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DISSERTATION

**The Spirit in the Book of Revelation and 1 John: a Theological
Comparison and Reflections of the Gospel of John's
Pneumatology**

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ABSTRACT

This study is an investigation into the theologies of the Spirit contained in the Revelation to John and the first letter of John, two of the five 'Johannine' New Testament writings. It seeks to determine whether there is a direct relationship between them by comparing their theological motifs and insights into the identity of the Spirit. Thereafter, using the Gospel of John as an interpretive interlocutor, the study investigates the extent to which the Gospel's theology of the Spirit may have influenced the pneumatologies of Revelation and 1 John, and whether the Gospel provides a relationship between them. The appellation 'Johannine' implies a relationship could exist between the pneumatologies. A theological analysis of the Spirit in each of Revelation and 1 John, followed by comparative theological analyses with each other and then with the Gospel of John, should be able to determine the nature and extent of any relationship and draw conclusions therefrom. Commentaries and academic literature on the Spirit in Revelation or 1 John typically make reference to the Gospel of John's pneumatology. Books on Johannine theology may discuss aspects of one or more of the pneumatologies. This study seeks to address a lacuna in the academic literature by providing a direct and detailed theological comparison of the pneumatologies in Revelation and 1 John.

Chapter 1

Introduction

The Book of Revelation and 1 John form part of the Johannine corpus of the New Testament, so named because their authorship has traditionally been ascribed to John the son of Zebedee, an apostle of Jesus Christ, who church tradition regards as the author of the Gospel of John. Whilst such ascriptions of apostolic authorship are held in contemporary biblical scholarship, they compete with alternative views which ascribe one or more of the three writings to different authors or to a Johannine school.¹ Each of the three writings mention the Spirit in conjunction with God and Christ. In both Revelation and 1 John it is apparent that the Spirit is deemed to be present in, and active among, the communities to which they were originally addressed. This commonality furnishes a basis for comparing how the Spirit was theologically understood within their respective communities. The Spirit in Revelation and in 1 John has not received the same degree of academic attention or theological analysis as that given to the Spirit in the Gospel of John. This is especially true in respect of any pneumatological relationship between Revelation and 1 John not involving the Gospel as an

¹ On questions of authorship see, for example, Craig R. Koester, *Revelation: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, The Anchor Yale Bible, Vol.38A (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014), pp.65-69; David E Aune, *Revelation 1-5*, Word Biblical Commentary, Vol. 52A (Dallas: Word Books, 1997), p.lvi; Gordon D. Fee, *Revelation*, New Covenant Commentary Series (Cambridge: The Lutterworth Press, 2013), pp.xviii-xix; Stephen S. Smalley, *1, 2, and 3 John*, Word Biblical Commentary, Vol.51, Revised edn (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2008), pp.xx-xxi; Robert W. Yarbrough, *1—3 John*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), pp.5-15; I. Howard. Marshall, *The Epistles of John*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament, Revised (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1978), p.46; Marianne Meye. Thompson, *John – A Commentary*, The New Testament Library (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2015), pp.17-21; Andrew T. Lincoln, *The Gospel according to St. John*, Black's New Testament Commentaries (London: Continuum, 2005), pp.25-26; and Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel according to John (i–xii)*, The Anchor Bible, Vol. 29 (New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc, 1966), p.XCVIII.

interpretative interlocutor. This study endeavours to contribute to the rectification of this by focusing primarily on the theology of the Spirit in both Revelation and 1 John and on any relation their pneumatologies may have to each other. Only thereafter, given that the appellation 'Johannine' assumes a link to the Gospel of John, will the Gospel's pneumatology be considered in relation to the pneumatologies of Revelation and 1 John.

This study will focus on the Spirit in Revelation and 1 John in order to ascertain:

- (1) the key features in their theologies of the Spirit;
- (2) what their theologies disclose about the identity of the Spirit;
- (3) the extent to which, on comparison, their pneumatologies display similar features and similar insights into the Spirit's identity and whether one pneumatology could have influenced the other;
- (4) whether their pneumatologies *prima facie* point to any influences of the Gospel of John's pneumatology and, if so, whether it can be said that such influences are reflections of the Gospel's pneumatology; and
- (5) whether the Gospel's pneumatology furnishes a theological connection between them.

The primary sources utilised in seeking to answer the above questions are Revelation, 1 John and the Gospel of John and other biblical books considered to be relevant. Secondary sources referred to include pseudepigraphical Jewish apocalypses, writings in the Apostolic Fathers, apocryphal Christian apocalypses, commentaries, academic books and

articles, and internet resources on the Greek texts and Greek words. Literature concentrating solely on the pneumatologies of Revelation or 1 John is limited.² In terms of shaping this study, discussions on the Spirit in Revelation or 1 John contained in journal articles, sections or chapters in academic books, and especially commentaries have proved most useful. However, insofar as literature referenced herein contributes to the focus of this study, none of the literature stands out as being of particular usefulness vis-à-vis other literature to warrant a separate and detailed review.

The theological method adopted in this study is to locate references to the Spirit in Revelation and 1 John, in particular references to πνεῦμα, and to analyse them for their characteristic features and functions. Such analyses will construct a portrait of the Spirit in both Revelation and 1 John. From this portrait key theological motifs will be ascertained as will any insights it provides as to the identity of the Spirit. This theological approach is appropriate as theological motifs and insights into the Spirit's identity will furnish a common theological basis by which to compare the pneumatologies of Revelation and 1 John and to assess the extent of any theological convergence between them. The results obtained will be limited by the extent of the portrait they provide of the Spirit. As the Spirit is neither the main focus of nor the protagonist in Revelation or 1 John, any portrait is likely to be incomplete. Their pneumatologies can only be gauged to the extent their constituent parts are pertinent to the subject matter in question.

² Examples are Robby Waddell, *The Spirit of the Book of Revelation*, Journal of Pentecostal Theology Supplement Series, 30 (Blandford Forum: Deo Publishing, 2013); and Hee Youl Lee, *A Dynamic Reading of the Holy Spirit in Revelation: A Theological Reflection on the Functional Role of the Holy Spirit in the Narrative* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2014).

Consequently, after comparing the pneumatologies of Revelation and 1 John, a further comparison will be made with the Gospel of John's pneumatology but only insofar as it may *prima facie* be reflected in Revelation and/or 1 John. A full analysis of the Gospel's pneumatology is beyond the scope of this study. Nonetheless, given the common Johannine appellation and implied links to the Gospel, the Gospel's pneumatology may assist in filling gaps and in providing a fuller portrait of the Spirit in Revelation and 1 John, especially if *prima facie* reflections of the Gospel are shown to be likely or reasonably possible reflections. Both Revelation and 1 John contain verses, other than πνεῦμα verses, which may be interpreted as referring to the Spirit. These will be noted in this study. As judgements on whether to include such verses within or to exclude them from pneumatology are often subjective, and as good justifications exist for their inclusion, in this study such verses will be interpreted as referring to the Spirit. This has the potential to create a more comprehensive portrait of the Spirit. This study will proceed with chapters on the Spirit in the Book of Revelation and the Spirit in 1 John respectively, followed by a comparative chapter which will compare their pneumatologies, consider *prima facie* reflections of the Gospel's pneumatology, and, finally, draw comparative conclusions. The study will conclude with a brief summary of its main findings.

Chapter 2

The Spirit in the Book of Revelation

The Spirit *prima facie* is a peripheral actor in the apocalyptic drama of the Revelation to John, with God and Christ taking centre stage. On closer inspection, nevertheless, the Spirit may be described as a divine actor, distinct from God and Christ, who is integral to God's sovereign will for his church on earth. In this chapter Revelation's portrait of the Spirit is examined. From such portrait key theological motifs are identified and insights into Revelation's understanding of the Spirit's identity are gained. Such motifs and insights will, in chapter 4, be compared to those in 1 John and then to aspects of the Gospel of John's pneumatology to assess, and to draw conclusions from, the extent of convergence between them.

2.1 References to the Spirit

The terms 'Spirit of God', 'Spirit of Christ' or 'Holy Spirit' do not appear in Revelation, seemingly confirming 'an almost complete absence of Christian pneumatology in even its primitive development',³ or suggesting that the text offers a primitive spirit theology with πνεῦμα used not for the Holy Spirit but 'the exalted Lord Himself'.⁴ Contrariwise, analysing the Spirit in terms of its characteristics and functions discloses a significant pneumatology. Πνεῦμα appears twenty-four times, translated as 'spirit', 'Spirit' or 'breath', and πνευματικῶς appears once. With the exception of the breath of the second beast,

³ J. Massyngberde Ford, *Revelation: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, The Anchor Bible, Vol.38 (Garden City; Doubleday & Company, Inc, 1975), pp.3-4, 19-20 and 22-26 (p.19 for quotation).

⁴ E Schweizer, Πνεῦμα', *TDNT* 6 (1968), 389-455 (p.449).

three references to foul or demonic spirits, and spirits of the prophets (Rev. 13:15; 16:13-14; 18:2; 22:6), references to πνεῦμα and πνευματικῶς can be justifiably interpreted as the Holy Spirit.⁵ Under this section references to the Spirit will be analysed for its characteristics and functions in order to construct Revelation's portrait of the Spirit.

2.1.1 *'In the spirit'*

The 'revelation' (ἀποκάλυψις) is of Jesus Christ, given to him by God 'to show his servants what must soon take place', and it is made known by sending an angel to John who is instructed to write it in a book to send to seven named churches (1:1, 11). John, it is stated, receives this revelation when he is 'in the spirit' (ἐν πνεύματι) on the Lord's day' (1:10).⁶ Whilst ἐν πνεύματι John is transported to the heavenly throne room, into a wilderness to see the great whore, and to the eschatological new Jerusalem (4:2; 17:3; 21:10). These four uses of ἐν πνεύματι have been interpreted as referring to John's human spirit,⁷ as a literary device to indicate an apocalypse, or to authenticate fabricated visions.⁸ Whilst the aforementioned interpretations are not inconceivable, it seems more likely that ἐν πνεύματι in these cases refers to an altered state of consciousness such as

⁵ The three πνεῦμα references to foul or demonic spirits (Rev. 16:13-14; 18:2) are not analysed in this study.

⁶ In English translations ἐν πνεύματι is translated either as 'in the spirit', for example NRSVue, NABRE, NCB, NRSVCE and EHV, or as 'in the Spirit', for example ESV, NASB, NIV, RSV and NKJV. The latter imply that the translators assume the (Holy) Spirit is meant, whereas the former leaves it open to interpretation.

⁷ Robert L. Thomas, *Revelation 1-7: An Exegetical Commentary* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1992), p.89.

⁸ Grant R. Osborne, *Revelation*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002), pp.82-83; Koester, *Revelation*, p.252; and Aune, *Revelation 1-5*, p.82.

ecstasy,⁹ a trance,¹⁰ an out-of-body¹¹ or visionary experience,¹² that is engendered by the Spirit of God. Subsequent occurrences of ἐν πνεύματι after Revelation 1:10 can be viewed as its intensification,¹³ as expressing a ‘higher degree of spiritual exaltation’,¹⁴ as indicative of visions from different occasions,¹⁵ as literary or structural markers for important sections of Revelation and as new phases in the vision.¹⁶ As strategically placed, ἐν πνεύματι is central to Revelation. Whilst the mode of pneumatic activity indicated by ἐν πνεύματι is not specified, its consequences are to enable John to see visions and hear prophetic words from the heavenly realm. This occurs in a context where John is sufficiently cognisant to enable him to write down what he sees and hears (1:11, 19). Rather than visual, aural or bodily relocation experiences, ἐν πνεύματι may indicate that,

⁹ Jon Kenneth Newton, ‘The Epistemology of the Book of Revelation’, *Heythrop Journal* 59.4 (2018), 733-746 (p.734); Ben Witherington III, *Revelation*, The New Cambridge Bible Commentary (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p.80; Robert H. Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament, revised edn (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1991), p.55; Ford, *Revelation*, p.382; and Thomas, *Revelation 1-7*, p.90.

¹⁰ Ian Boxall, *The Revelation of Saint John*, Black’s New Testament Commentaries (London: Continuum, 2006), p.39; David E Aune, *Revelation 17-22*, Word Biblical Commentary, Vol. 52C (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1998), p.933; and Rebecca Skaggs and Priscila Benham, *Revelation: Pentecostal Commentary*, Pentecostal Commentary Series (Blandford Forum: Deo Publishing, 2009), pp.27, 59 and 170.

¹¹ Skaggs and Benham, *Revelation*, p.59; and Aune, *Revelation 1-5*, p.82.

¹² Sigve K. Tonstad, *Revelation*, Paideia Commentaries on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2019), p.53.

¹³ Stephen S. Smalley, *The Revelation to John: A Commentary on the Greek Text of the Apocalypse* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2005), p.114.

¹⁴ R. H. Charles, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on The Revelation of St. John, Vol. I*, The International Critical Commentary (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1920), p.110.

¹⁵ Charles, *The Revelation of St. John, Vol. I*, pp.109-111; and R. H. Charles, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on The Revelation of St. John, Vol. II*, The International Critical Commentary (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1920), p.63.

¹⁶ John Christopher Thomas, ‘The Spirit in the Book of Revelation’, in *The Oxford Handbook of the Book of Revelation*, ed. by Craig R. Koester (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), pp.240-255 (pp.244-245); Waddell, *The Spirit of the Book of Revelation*, pp.138 and 149; Ian Paul, *Revelation*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, Vol.20 (London: IVP Academic, 2018), p.280; John Christopher Thomas and Frank D. Macchia., *Revelation*, The Two Horizons New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2016), pp.2-3; Koester, *Revelation*, p.360; Osborne, *Revelation*, p.747; and, for an overview of various interpretations of ἐν πνεύματι, see J. C. de Smit, ‘The Holy Spirit in the Book of Revelation—Nomenclature’, *Neotestamentica* 28.1 (1994), 229-244 (pp.233-241).

phenomenologically, John's experiences are pneumatically perceived.¹⁷ If, as seems likely, ἐν πνεύματι, in each of its instances, denotes God's Spirit it is of course a theologically significant phrase. All that John sees and hears in his visionary experience results from his state ἐν πνεύματι. The apocalypse of Jesus Christ, given to Christ by God, is conveyed to the seven churches by John. The Spirit enables John to access the heavenly throne room and to receive the revelation. The Spirit therefore enables God's servants to receive prophecy which encompasses God's messages to the seven churches (Rev. 2-3) and what is revealed through John's visions.¹⁸

Whilst ἐν πνεύματι may be interpreted as the Spirit enabling human reception of divine communication, other commentators interpret it as an ecstatic visionary trance-like experience *per se* without reference to God's Spirit.¹⁹ However, there are good reasons to regard ἐν πνεύματι as referring to God's Spirit in its four occurrences. God-given prophecy and the Spirit are inextricably linked. What John sees, writes and communicates ἐν πνεύματι is prophecy (1:3; 22:7, 10, 18-19). The angel signals the Book of Revelation's heavenly origin (1:1). It is ἐν πνεύματι which signals the Spirit's activity and identifies John as a prophet who otherwise is not named as one. This interconnection between Spirit, prophets and prophecy is attested in other early Christian texts (Acts. 19:6; 21:10-11; 1

¹⁷ Fee, *Revelation*, p.68; Koester, *Revelation*, pp.243 and 812; Richard Bauckham, *The Climax of Prophecy: Studies in the Book of Revelation* (London: T&T Clark, 1993), pp.152-153; and J Kobus de Smidt, 'Hermeneutical Perspectives on the Spirit in the Book of Revelation', *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 7.14 (1999), 27-47 (p.29).

¹⁸ Richard Bauckham, *The Theology of the Book of Revelation*, New Testament Theology (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p.116: 'The Spirit does not give the content of the revelation but the visionary experience which enables John to receive the revelation'.

¹⁹ For example, Charles, *The Revelation of St. John*, Vol. I, p.22; and Aune, *Revelation 1-5*, pp. 36 and 82-83.

Cor. 12:10; 14:11; 1 Thess. 5:19-20; Didache 3:8, 12).²⁰ John being ἐν πνεύματι 'on the Lord's day' may thus signify that he receives revelation during prayer and worship.²¹ If so, this would likely resonate with the seven churches if pneumatic activity typically took place within a liturgical setting. Prophecy was a gift to benefit the community not solely the individual who prophesied.²² Accordingly, ἐν πνεύματι may be a relational 'symbolic code for participation in the community of the Spirit'.²³ John's state ἐν πνεύματι is partially paralleled in Ezekiel's visions where a spirit enters the prophet, he hears a heavenly voice, and is then transported between heaven and earth (Ezek. 2:2; 3:12, 14; 8:3; 11:1). Spirit-effected visionary transportations in the pseudepigraphical Jewish apocalypses of *1 Enoch*, *Apocalypse of Zephaniah*, *4 Ezra*, *2 Baruch* and *Apocalypse of Adam*,²⁴ and in the second-century CE Christian writing *The Shepherd of Hermas*,²⁵ are probably drawn from Ezekiel. Apocryphal Christian apocalypses written after the Book of Revelation do not purport to be written ἐν πνεύματι. The Spirit is absent, for example, from the *Apocalypse of Peter* and the *Apocalypse*

²⁰ See 'The Didache' in Michael W. Holmes, *The Apostolic Fathers: Greek Texts and English Translations*, Third Edition (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), pp.362 (Greek) and 363 (English), assuming that both occurrences of ἐν πνεύματι ('in the spirit') in 11:8 and 11:12 refer to God's Spirit.

