Light" and "Life-Darkness" constellations. In the Fourth Gospel Jesus puts before his audience an either-or choice. Not to love the light, consequently, means to love the darkness. There is no middle ground on which to stand. It is as if Jesus (the new Adam) is purposely using Genesis language as a way of telling his audience that a new age, a new Genesis is breaking into Israel's history.

It is significant that the Fourth Gospel introduces the notion of "Life" as coterminous in meaning with "light" (1:4). Is it possible that the author(s) of the gospel's final edition equated "Life" with "light" as a way of stressing the revelational quality of the word $\gamma\omega\gamma$ in the Greek Fourth Gospel? Christ, then, could be understood as Life and Light--as Bultmann has remarked, "the revelation of God".²³ For Christ calls himself the "Life" and the "Light of Life" (cf. Jn. 11:25; 14:6; and 8:12). It is in this sense then that one might ask whether the Fourth Gospel consciously intended to portray Jesus the Christ as someone whom the Gospel believed was the elemental embodiment of a new creation, a new genesis; Jesus the Christ, the Life and Light who has overturned the "death" and "darkness" incurred by the first Adam.

3. "Knowing" ("Believing") in the Context of "Life" (γνωσκειν/πιστευσεν)

Nowhere in the Old or New Testament is the relationship between "knowing" and "Life" so apparent than in the Fourth Gospel. At the end of Jesus' public activity (Jn. 16&17) Jesus is speaking intimately with his disciples. Just after a confession of belief by his disciples, Jesus is heard speaking these words to the Father:

Eternal life is this: to know (ἵνα γνωσκατωσεν) you, the only true God, and him whom you have sent, Jesus Christ. [Jn. 17:3]

In Jesus' last discourse to Philip, just after he promises to ask the Father, on behalf of his disciples, to give them the "Paraclete" (Jn. 14:16,17), he says to them:

...and you will have life.
On that day you will know (γνωσκειτε)
that I am in my Father,
and you in me, and I in you. [Jn. 14:19b,20]

Then Jesus' moves out from the circle of his disciples, praying that "all" might be one as he and the disciples are one. It is here, in Jn. 17:21b,22b,23, that "knowing" appears to be used interchangeably with "believing":

I pray..that the world may believe (πιστευη) that you sent me.
...that they may be one, as we are one--
I living in them, you living in me--
...so shall the world know (γνωσκει) that you sent me.
[cf. also 17:25,26b and 4:42]

Earlier in the chapter "knowing" and "believing" are again used interchangeably:

They have known that in truth I came from you,
They have believed it was you who sent me. [Jn.17:8b]

It is interesting to note that only in the later chapters of the Fourth Gospel are "knowing" and "Life" frequently related. In the early chapters, often "believing" and "Life" appear explicitly. The first time "believing" appears alone with "Life" is during Jesus' conversation with Nicodemus. Jesus tells Nicodemus not once but twice:

...all who believe may have eternal life...
...whoever believes in him...may have eternal life.
[Jn. 3:15,16b]

And Jesus tells a gathering of Jews in Jn. 5:24:

...the man who...believes (πιστεύων) in
him who sent me possesses eternal life.

Later in the gospel Jesus tells another group of Jews in Jn. 6:47:

Let me firmly assure you, he who
believes has eternal life.

A passage which has particular force is Jn. 6:68b,69. In this scene Jesus has not only alienated once and for all a group of Jews as the result of an appeal to them to "eat" his "flesh" and "drink his blood" (6:53), but he has even frightened away a good many of his own disciples who have failed to understand the depth of his love declaration. But Peter, speaking for the Twelve, turns to Jesus and says:

"You have the words of eternal life.
We have come to believe; we are con-
vinced that you are God's holy one."

As in the Old Testament (e.g. Gen. 2:9; Is. 11:9; Jer. 31:30a, 33b, 34b; Hab. 2:2, 3; Ezek. 36:36; 37:5b, 6; and Pss. 13:4b, 6a and 16:10, 11a) "knowing" ("believing") in the context of "Life" is a central notion in the Greek Fourth Gospel. Furthermore, the interchangeability of "believing" and "knowing" within the Fourth Gospel strongly suggests a conscious attempt on the part of the writer(s) that this "knowledge" is not something attained but a Knowledge that is revealed, given. This kind of "knowing" we have seen is fundamental in Semitic theology.

Taken in the wider context of "Life", "believing" and "knowing" place upon the Greek word $\gamma\omega\eta$ a characteristic which departs from the classical notion of $\gamma\omega\eta$ understood as a "right" of the human person; a notion Plato expounded upon in his Republic.²⁴

Consequently, "to know" for the Fourth Gospel is a revelational knowing. As R.E. Brown has expressed it, in the Fourth Gospel "to know means to be in a vital and intimate relationship with the Father and Jesus, and such a relationship comes through faith in Jesus and hearing his words."²⁵

4. The "Life-Water" ("Living Water") Constellation (ὕδωρ ζῶν)

Of all the constellations we have discussed concerning "Life" in the Fourth Gospel, the "Living Water" constellation occurs with the least frequency. Nonetheless, the constellation is of utmost importance, as we shall see.

The first of its three occurrences in the Fourth Gospel comes in Jn.4:10, during Jesus' discourse with the Samaritan woman at the well. After the Samaritan woman expresses surprise at Jesus' being a Jew and asking her for a drink, Jesus turns the situation around and proclaims to the woman:

"If only you recognized God's gift,
and who it is that is asking you for
a drink, you would have asked him instead
and he would have given you living water (ὕδωρ ζῶν).

The Samaritan woman has not seemed to comprehend this symbolic usage of a concrete event which Jesus does often throughout the Fourth Gospel. Jesus says to the woman a second time in 4:14:

"...whoever drinks the water I give
him will never be thirsty; no, the
water I give shall become a fountain
within him, leaping up to provide
eternal life."

The last occurrence of the "Life-Water" constellation comes in the middle of the Fourth Gospel. Unlike the private conversation between Jesus and the Samaritan woman earlier in the gospel, here the scene is the last day of the Feast of Booths. Jesus is said to cry out in the middle of a Jewish crowd:

"If anyone thirsts, let him come to me;
let him drink who believes in me.
Scripture has it: 'From within him rivers
of living water shall flow.'" [Jn.7:37b,38]

Here Jesus directly quotes the prophet Zechariah, "...On that day, living waters shall flow from Jerusalem..." (Zech.14:8a). It is strongly evident to the reader that the Fourth Gospel openly portrays Jesus as one who has come in the same spirit of Zechariah (and Jeremiah; cf. Jer.2:7,13); but, moreover, one who stands in the midst of his world as the person come to realize the prophecy of Zechariah.

This concludes the study of the "Life-Water" ("Living Water") constellation in the Fourth Gospel. Here, particularly with Jn. 7:38, there is explicit connection with the Old Testament established.

As well, this completes the study of "Life" in the Greek Fourth Gospel in the context of the aforementioned satellite motifs ("death", "light", "darkness", and "knowing" ("believing")).

The results of these observations show that these five principal constellations: "Life-Death", "Life-Light", "Life-Darkness", "Life-Knowing" ("Believing"), and "Life-Water" ("Living Water"), are present as well in the Old Testament. Moreover, when one views this contextual pattern of "Life" in the Fourth Gospel in its totality, one is struck by the strength of its rootedness, not only in the Prophetic and Wisdom literature of the Old Testament but, as well, in the original story of creation in Genesis.

IV. The Greek Fourth Gospel and The Odes of Solomon

1. The "Life-Death" Constellation

Although the first occurrences of the "Life-Death" constellation come early in the Odes (cf. 6:15; 9:4,6b,7a; and 11:7b), the Life-death contrast most explicitly appears in Ode 15:9a,10a:

Death has been destroyed before my face,
And eternal life has arisen in the Lord's hand.

In Ode 28:7,8 the Odic poet is singing a hymn in thanksgiving to the Spirit, reminiscent of the thanksgiving Psalms of the Old Testament, although more similar in form to the language of the Song of Songs:

And immortal life embraced me,
and kissed me.
And from that (life) is the Spirit
which is within me.
And it cannot die because it is life.

It is important to grasp the sense of urgency which undergirds the emotional pattern of the Odes. Bordering on the apocalyptic, Life and death are juxtaposed in the Odes, in the spirit of Jeremiah (21:8), Amos (5:4,5), and Habbakuk (2:4,5):

All my persecutors have died,
and they who trusted in me sought me,
because I am living. [Ode 42:5]

The previous passage is being spoken by the resurrected Christ to the community behind the Odes. As we remember in our study of the Fourth Gospel, the Jesus of the Fourth Gospel powerfully confronted his audience with the choice of "Life" or "death":

Whoever believes in the Son
has life eternal.
Whoever disobeys the Son
will not see life, but must
endure the wrath of God. [Jn. 3:36; cf. 6:53,54]

2. The "Life-Light" and "Life-Darkness" Constellations

In Ode 8 the hymnist exhorts his hearers to "rise up and stand erect" (8:3a), to let their "love abound from the heart to the lips" (8:1b)--in other words, to sing from their depths...:

In order to bring forth fruits to the Lord,
a holy life; and to talk with watchfulness
in His light. [Ode 8:2]

The musical tone of the poem is bathed in the major key. The suspended minor chord has resolved, yet continues in unending resolution. The ecstasy is sobered by "watchfulness" and the acknowledged necessity to "bring forth fruits" of "a holy Life".