²¹ J. Scott Duvall, *Revelation*, Teach the Text Commentary Series (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2014), p.75; Paul, *Revelation*, p.71; Skaggs and Benham, *Revelation*, p.27; Thomas, 'The Spirit in the Book of Revelation', p.247; and Melissa Archer and Robby Waddell, 'The Spirit in John's Apocalypse: Vision, Prophecy, Discernment', *Pneuma* 43 (2021), 553-556 (pp.559 and 560).

²² M. Eugene Boring, *Revelation*, Interpretation, A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1989), p.82; and Richard L. Jeske, 'Spirit and Community in the Johannine Apocalypse', *New Testament Studies* 31 (1985), 452-466 (pp.462 and 464).

²³ Jeske, 'Spirit and Community', pp.462 and 464.

²⁴ James H. Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, Volume 1 Apocalyptic Literature and Testaments (Garden City: Doubleday & Company, Inc, 1983), p.49 (1 Enoch 70:2-3, if translated 'spirit' rather than 'wind'), p.508 (Clement, *Stromata* 5.11.77 on The Apocalypse of Zephaniah), p.554 (4 Ezra 14:22), p.622 (2 Baruch 6.4) and p.717 (The Apocalypse of Adam par.7:24).

²⁵ Vis. 1.1.3 and 2.2.1 in 'The Shepherd of Hermas' in Holmes, *The Apostolic Fathers*, pp.455 and 463. See also Carolyn Osiek, *The Shepherd of Hermas: A Commentary*, Hermeneia – A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999), p.33.

of Thomas.²⁶ Both Apocalypses of James contain obscure references, although the *Second Apocalypse of James* mentions a revelation through the ‘spirit of power’.²⁷ The Spirit is briefly mentioned in the *Apocalypse of Paul* and is the subject of a question in *The Questions of Bartholomew*.²⁸ The Spirit has a greater presence in the *Ascension of Isaiah*, including believers speaking through the Holy Spirit and the angel of the Spirit inspiring Psalms and Proverbs.²⁹ In its context in the Book of Revelation ἐν πνεύματι is theologically significant. It depicts John as a prophet whose experiences are similar to those of Ezekiel and the Book of Revelation as an apocalypse which is pivoted on the Spirit. Because of the reference to ‘in’ some view ἐν πνεύματι as confirmation that the Spirit indwells believers.³⁰ Although not inconceivable evidentially this is uncertain. Ἐν πνεύματι could be a transient Spirit-effected prophetic state where the Spirit comes and acts upon a believer temporarily in a manner similar to that experienced by Hebrew prophets.³¹ An analysis of the phrase ‘in the spirit’ indicates that it portrays the characteristics of the Spirit as operating between heaven and earth in divine communication from God and Christ, and is capable

²⁶ J. K. Elliot, *The Apocryphal New Testament: A Collection of Apocryphal Christian Literature in an English Translation* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2005), pp. 591-612 (*The Apocalypse of Peter*) and pp. 645-651 (*The Apocalypse of Thomas*).

²⁷ William R. Schoedel (trans), ‘First Apocalypse of James’ *Early Christian Writings*, <<https://www.earlychristianwritings.com/text/apocalypsejames1st.html>> [accessed 1/2/2024] and Charles W. Hedrick (trans), ‘The (Second) Apocalypse of James’, *Early Christian Writings*, The Nag Hammadi Library <<https://www.earlychristianwritings.com/text/apocalypsejames.html>> [accessed 1/2/2024].

²⁸ Elliot, *The Apocryphal New Testament*, pp.616-644 (*The Apocalypse of Paul*, par.45 p.640 for Spirit reference) and pp. 652-668 (*The Questions of Bartholomew*, par.V:2-4 p.667 for Spirit reference).

²⁹ Chapter III verse 19 and Chapter IV verse 21 respectively in the *Ascension* text as contained in R. H. Charles, *The Ascension of Isaiah* (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1900), pp.21 and 37-38.

³⁰ Thomas, *Revelation 1-7*, p.89.

³¹ Ben Witherington III, ‘The Trinity in the Johannine Literature’ in *The Oxford Handbook of the Trinity*, ed. by Gilles Emery and Matthew Levering (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp.69-79 (p.77); Stephen S. Smalley, ‘“The Paraclete”: Pneumatology in the Johannine Gospel and Apocalypse’, in *Exploring the Gospel of John: In Honor of D. Moody Smith*, ed. by R. Alan Culpepper and C. Clifton Black (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996), pp.289-300 (p.294); and Witherington, *Revelation*, p.80.

of being encountered on a personal basis for prophetic purposes. The functions of the Spirit are to communicate God's messages and what is revealed through John's visions, and to effectuate this by enabling John to access the heavenly realm so that he may receive prophetic-visionary revelations to pass on to the seven churches.

2.1.2 ***'Let anyone who has an ear listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches'***

This phrase, an exhortation to listen, is spoken by Christ in his messages to each of the seven churches in Asia (Rev. 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22). Although it follows a situationally-specific prophecy addressed to a particular church such prophecy is to be heard by all seven churches who are the primary addressees of Revelation (1:4, 11). Each message is given to 'the angel of the church',³² is prefaced by 'the words of' Christ who is varyingly described, contains Christ's words of commendation (excepting Laodicea) and censure (excepting Smyrna and Philadelphia), the exhortation to listen, and rewards from Christ to those who conquer (Rev. 2–3). The exhortation to listen has been interpreted by scholars in various ways. For example, it amounts to 'a rich theological refrain' suggesting that 'the interpretive discerning process' is both christological and pneumatological,³³ that the Spirit is a co-worker or collaborative messenger with Christ both speaking together with one voice,³⁴ that the Spirit functions as Christ's

³² On the meaning of angel see Paul, *Revelation*, p.78; Koester, *Revelation*, p.256; Osborne, *Revelation*, pp.110-111; Smalley, *Revelation*, p.58; and Fee, *Revelation*, p.24.

³³ Thomas and Macchia, *Revelation*, p.92.

³⁴ Lee, *A Dynamic Reading*, p.92; Brandon D. Smith, *The Trinity in the Book of Revelation: Seeing Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in John's Apocalypse*, Studies in Christian Doctrine and Scripture (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2022), p.170; Thomas, 'The Spirit in the Book of Revelation', p.253; Koester, *Revelation*, p.27; and Thomas and Macchia, *Revelation*, p.92.

Spirit or is 'none other than Jesus himself',³⁵ that Christ is speaking by the Spirit³⁶ or the Spirit is mediating Christ,³⁷ that Christ and the Spirit's work is indistinguishable,³⁸ and that the Spirit is continuously speaking to the churches.³⁹ Although these interpretations are possible, a more detailed explanation of the Spirit's role may be ascertained from analysing intratextual connections and the content of situationally-specific prophecies. An important theological question is why, when the words are those of Christ, does Christ exhort the churches to 'listen to what the Spirit is saying'? The answer is to be found in the Spirit's activity in relation to the churches. The Spirit is both Christ's presence and God's active power in the churches. Christ is shown in vision as being in the midst of the seven golden lampstands, representing the seven churches, and he refers to himself as the one who walks among them (1:12-16, 20; 2:1). As Revelation locates Christ in the heavenly throne room with God it follows, by implication, that it is through the Spirit that Christ is present among the churches.⁴⁰ In respect of the Spirit being God's active power, the lampstand vision is paralleled in Zechariah's fifth vision where lampstands represent the power of Yahweh's Spirit (Zech. 4:6).⁴¹ In relation to prophecy the Spirit operates among the seven churches, as in the case of the phrase ἐν πνεύματι, through the ternary chain of

³⁵ Thomas, *Revelation 1-7*, p.151; Charles, *The Revelation of St. John, Vol. I*, p.53; and Gary M. Burge, *The Anointed Community: The Holy Spirit in the Johannine Tradition* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1987), p.177.

³⁶ F.F. Bruce, 'The Spirit in the Apocalypse', in *Christ and Spirit in the New Testament: Studies in Honour of Charles Francis Digby Moule*, ed. by Barnabas Lindars and Stephen S. Smalley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), pp.333-344 (p.340).

³⁷ Boxall, *Revelation of Saint John*, p.51; and Aune, *Revelation 1-5*, p.124.

³⁸ Boring, *Revelation*, p.89.

³⁹ Lee, *A Dynamic Reading*, p.91; Geoffrey C. Bingham, *The Revelation of St John the Divine: Commentary and Essays on the Book of Revelation* (Blackwood: New Creation Publications Inc, 1993), p.34; and Smalley, *Revelation*, p.63.

⁴⁰ On the Spirit as Jesus' presence see Ranko Stefanovic, *Revelation of Jesus Christ: Commentary on the Book of Revelation* (Berrien Springs: Andrews University Press, 2002), p.105; Koester, *Revelation*, p.246; and Archer and Waddell, 'The Spirit in John's Apocalypse', p.562.

⁴¹ G. K. Beale with David H. Campbell, *Revelation: A Shorter Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co, 2015) [eBook Version], pp.58 and 67.

divine communication, that is, from God to Christ to Spirit. The Spirit enables the seven churches to receive the prophecy, communicated to them by John, so that Christ's words may be transformative among them. Implicitly, the Spirit speaking, as Christ's presence and God's power, is intended to produce an effect which results in the fulfilment of situationally-specific prophecy. Notably, the exhortation to listen is placed immediately before or after Christ's promises of rewards to those who conquer, thus suggesting intratextual connections. To conquer implies that the rewards are for those who have heeded the exhortation to listen by obeying situationally-specific prophecy where this requires steadfastness or rectification from the churches. The implication is that the Spirit utters Christ's prophetic words, given to Christ by God, and this facilitates their fulfilment.

The content of Christ's situationally-specific prophecies provides insight into the Spirit's envisaged work. Christ's words are introduced by the words 'I know', followed on five occasions by 'your works', church persecution (Smyrna), or the church existing in sinful surroundings (Pergamum) (see Rev. 2:2, 9, 13, 19; 3:1, 8, 15). Works relate to the seven churches' spiritual health, or lack thereof, measured by behaviour befitting Christian witness. Commendable works include toil, endurance, intolerance towards evildoers, recognising true apostles, love, faith, service, keeping Christ's word and not denying the faith (2:2, 13, 19; 3:8). Censured works, resulting in serious consequences, include loss of zeal (first love), belief in false teaching, sacrificing to idols, sexual immorality, being spiritually dead or lukewarm, and pride (2:2-5, 14-16, 20-23; 3:1-3, 15-17). The consequences of censured works can be averted through repentance and obedience (2:5, 16, 22; 3:3, 19). By implication, the Spirit's facilitation of fulfilment

of situationally-specific prophecy relates to the Spirit aiding believers in their perseverance in commendable works and in achieving their freedom from censured works. In relation to these, the Spirit's activity is soteriological in that the Spirit sustains faithful believers in, and restores failing believers to, a salvific state befitting those freed from sins by Christ's blood and made 'priests serving his God and Father' (1:5-6). For failing believers implicitly the Spirit's activity replaces censured works with commendable works authenticated by restored devotion to God, epistemological soundness in respect of Christ's teaching, and ethical behaviour.⁴² Whilst the mode of sustaining and restorative pneumatic activity is not explicated it is inextricably connected to Christ's words. Such connection implies that the Spirit has hermeneutical and didactic functions in respect of Christ's words so they may produce a beneficial effect in believers' lives. Whilst the Spirit enables both the reception of prophecy and its apprehension, spiritual sustenance and restoration associates the Spirit with life-giving epistemological and ethical salvific health and renewal. Accordingly, in the exhortation to listen the Spirit acts as both the Spirit of prophecy and the Spirit of life. The ternary divine communication chain ending with the Spirit's activity in the seven churches demonstrates the Spirit's personality, unity with both Father and Son as Spirit of both, and implies 'his divine nature'.⁴³ Analysing the exhortation to listen portrays the characteristics of the Spirit as Jesus' presence and the power of God among the seven churches and as having a personality distinct from but so intimately connected to God and Christ that the Spirit may share their divinity. The implicit function of the Spirit is to facilitate fulfilment of

⁴² These are umbrella terms for the content of commendable works in Revelation 2-3.

⁴³ Smalley, 'The Paraclete', p.293; Fee, *Revelation*, p.61; and, for quotation, Smith, *The Trinity*, p.171.

situationally-specific prophecy by sustaining faithful believers in and restoring failing believers to salvific health through a hermeneutical and didactic role in respect of Christ's words.

2.1.3 *The Spirit's Independent Voice*

In two instances in Revelation the Spirit speaks with an independent voice, rather than as part of the prophetic-divine communication chain, and, in both cases, the Spirit responds to words spoken in the heavenly realm. Firstly, an unidentified voice proclaims: 'Blessed are the dead who from now on die in the Lord'. The Spirit affirms this, saying 'Yes',⁴⁴ and adds 'they will rest from their labours, for their deeds follow them' (14:13). This is preceded by a call for saints to endure by holding 'fast to the faith of Jesus' (14:12). The Spirit elucidates the reason for blessedness thus providing a motivation to endure until death. Secondly, in response to Jesus saying 'I am coming soon' (22:12-16), the 'Spirit and the bride say, 'Come' (22:17). This joint invitation expresses a longing for Christ which the Spirit's activity in the church may have engendered. The Spirit, in both instances, is a direct speaker and the 'revelatory voice of God'.⁴⁵ Revelation 22:17 has been viewed by commentators as Spirit-inspired prayer or as the Spirit offering intercessory prayer.⁴⁶ 'Come' has alternatively been interpreted as an invitation to faith in Christ rather than for the Parousia.⁴⁷ This seems unlikely given Jesus' words and the eschatological setting of Revelation which includes Christ's second coming (1:7; 19:11-16; 22:20-21). An analysis of the Spirit's independent voice

⁴⁴ 'Yes' is functionally equivalent to 'Amen'. See David E Aune, *Revelation 6-16*, Word Biblical Commentary, Vol. 52B (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998), p.839; and Osborne, *Revelation*, p.545.

⁴⁵ Lee, *A Dynamic Reading*, p.91; and Osborne, *Revelation*, p.37.

⁴⁶ Bauckham, *Theology*, p.118; Bauckham, *Climax*, p.160; and Witherington, *Revelation*, pp.283-284.

⁴⁷ Osborne, *Revelation*, p.37; and Lee, *A Dynamic Reading*, p.90.

portrays the characteristics of the Spirit as a person who can speak independently from God and Christ. The functions of the Spirit appear to be didactic and elucidative to motivate the saints to endure in the faith and, possibly, to direct the seven churches to live in expectation of Christ's eschatological coming.

2.1.4 ***'The seven spirits of God'***

The meaning of the phrase 'the seven spirits of God' (hereinafter 'the seven spirits'; see 1:4; 3:1; 4:5; 5:6) has divided scholarly opinion.⁴⁸ It initially appears between God and Christ in a threefold greeting (1:4). Interpreting this as God's singular Spirit has been criticised as eisegesis erroneously influenced by later trinitarianism.⁴⁹ Instead the seven spirits are to be regarded as celestial beings attending God's throne, as also attested in the Apocrypha and the Pseudepigrapha.⁵⁰ Additionally, certain Qumran documents use angels and spirits interchangeably.⁵¹ It is speculated by commentators that the seven spirits *inter alia* echo Babylonian astral religion, that they are the seven archangels of Jewish angelology, a heavenly entourage with special ministry, the angels of the seven churches and God's principal angels.⁵² A mediating position is that the 'angelic imagery and pneumatological content' have been conflated into 'angelomorphic pneumatology'.⁵³ Contrary to angelic identification, the seven

⁴⁸ It appears three times and initially as 'the seven spirits who are before his throne' (Rev. 1:4).

⁴⁹ Boring, *Revelation*, p.75; Boxall, *Revelation of Saint John*, p.32; Aune, *Revelation 1-5*, pp.33-34; and Archer and Waddell, 'The Spirit in John's Apocalypse', p.556.

⁵⁰ For example, 1 En. 37:2, 4; cf. 2 Macc 3:24 and Tob 12:15; 1 En. 20:1-7; 90:21 see Koester, *Revelation*, p.216; and Bauckham, *Theology*, p.110.