In Ode 10 a similar exalted key dominates the tone of the poem. Similar, to Ode 8, the hymnist speaks of "Life" and "light" in connection with "fruits". It is also significant that here the "fruit" (or consequence) of receiving this light and Life, is "the fruit of His peace":

And [the Lord] has opened my heart by His Light.
And He has caused to dwell in me His immortal life,
And permitted me to proclaim the fruit of His peace.
[Ode 10:1b,2, cf. 6ab]

What seems to be characteristic of both Ode 8 and 10 is a mood that is, on the one hand, sublime, and on the other hand, restful. There is an obvious joy which emits from the texture of the lyric, yet a joy which is tempered by depth of experience.

As we have seen, the "Life-light" parallel occurs throughout the Old Testament (e.g. Gen. 1:16, 18, 20a; Zech. 14:7, 8; Job 3:20; Ps. 27:1; and Prov. 6:23) and the Fourth Gospel (e.g. Jn. 1:4, 5; 5:35b; 11:10, 25; and 12:46, 50). In the Prologue of the Fourth Gospel where we read:

Whatever came to be in him found life,
life for the light of men. [Jn. 1:4],

we find not only elements which we know to exist in the Odes, but there seems to be as well a similarity of landscape; especially noticeable when compared to Ode 41:3a, 6:

We live in the Lord by His grace...
And let our faces shine in His light...

The "Light-Darkness" constellation as well forms an integral part of the contextual pattern of the Odes. The constellation that initially occurs in Ode 11 is perhaps the most unapproachable hymn in the entire collection of Odes. The song-poem is heavy laden with biblical "Paradise" symbolism. It is in the context of a sacred garden where the "light-darkness" contrast occurs. Immediately after the Odic poet writes that the "Lord" has taken him to "Paradise", this follows:

((I beheld blooming and fruit-bearing trees...))
And I said, Blessed, O Lord, are they who are
planted in Thy land, and who have a place in
Thy Paradise;
And have passed from darkness into light. [Ode 11:16a, 18, 19]

The previous passage strongly implies an experience of inward transport, whereby the believer becomes transplanted (if you will) from the ordinary world (of darkness) into a world (of light) similar to the one spoken of in the Book of Genesis.

And in Ode 15:2 the "Lord" is compared with the "Sun":

Because He is my Sun, and His rays have lifted
me up; and His light has dismissed all darkness
from my face.

Ode 18 utilizes the "Light-Darkness" contrast as a way of describing "knowledge" and "ignorance" of God:

Let not light be conquered by darkness,
Nor let truth flee from falsehood. [Ode 18:6]

In the context of a "total healing" Ode 21:3 proclaims:

And I put off darkness,
and put on light. [cf. also Ode 42:15, 16]

As in the Old Testament (e.g. Gen. 1:3, 4, 18; Is. 5:20; Job 3:4 and Sir. 11:7a, 8) and the Fourth Gospel (1:5; 3:19-21; 8:12 and 12:46, 50) the "Light-Darkness" constellation for the Odes becomes a way of describing what the world is like with God, and what it is like without him.

Take, for instance, Jn. 8:12. The Christ of the Fourth Gospel marks his own and the world's course to God in terms of the "Light-Darkness" contrast and the "Life-Light" parallel":

I am the light of the world.
No follower of mine shall ever
walk in darkness; no, he shall
possess the light of life.

And as the gospel proceeds, this message of Christ becomes more urgent:

I have come to the world as its light,
to keep anyone who believes in me from
from remaining in the dark. [Jn. 12:46]

Although the Christ of the Fourth Gospel goes so far as to identify himself with being the "Light" and "Life", he is in perfect continuity with the "Lord" of the Psalms:

The Lord is my light...
The Lord is my life's refuge. [cf. Ps. 13:8,9]

As we have just seen in the Odes, the "Light-Darkness" contrast (e.g. Ode 11:16a,18,19; and 15:2; and 18:6) and the "Life-Light" parallel (e.g. Ode 8:2; 10:1b,2) form an integral part of the contextual pattern around the central motif "Life".

3. "Knowing" ("Believing") in the Context of "Life"

We mentioned earlier that the notion of "knowing" ("believing") in the context of "Life" appears frequently in the Fourth Gospel (e.g. Jn. 17:21b,22b,23; 17:25,26b); moreover, that "believing" in the context of "Life" appears without mention of the word "knowing" (e.g. Jn. 3:15,16b; 5:24; and 6:47), as well, in the Fourth Gospel.

It is significant that the notion of "knowing" ("believing") in the context of "Life" appears in Ode 15:10ab:

And eternal life has arisen in the Lord's hand,
and it has become known to His faithful ones...

In Ode 8:10b,11a, "faith" and "knowledge" are closely connected:

Keep my faith, you who are kept by it;
and understand my knowledge, you who know me in truth;

But when one investigates further the Odes one finds as well the alternate pattern which is found also in the Fourth Gospel; i.e. the notion of "believing" in the context of "Life" without mention of "knowing". For example, Ode 9:4b reads:

And His belief is eternal life...

And again in Ode 34:6b:

Believe and live and be saved.

And finally in Ode 42:5bc, the notion of "trusting" appears in the context of "living":

And they who trusted in me sought me,
because I am living.

If we look again at the Fourth Gospel we read:

...all who believe may have eternal life.... [Jn. 3:15]

...the man who...has faith in him
who sent me possesses eternal life. [Jn. 5:24]

Let me firmly assure you, he
who believes has eternal life. [Jn. 6:47]

As we discussed earlier, perhaps this "interchangeability" of "believing" and "knowing" in the Fourth Gospel and the Odes arises out of a Semitic understanding of Knowledge as something that is not attained, but revealed, given (cf. Hab. 2:3; Ezek 36:36; 37:5b,6; Ps. 4:4,6; 13:4b,6a) Could it be the case that this undergirding of "knowing" with the notion of "believing" is a way of reinforcing the Semitic notion of Knowledge ?

Of course, the fact that the Fourth Gospel and the Odes root the notion of "knowing" ("believing") in the axial notion "Life", does more than suggest an inherited Semitic theology. For it is the "Tree of Life" and the "Tree of Knowledge" (Gen. 2:9) of Paradise which are forbidden to be eaten by man and woman of their own accord. "Life" and "Knowledge" are the most sacred "fruits" of the Kingdom established by God. It is when man and woman decide (of their own accord) to eat of the "Tree of Knowledge" (Gen. 3:5) that the Fall or

or separation of man and woman from Life in God begins.

When one reads Ode 11 in light of Genesis, and is led by the Odic poet who is taken to "Paradise" and beholds "blooming and fruit-bearing trees...and a river of gladness...irrigating them, and round about them in the land of eternal life...[are those]who have passed from darkness into light..."(Ode 11:16a,e,f,19b), one is struck by the realized eschatological implications of the Ode. We learn from this Ode more about what Christ came into the world to do--i.e. to re-establish the Paradise which was received and lost, according to the story of the beginning of life in Genesis.

4. The "Life-Water" ("Living Water") Constellation

Focusing on the notion of "Life" (particularly, the "living water" motif) J.H. Charlesworth and R.A. Culpepper have noted that "in both the Odes and John the Lord is the source of life and eternal life, which is a present reality resulting from the indwelling of the believer in the Lord, symbolically represented by the drinking of life-giving water."²⁶

The notion of "living water" in the context of Knowledge and Life finds particular emphasis in Ode 6:

The Lord has multiplied His knowledge...
for it spread over the surface of all the earth...
For from the Most High the drink was given...
Even lives who were about to expire,
They have held back from death...
And lived by the living water of eternity.
[Ode 6:6a,10a,12,15,18b; cf. also Ode 30:1]

And again "living water" in the context of "received knowledge" appears in the paradise Ode 11:

I received His knowledge.
And so I drank and became intoxicated,
from the living water that does not die.
[Ode 11:4b,7]

It is here in the paradise Ode 11 where it seems that a conscious connection is being made between this "living water" given by the "Lord" and the "river" which "waters the garden" wherein the "Tree of Life" and the "tree of knowledge" are planted in Gen. 2:9,10.