⁵¹ Koester, *Revelation*, p.216: 'The DSS use "angels" and "spirits" as parallel expressions (4Q405 23 I, 8-10; 1QM XII, 8-9)'; Boxall, *Revelation of Saint John*, p.32: '...the plural 'spirits' is sometimes used of angels (e.g. 1QS 3:17-26...)'; and Aune, *Revelation 1-5*, p.34.

⁵² Osborne, *Revelation*, p.74; Mounce, *Revelation*, pp.47-48; and Aune, *Revelation 1-5*, pp.34-35.

⁵³ Archer and Waddell, 'The Spirit in John's Apocalypse', p.558 quoting Bogdan Gabriel Bucar, *Angelomorphic Pneumatology: Clement of Alexandria and Other Early Christian Witnesses*, Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae, v.95 (Leiden: Brill, 2009), p.99.

spirits can justifiably be interpreted as a symbolic representation of one Spirit.⁵⁴ Against a background of the sevenfold qualities of the 'Spirit of the Lord' resting on the Messiah (Is. 11:2),⁵⁵ Zechariah's vision of the lampstand and olive trees (Zech. 4:1-14), and the symbolic significance of seven as a number, the seven spirits signify the one Spirit in completeness, fullness and perfection especially in executing God's work on earth.⁵⁶ The seven spirits are important in the larger context of Revelation's pneumatology, highlighting additional dimensions to the Spirit beyond that of prophecy. Along with God and Christ the seven spirits are a source of grace and peace in the tripartite, even trinitarian, greeting to the seven churches, which is not something attributed to angels (Rev. 1:4-5).⁵⁷ This connects the seven spirits to God and Christ in a way that signals an integration between them. Christ having (ἐξων) 'the seven spirits of God and the seven stars' is better understood as one Spirit and seven angels than as fourteen angels (3:1 cf. 1:20). This recognises the superior status of the seven spirits to angels, given their proximity to the heavenly throne. As ἐξω can connote possession, Christ possesses the seven spirits in the sense that they belong to Christ and, by implication, to God (1:1), arguably as an integral part of himself and Godself.⁵⁸ This excludes angels who are created beings. It may imply that the seven spirits can empower the moribund Sardis church to prophetic fulfilment and renewal beyond hermeneutical and didactic functions. What may be envisaged is the

⁵⁴ Paul, *Revelation*, pp.62 and 100; Fee, *Revelation*, p.6; Smalley, *Revelation*, p.33; and Bauckham, *Theology*, p.110.

⁵⁵ This is in the Greek LXX there are six in the Hebrew MT. Paul, *Revelation*, p.62.

⁵⁶ Bingham, *Revelation*, p.264; Beale and Campbell, *Revelation*, pp.26 and 25; Osborne, *Revelation*, pp.36 and 61; Thomas, *Revelation 1-7*, p.68; Bauckham, *Theology*, p.110; and Lee, *A Dynamic Reading*, p.80.

⁵⁷ On non-attribution of grace and peace to angels, see Thomas, *Revelation 1-7*, p.67; Paul, *Revelation*, p.100; and Archer and Waddell, 'The Spirit in John's Apocalypse', p.577.

⁵⁸ See '2192. echó' 'in Joseph Thayer, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, Electronic Database. Copyright © 2002, 2003, 2006, 2011 by Biblosoft <<https://biblehub.com/thayers/2192.htm>> [accessed 17/04/24].

seven spirits representing the Spirit of life as a purifying influence. The latter is suggested by the seven spirits appearance as 'seven flaming torches' in front of God's throne (4:5). This evokes the Holy of Holies in the wilderness tabernacle and second temple with torches representing holiness.⁵⁹ The seven spirits heavenly location may suggest that they are a gateway to the throne.⁶⁰ From the perspective of heaven the Spirit is the final link before humankind in the prophetic-divine communication chain. From the perspective of humankind, the Spirit is the gateway to receiving God's prophetic words and Christ's gospel. The Lamb is seen with (ἑπτὰ) seven eyes, which are the seven spirits 'sent out into all the earth' (5:6).⁶¹ The imagery evokes Zechariah's lampstand vision where 'the seven eyes of [Yahweh] that range through the whole earth' are associated with the power of God's spirit (Zech. 4:2, 6, 10). The eyes signify omniscience and, possibly, omnipresence, both of which are divine attributes. Being embedded in the Lamb, the eyes may signify that the seven spirits are the implied recipient of the worship given to the Lamb (Rev. 5:8-10), thereby confirming the Spirit's 'divine identity'.⁶² Being sent into the earth represents the Spirit departing the heavenly throne room to implement God and Christ's universal mission on the earth as the 'divine missionary agent'.⁶³ Assuming they refer to the one Spirit, an analysis of the seven spirits portrays the characteristics of the Spirit as complete and perfect,

⁵⁹ Koester, *Revelation*, p.363; Paul, *Revelation*, p.125; and Paul A. Rainbow, *Johannine Theology: The Gospel, the Epistles and the Apocalypse* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2014) [eBook Version], p.182.

⁶⁰ Barker notes that in the *Ascension of Isaiah* 'the angel of the holy spirit' sits to the left whereas Christ sits down at the right hand of God (Asc. Isa.11:32-33). See further Margaret Barker, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ: Which God Gave to Him to Show His Servants What Must Soon Take Place (Revelation 1.1)* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000), p.194.

⁶¹ See comments on ἑπτὰ/ἑξά above (Rev.3:1).

⁶² Archer and Waddell, 'The Spirit in John's Apocalypse', p.558 quoting Thomas, 'The Spirit in the Book of Revelation', p.492.

⁶³ Osborne, *Revelation*, p.257; Bauckham, *Theology*, p.115; and Archer and Waddell, 'The Spirit in John's Apocalypse', p.558 (for quotation).

as possessing divine attributes, as belonging to and integrated with God and Christ, and as sent out from them. The functions of the Spirit are to empower the failing churches in Asia to renewal, to act as the gateway to prophecy and the gospel, and to implement God and Christ's mission to the world.

2.1.5 **Breath**

Three and a half days after the killing of two prophetic witnesses by the beast 'the breath of life (πνεῦμα ζωῆς) from God' enters their dead bodies and they stand on their feet (11:11). Breath evokes Ezekiel's vision of the valley of the dry bones (Ezek. 37) as well as the Genesis creation account. Yahweh's breathing into those slain causes them to live and to stand on their feet (37:10) while his breathing 'the breath of life' into the man's nostrils causes the man to become 'a living being' (Gen. 2:7). Ezekiel's vision forms the basis of the hope for eschatological bodily resurrection initially realised in Christ's resurrection.⁶⁴ Πνεῦμα can be translated here as Spirit although translations and the majority of commentators favour 'breath'.⁶⁵ Breath in Ezekiel and Genesis may have influenced the choice of translation. If πνεῦμα is translated as 'Spirit', which is a legitimate translation, it is theologically significant. The two witnesses' resurrection, recalling Christ's resurrection, shows Yahweh's purposes being accomplished by his spirit (Zech. 4:6)⁶⁶ and πνεῦμα as the Spirit of life. Πνεῦμα ζωῆς entering the corpses of the two witnesses would be an instance of the Spirit entering into believers. Πνεῦμα ζωῆς may, in fact, be interpreted as a double entendre referring to both breath of life and Spirit of life or the life-giving Spirit as

⁶⁴ Paul, *Revelation*, p.204.

⁶⁵ Waddell, *The Spirit of the Book of Revelation*, p.133.

⁶⁶ Koester, *Revelation*, pp.502-503.

the source of new life breathed into the two witnesses.⁶⁷ As demonstrated by the words ἐν πνεύματι, Revelation is prophecy pivoted on the Spirit. The exhortation to listen relates the Spirit to the fulfilment of situationally-specific prophecy and to soteriological life-giving restorative powers. The two witnesses are prophets, Elijah-like in their authority to prevent rain during their prophesying and in their post-resurrection ascension to heaven (Rev. 11:3, 6, 12; cf. 1 Kgs 17:1; 2 Kgs 2:1, 11). The Spirit of prophecy, which inspired the two witnesses' prophesying, is not mutually exclusive of the Spirit of life. Interpreting πνεῦμα ζωῆς as the Spirit of life falls within the scope of justifiable translation and reasonable theologizing in the context of Revelation's pneumatology. When πνεῦμα ζωῆς refers to the Spirit, it shows that the Spirit is 'God-like', even divine.⁶⁸ Breath (πνεῦμα) is also mentioned in respect of the second beast that causes the first beast's image to speak (Rev. 13:15). This is a satanic parody of the witnesses' resurrection, 'a case of ventriloquism rather than life'.⁶⁹ Assuming that πνεῦμα in Revelation 11:11 refers to the Spirit, an analysis of πνεῦμα ζωῆς portrays the characteristics of the Spirit as able to enter into believers and as divine. The function of the Spirit is life-giving through soteriological restorative powers.

2.1.6 *Prophetic Terms*

The corpses of the two witnesses are said to lie in a street 'of the great city that is prophetically (πνευματικῶς) called Sodom and Egypt' (11:8). Although its pneumatological significance is often overlooked, πνευματικῶς implies the

⁶⁷ Waddell, *The Spirit of the Book of Revelation*, p.184; and Osborne, *Revelation*, p.430.

⁶⁸ Lee, *A Dynamic Reading*, p.94; and Thomas and Macchia, *Revelation*, p.491.

⁶⁹ Paul, *Revelation*, p.237; Waddell, *The Spirit of the Book of Revelation*, p.184; and, for quote, Archer and Waddell, 'The Spirit in John's Apocalypse', p.554.

Spirit's presence.⁷⁰ It has *inter alia* been interpreted as the Spirit identifying 'the spiritual or theological reality',⁷¹ as 'charismatic exegesis of the Old Testament' under the Spirit's guidance,⁷² as 'Spirit-given perception' by the Spirit of prophecy,⁷³ as 'true reality via the assistance of the Spirit',⁷⁴ and also as pneumatically conveyed discernment.⁷⁵ Each of the foregoing proposals fall within the parameters of reasonable interpretation. Spirit-given prophetic discernment is consonant with the exhortation to listen. The Spirit aiding perseverance in commendable works embraces the recognition of true apostles from false ones (2:2). The Spirit aiding freedom from censured works embraces the rejection of false teaching in favour of Christ's true teaching (2:14-16, 20). An angel tells John that 'the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy' (19:10). The testimony of Jesus can be interpreted as believers bearing witness about Jesus,⁷⁶ or Jesus bearing witness himself,⁷⁷ with both being linked to the content of Jesus' gospel. In either case, the Spirit inspires prophecy.⁷⁸ Witness to Jesus 'is the heart of prophecy' and Jesus' witness is 'the essence of prophecy'.⁷⁹ The 'Lord' is referred to as 'the God of the spirits of the prophets' (22:6). The Lord inspiring prophets, with prophets' natural cognitive or psychic faculties being

⁷⁰ Thayer defines πνευματικῶς as 'by the aid of the Holy Spirit... in a sense apprehended only by the aid of the Divine Spirit, i.e. in a hidden or mystical sense.' See '4153. pneumatikós' in Joseph Thayer, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, Electronic Database. Copyright © 2002, 2003, 2006, 2011 by BibleSoft <<https://biblehub.com/thayers/4153.htm>> [accessed 18/04/24].

⁷¹ Paul, *Revelation*, p.202.

⁷² Aune, *Revelation 6-16*, p.620.

⁷³ Bauckham, *Climax*, p.169.

⁷⁴ Waddell, *The Spirit of the Book of Revelation*, p.182.

⁷⁵ Thomas, 'The Spirit in the Book of Revelation', p.252.

⁷⁶ Favoured by Aune, *Revelation 6-16*, p.1039.

⁷⁷ Favoured by Robert L. Thomas, *Revelation 8-22: An Exegetical Commentary* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1995), p.376; Koester, *Revelation*, p.265; and Skaggs and Benham, *Revelation*, p.194.

⁷⁸ Boxall, *Revelation of Saint John*, p.270; Mounce, *Revelation*, p.350; and Bauckham, *Theology*, p.119.

⁷⁹ Osborne, *Revelation*, p.678.

quickened by the Spirit for prophetic activity, appears to be what is envisaged.⁸⁰

An analysis of πνευματικῶς, prophecy and prophets portrays the characteristics of the Spirit as the Spirit of prophecy. The functions of the Spirit are to enable discernment and to bear witness about Jesus and his gospel.

2.2 Water of Life

The 'river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb' through the middle of the street of the new Jerusalem envisions the ultimate triumph of God and his eternal dwelling place with his people (22:1-2). Although the word πνεῦμα is absent, the water imagery has been interpreted as a reference to the Spirit for several reasons. The river evokes Ezekiel's vision of water flowing from the temple (Ezek. 47:1-12),⁸¹ while crystal suggests purity with the river indicating the life-giving presence of God.⁸² The water metaphor has been reasonably viewed as 'the life of eternal fellowship with God and Christ'.⁸³ Typically, where the Spirit is seen as the water of life, it is via the hermeneutical lens of the Gospel of John where the Spirit is referred to as 'rivers of living water' (Jn. 7:37-39).⁸⁴ Others see no spiritual significance to the water in respect of the Spirit.⁸⁵ Whilst it is unlikely that the water of life represents the Spirit *per se*, there are several theological strands in Revelation's pneumatology that can be adduced to support the water of life as an actual or symbolic representation of God as Spirit, inclusive of the Spirit of Christ, and the Spirit as a distinct person.

⁸⁰ Osborne, *Revelation*, p.78; Fee, *Revelation*, p.308; Koester, *Revelation*, p.838; Aune, *Revelation 6-16*, p.1182; Smalley, *Revelation*, p.568; and Thomas, *Revelation 8-22*, p.496.

⁸¹ Tonstad, *Revelation*, pp.324-325; and Mounce, *Revelation*, p.398.

⁸² Duvall, *Revelation*, p.528; Paul, *Revelation*, p.362; and Mounce, *Revelation*, p.398.

⁸³ Beale and Campbell, *Revelation*, p.488.

⁸⁴ For example, Bingham, *Revelation*, p.248.

⁸⁵ For example, Thomas, *Revelation 8-22*, p.482.

Whilst primarily the Spirit of prophecy, the Spirit in Revelation is also the Spirit of life. This is seen in the intended effects of the Spirit speaking in the exhortation to listen and in the resurrection of the two witnesses. The Spirit's sustaining and restorative powers are life-giving. Christ holding the seven spirits before the Sardis church suggests life-purifying empowerment. The seven spirits are between God and Christ in the threefold greeting from the heavenly throne room and are a source of grace and peace with them. They are also seen in front of the throne of God, as the gateway to the throne and are sent forth from the throne room in God and Christ's redemptive mission to the earth. The water of life flows among the redeemed at the time when the Spirit's earthly mission is complete. At such time the Spirit would be expected to be seen again in the immediate vicinity of the throne of God and Christ. In Revelation the Spirit is intimately connected to and integrated with God and Christ and, like them, has divine attributes. The river of the water of life is unlikely to be something created and is most probably an effluence of God himself. That which emanates from God as life-giving must itself be the essence of God. On the basis of the foregoing theological strands, it is within the scope of reasonable theologizing to view the water of life as including the Spirit of God and Christ and the Spirit as a distinct person.

2.3. Theological Motifs and the Spirit's Identity

The foregoing analysis of characteristics and functions has constructed a portrait of the Spirit in Revelation. From this it is possible to identify key theological motifs and to gain insights into the identity of the Spirit.

2.3.1 *Theological Motifs*

The following motifs encapsulate the principal theological themes associated with the Spirit in Revelation. The Spirit is the '*Spirit of prophecy*'. This is the dominant motif which encompasses the Spirit's manifestation of prophetic functions. The Spirit communicates prophecy to John on earth for the seven churches and enables prophetic discernment. The Spirit in the exhortation to listen sustains and renews believers through implied hermeneutical and didactic functions in relation to Christ's words. These functions are corroborated by the Spirit's independent voice, whereby the Spirit responds to heavenly voices with affirmation, elucidation and joining the church in accord with its response. Another motif is the '*Spirit of life*'. This is evidenced by the Spirit's implicit soteriological sustaining and restorative powers, connected to the hermeneutical and didactic functions, effecting spiritual sustenance and renewal manifested by devotion to God, epistemological soundness in respect of Christ's teaching and ethical behaviour. It is corroborated by the Spirit effecting the resurrection of the two witnesses, by Christ having the seven spirits if this implies Spirit-purifying empowerment in respect of the Sardis church, and, indirectly, by the water of life. '*The Spirit has a close relationship with Christ and God*'. This motif can be seen in the ternary divine prophetic-communication chain. Additionally, the seven spirits who are pictured in front of the throne and between God and Christ, and who are sent out from them, evince an intimacy, even integration, between God, Christ and Spirit. The Spirit is the Spirit of God and of Christ. In respect of the exhortation to listen this is manifested by the Spirit being the presence of Christ and power of God. Lastly, the '*Spirit of mission*' is a motif describing the Spirit as the heavenly missionary on earth. The Spirit is a gateway to prophecy and the

gospel, the implementer of God and Christ's mission, and the bearer of prophetic witness about Jesus.

2.3.2 *The Spirit's Identity*

The character of the Spirit as portrayed in Revelation comprises traits from which one may gain insights into Revelation's understanding of the Spirit's identity. The Spirit is a person who can be encountered in prophecy, who speaks, is able to enter into believers, and possesses attributes associated with divinity. The Spirit is distinct from God and Christ but is so intimately connected to them as to belong to them, be integrated in all that they do, and be sent out from them. In Revelation divine designations are claimed by Christ.⁸⁶ Whilst no divine designation applies to the Spirit, as Jesus' presence and God's power in the seven churches, and as one who is pictured as complete and perfect, the Spirit is more akin to God and Christ than to something created. One may conclude from the foregoing characterisation that the Spirit is a divine person who acts alongside and in tandem with two other divine persons, God and Christ, and whose identity and functions cannot be theologically comprehended apart from this tripartite relationship. Whilst this may not equate to God, Christ and the Spirit in the Godhead (*opera ad intra*) in terms of later trinitarian theologizing it does furnish concepts similar to God's external actions in the church and on earth (*opera ad extra*). The Spirit is sometimes theologically designated as an agent but agency fails to do justice to the Spirit in Revelation. The Spirit is not an impersonal active

⁸⁶ The Doctrine of God and Christology in Revelation are beyond the scope of this chapter. However, on Christ's divinity, the following should be noted. God claims to be the 'Alpha and Omega' (Rev. 1:8; 21:6) and 'the Beginning and the End' (Rev. 21:6) cf. 'I am the first, and I am the last' (Is. 44:6; 48:12) relating to Yahweh. Christ claims to be the 'Alpha and Omega' (Rev. 22:13), 'the First and the Last' (Rev. 1:17; 2:8; 22:13) and 'the Beginning and the End' (Rev. 22:13).

force detached from but at the command of God and Christ or an independent agent acting on their behalf. Instead the Spirit is integral to God and Christ. Whilst this is not fully-fledged trinitarianism, it is not dissonant from aspects of it. Revelation furnishes theological evidence for three divine beings acting in concert. It is subsequent trinitarian theologizing that seeks to make sense of this within a Christian monotheistic theological framework.

Conclusion

This chapter has argued that Revelation discloses a significant theology of the Spirit. Its significance is further fortified where the references to the seven spirits, breath of life from God, and water of life are regarded as referring to the Spirit. The theological motifs and insights into the Spirit's identity which this chapter has set out will form the basis, in chapter 4, for assessing the extent of the convergence of Revelation's pneumatology with that of 1 John and aspects of the Gospel of John's pneumatology.

Chapter 3

The Spirit in 1 John

In 1 John the Spirit identifies, indwells and sustains believers in Jesus Christ and testifies to the truth about Christ. In this chapter 1 John's portrait of the Spirit is examined. From such portrait key theological motifs are identified and insights into 1 John's understanding of the Spirit's identity are gained. These will be used to assess the convergence between the Johannine pneumatologies.

The Spirit in Context

1 John is a letter to a Christ-believing community disquieted by the departure of some of their number (1 Jn. 2:18-19). It reassures the community that they are children of God who possess eternal life, adjudges the departees' apostasy as proving they were never genuine believers, and provides a bulwark of Christian teaching (2:3-6, 19, 3:1, 7-10, 19-22; 4:2-3, 6, 15-16; 5:13). In 1 John identity markers signpost what authenticates believers in Christ with the Spirit being a major identity marker. References to, and implicit connections with, the Spirit constitute the Spirit's portrait in 1 John.

3.1 References to the Spirit

The term Spirit of God (Πνεῦμα τοῦ Θεοῦ) occurs once in 1 John but can be regarded as the meaning of πνεῦμα in seven additional occurrences. These and

one direct connection with the Spirit are analysed in this section. In each case the characteristics and functions of the Spirit will be ascertained.⁸⁷

3.1.1 *The Spirit, Mutual Indwelling, and Abiding*

God's gift of his Spirit (Πνεύματος) to those who believe in his Son Jesus Christ enables believers to know that God abides in them and that they abide in God (3:24; 4:13). Both God and Christ are envisaged as abiding in believers (2:6, 2:24, 27-28; 3:6, 23-24; 4:12-13, 15-16; 5:20).⁸⁸ The juxtaposition of 'abide' and 'in' indicates an indwelling. Hence, God and Christ being in the believer, and the believer being in God and Christ, constitutes a mutual indwelling. The co-text of, and connection between, the Spirit as God's gift and mutual indwelling suggests that the Spirit imparting knowledge of the mutual indwelling in a didactic sense, inculcating assurance in believers, is through the Spirit indwelling the believer with the Spirit both effecting and sustaining the mutual indwelling.⁸⁹ Believers having 'fellowship (κοινωνίαν) with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ' (1:3)

⁸⁷ Πνεῦμα occurs twelve times in different grammatical forms. The references to πνεῦμα in 1 Jn. 4:1, 3 and to 'the spirit of error' (1 Jn. 4:6) are not references to God's Spirit. The Greek text 'καὶ τοῦτό ἐστιν τὸ τοῦ ἀντιχρίστου' which, in English, is translated as '*the spirit of the antichrist*' (1 Jn. 4:3), for example in the NRSVue, does not contain πνεῦμα, see <https://biblehub.com/interlinear/1_john/4.htm> [accessed 10/7/24]. It is implied from the two preceding references to 'spirit'. Neither 2 John nor 3 John contain πνεῦμα.

⁸⁸ On the difficulties in determining whether the reference in the Greek text is to God or Christ and the author's use of the pronoun αὐτός and third person verbs without an explicit subject, see Martin M. Culy, *1, 2, 3 John: A Handbook on the Greek Text* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2004), p.xx.

⁸⁹ Many commentators regard the Spirit as the vehicle or means of the mutual indwelling. See, for example, Gary M. Burge, *The Letters of John*, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), pp.171 and 189; Karen H. Jobes, *1, 2, & 3 John*, Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2013) [ePub Edition], p.219; Kelly Anderson and Daniel Keating, *James, First, Second and Third John*, Catholic Commentary on Sacred Scripture (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017), p.248; John R. Stott, *The Epistles of John: An Introduction and Commentary*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co, 1964), pp.151 and 165; and John Christopher Thomas, 'The Spirit in the Gospel according to John, 1 John and 2 John: *"Rivers of Living Water"*', *Pneuma* 43 (2021), 442-469 (p.466). On the Spirit giving assurance see, for example, C Hass, M. De Jonge and J. L. Swellengrebel, *A Translator's Handbook on the Letters of John*, Helps for Translators, Vol. XIII (London: United Bible Societies, 1972), p.98; Yarbrough, *1—3 John*, p.246; and Smalley, *1, 2, and 3 John*, p.238.

confirms that mutual indwelling comprises intimate and relational aspects.⁹⁰ The Spirit effecting this intimate relationship has been reasonably viewed as communion with the Spirit on a personal basis, 'a touchstone of Christian interiority', and as 'living in the Spirit'.⁹¹ Mutual indwelling raises theological questions about the Spirit's identity. 1 John 5:20 may be interpreted as God's 'Son Jesus Christ...is the true God and eternal life'.⁹² On such interpretation both God as Father and Jesus Christ as Son are identified as God. The Spirit effecting believers being in God and Christ raises the possibility that the Spirit too is divine. Participation of believers in the divinity of the Father and Son has been viewed as 'something of the imparting of the divine nature to the believer',⁹³ and as participation of the Trinity in believers.⁹⁴ Both 1 John 3:24 and 4:13 were influential in Athanasius's theologizing on the Spirit which contributed to the formulation of the Church doctrine of a triune Godhead. In *Orations against the Arians*, Athanasius interpreted 1 John 3:24 and 4:13 as the Spirit intrinsically belongs to and has union with the Son who has an intrinsic union with the Father. In consequence of this, the Spirit is able to share such union with believers.⁹⁵ In his later *Letters to Serapion*, against the Tropikoi,⁹⁶ Athanasius interpreted 1

⁹⁰ On the meaning of κοινωνία see '2842. koinonia' in both Strong's Exhaustive Concordance, which includes 'fellowship....(social) intercourse' <<https://biblehub.com/strongsgreek/2842.htm>> and in Thayer's Greek Lexicon, which includes 'fellowship, association, community, communion, joint participation, contact...intimacy' <<https://biblehub.com/thayers/2842.htm>> [both accessed 7/7/24].

⁹¹ Burge, *Letters of John*, p.34 and Burge, *The Anointed Community*, pp.172-173.

⁹² Many commentators favour this interpretation, see for example, Burge, *Letters of John*, p.218; Marianne Meye Thompson, *1-3 John*, The IVP New Testament Commentary Series (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1992), p.148; Smalley, *1, 2, and 3 John*, p.294; Raymond E. Brown, *The Epistles of John*, The Anchor Bible, Vol. 30 (New York: Doubleday, 1982), p.626; and John Christopher Thomas, *1 John, 2 John, 3 John*, Pentecostal Commentary Series (Blandford Forum: Deo Publishing, 2017), p.279.

⁹³ Thomas, *1 John, 2 John, 3 John*, p.195.

⁹⁴ Jobes, *1, 2, & 3 John*, p.219; and Rainbow, *Johannine Theology*, p.208.

⁹⁵ See *Orations* 1.43 on 1 Jn. 3:24 and *Orations* 3.24-25 on 1 Jn. 4:13 and Hill's commentary on these in Kevin Douglas Hill, *Athanasius and the Holy Spirit: The Development of His Early Pneumatology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2016), pp.227-230 and 236-237.

⁹⁶ Tropicism claimed the Spirit was a creature. See Hill, *Athanasius*, pp.138-139.

John 4:13 as participation of believers in God through the Spirit and concluded that participation was not possible unless the Spirit is divine and ‘the divine presence in believers’ lives’.⁹⁷ Such interpretations fall within the scope of reasonable and justifiable theologizing from the texts.

In 1 John abiding is a theologically significant concept. It bespeaks God and Christ dwelling in believers and applies to individuals and the community.⁹⁸ The Greek verb μένω occurs 24 times and conveys the idea of something that continues.⁹⁹ For believers, abiding in God and Christ is exteriorising mutual indwelling through praxis. Praxis is expressed by faithfully adhering to the community’s beliefs such as obeying its commandments (2:3-6; 3:11, 22-24). The community’s beliefs accord with ‘what was from the beginning’ (1:1-3, 5; 2:7, 13-14, 24; 3:11) concerning Jesus Christ and encompass his pre-existence, life, death, teaching, and second coming (1:2; 2:28; 3:2, 5; 4:9) (hereinafter ‘the community’s beliefs’). Where the community’s beliefs abide in believers they will ‘abide in the Son and in the Father’ (2:24). Such abiding is, and continues to be, effected by the Spirit. Authentic believers abide in God and Christ, through the Spirit, by continuing to believe and confess belief in, and continuing to implement the community’s beliefs (2:24-25; 4:12, 15-16, 21; cf. 2 Jn. 9). Conversely, the departees abandonment of beliefs and obedience exposes their inauthenticity (1

⁹⁷ See ‘Letters to Serapion 1.24.3 and 2.12.4 in A. Issak Haithman, *The Spirit of Truth: Johannine Pneumatology in the Letters of Athanasius to Serapion* (Eugene: Pickwick Publications, 2023), pp. 113-114, 147-148 (p.148 for quote). See also par 24 in the first letter, Khaled Anatolios, *Athanasius, The Early Church Fathers* (London and New York: Routledge, 2004), p.181.

⁹⁸ Judith M. Lieu, *The Theology of the Johannine Epistles*, New Testament Theology (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p.43.

⁹⁹ On its 24 occurrences in 1 John see ‘118 Occurrences’ under ‘Strong’s Greek 3306’ and on the meaning of μένω in Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance, including *inter alia* to stay, abide, remain, continue, dwell, endure, be present, see 3306. menó <<https://biblehub.com/greek/3306.htm>> [accessed 8/05/24].

Jn. 2:18-19). Where authentic believers lapse from praxis, they 'have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous', whose blood 'cleanses from all sin' with forgiveness available on confessing sin (1:7-10; 2:1-2). The Spirit is an identity marker of believers in Jesus Christ, being the gift of God and Christ's indwelling, and is authenticated by believers abiding in God and Christ, through the Spirit, as exteriorised by praxis. An analysis of the Spirit, mutual indwelling, and abiding portrays the characteristics of the Spirit as given by God to believers in Christ, thereby forming part of a tripartite relationship with believers, and capable of being communed with in an intimate way with the foregoing implying the Spirit's personality and divinity. The functions of the Spirit are to indwell believers as the indwelling presence of God and Christ, to effect believers being in God and Christ, to sustain believers in this mutual indwelling by praxis and to enable believers to know, and therefore be assured, of their abiding in God and Christ.

3.1.2 ***The Spirit, Confession, and Testing***

The confession 'Jesus Christ has come in the flesh' by a spirit is an identity marker of the 'Spirit of God' (Πνεῦμα τοῦ Θεοῦ) and identifies the spirit confessing as being 'from God' (4:2). Accordingly, the spirit (πνεῦμα) in 'every spirit that confesses' (4:2) is a dual reference to the believer, who has received the gift of the Spirit, and to the Spirit which indwells the believer and inspires confession of faith in Christ.¹⁰⁰ The Spirit is 'the spirit of truth' (4:6; 5:6) which is demonstrated by the Christocentric content of confession conforming to the community's

¹⁰⁰ For other interpretations see, for example, Smalley, *1, 2, and 3 John*, p.210; Brown, *The Epistles of John*, p.501; and Thompson, *1-3 John*, p.112.

beliefs. Christ having 'come in the flesh' anchors confession to Christ's incarnational ministry. If Christ did not 'come in the flesh' the foundation of the community's beliefs is undermined. Eyewitness testimony, Christ having taught, the example he set, Christ being sent into the world and being an atoning sacrifice for sins (1:1-3, 5, 7; 2:2, 6, 13-14; 3:5; 4:9) *inter alia* are dependent upon Christ having existed 'in the flesh'. Confession of Jesus Christ is instigated by, and is a manifestation of, the Spirit as God and Christ's indwelling presence. Consistent with this is that everyone confessing the Son 'has the Father also' (2:23); God abides in them and 'they abide in God' (4:15). A believer's initial confession likely indicates the simultaneous receipt of the gift of the Spirit. Continued confession arises from, and is confirmation of, abiding in God and Christ by praxis which authenticates the believer as one indwelt by the Spirit. Confession as an identity marker of the Spirit of God is to be understood in the context of the trauma of schism and the community's teaching on antichrists, a designation applicable to the departees. Antichrists deny that Jesus is the Christ and, by so doing, deny the Father, with denial of the Son confirming that the denier does not have the Father (2:18-19, 22-23). As the departees have fallen under the influence of false prophets, there is a need to 'test the spirits to see whether they are from God' (4:1). A spirit that does not confess Jesus discloses itself as being 'of the antichrist' (4:3). Those who know God listen to the what the community says thereby disclosing the presence of 'the spirit of truth' which, in the community's dualistic outlook, is opposed by 'the spirit of error' (4:6). Consequently, a confession of faith in Christ is a hallmark of the Spirit of God where it conforms to the community's beliefs about Christ. Such beliefs include perfect harmony existing between Father and Son where belief in one cannot be detached from

belief in the other. An analysis of the Spirit and confession portrays the characteristics of the Spirit as the Spirit of truth, with truth being consonant with the community's beliefs, and the Spirit being one in agreement with Christ as Son and God as Father in respect of the truth about the incarnate Christ. The functions of the Spirit are to inspire confession of faith in Christ, to sustain such confession as believers abide in God and Christ and to enable believers to discern truth from error, antichrists and false prophets.