A striking parallel between the Fourth Gospel and the Odes is the usage of "fountain" in the context of "Life":

...the water I give shall become a fountain
within him, leaping up to provide eternal life.
[Jn. 4:14b]

Fill for yourselves water from the living fountain
of the Lord, because it has been opened for you.
[Ode 30:1]

We mentioned earlier that when one studies the "living water" constellation in the Fourth Gospel (especially Jn. 7:38) it becomes evident that the Christ of the Fourth Gospel is openly portrayed as one who has come to the people of Israel in the spirit of Zechariah (Zech. 14:7, 8a, 9a) and Jeremiah (Jer. 2:7, 13) in order to proclaim to them that the Kingdom promised by Zechariah and Jeremiah has in Christ begun to be realized:

If anyone thirsts, let him come to me:
let him drink who believes in me.
Scripture has it: From within him rivers
of living water shall flow.

Certainly, the Christ of the Odes is portrayed in the same fashion as the Christ of the Fourth Gospel, perhaps with a measure of greater intensity:

For it spread over the surface of all the earth...
Even lives who were about to expire,
They have held back from death...
and lived by the living water of eternity.
[Ode 6:6a, 15, 18b]

We have completed our study of the "Life-Death", "Life-Light", "Life-Darkness", "Life-Knowing (Believing)", and "Life-Water" ("Living Water") constellations of The Odes of Solomon, the Greek Fourth Gospel and the Old Testament. We have discovered that all three writings share this particular contextual pattern (i.e. the presence of the axial word "Life" and its satellites "light", "knowing" ("believing"), "water", "darkness", and "death"). It is on this basis that I hope to have furthered the hypothesis that the Fourth Gospel and The Odes of Solomon arise out of a similar religious environment that is strongly Semitic in character.

V. The $\text{ḥw}^{\text{h}}\text{z}^{\text{h}}\text{el}^{\text{v}}$ - ḥw^{h} Constellation in the Greek Fourth Gospel:
A Tentative Explanation

I would like to briefly recapitulate Part I of this essay. In Part I.2 I summarized J. Molitor's philological study on the meaning of "Life" in the Syriac Fourth Gospel. Molitor observed that in those passages where $\text{ḥw}^{\text{h}}\text{z}^{\text{h}}\text{el}^{\text{v}}$ appears (i.e. Jn. 3:17; 10:19; and 11:12) in the Greek, they all rendered $\text{ḥw}^{\text{h}}\text{z}^{\text{h}}\text{el}^{\text{v}}$ with "to live" in Syriac. In addition, where $\text{ḥw}^{\text{h}}\text{t}^{\text{h}}\text{p}$ occurs in the Greek gospel (i.e. in Jn. 4:42), the Syriac gospel renders $\text{ḥw}^{\text{h}}\text{t}^{\text{h}}\text{p}$ with "life giver".

In Part I.3 I made a contextual study of $\text{ḥw}^{\text{h}}\text{z}^{\text{h}}\text{el}^{\text{v}}$ - ḥw^{h} in the Greek Fourth Gospel. The results of this study show that $\text{ḥw}^{\text{h}}\text{z}^{\text{h}}\text{el}^{\text{v}}$ appears in close proximity to ḥw^{h} ($\text{ai}^{\text{w}}\text{v}^{\text{h}}\text{os}$) in Jn. 3:16,17; 5:34,39; 10:9,10; 11:12,25; and 12:47,50 [see page 6 for exposition]. Moreover, in the only place where $\text{ḥw}^{\text{h}}\text{t}^{\text{h}}\text{p}$ appears (i.e. in Jn. 4:4-42), it is found in close proximity to ḥw^{h} $\text{ai}^{\text{w}}\text{v}^{\text{h}}\text{os}$ [see page 7 for exposition].

When we look again at Molitor's philological study of "Life" in the Syriac Fourth Gospel together with my contextual study of $\text{ḥw}^{\text{h}}\text{z}^{\text{h}}\text{el}^{\text{v}}$ - ḥw^{h} in the Greek Fourth Gospel, the question cannot help but arise: why did the editor(s) of the Greek Fourth Gospel use $\text{ḥw}^{\text{h}}\text{z}^{\text{h}}\text{el}^{\text{v}}$ ("to save") and $\text{ḥw}^{\text{h}}\text{t}^{\text{h}}\text{p}$ ("Saviour") in close proximity to ḥw^{h} $\text{ai}^{\text{w}}\text{v}^{\text{h}}\text{os}$ (life[eternal]), rather than employing Greek words more clearly connoting the notions of "to live" and "life giver"--those words which Molitor discovered take the place of $\text{ḥw}^{\text{h}}\text{z}^{\text{h}}\text{el}^{\text{v}}$ and $\text{ḥw}^{\text{h}}\text{t}^{\text{h}}\text{p}$ in the Syriac Fourth Gospel ?

If it be indeed the case (based on the findings of this essay-- i.e. that the Old Testament, the Fourth Gospel, and The Odes of Solomon do share a like "axial-satellite" pattern) that the Fourth Gospel and The Odes of Solomon can be said to arise out of a similar religious environment that is strongly Semitic in character, I would like to offer the following tentative explanation for the $\text{ḥw}^{\text{h}}\text{z}^{\text{h}}\text{el}^{\text{v}}$ - ḥw^{h} constellation in the Greek Fourth Gospel.

The Greek Fourth Gospel's appropriation of $\text{ḥw}^{\text{h}}\text{z}^{\text{h}}\text{el}^{\text{v}}$ and $\text{ḥw}^{\text{h}}\text{t}^{\text{h}}\text{p}$ within the context of ḥw^{h} ($\text{ai}^{\text{w}}\text{v}^{\text{h}}\text{os}$) might very well have been accomplished as a way of supplementing the notion of "to save" with the notion of "to live". In this way the Greek audience behind the Greek Fourth Gospel would have understood "salvation" in terms of "life bestowal"--which was the ancient Semitic understanding of "salvation". For ḥw^{h} mean

both "to save" and "to live"(as well as "to heal"). Hence, it is not unlikely that the final redactor of the Greek Fourth Gospel (possessing a thorough knowledge of Semitic languages and thought structures) employed the words σωζειν and ζωη in close proximity to one another as a way of compensating for there not being one Greek word that would express the Semitic חַיִּים.

Continuing with this line of thought, if the Greek Fourth Gospel had not brought σωζειν and ζωη within the same context in those crucial Johannine passages (i.e. Jn 3:16, 17: 5:34, 39; 10:9, 10; and 11:12, 25), the word "life" (ζωη) would not have necessarily included the notion of "salvation" within its range of meaning. Conversely, if the notion of "to save" were not to occur in the context of "life", perhaps only its negative meaning (i.e. that of "deliverance from evil") would have been communicated to the Fourth Gospel's Greek audience.

Thus, the two notions ζωη and σωζειν, used in close connection with one another would have communicated the meaning of salvation in terms of life bestowal--that meaning which the semitic חַיִּים alone conveyed.

* Five Principal Satellites Revolving Around the Axis Motif. "LIFE"	LIFE-DEATH	LIFE-LIGHT	LIFE-DARKNESS	LIFE $\frac{\text{BELIEF}}{\text{KNOWLEDGE}}$	LIFE-WATER
The Old Testament	Gen. 3:3b Dt. 30:15;32:39 Jer. 21:8 Am. 5:4,5 Hab. 2:4,5 Ps. 1:6;6:5,6 Prov. 5:5,6 8:35,36 11:19	Gen. 1:16,18,20 Zech. 14:7,8 Sir. 11:7,8 Job 3:20:33;28 Ps. 27:1;36:10 Prov. 6:23;13:8,9	Gen. 1:3,4,18 Is. 5:20 Sir. 11:7a,8 Job 3:4; 12:22	Gen. 2:9 Ezek. 36:36;37:5b, Jer. 31:30a,33b, 34b Is. 11:9 Hab. 2:2,4 Ps. 4:4,6;13:5,6 16:10,11a	Gen. 1:20;2:9,10 Zech. 14:8 Jer. 2:7,13
The Fourth Gospel	3:16,36 5:24b 6:53,54 10:9,10	1:4,5 5:35b 11:10,25 12:46,50	1:5 3:19-21 8:12 12:46,50	3:15,16b 4:42 5:24a 6:47,68b,69 7:38 14:19b,20 17:3,8b,22,23	4:10,14 7:38
The Odes of Solomon	6:15 9:4,6b,7a 11:7b 15:9a,10a 28:8 42:5	8:2 10:1,2,6 11:7,11 15:2c,5b 29:4b,7 41:3a,6a	11:16f,19 15:2c,5b 18:6,8a 21:3 42:14,16b	8:10b,11a 9:4b 11:4,7 15:5,10abc 34:6 42:5bc	6:18 11:7b 30:1

NOTES

¹ H.J.W. Drijvers, "The 19th Ode of Solomon: Its Interpretation and Place in Syrian Christianity", The Journal of Theological Studies vol. xxxi(2,1980), 337,349,351 (cf. also Drijvers "Rechtgläubigkeit und Ketzerei im Ältesten syrischen Christentum" in his Symposium Syriacum [1972], 301-308; also Drijvers Kerygma und Logos. Beiträge zu den geistesgeschichtlichen Beziehungen zwischen Antike und Christentum [Göttingen: Westminster Press, 1979], p.171).