3.1.3 *The Spirit and Ethics*

The Spirit is directly connected with the commandment to love one another (2:10; 3:10-11, 17-18, 23; 4:7, 11, 21; 5:2). This is by virtue of the Spirit effecting mutual indwelling and in sustaining believers as they abide in God and Christ by praxis.¹⁰¹ The commandment flows from the revelation that God is love (4:8-10, 16), expresses the community's ethical life and identifies believers. Obeying the commandment evinces loving and knowing God, enables God's love to be perfected and is essential to believers abiding in God and God abiding in them (2:3-5; 3:24; 4:16, 19; 5:2-3). The love commandment is 'from the beginning' linking it to the community's beliefs and the Spirit of truth (2:7; 3:11). God's love is revealed by sending his only Son into the world as an atoning sacrifice for sins so that believers may live through him (4:9-10). In the community's ethical life

¹⁰¹ The Spirit and love being linked together is a widely held interpretation, albeit commentators express this in varying ways. See, by way of example, Burge, *The Anointed Community*, p.173; Thompson, *1-3 John*, p.110; Rainbow, *Johannine Theology*, p.208; Saint Augustine, *Homilies on the First Epistle of John*, The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century, Part III - Homilies, Volume 14 (New York: New City Press, 2008), pp.96 and 128; and Stott, *The Epistles of John*, p.165.

Christ's life and death are a paradigm for abiding in love (2:6; 3:16).¹⁰² Obedience to the love commandment, sustained by the Spirit, maintains the community's integrity against schismatics. As Christ's atoning sacrifice is 'for the sins of the whole world', with the Father having 'sent his Son as Saviour of the world' (2:2; 4:14), the love commandment, although lived out between community members, serves the community's witness to the world as being modelled on Christ as an exemplar. An analysis of the Spirit and ethics portrays the characteristics of the Spirit as being inextricably linked to God's love as expressed through his Son and, by indwelling believers, integral to love's manifestation in them. The function of the Spirit is to sustain believers as they abide in God and Christ by living out the love commandment and modelling Christ's example.

3.1.4 *The Spirit of Truth and Testimony*

God testifies to his Son (5:9-12) and his Son makes known 'him who is true', with believers being 'in him who is true, in his Son Jesus Christ' (5:20). God and his Son both speak to truth and are the truth.¹⁰³ The Spirit testifies to truth 'for the Spirit is the truth' (5:6). Truth is as inherent to the Spirit as it is to God and Christ. The Spirit also testifies in agreement with the testimony of 'water and the blood'

¹⁰² See Loren T. Stuckenbruck, 'The Spirit and *Imitatio Christi* in 1 John', in *The Spirit Says: Inspiration and Interpretation in Israelite, Jewish and Early Christian Texts*, ed. by Ronald Herms, John R. Levison and Archie T. Wright (Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter, 2021), pp.227-228.

¹⁰³ The phrase translated 'him who is true' (τὸν ἀληθινόν) can be translated as 'him who is the truth', as proposed by Smalley, *1, 2, and 3 John*, p.293. Strecker comments 'in this passage it is [not] exclusively God who is called "the one who is true"...Since the author's use of language is flexible in applying personal pronouns either to God or Christ, one should not think of the absolute τὸν ἀληθινόν as presenting an either/or "God" or "Christ..."', Georg Strecker, *The Johannine Letters: A Commentary on 1, 2, and 3 John*, Hermeneia — A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996), pp.210-211.

(5:7-8) with such testifying suggesting the Spirit has a personality.¹⁰⁴ The water and the blood have been variously interpreted throughout church history with the likely interpretation being that water and blood refer to Jesus' baptism and death on the cross.¹⁰⁵ This pivots the Spirit's testimony on Jesus' historical salvific mission and it is consonant with the Spirit's testimony conforming to the community's beliefs which are likewise pivoted. In the community's pneumatology, the Spirit is probably involved in bringing non-believers to faith by testifying *inter alia* through the confessions, teaching and example of the community, indwelt by the Spirit, and through non-believers encountering the community's beliefs. On their initial verbalising of faith it seems likely that the external witness of the Spirit simultaneously becomes an internal witness through the gift of the Spirit inspiring confession and identifying the confessor as one 'from God' (4:2). An analysis of the characteristics of the Spirit of truth and testimony thus portrays the characteristics of the Spirit as truth which is as inherent to the Spirit as it is to God and Christ, and as having a personality. The function of the Spirit is to bear witness to the truth of God's salvific mission in Christ.

¹⁰⁴ See Colin G. Kruse, *The Letters of John*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2000) [eBook Version], p.211. On verses 5:7-8 Smalley states 'The "witnesses"... (Spirit, water, and blood) are personified. Although the relevant nouns in the [Greek]... are all neuter, John introduces them by means of a clause in the masculine plural... The Spirit is obviously regarded as personal'. See further Smalley, *1, 2, and 3 John*, p.269.

¹⁰⁵ For discussion on the various interpretations see Burge, *Letters of John*, pp.201-202; Smalley, *1, 2, and 3 John*, pp.264-265 and Brown, *The Epistles of John*, pp.575-578. The interpretation favouring Jesus' baptism and death is commonly held. See, for example, Cornelis Bennema, 'The Hermeneutical Role of the Spirit in the Johannine Writings' in *The Spirit Says: Inspiration and Interpretation in Israelite, Jewish and Early Christian Texts*, ed. by Ronald Herms, John R. Levison and Archie T. Wright (Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter, 2021), pp.169-188 (p.186); Smalley, *1, 2, and 3 John*, pp.265 and 269; Burge, *Letters of John*, p.204; Thompson, *1-3 John*, p.136; J. L. Houlden, *J. A Commentary on the Johannine Epistles*, Black's New Testament Commentaries (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1973), pp.125-126; and A. E. Brooke, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Johannine Epistles*, The International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1912), p.137.

3.2. Implied Connections with the Spirit

1 John contains verses which, by implication, are connected with the Spirit notwithstanding the absence of πνεῦμα. The analyses in sections 3.1.1–4 above (hereinafter ‘the analyses’) enable such implied connections to be made. These verses complete 1 John’s portrait of the Spirit and are considered below.

3.2.1 *Born of God and the Spirit*

‘Born of God’ and its related term ‘children of God’ imply God is Father and are identity markers for believers in Christ (2:9; 3:1-2, 9-10; 4:7; 5:1-2, 4, 18).¹⁰⁶ Those born of God ‘do not sin because God’s seed (σπέρμα) abides in them’ (3:9). God’s seed and born of God are therefore interlinked. The analyses provide theological justifications for implying God’s seed refers to the Spirit. The Spirit testifies to the truth leading non-believers to faith in Christ. As God’s gift, the Spirit indwells believers as God and Christ’s abiding presence, inspires confession of faith and sustains believers so they may abide in God and Christ and conform to Christ’s example. These together likely constitute what it means to be born of God. The Spirit is divine life within a believer. Consequently, God’s seed, by implication, is the Spirit. This interpretation is bolstered by God’s seed being widely viewed, metaphorically, as referring to the Spirit or God’s nature or

¹⁰⁶ ‘Born of God’ or ‘born of him’ are ‘the theological metaphor of divine birth’, as noted by Burge, *The Anointed Community*, p.171 (n. 87). On ‘children of God’ (τέκνα) vis-à-vis ‘little children’ or ‘children’ (τεκνία or παιδία), see Lieu, *Theology*, p.34.

the word of God or some combination of the foregoing.¹⁰⁷ The analyses confirm there is nothing incompatible between the Spirit, God's nature (God and Christ's indwelling presence) or God's word (the community's beliefs). Accordingly, the Spirit is involved in originating salvific life in Christ. The Spirit is therefore characterised as life-giving and as having a soteriological function.

3.2.2 *Teaching and the Spirit*

Believers have an anointing (χρίσμα) from the Holy One and knowledge (2:20).¹⁰⁸ As the anointing abides in them, they do not need anyone to teach them as the anointing teaches them about 'all things and is true' (2:27). The analyses furnish theological grounds for implying that the anointing refers to the Spirit. Like the anointing the Spirit is given by God. The Spirit indwells believers thus effecting, sustaining and imparting knowledge of mutual abiding. The Spirit is the truth aligned with the community's beliefs and inspires confession conforming to such beliefs. Consequently, by implication, the Spirit of truth is the anointing which abides in believers. This interpretation is bolstered by the Spirit being generally

¹⁰⁷ For various interpretations see Hass, De Jonge and Swellengrebel, *A Translator's Handbook*, p.85. On σπέρμα as God's nature, see Culy, *1, 2, 3 John: A Handbook*, p.77; Smalley, *1, 2, and 3 John*, p.164; and Yarbrough, *1—3 John*, p.195. On σπέρμα as the word of God, see Kenneth Grayston, *The Johannine Epistles*, The New Century Bible Commentary (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1984), p.107. On σπέρμα as the Spirit, see Burge, *The Anointed Community*, p.176; Kruse, *The Letters of John*, p.187; Strecker, *The Johannine Letters*, p.102; James D. G. Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1970), p.197-199; Brooke, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary*, p.89; Thomas, *1 John, 2 John, 3 John*, p.166; and Brown, *The Epistles of John*, p.411. On σπέρμα as God's nature (new life) and the Spirit, see Marshall, *The Epistles of John*, p.187. For the word of God and the Spirit see Smalley, *1, 2, and 3 John*, p.165; and Anderson and Keating, *James, First, Second and Third John*, p.233.

¹⁰⁸ On the identity of the Holy One as God, Jesus or the Spirit see, for example, Grayston, *The Johannine Epistles*, p.88; and Smalley, *1, 2, and 3 John*, pp.102-103.

viewed as the anointing, although some prefer the word of God, with others seeing both the Spirit and the word of God in view.¹⁰⁹ The analyses confirm that the Spirit or the Spirit and the word of God (the community's beliefs) are compatible with the anointing. Accordingly, the Spirit is characterised as giving knowledge to believers and therefore as having a didactic function.

3.2.3 *Conquering and the Spirit*

Those born of God, by virtue of their faith, can conquer the opposing forces of the world, including the evil one, false prophets and spirits of the antichrist, and thereby achieve victory in their abiding in God and Christ (2:13-17, 22, 24, 26, 28; 4:1, 3, 5; 5:4-5). This is because 'the one who is in you [i.e. the believer] is greater than the one who is in the world' (4:4). The analyses contain theological reasons for implying that 'the one who is in you' refers to the Spirit. The Spirit is the one who indwells believers effecting and sustaining mutual indwelling which includes believers' praxis of continuing in confession of faith in Christ and continuing to walk in love as Christ walked. The Spirit of truth upholds the

¹⁰⁹ On Spirit as the anointing, see Burge, *Letters of John*, pp.131-132; Burge, *The Anointed Community*, pp.174-175; John R. Levison, *Filled with the Spirit* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2009), pp.416-421; Brooke, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary*, p.56; Alan R. Culpepper, *The Gospel and Letters of John*, *Interpreting Biblical Texts* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1998), p.262; Andreas J. Köstenberger, *A Theology of John's Gospel and Letters*, *Biblical Theology of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2009), p.401; Brown, *The Epistles of John*, p.307; Mark L. Strauss, 'Epistemology and the Spirit in Biblical and Philosophical Perspective', in *The Spirit Says: Inspiration and Interpretation in Israelite, Jewish and Early Christian Texts*, ed. by Ronald Herms, John R. Levison and Archie T. Wright (Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter, 2021), pp.73-87 (pp.77-78); Bennema, 'The Hermeneutical Role of the Spirit', p.185; Thomas, *1 John, 2 John, 3 John*, p.129; Augustine, *Homilies*, p.62; Culy, *1, 2, 3 John: A Handbook*, p.52; Stott, *The Epistles of John*, p.106; Anderson and Keating, *James, First, Second and Third John*, p.214; Kruse, *The Letters of John*, pp.138 and 145; and Issak, *The Spirit of Truth*, pp.145-147 (on Athanasius' interpretation). On the anointing as the word of God, see Thompson, *1-3 John*, p.78; Houlden, *A Commentary on the Johannine Epistles*, pp.79 and 82-83; Grayston, *The Johannine Epistles*, p.88; and Yarbrough, *1—3 John*, p.167. On the anointing as the Spirit and the word of God, see Hass, De Jonge and Swellengrebel, *A Translator's Handbook*, p.65; Marshall, *The Epistles of John*, pp.153-154; Smalley, *1, 2, and 3 John*, pp.101-102; and Dunn, *Baptism*, pp.196-197.

community's beliefs and enables discernment of the spirit of error in the testing of the spirits. Consequently, 'the one who is in you', by implication, is the Spirit. The Spirit is characterised as helping believers in their praxis to persevere in and overcome challenges to their faith. This falls within the Spirit's sustaining function.

3.3. Theological Motifs and the Spirit's Identity

The analyses and sections 3.2.1–3 have constructed a portrait of the Spirit in 1 John. From this portrait one may identify key theological motifs and gain insights into the Spirit's identity.

3.3.1 *Theological Motifs*

The following motifs encapsulate the principal theological themes of the Spirit in 1 John. The '*Spirit's indwelling function*' is the Spirit indwelling believers as God and Christ's indwelling presence and effecting mutual indwelling through believers abiding in God and Christ. The '*Spirit's sustaining function*' flows from the Spirit's indwelling function. It is the Spirit sustaining believers in their abiding by believers' continuing confession, living the love commandment, modelling Christ's life and death, and persevering in and overcoming challenges to their faith. As the '*Spirit of life*' the Spirit has a soteriological function. Being God's seed, the Spirit gives salvific life resulting in believers being born of God. The '*Spirit of truth*' inspires confession of truth and enables discernment of truth from error. Through a didactic function the Spirit imparts knowledge inculcating assurance and also, as the anointing, teaches all things pertaining to the community's beliefs. Each of the foregoing flow from the Spirit's indwelling

function. Lastly, the '*Spirit of testimony*' is the Spirit of truth bearing external witness to non-believers of Christ's salvific mission to the world.

3.3.2 *The Spirit's Identity*

The character of the Spirit as portrayed in 1 John comprises traits from which one may gain insights into 1 John's understanding of the Spirit's identity. The Spirit is God's gift where faith arises, it is life-giving, can be experienced and communed with intimately, is knowledgeable and truthful, helps believers in their praxis of abiding, has a personality and is divine. In relation to divinity, the character of the Spirit is in unison with the characters of God and Christ. The Spirit is one with them in respect of the truth about the incarnation. Truth is inherent to the Spirit. As God and Christ are the truth the Spirit equally is the truth. The Spirit is directly connected to God's love, as expressed through Christ, by reason of the Spirit's sustaining function. The Spirit being life-giving and being the anointing implies divinity.¹¹⁰ Most significantly, God, Christ and Spirit form a tripartite indwelling relationship with believers. God the Father and Christ the Son, who in 1 John are equally God, are in believers and believers are in God and Christ. The Spirit effects this mutual indwelling. Taken together the foregoing furnishes good theological reasons for regarding the Spirit as divine. Athanasius's view that only divinity could effectuate believers being in divinity was well-founded. It located

¹¹⁰ In his first letter to Serapion, Athanasius used the Spirit as life-giving (though not in relation to 1 Jn. 3:9 as 'God's seed') and the anointing in 1 Jn. 2:27 to advance his argument that the Spirit is not a creature but is divine (see paragraphs 21-23). See further Anatolios, *Athanasius*, pp.179-181.

within 1 John a nascent trinitarianism which proved important in the theologizing that concluded God is a Trinity.¹¹¹

Conclusion

This chapter has examined the pneumatology of 1 John, a pneumatology elucidated in the context of schism. Theological motifs and insights into the Spirit's identity in 1 John will form the basis, in the next chapter, for assessing the extent of the convergence of 1 John's pneumatology with that of Revelation and aspects of the Gospel of John's pneumatology.

¹¹¹ Witherington notes 'It is understandable why much of the theological discussion about the Trinity at Nicaea and later at Chalcedon focused on matters that arose from the Fourth Gospel and 1 John, with some important glances at Pauline material', Witherington, 'The Trinity', p.77.

Chapter 4

A theological comparison of the pneumatologies in the Book of Revelation and 1 John and with aspects of the pneumatology in the Gospel of John

In Revelation and 1 John the Spirit is deemed to be active within the communities they address.¹¹² This commonality enables one to examine whether similar theological concepts underlie pneumatic activity within the respective communities. Utilising the theological motifs and insights into the Spirit's identity from Chapters 2 and 3, this chapter undertakes a comparative analysis of the pneumatologies.¹¹³ This analysis will assess the extent of any theological convergence between the pneumatologies and the likelihood of a direct pneumatological relationship between the two texts. A plausible dating timeline permits either of Revelation or 1 John to pre or postdate the other, allowing for either to have directly influenced the other.¹¹⁴ Thereafter, a further comparative analysis will be made with aspects of the Gospel of John's pneumatology insofar as Revelation and 1 John may *prima facie* reflect such aspects. This analysis will seek to determine if the Gospel provides a connection between the pneumatologies of Revelation and 1 John.

¹¹² See, for example, sections 2.1.1 and 2.1.2 and sections 3.1.1 and 3.2.2.

¹¹³ See sections 2.3.1 and 2.3.2 and sections 3.3.1 and 3.3.2 for theological motifs and insights into Spirit's identity in Revelation and 1 John respectively.