² J.H. Charlesworth and R.A. Culpepper, "The Odes of Solomon and the Gospel of John", Catholic Biblical Quarterly, 35(3,1973), 299-320.

³ J.H. Charlesworth, The Odes of Solomon. The Syriac Texts, 4th ser. (University of Montana: Scholars Press for the Society of Biblical Literature, 1977), pp. 9 and 11 for detailed analysis.

⁴ A.F.J. Klijn, "The Term 'Life' in Syriac Theology", Scottish Journal of Theology, 5(1952), 390. (cf. also F.C. Burkitt, Church and Gnosis. A Study of Christian Thought and Speculation in the Second Century [Cambridge: AMS Press, 1932], pp. 120-1).

⁵ Burkitt, p.109.

⁶ Klijn, p.391.

⁷ Ibid., p.393.

⁸ J. Molitor, "Leben als aramäischer Terminus der Erlösung, Grundbegriffe der Jesusüberlieferung im Lichte ihrer orientalischen Sprachgeschichte (Düsseldorf: Patmos-Verlag, 1968), pp. 7-111.

⁹ Ibid., p.31. Where Molitor has employed the term "Übersetzung" I use "Überlieferung". How do we know that the Aramaic is not a "translation" ? Hence, on this basis, both need be seen as "traditions".

¹⁰ Ibid., pp.31-32.

¹¹ Ibid., p.32.

¹² Ibid., pp.32-33.

¹³ For a detailed explanation of arguments cf. C.H. Dodd's Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963), pp.74ff.

¹⁴ S. Jellicoe, The LXX and Modern Study (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), pp.59-64.

¹⁵ Ibid., p.342.

¹⁶ cf. G. Kittel's Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament, "ZWH", vol. ii (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1932), pp.851-852; cf. R. Bultmann's Bible Key Words, from G. Kittel's Theologisches Wörterbuch (London: A & C Black, 1949), pp.33-36; cf. also T. Boman's Hebrew Thought Compared with Greek, trans. by J.L. Moreau from the German Das Hebräische Denken im Vergleich mit dem Griechischen (Göttingen: Westminster Press, 1954): "God created (made, spoke) and the corresponding thing was (אָהָר) [Gen.1:3,9, 11] p.38... 'abide' (Gen. 4:8) or by 'be operative', 'live' (Gen.6:4) p.42... the word of God will continue living and effective (אָהָר) [Is.40:8] p.42... The אָהָר of God is not given once for all... but is only revealed in that act with particular clarity. (Lev.25:37; 11:45; 22:33; 26:45; Num.15:41) p.42... The אָהָר of God i.e. God's invasion into history (1 Sam.5:11; 7:13; II Ki 18:46) pp.47-48... the coming of the spirit of God and the spirit of Evil is expressed by אָהָר (Num. 24:2; 1 Sam. 16:23) p.48... to Jahweh is ascribed an unalterable (i.e. eternal) אָהָר, and this אָהָר is a dynamic, energetic, ef

fective, personal being...who thereby advances the salvation of his people...ἡ ἀθάνατος 'eternally effective' when used in the context of God's being;" p.49.

¹⁷ Bultmann, Bible Key Words, p.39.

¹⁸ E.K. Lee, The Religious Thought of St. John (London:S.P.C.K., 1950), p.196. The fact that the Fourth Gospel equates "Life" with "eternal Life" would suggest an affinity with the LXX understanding of ζῶν in this instance; (cf. also F. Mussner, ZWH Die Anschauung von 'Leben' im Vierten Evangelium [München:Kösel-Verlag, 1952], pp.55-56; also W. Klassen and G.F. Snyder, editors of Current Issues in New Testament Interpretation. Essays in Honor of O.A. Piper [New York: Harper, 1962], "The Gospel of Life, a Study of the Gospel of John" by F.V. Filson, pp.114-116.

¹⁹ D. Hill, Greek Words and Hebrew Meanings. Studies in the Semantics of Soteriological Terms (Cambridge:Cambridge University Press, 1967), pp.167,172.

²⁰ Bultmann, op. cit., pp.843-845 (cf. German Version). In the Bible Key Word Series ζῶν is said to correspond to the Old Testament וָחַי or ψυχῆ; (cf. also Hill's Greek Words, pp.165-169: "The word represents the state of being alive with emphasis on the character and quality of the process, whereas וָחַי emphasizes the personal vitality of the being who lives; cf. also J.B. Bauer's Bibeltheologisches Wörterbuch [Graz: Verlag-Styria, 1959], "Leben" by E. Schmitt, p.476: "Der Lebensbegriff gehört zu den Zentralgedanken des alten Testaments und erst recht des Neuen Testaments (ζῶν)...meint quantitative und qualitative Fülle...Leben ist nicht nur Voraussetzung, sondern Summe alle dieses Gutes.")

²¹ R. Brown, The Anchor Bible. The Gospel According to John(i-xii) (New York: Doubleday, 1966),p.505.

²² C.F.D. Moule, "The Meaning of Life in the Gospels and Epistles of St. John", Theology,78(6,1975),114-125;cf. R. Schnackenberg The Gospel According to John, II,"Excursus 12:The Idea of Life in the Fourth Gospel" (New York: Herder & Herder, 1980), pp.350-357; cf. G.A. Turner, "Soteriology in the Gospel of John", Journal of Evangelical Theological Studies, 19(4,1976);271-277; cf. R.W. Thomas, "The Meaning of the Terms 'Life' and 'Death' in the Fourth Gospel and in Paul", Scottish Journal of Theological Studies,19(4,1976),271-277; cf. also A.E. Aune, The Cultic Setting of Realized Eschatology in Early Christianity(Leiden: Brill, 1972),"The Present Realization of Eschatological Salvation in the Fourth Gospel",pp. 45-135;cf.also E.A. Abbott, Johannine Vocabulary (Philadelphia: A & C Black,1978),p.209.

²³ Bultmann,op.cit.,p.74(English);cf.Hill,op.cit.,p.193:"While it is true that the ideas represented by 'life' and 'light' are characteristic Hellenistic religious and philosophical thought, the closest parallels to this statement are found in the Old Testament and Jewish thought. The words of Ps. 36(35):10...probably influenced John, 'with this fountain of life, and in thy light shall we see light.'"; cf. R.W. Thomas, op.cit.,p.201: "T.W. Manson describes Paul's theology as one of 'conversion'. By contrast John's theology is styled a theology of 'revelation';(Eph. 2:8; 2 Cor.2:16; Col. 1:13; for Paul's parallel between Adam and Christ cf. especially Rom. 5:12-17.)"

This "new Adam" theology, so explicit in Paul's writings,I believe is strongly implied in the Fourth Gospel; cf. p. 19 of this essay.

²⁴ Lee, op. cit., p.200; (cf. Plato's Republic 10:608-10; Phaedo passim)

²⁵ Brown, op.cit., "Appendix I", p.508: "Here 'to know' means to be in a vital relationship--an intimate relationship with the Father and Jesus, and such a relationship comes through faith in Jesus..."

²⁶ Charlesworth, op.cit., (article), p.321 [NOTE: "living" occurs 34 times in the Odes; cf. Charlesworth, The Syriac Texts, op.cit., p.55.] It is pertinent to note also that the Qumran Scrolls contain the "Living Water" constellation; (cf. Th. Gaster "The Book of Hymns" [1 QH 8:7,16; and 19:34], The Dead Sea Scriptures with Introduction and Notes (New York: Doubleday, 1976). The Qumran Scrolls themselves, arising out of a thoroughly Semitic environment, contain more than just the "Living Water" constellation. The "Light-Darkness" constellation appears in the 1 QH 3:13;4:1:

...Those born of truth spring from a fountain of light, but those born of falsehood spring from a source of darkness. (Cf. G. Vermes, The Dead Sea Scrolls: Qumran in Perspective [Cleveland: Collins World, 1978], p.171).

(Cf. also for "Light-Darkness" constellation, Gaster's "The Manual of Discipline" [p.44,48] and "The War of the Sons of Light and the Sons of Darkness" [p.388])

Due to the limits of this essay, the Qumran Scrolls and their "constellations" in relation to the notion of "Life" cannot be discussed further. Let it suffice to say that on the basis of the "Living Water" and "Light-Darkness" constellations alone, the "Scrolls" should be included in an extended study of "Life" and the biblical environment of the Fourth Gospel. (cf. in this regard J.C. Coltzee, "Life (Eternal Life) in John's Writings and the Qumran Scrolls", Neotestamentica, 6 [1972], 48-66.)

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