¹¹⁴ On dating issues see Smalley, *1, 2, and 3 John*, pp.xx-xxi and xxix; Yarbrough, *1—3 John*, p.17; Brown, *The Epistles of John*, pp.32 and 101; Marshall, *The Epistles of John*, p.47; Osborne, *Revelation*, p.9; Koester, *Revelation*, pp.71-79; Fee, *Revelation*, p.xx; and Mounce, *Revelation*, p.21.

4.1 **Comparison of theological motifs and the Spirit's identity in Revelation and 1 John**

In this section, for comparative purposes, theological motifs common and specific to the pneumatologies of Revelation and 1 John shall be considered as will insights provided by these pneumatologies into the Spirit's identity.

4.1.1 ***Common Theological Motifs***

4.1.1 (a) *Soteriology, Ethics and Conquering*

Revelation and 1 John perceive the Spirit as essential to the life of their communities. Their communities' soteriology, ethics and ability to conquer forces detrimental to living for Christ are dependent upon the Spirit. In 1 John soteriology as a motif is seen in the Spirit of life as the originator of salvific life through believers being born of God.¹¹⁵ The motif of the Spirit sustaining believers is also soteriological as continuing confession of Christ, living the love commandment by modelling Christ and persevering in and overcoming challenges to faith all relate to salvific life.¹¹⁶ In Revelation the Spirit has a similar role to that in 1 John in respect of salvific life but Spirit-birth is not explicitly mentioned. As in 1 John believers are those redeemed through Christ's blood, who testify to faith in Christ and whose lives exhibit moral qualities (Rev. 5:1; 7:13; 12:11, 17; 13:10; 14:12 cf. 1 Jn. 1:7; 2:2-6, 23; 3:10, 23; 4:2-3, 10). Soteriology as a motif in Revelation is found in the Spirit of prophecy and of life resurrecting the deceased witnesses and sustaining faithful believers in, and restoring failing believers to, healthy salvific life. Sustaining and restoration encompass

¹¹⁵ See section 3.2.1.

¹¹⁶ See sections 3.1.2, 3.1.3 and 3.2.3.

manifesting ethical behaviour as well as believers conquering over adverse circumstances and personal failings through listening to what the Spirit is saying in respect of Christ's words.¹¹⁷ Conquering is an intended consequence of the Spirit's independent voice to motivate believers to endure.¹¹⁸

4.1.1 (b) *Beliefs and Teaching*

In both pneumatologies the Spirit is identified with a correct understanding of Christ and his teachings. In 1 John the Spirit effecting and sustaining believers' abiding in God and Christ by praxis includes believers adhering to the community's beliefs.¹¹⁹ The motif of the Spirit of truth is seen in Spirit-inspired confession and the Spirit's testimony to Christ conforming to the community's beliefs and in believers discerning truth from error by reference to such beliefs.¹²⁰ The Spirit imparts knowledge in a didactic sense to believers about the community's beliefs inculcating assurance of their truthfulness.¹²¹ In Revelation similarities to 1 John are evident from the didactic and elucidative function of the Spirit's independent voice affirming the blessedness of those who die holding 'fast to the faith of Jesus' (Rev. 14:12-13), the Spirit enabling prophetic discernment and the Spirit's role in connection with Christ's messages to the seven churches.¹²² These messages are not spoken into a vacuum. Christ's affirmatory tone when speaking of the commendable works of the Ephesus church suggests that expected standards of behaviour have been met whilst censured works are spoken of in terms of falling from a known higher standard (2:2-6). Sardis is told

¹¹⁷ See sections 2.1.2 and 2.1.5.

¹¹⁸ See section 2.1.3.

¹¹⁹ See sections 3.1.1 and 3.1.3.

¹²⁰ See sections 3.1.2 and 3.1.4.

¹²¹ See sections 3.1.1 and 3.2.2.

¹²² See sections 2.1.2, 2.1.3 and 2.1.6.

to 'Remember...what you received and heard; obey it and repent' whilst Philadelphia is commended for keeping Christ's word and not denying him (3:3, 8,10). Ephesus is commended for discerning false apostles and the works of false teachers (2:2, 6). Certain believers in Pergamum and Thyatira are censured for believing false teaching and committing immorality (2:14-15, 20). Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira and Philadelphia are commended for endurance (2:10, 13, 19, 25; 3:10). Each of the foregoing imply that the churches are being measured by reference to Christ and his teachings. The Spirit's soteriological sustaining and restorative powers, connected to the implied hermeneutical and didactic functions, sustain faithful believers in and restore failing believers to epistemological soundness in respect of Christ and his teachings.¹²³ The Spirit's role in effecting this reinforces correct beliefs and corrects false beliefs.

4.1.1 (c) *Mission*

In 1 John and Revelation the Spirit has a missiological role. The motifs of the Spirit of testimony and Spirit of truth in 1 John combine to characterise the Spirit as testifying to the truth about Jesus' historical salvific mission.¹²⁴ The motif of the Spirit of mission in Revelation involves the Spirit being sent to earth to bear witness to Christ and implement God and Christ's mission.¹²⁵

4.1.1. (d) *Modus operandi: how the Spirit operates in the lives of believers*

The effects of the Spirit in believers' lives, namely what the Spirit accomplishes, are similar in 1 John and Revelation but how the Spirit realizes such effects is

¹²³ See section 2.1.2.

¹²⁴ See section 3.1.4.

¹²⁵ See section 2.1.4.

portrayed differently. In 1 John the motif relating to effects is the Spirit's indwelling function.¹²⁶ All other theological motifs are connected with this. The Spirit indwelling believers, as God and Christ's presence, brings about salvific birth, empowers each of confession, ethical life, overcoming and discernment of truth from error, teaches believers and enables the Spirit to testify about Christ through believers. The most significant motif in Revelation in respect of realizing effects is the Spirit of prophecy with its implied hermeneutical and didactic functions in relation to Christ's words, inclusive of the Spirit's life-giving soteriological sustaining and restorative powers.¹²⁷ What the Spirit says in respect of Christ's words is not corroboration of their being prophecy communicated through John being 'in the spirit' as that would be superfluous. Instead the Spirit speaking confirms the Spirit's continuing role within the seven churches in connection with Christ's words beyond Christ speaking such words. Christ's prophetic words encompass his teachings as implied by there being an objective standard by which Christ measures the seven churches' faithfulness and failings in the situationally-specific prophecies.¹²⁸ Besides prophecy other modes of the Spirit speaking are hinted at. 'In the spirit' establishes that, at least for transitory periods of prophesying, the Spirit is perceived as coming and acting upon or possibly within believers.¹²⁹ The resurrection of the two witnesses confirms that the Spirit can enter into believers.¹³⁰ The exhortation to listen to what the Spirit is saying implies that the Spirit enables the seven churches to comprehend and interpret Christ's words to them. Accordingly, in addition to speaking through prophets, it

¹²⁶ See section 3.1.1.

¹²⁷ See section 2.1.2.

¹²⁸ See section 4.1.1 (b).

¹²⁹ See section 2.1.1.

¹³⁰ See section 2.1.5.

can be reasonably theologized that the Spirit may come and act upon, or even within, believers to enable them to understand and interpret Christ's words and may also speak through those believers who teach and exegete Christ's words. A possible meaning of Revelation 19:10 is that the Spirit of prophecy operates through believers bearing witness to Jesus by reference to the contents of Jesus' historical teaching.¹³¹ This would bring testimony about Christ and his teachings into the ambit of prophecy.

4.1.2 *A Theological Motif Specific to Revelation*

The Spirit of prophecy is a motif specific to Revelation. Whilst the Spirit as the anointing connects the Spirit of truth to teaching 'about all things' (1 Jn. 2:27), which could potentially include matters within the scope of prophecy, teaching in 1 John is pivoted on the historical Christ and his teachings.¹³² Whilst the Spirit of prophecy is also concerned with Christ and his teachings,¹³³ it additionally encompasses prophetic revelation of future events, Christ's intimate knowledge of the seven churches' contemporary circumstances and spiritual condition, Christ's specific instructions on how to correct current erring behaviour and Christ's intentions for the churches' future (Rev. 1:19; 2:2-7, 9-10, 13-17, 19-23, 26-28; 3:2-5, 9-10, 12, 15-19, 21). The Spirit of prophecy also confers prophetic discernment to enable believers to see behind apparent realities.¹³⁴

¹³¹ See section 2.1.6

¹³² See sections 3.1.1, 3.1.2, 3.1.4 and 3.2.2.

¹³³ See section 4.1.1 (b).

¹³⁴ See section 2.1.6.

4.1.3 *A Theological Motif Specific to 1 John*

A motif specific to 1 John is the Spirit indwelling believers as God and Christ's abiding presence and effecting mutual indwelling through believers abiding in God and Christ.¹³⁵ Whilst Revelation knows of the Spirit as Christ's presence and God's active power in the seven churches, including the possibility of the Spirit being within believers,¹³⁶ it lacks 1 John's specificity on the Spirit's abiding in believers.

4.1.4 *The Spirit's identity*

The theological insights furnished by Revelation and 1 John on the identity of the Spirit are similar. These include the motif of the Spirit's close relationship with Christ and God, the Spirit being a person distinct from God and Christ but one with them in purpose and action and the Spirit possessing divine attributes.¹³⁷ In Revelation and 1 John, Christ may be interpreted as equally God with the Father.¹³⁸ Given the tripartite interrelationship between God, Christ and the Spirit, Christ's identity as divine adds support to an interpretation that the Spirit in Revelation and 1 John is also equally divine thus providing grounds for a triune Godhead conforming to subsequent trinitarian theology.

4.1.5. *Conclusions*

A comparative theological analysis of the Spirit in Revelation and 1 John discloses a significant degree of convergence between their pneumatologies in

¹³⁵ See section 3.1.1.

¹³⁶ See sections 2.1.1, 2.1.2 and 4.1.1 (d).

¹³⁷ See sections 2.3.1, 2.3.2 and 3.3.2.

¹³⁸ See sections 2.3.2 and 3.3.2.

respect of the effects of the Spirit within their communities.¹³⁹ Insights into the Spirit's identity also disclose significant convergence. There are differences, most notably in how they portray the Spirit's *modus operandi* in their distinctive theological motifs. These differences make it unlikely that there is a direct link between the pneumatologies in terms of one influencing the other. Nonetheless, the effects attributed to pneumatic activity within the respective communities display a level of theological convergence on the Spirit's role to suggest a common background to their pneumatic understandings. As both Revelation and 1 John have traditionally borne the appellation Johannine, thereby associating them with the Gospel of John, an important question is whether such association is justifiable from a pneumatological viewpoint.

4.2 Reflections in Revelation and 1 John of the Gospel of John's Pneumatology

Although scholarly views on the dating of the Johannine corpus of the New Testament are diverse, among them is a plausible timeline which places Revelation and 1 John within the same decade or a two-decade period and which postdate both Revelation and 1 John to the Gospel or its earlier iteration before a final redaction.¹⁴⁰ Accordingly, in this section an additional comparative analysis with aspects of the Gospel's pneumatology will be undertaken insofar as the pneumatologies of Revelation and 1 John may *prima facie* reflect such aspects. This analysis seeks to determine if John's Gospel has influenced, and

¹³⁹ See sections 4.1.1 (a), 4.1.1 (b) and 4.1.1 (c).

¹⁴⁰ On dating matters see Gary M. Burge, *John*, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), pp.28-29; Brown, *The Gospel according to John (i-xii)*, p.LXXXVI; Thompson, *John*, pp.21-22; Smalley, *1, 2, and 3 John*, pp.xx-xxi and xxix; Yarbrough, *1—3 John*, p.17; Brown, *The Epistles of John*, pp.32 and 101; Marshall, *The Epistles of John*, p.47; Osborne, *Revelation*, p.9; Koester, *Revelation*, pp.71-79; Fee, *Revelation*, p.xx; and Mounce, *Revelation*, p.21.

is what theologically connects, Revelation and 1 John's pneumatologies. An assessment will be made as to whether a pneumatic understanding within Revelation and/or 1 John is a reflection of John's Gospel. A reflection for this analysis is not necessarily an exact representation of the Gospel's pneumatology but could include an apparent understanding or interpretation of it.

4.2.1 **Salvific Birth**

In 1 John those who believe in and confess Christ are deemed to be born of God. The Spirit, as God's seed, effects this birth.¹⁴¹ Faith is engendered by the Spirit of truth testifying to the community's beliefs. As confession indicates the presence of the Spirit within believers, initial confession probably occurs simultaneous to, or shortly after, the indwelling Spirit is given to one who has come to believe.¹⁴² Accordingly, from a pneumatological perspective, born of God is a holistic term describing the Spirit's soteriological role in the process of a person transitioning to faith and becoming a child of God. 1 John *prima facie* reflects the Gospel's pneumatology. In the Gospel those born of God have received Jesus, by believing in his name, and thereby have been given power to become children of God (Jn. 1:12-13) being 'born from above' (or 'born anew') which equates to 'being born of water and Spirit' or just 'born of the Spirit' (3:3-8).¹⁴³ Believing 'in his name' is to accept and acknowledge Jesus for who he claims to be and what he teaches (3:18; 6:68-69; 8:31; 14:23-24; 20:31 cf. 1 Jn.

¹⁴¹ See section 3.2.1.

¹⁴² See sections 3.1.2 and 3.1.4.

¹⁴³ On the possible meanings of 'no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit.' (Jn. 3:5) see, for example, Craig R. Koester, *The Word of Life: A Theology of John's Gospel* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2008), pp.140-141; C. K. Barrett, *The Gospel according to St. John: An Introduction with Commentary and Notes on the Greek Text*, 2nd edn (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1978), pp.208-210; and Brown, *The Gospel according to John (i-xii)*, pp.141-144.

3:23; 5:13).¹⁴⁴ This is comparable to the community's beliefs in 1 John. In the Gospel a consequence of believing is eternal life, which is eschatological salvation with a present realization through knowing God and Christ, with Christ characterised as life and the Spirit as the one who gives life (Jn. 1:4; 3:3, 5, 15-18, 36; 5:24, 26, 39-40; 6:27, 40, 47, 54, 63; 10:28; 11:25; 14:6; 17:3). Likewise in 1 John believing leads to eternal life, including fellowship with the Father and Son, with Christ characterised as eternal life and the Spirit as originating salvific life (1 Jn. 1:2-3; 2:25; 3:9; 5:11, 20). According to both the Gospel and 1 John Christ came to save the world albeit salvation is conditional on believing in Christ (Jn. 3:16-18; 4:42 cf. 1 Jn. 2:2; 4:9-10). In the Gospel, following his ascension, Jesus draws all people to himself although only those drawn by and given to Jesus by the Father come to him (Jn. 6:37, 39, 44, 65; 12:32). This raises complex issues regarding human responsibility vis-à-vis divine sovereignty, in particular whether believing is the *sine qua non* for or the consequence of salvific birth.¹⁴⁵ Whichever the case salvific birth is a divine gift effected by the Spirit.¹⁴⁶ As in 1 John being born of God in the Gospel is a soteriological process involving the Spirit. Post-Jesus' death and resurrection the Spirit-Paraclete (παράκλητος), who is also the Spirit of truth, is given to be with and to be within Jesus' disciples

¹⁴⁴ Schnackenburg notes that 'the expression "believe in his name" is typically and exclusively Johannine...and implies the acceptance of Jesus to the full extent of his self-revelation', see Rudolf Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St. John, Volume 1, Introduction and Commentary on Chapters 1-4*, Herder's Theological Commentary on the New Testament, Original Edition 'Das Johannesevangelium', part I, Herder, Freiburg, 1965, translated by Kevin Smyth (Tunbridge Wells: Burns & Oats, 1968), pp.262-263, 560-561 and 564; Lincoln, *The Gospel according to St. John*, pp.102-103; and Thompson, *John*, pp.31 and 303-305.

¹⁴⁵ For a discussion and comments on these questions see, for example, Catrin H. Williams, 'Faith, Eternal Life, and the Spirit in the Gospel of John', in *The Oxford Handbook of Johannine Studies*, ed. by Judith M. Lieu and Martinus C. de Boer (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), pp.347- 362 (pp.348-352); Herman N. Ridderbos, *The Gospel of John: A Theological Commentary*, translated by John Vriend (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1997), pp.46-47; and Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St. John, Volume 1*, pp.261-262..

¹⁴⁶ Ridderbos, *The Gospel of John*, pp.45-47; and Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St. John, Volume 1*, pp.261-262.

and to testify on Jesus' behalf (7:39; 14:16-17; 15:26; 20:22).¹⁴⁷ Such testifying includes the Spirit-Paraclete proving 'the world wrong about sin and righteousness and judgement' (16:7-11) which, like the community's beliefs in 1 John, relates to Christ and his teachings. As the Spirit of truth guides 'into all the truth', with Jesus being the truth (14:6; 16:13), the Father drawing people to Jesus and Jesus drawing people to himself is a faith engendering agency function of the Spirit. Spirit-birth is the culmination of being born of God, realizing eternal life in those who believe, and the probable juncture when the Spirit enters into a believer. Given their similarities, being born of God by the Spirit in 1 John is a likely reflection of the Gospel's soteriological pneumatology.

Revelation says nothing explicit about salvific birth. However, the perilous condition of the lukewarm church in Laodicea (Rev. 3:14-22) is portrayed by the image of Christ on the outside knocking on its door (3:20). Christ's willingness to enter where the door is opened is personalised and requires individuals to positively respond.¹⁴⁸ In the context of Christ's exhortation to repent and accept his message such imagery may have evoked, within the Laodiceans, memories of their lives without Christ and how they initially expressed their faith in him. By listening to what the Spirit is saying failing believers conquer their censured behaviour through the Spirit's soteriological life-giving power restoring them to

¹⁴⁷ On the meaning and background of παράκλητος see, for example, Raymond E. Brown, 'The Paraclete in the Fourth Gospel', *New Testament Studies*, 13.2 (1967) 113-132; Burge, *The Anointed Community*, pp.6-41; Thompson, *John*, pp.318-322; and Smalley, 'The Paraclete', pp.290-292.

¹⁴⁸ Fee, *Revelation*, p.60; Paul, *Revelation*, p.116; Osborne, *Revelation*, p.212; Koester, *Revelation*, p.340; and Thomas and Macchia, *Revelation*, p.132. On the meaning of the Greek word τις in the phrase εἰάν τις ἀκούσῃ τῆς φωνῆς μου (Rev. 3:20), which can be translated if 'anyone, someone, a certain one' hears my voice, see Strong's Lexicon <<https://biblehub.com/greek/5100.htm>> [accessed 25/11/24].

salvific health.¹⁴⁹ Restoration by the Spirit to salvific health may imply the Spirit's involvement in originating salvific life. If so, this is consonant with salvific birth in 1 John and the Gospel.

4.2.2 ***Sustaining Salvific Life***

In 1 John God and Christ abide in believers and believers abide in God and Christ. The Spirit provides assurance of and effects this mutual indwelling through being in believers as God and Christ's presence. The indwelling Spirit sustains believers' abiding in God and Christ as exteriorised by the praxis of continuing confession, living the love commandment and overcoming adverse forces.¹⁵⁰ This sustaining of salvific life *prima facie* reflects the Gospel's pneumatology. The Gospel speaks of Christ and believers mutually being in and abiding in each other thus signalling a mutual indwelling, of the Father's indwelling of Christ and of the Father and Christ being in each other (Jn. 10:38; 14:10-11, 20; 15:4-5; 17:21, 23, 26). Given the latter, and that Christ and the Father are one, Christ's mutual indwelling of believers is inclusive of the Father (10:30; 17:21). From the perspective of the believer mutual indwelling language, rather than being ontological in nature, is a metaphor for intimate relationship.¹⁵¹ Although neither 1 John nor the Gospel speaks of the Spirit in explicit perichoretic terms of mutually indwelling the Father and the Son, 1 John's theology of the Spirit effecting a reciprocal indwelling of God and Christ with believers is consonant with the Gospel. At Jesus' request the Spirit-Paraclete is given by the Father to abide with

¹⁴⁹ See section 2.1.2.

¹⁵⁰ See sections 3.1.1, 3.1.2, 3.1.3, 3.2.3 and 3.3.1.

¹⁵¹ Cornelis Bennema, *The Power of Saving Wisdom: An Investigation of Spirit and Wisdom in Relation to the Soteriology of the Fourth Gospel* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2007), pp.135-137 and 222.

(παρ ὑμῖν μένει) and to be in (ἐν ὑμῖν ἔσται) his disciples (Jn. 14:16-17). Whilst this has been interpreted as the Spirit-Paraclete being beside and among believers in a communal sense,¹⁵² the Spirit-Paraclete is also individually within believers.¹⁵³ Corroborating this is Jesus' post-glorification but pre-ascension breathing (ἐνεφύσησεν) on his disciples and saying 'Receive the Holy Spirit', which constitutes a life-giving insufflation (20:22 cf. Gen. 2:7; Ezek. 37:9-10, 14).¹⁵⁴ This initiates fulfilment of Jesus' promises to his disciples not to leave them orphaned, to come to them and to reveal himself to them and it ameliorates Jesus' departure from the world (Jn. 14:18, 21-23; 16:7). This is because the Spirit is another Paraclete (14:16) which confirms that Jesus was a Paraclete (cf. παράκλητον in 1 Jn. 2:1). Evoking Joshua succeeding Moses and Elisha succeeding Elijah (Deut. 31:1-8; 34:9; 2 Kgs. 2:1-15), the Spirit-Paraclete continues and executes Christ's mission on earth following his departure as 'Jesus' authorized agent and successor'.¹⁵⁵ As the Spirit-Paraclete's functions are also predicated on how the Father functions, with the Son acting in unison

¹⁵² Frederick Dale Bruner, *The Gospel of John – A Commentary*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2012) [eBook Version], pp. 1022-1023; and D Moody Smith, *John*, Abingdon New Testament Commentaries (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1999) [eBook Version], p.146.

¹⁵³ Max Turner, *The Holy Spirit and Spiritual Gifts in the New Testament Church and Today*, revised edn (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 2005), p.80; Brown, *The Gospel according to John (i–xii)*, p.642; and Levison, *Filled with the Spirit*, pp.390-391.

¹⁵⁴ Turner, *The Holy Spirit*, p.90; David F. Ford, *The Gospel of John: A Theological Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2021), p.405; and Levison, *Filled with the Spirit*, pp.367-372. See ἐμφυσάω in Strong's Lexicon meaning 'To breathe into, to blow upon,' <<https://biblehub.com/greek/1720.htm>> [accessed 11/12/24].

¹⁵⁵ Williams, 'Faith, Eternal Life, and the Spirit', p.356 (for quote). See also, for example, Barrett, *Gospel*, pp.461-462; Turner, *The Holy Spirit*, pp.79-81; Koester, *The Word of Life*, pp.147-148; Rudolf Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St. John, Volume 3, Commentary on Chapters 13–21*, Herder's Theological Commentary on the New Testament, Original Edition 'Das Johannesevangelium', III Teil, Verlag Herder, Freiburg im Breisgau, 1975, translated by David Smith and G. A. Kon (Tunbridge Wells: Burns & Oats, 1982), pp.74-75; and Ridderbos, *The Gospel of John*, pp.499-500. On the parallels between Jesus and the Spirit-Paraclete, see Brown, 'The Paraclete', pp.126-127; and Marianne Meye Thompson, 'The Paraclete Will Teach You All Things': Spirit-Inspired Interpretation in the Gospel and Epistles of John', in *The Spirit Says: Inspiration and Interpretation in Israelite, Jewish and Early Christian Texts*, ed. by Ronald Herms, John R. Levison and Archie T. Wright (Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter, 2021), pp.202-218 (p.207).

with his Father (Jn. 5:19), in executing Christ's work the Spirit-Paraclete also executes the Father's work.¹⁵⁶ Being another Paraclete and omnipresent, the Spirit-Paraclete mediates the continuing presence of Christ and likewise the Father's presence thus fulfilling Christ's promise that he and his Father would come and make their home with his disciples (14:23).¹⁵⁷ Christ and the Father together mutually being in believers constitutes a mutual indwelling. The Spirit-Paraclete's mediation of their presence is through his indwelling believers with such indwelling sustaining salvific life as is the case in 1 John. The Spirit-Paraclete testifying on Jesus' behalf including through his disciples (15:26-27; 17:20) sustains disciples' continuing confession. By mutually abiding in Christ disciples bear lasting fruit thereby glorifying the Father (15:1-5-8, 16). This includes the ethical fruit of sacrificial love. Love for one another is one of the commandments that obedience to which enables disciples to abide in Christ (15:7, 9-10, 12-14, 17). Love *ad intra* between the Father and Son (3:35; 5:20; 10:17; 15:9-10) is expressed *ad extra* in God's love for the world through the gift of his Son providing eternal life to 'everyone who believes in him' (3:16). The Spirit-Paraclete, who is inextricably connected to such love as God and Christ's indwelling presence, facilitates and sustains obedience to the love commandment. As Christ 'conquered the world' so too believers may 'take courage' and overcome persecution (16:33) fortified by Christ's presence within

¹⁵⁶ For a list of the functions of the Spirit-Paraclete which are also the functions of the Father, see Thompson, *John*, p.320.

¹⁵⁷ On the Spirit-Paraclete as the presence of Christ or Christ and the Father see D Moody Smith, *The Theology of the Gospel of John*, New Testament Theology (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp.140-142; Smalley, 'The Paraclete', p.291; Brown, *The Gospel according to John* (xiii-xxi), pp.643-644 and 647-648; Turner, *The Holy Spirit*, pp.80-81; Culpepper, *The Gospel and Letters of John*, p.212; Ford, *The Gospel of John*, pp.283-285 and 309-310; Köstenberger, *Theology*, pp.240-241; Lincoln, *The Gospel according to St. John*, pp.396 and 399-400; Smith, *John*, pp.146-147; Burge, *The Anointed Community*, pp.138-139 and 146; and Koester, *The Word of Life*, pp.147-148.

them mediated by the Spirit. Based on the foregoing analysis, the Spirit's sustaining function in 1 John, which flows from the Spirit's indwelling function, is a likely reflection of the Gospel's Christological pneumatology.¹⁵⁸ Listening to what the Spirit says in Revelation also contributes to the sustaining of salvific life including faithful witness, ethical behaviour and conquering.¹⁵⁹ As this derives from the Spirit's didactic function it is discussed below.

4.2.3 *Pneumatic Epistemology*

God and Christ are foundational to truth in 1 John with knowledge conveyed by the Spirit of truth (1 Jn. 2:20-27; 3:24; 4:6, 13; 5:6). Whilst 'in the spirit' John receives the Patmos theophany where Christ identifies himself in terms ascribed to Yahweh the everlasting creator-God whose words are truth (Rev. 1:9-18 cf. Ps. 90:2; 119:142, 151, 160; Is. 40:28; 44:6; 45:5-12, 18-19; 48:12; Rev. 1:8; 22:13). Truth is a major theme in the Gospel where Christ claims to be 'the truth' and the Spirit is 'inseparably related to *truth*' (Jn. 14:6, 17; 15:26; 16:13).¹⁶⁰ In 1 John, Revelation and the Gospel epistemology has a pneumatic dimension through the Spirit having a didactic function. In this respect 1 John and Revelation *prima facie* reflect the Gospel's pneumatology.

In 1 John believers have knowledge by virtue of their anointing with the Spirit of truth. The Spirit, who indwells believers, is aligned to the community's beliefs anchored in Christ's historical teachings and inspires confession. The Spirit

¹⁵⁸ See Section 3.3.1.

¹⁵⁹ See Section 2.1.2.

¹⁶⁰ Craig G Bartholomew, 'The Spirit of Truth in John's Gospel and Biblical Hermeneutics' in *The Spirit Says: Inspiration and Interpretation in Israelite, Jewish and Early Christian Texts*, ed. by Ronald Herms, John R. Levison and Archie T. Wright (Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter, 2021), pp.189-200 (pp.189-192).

teaches believers 'about all things' obviating the need for teachers (1 Jn. 2:27).¹⁶¹ In a letter replete with teaching the author of 1 John writes as a teacher. Accordingly, the dispensability of teachers is best understood not as an absolute but in the context of the community's schism. Such dispensability may imply that the Spirit's didactic role is a dynamic and enlightening one which equips true believers within the community to recognise, comprehend and counteract false teaching and prophecy with the truth which the Spirit upholds. The anointing distinguishes the faithful from the departees who, lacking the anointing, were not so equipped and left the community to follow false teachers and prophets. Teaching as a dynamic and enlightening function is consonant with the Gospel's portrayal of the Spirit-Paraclete teaching Jesus' disciples 'everything', as in 1 John, but significantly adding a concomitant reminding function in respect of all that Jesus said to his disciples (Jn. 14:26). This reminding function, in addition to occasioning recall, has been viewed *inter alia* as the Spirit-Paraclete furnishing 'a new hermeneutical perspective', taking what Jesus taught 'to a deeper level', recontextualising 'Jesus' original words for any context', and as 'mnemonic illumination of what was revealed in the past'.¹⁶² Through teaching and reminding the Spirit-Paraclete provides a contemporary, contextualised and applicable relevance to Jesus' historical teaching in circumstances encountered by believers. Teaching and reminding and the Spirit's didactic role in 1 John comprehensively embrace Jesus' teachings. Circumscribed by historicity, teaching 'all things' and 'everything' excludes new revelation independent of what

¹⁶¹ See sections 3.1.2, 3.2.2 and 3.3.1.

¹⁶² See respectively Burge, *The Anointed Community*, p.212; Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St. John, Volume 3*, p.83; Bennema, 'The Hermeneutical Role of the Spirit', p.182; and Catrin H. Williams, 'Unveiling Revelation: The Spirit-Paraclete and Apocalyptic Disclosure in the Gospel of John', in *John's Gospel and Intimations of Apocalyptic*, ed. by Catrin H. Williams and Christopher Rowland (London/New York: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2013), pp.104-127 (p.127).

Jesus taught during his earthly mission.¹⁶³ On the basis of the foregoing analysis, it falls within the scope of reasonable possibility that 1 John reflects aspects of the Gospel's pneumatic epistemology.

The book of Revelation mainly comprises prophecy, including predictive prophecy, in respect of eschatological events (Rev. 1:1-3, 19; 22:6-7, 10, 18-20). Being 'in the spirit' enables John to receive this prophecy (1:10-11).¹⁶⁴ Prophecy includes Christ's words which are specific to the situations of the seven churches and relate to their faithfulness to or failure in respect of Christ's teachings.¹⁶⁵ Christ's words are accompanied by the phrase 'Let anyone who has an ear listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches' (Rev. 2-3). From this phrase, and the content of the situationally-specific prophecies, it may be implied that the Spirit has hermeneutical and didactic functions in relation to Christ's words. These functions, which are intended to motivate the faithful to continue in their commendable works and induce the failing to repent of their censured works, include life-giving sustaining and restorative soteriological powers.¹⁶⁶ Corroborating the implied hermeneutical and didactic functions is the Spirit's independent voice which has didactic and elucidative functions in motivating saints to endure in 'the faith of Jesus' (14:12-13).¹⁶⁷ The foregoing descriptions of the Spirit's role in Revelation seem to fall within the scope of the Gospel's portrayal of the Spirit-Paraclete.

¹⁶³ Burge, *John*, p.359; and Bennema, *The Power of Saving Wisdom*, p.228.

¹⁶⁴ See section 2.1.1.

¹⁶⁵ See sub-section 4.1.1 (b).

¹⁶⁶ See section 2.1.2.

¹⁶⁷ See section 2.1.3

In relation to things that Jesus has to say but which his disciples cannot presently bear, the Spirit-Paraclete, who is the Spirit of truth, will guide the disciples 'into all the truth' as he does 'not speak on his own' but speaks 'whatever he hears'. The Spirit-Paraclete's guidance into truth is via a declarative role in respect of Jesus' words following his departure (Jn. 16:7, 12-15). The Spirit-Paraclete 'will declare (ἀναγγελεῖ)...the things that are to come (τὰ ἐρχόμενα)' (16:13) and, as twice stated by Jesus, 'will take what is mine and declare (ἀναγγελεῖ) it to you' (16:14-15). References to ἀναγγελεῖ have been interpreted as a technical apocalyptic term. If correct, this signals that the Spirit-Paraclete shares similarities with the *angelus interpretes* in Jewish apocalyptic tradition. Such tradition includes a two-stage revelation process. An initial veiled and partial revelation is communicated in a dream or vision. This is subsequently unveiled and decoded by the *angelus interpretes*, a divinely appointed emissary from heaven. Post-Jesus' ascension the Spirit-Paraclete, in both his teaching and reminding function (14:26) and declarative role (16:12-15), operates as an interpreter of Jesus' revelatory words. The *angelus interpretes* in Jewish apocalypses acts as an interpreter but can also unveil new revelation.¹⁶⁸ The Book of Revelation, which claims to be post-ascension 'revelation (ἀποκάλυψις) of Jesus Christ' (Rev.1:1) disclosed to John whilst being 'in the spirit', appears to fall within the scope of the Spirit-Paraclete's declarative role including declaring things to come (Jn. 16:13-15).¹⁶⁹ Τὰ ἐρχόμενα has *inter alia* been interpreted as referring to Jesus' passion and resurrection, the Spirit-Paraclete leading the believing community in the future, and as an

¹⁶⁸ On the *angelus interpretes* in relation to the Spirit-Paraclete see John Ashton, *Understanding the Fourth Gospel*, 2nd edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp.346-347; and Williams, 'Unveiling Revelation', pp.104-107 and 120-121.

¹⁶⁹ In support of this view, see references to various authors in George R Beasley-Murray, *John*, Word Biblical Commentary, Vol. 36 (Waco: Word Books, 1987), p.284. Against Revelation falling within 'things to come' is Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St. John*, Volume 3, p.135.

elaboration of the Spirit-Paraclete's teaching and reminding function.¹⁷⁰ However, in the context of Jesus having things to say which his disciples cannot presently bear and as the Spirit-Paraclete mediates Christ's post-ascension presence, τὰ ἐρχόμενα can reasonably be interpreted as the Spirit-Paraclete having revelatory power to disclose new revelation.¹⁷¹ The future eschatological events and the situationally-specific prophecies in the Book of Revelation fall within the Spirit-Paraclete's revelatory ambit of new revelation from Christ.

The exhortation to 'listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches' (Rev. 2-3) refers to Christ's words and implies the Spirit has an ongoing role in connection with them. This is consistent with the Spirit-Paraclete not speaking on his own but speaking what he hears and with his declarative role in respect of Christ's words (Jn. 16:13-15). When viewed from the perspective of the Jewish apocalyptic *angelus interpretes* tradition the exhortation to listen displays certain similarities to the second stage of the apocalyptic two-stage revelation process albeit the Spirit is also critical to the first stage. Christ's situationally-specific prophecies are initially communicated to the seven churches by John who received them during his visionary experiences 'in the spirit.' After Christ's words are heard by the churches their continuing relevance and effectiveness is the Spirit's domain through the implied hermeneutical and didactic functions. Whilst Christ's words may not appear to be veiled or ambiguous, in order to be strengthening and transformational those words require to be accepted,

¹⁷⁰ Koester, *The Word of Life*, p.156; Ridderbos, *The Gospel of John*, p.536; Brown, *The Gospel according to John (xiii-xxi)*, pp.714-716; and Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St. John, Volume 3*, p.135.

¹⁷¹ See, for example, Burge, *John*, p.452; Crinisor Stefan, 'The Paraclete and Prophecy in the Johannine Community', *Pneuma*, 27:2 (2005), 273-296 (pp.280-287); Burge, *The Anointed Community*, pp.215-216; and Williams, 'Unveiling Revelation', pp.120-123 and 127.

comprehended and actualised in the lives of believers.¹⁷² For those who listen to what the Spirit is saying the Spirit's soteriological sustaining and restorative powers are beneficial to salvific life. The latter is consistent with the Gospel where the Spirit has a soteriological function in relation to Jesus' words. 'It is the spirit that gives life' with Jesus' spoken words being 'spirit and life' (6:63). Jesus' words are the words of God. The Spirit reveals their divine salvific wisdom and functions as a 'life-giving cognitive agent' in respect of them. Those who believe Jesus' words have eternal life in consequence of a salvific experience effected by the Spirit.¹⁷³ On the basis of the foregoing analysis, it falls within the scope of reasonable possibility that Revelation reflects aspects of the Gospel's pneumatic epistemology.

4.2.4 *Pneumatic Mission and the Coming of the Spirit-Paraclete in Relation to the Spirit's Identity in Revelation and 1 John*

In Revelation the Spirit implements God and Christ's mission on the earth and bears prophetic witness about Jesus.¹⁷⁴ In 1 John the Spirit who testifies to the truth bears witness in Christ's salvific mission to the world.¹⁷⁵ Likewise in the Gospel, post-Jesus' ascension, the Spirit-Paraclete testifies on Jesus' behalf (15:26). This includes empowering Jesus' disciples to testify following the glorified Jesus breathing the Spirit-Paraclete into them (15:27; 20:22). In bearing witness the Spirit-Paraclete has been interpreted as having a forensic function in

¹⁷² See sub-section 4.1.1. (d) on the Spirit's *modus operandi* in relation to the exhortation to listen and how it becomes effective in believers' lives.

¹⁷³ Burge, *The Anointed Community*, pp.106-107; Turner, *The Holy Spirit*, p.67; Thompson, *John*, p.110; and, for quote, Bennema, *The Power of Saving Wisdom*, p.209.

¹⁷⁴ See sections 2.1.4, 2.1.6 and 2.3.1.

¹⁷⁵ See sections 3.1.4 and 3.3.1.

the context of a cosmic trial or lawsuit (16:7-11).¹⁷⁶ Although some have disputed that mission is a significant motif in the Gospel, the Spirit-Paraclete functions as Jesus' authorised agent who continues Jesus' mission to the world.¹⁷⁷ Whilst pneumatic mission *per se* is insufficient to link the pneumatologies, the coming of the Spirit-Paraclete *prima facie* establishes a theological connection with the Spirit's identity in Revelation and 1 John. The Spirit-Paraclete, who is also described as the Spirit of truth and Holy Spirit, is given, sent by, and comes from the Father in Jesus' name and at Jesus' request. Simultaneously Jesus sends the Spirit-Paraclete from the Father and equally sends the Spirit-Paraclete from himself (14:16-17, 26; 15:26; 16:7). This procession from the Father and Jesus of the Spirit-Paraclete to Jesus' disciples evidences a tripartite interrelationship between Father, Son and Spirit without undermining their distinguishability. The personification of the Spirit-Paraclete in the Gospel flows from the person of Jesus and their functional parallels with his close identification to Father and Son having implications for his divinity.¹⁷⁸ Whilst this is not fully articulated trinitarianism the Gospel's Spirit-Paraclete teachings contributed to the theologizing which led to the formulation of the doctrine of the Trinity including at Nicaea (325 CE) and Chalcedon (451 CE).¹⁷⁹ 1 John and Revelation are addressed to communities who likely understood their existence as being

¹⁷⁶ Andrew T. Lincoln, *Truth on Trial: The Lawsuit Motif in the Fourth Gospel* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2019), pp.12-13 and 111-112; and Köstenberger, *Theology*, pp.436-456.

¹⁷⁷ Johannes Nissen, 'Mission in the Fourth Gospel: Historical and Hermeneutical Perspectives', in *New Readings in John: Literary and Theological Perspectives Essays from the Scandinavian Conference on the Fourth Gospel in Århus 1997*, Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series 182, ed. by Johannes Nissen and Sigfred Pedersen (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), pp.213-231 (pp.213-214); Lincoln, *The Gospel according to St. John*, p.412; and Barnabas Lindars, *The Gospel of John*, The New Century Bible Commentary (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1972), p.506.

¹⁷⁸ Burge, *The Anointed Community*, pp.142-147; and Dirk Van der Merwe, 'Divine fellowship in the Gospel of John: A Trinitarian spirituality', *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 75(1) (2019), 1-12 (pp.3-5).

¹⁷⁹ Witherington, 'The Trinity', p.69; and Ford, *The Gospel of John*, p.305.

consequential to the Spirit acting as Jesus' missionary agent. Interrelations between Father, Son and Spirit, the Spirit having a personality and his being divine are characteristics in 1 John and Revelation's identification of the Spirit.¹⁸⁰ These characteristics evince an affinity with Jesus' Spirit-Paraclete teachings. It is possible that they conform to their authors' understandings of the Gospel's teachings from a post-Jesus' glorification perspective after the Spirit-Paraclete was understood to have come. Such perspective may have been shaped by perceptions of the Spirit-Paraclete working within their believing communities through individual and communal experiences. These perceptions may have included experiencing the Son and the Father as mediated by the Spirit. Jesus' Spirit-Paraclete teachings have been described as 'trinitarian mission theology' with trinitarian teaching part of such mission theology.¹⁸¹ This would seem to be borne out in respect of the Spirit's identity in Revelation and 1 John. Accordingly, insofar as tripartite interrelations between Father, Son and Spirit are common to their pneumatologies, it falls within the scope of reasonable possibility that Revelation and 1 John may be reflections of the Gospel's pneumatology.

4.2.5 ***Water and the Spirit***

Through the hermeneutical lens of the Gospel (7:37-39) 'the river of the water of life' in Revelation has been interpreted as representing the Spirit. This water of life flows 'from the throne of God and of the Lamb' in the eschatological new Jerusalem where God dwells among, and is worshiped by, his people and where God and the Lamb are its temple (Rev. 21:1-3; 22:1-3). Certain theological

¹⁸⁰ See sections 2.3.2 and 3.3.2.

¹⁸¹ Andreas J. Köstenberger and Scott R. Swain, *Father, Son and Spirit: The Trinity and John's Gospel*, New Studies in Biblical Theology 24 (Downers Grove: Apollos/InterVarsity Press, 2008), pp.154-156.

strands in Revelation's pneumatology establish that Revelation *per se* supports the river of the water of life as an actual or symbolic representation of God as Spirit, inclusive of the Spirit of Christ and the Spirit as a distinct person.¹⁸² Nevertheless, the contours of the Gospel's pneumatology furnish additional support for the river in the holy city representing God as Spirit. In the Gospel 'God is spirit' (Jn. 4:24). As Jesus, the Son of God, is the eternal Word who was with God, was God and who became flesh (1:1-2, 14, 18), pre-incarnation the Word was spirit. The Baptist declares Jesus to be 'the Lamb of God' and at Jesus' baptism the Spirit descends from heaven upon and remains on Jesus disclosing him as the Messiah and the 'one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit' (1:29-34). At the festival of Booths Jesus invites the thirsty to believe in him and drink as 'rivers of living water' will flow. These rivers refer to the Spirit which believers will receive when Jesus is glorified (7:37-39). Whilst the source of the living water has been interpreted as believers, either primarily or in a secondary sense, Jesus as the primary source is more consonant with Johannine pneumatology.¹⁸³ The Spirit-Paraclete proceeds from the Father to the Son and from the Son to believers (14:16-17, 26; 15:26; 16:7). In Jesus' breath the Spirit proceeds from Jesus to his disciples (20:22). True worshippers will worship God 'in spirit and truth' (4:23-24). The Spirit as 'rivers of living water', together with the other aspects of the Gospel's portrait of the Spirit, is harmonious with the river of the water of life

¹⁸² See section 2.2.

¹⁸³ Ridderbos, *The Gospel of John*, pp.273-274; Lindars, *Gospel*, pp.298-301; Barrett, *Gospel*, p.328; Rudolf Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St. John, Volume 2, Commentary on Chapters 5-12*, Herder's Theological Commentary on the New Testament, Original Edition 'Das Johannesevangelium', Part II, Herder, Freiburg, 1971, translated by Cecily Hastings, Francis McDonagh, David Smith and Richard Foley (London: Burns & Oats, 1980), pp.152-157; Brown, *The Gospel according to John (i-xii)*, pp.320-321 and 327-329; Thompson, *John*, pp.175-176; Lincoln, *The Gospel according to St. John*, pp.256-257; and Volker Rabens, 'The Spirit and Living Water in John's Gospel' in *Holy Spirit: Unfinished Agenda*, ed. by Johnson T. K. Lim (Singapore: Amour Publishing, 2014), pp.57-61 (p.58).

representing the life-giving Spirit proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb in the new Jerusalem where God's servants worship him. In this respect Revelation may be viewed as a likely reflection of the Gospel's pneumatology.

4.2.6 **General Comparative Conclusions**

Insofar as the pneumatologies of Revelation and 1 John *prima facie* reflect aspects of the Gospel of John's pneumatology, a comparative analysis has disclosed that salvific birth and sustaining salvific life in 1 John and the river of the water of life in Revelation are likely reflections of the Gospel's pneumatology. Both pneumatic epistemology and tripartite interrelations between Father, Son and Spirit in each of Revelation and 1 John fall within the scope of being reasonably possible reflections of the Gospel's pneumatology. On the interrelationship between the pneumatologies of Revelation and 1 John a direct link is unlikely. Their theological convergence relates to what the Spirit effects in their communities. Distinct theological motifs relating to the Spirit's *modus operandi* differentiate them from each other. It is the Gospel that furnishes a common link and which theologically connects the pneumatologies thereby justifying the appellation Johannine from a pneumatological perspective. Notably, the *modi operandi* of the Spirit specific to Revelation and to 1 John are found in the Gospel. The Spirit's indwelling function is the *modus operandi* specific to 1 John. As a likely reflection of the Gospel's pneumatology it principally derives from the Spirit-Paraclete being in, and the breathing of the Holy Spirit into, Jesus' disciples. The Spirit of prophecy is the *modus operandi* specific to Revelation. It enables John to receive the Revelation from Christ whilst 'in the spirit' and has implied hermeneutical and didactic functions in relation to Christ's

words in the situationally-specific prophecies. This being a reasonably possible reflection of the Gospel's pneumatology derives from the Spirit-Paraclete's declarative function in relation to Christ's words. Common to both 1 John and Revelation is the *modus operandi* of the Spirit as a life-giving force. The Spirit of life is seen in 1 John in salvific birth and the Spirit's sustaining function. In Revelation the Spirit of life is seen in the soteriological sustaining and restorative powers concomitant with the implied hermeneutical and didactic functions, the resurrection of the two witnesses and the river of the water of life. In the Gospel the Spirit of life is seen in connection with salvific birth, animating Christ's words, the rivers of living water and the Spirit-Paraclete indwelling believers. In their emphases on a particular facet of the Spirit's *modi operandi*, it may be said that Revelation and 1 John each reflect different but complementary pneumatological threads relating to the Spirit's role as portrayed in the Gospel. Revelation reflects the Spirit as the one who makes known, teaches and interprets Jesus' revelatory words. 1 John reflects the Spirit as the mediator of God and Christ's empowering presence within believers. Notwithstanding their particular emphasis, 1 John and Revelation are seemingly aware of other's pneumatological thread from the Gospel in respect of the Spirit's *modi operandi*. The Spirit's didactic function in 1 John, interpreted as a Spirit empowered dynamic and enlightening function, makes greater sense when viewed as a reflection of the Spirit-Paraclete's teaching and reminding function. This, alongside the Spirit's declarative function, is part of the Gospel's pneumatological thread of the Spirit as an interpreter of Christ's words. The Spirit indwelling believers, although not explicitly stated in Revelation, is not inconsistent with being 'in the spirit', the Spirit entering into the resurrected witnesses and the seven churches comprehending what the Spirit is

saying to them. The indwelling of the Spirit in the Gospel derives from the Spirit-Paraclete as does the declarative function relevant to the Spirit of prophecy in Revelation. It is possible that the pneumatological thread from the Gospel respectively emphasised in 1 John and Revelation is that which was most appropriate to their communities' *Sitz im Leben*. The Spirit's indwelling of believers may have been of particular relevance if a rival spiritual force was appealed to as an authority by those who left the community of 1 John. The Spirit's declarative role in respect of Christ's words would seem to be more relevant to John and the seven churches as recipients of prophetic revelation and in relation to the interpretation of Christ's situationally-specific prophecies. More generally, tripartite relations between Father, Son and Spirit in Revelation and 1 John provide insights into the Spirit's identity and indicate that their pneumatologies are inextricably connected to their doctrines of God and Christologies. Such tripartite relations are also seen in the Gospel in relation to the coming of the Spirit-Paraclete and at Jesus' baptism where the Spirit descends from God in heaven and remains on Jesus. Whilst neither 1 John nor Revelation are treatises on the Spirit each is predicated on their addressees being aware of the Spirit's activity within their lives and communities. These communities are likely to have had a greater knowledge of the Spirit than the written documents disclose. Revelation and 1 John provide only partial insights into their pneumatologies. Nevertheless, from such insights it seems likely in some cases, or reasonably possible in others, that aspects of their pneumatologies derive from the Gospel of John's pneumatology which is the common link between them.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

This study has examined the Spirit as portrayed in the Book of Revelation and 1 John. It has done so using a theological approach which has constructed a portrait of the Spirit from which key theological motifs and insights into the Spirit's identity could be ascertained and then used for comparative analyses. It has sought to determine how the pneumatologies of Revelation and 1 John compare to each other, whether there is any direct relationship between them, and to what extent they are influenced by the pneumatology of the Gospel of John. A comparative analysis has shown that there is a significant degree of theological convergence between the pneumatologies of Revelation and 1 John in terms of what the Spirit effects in the lives of believers and in relation to the identity of the Spirit. However, theological motifs distinct to each of Revelation and 1 John differ on how the Spirit accomplishes these effects. This difference makes it unlikely that there is any direct link between the pneumatologies in the sense of one influencing the other. A further comparative analysis with aspects of the Gospel of John's pneumatology, where this *prima facie* may have influenced Revelation and/or 1 John, has shown that in several areas it is either likely or reasonably possible that the Gospel's views on the Spirit are reflected within their pneumatologies. In respect of their distinct theological motifs, Revelation and 1 John may be regarded as reflecting different but complementary pneumatological threads attested within the Gospel of John.

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