

The Paraclete: Christ's Replacement or Christ's Connector?

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Abstract

Johannine scholars have debated whether the Paraclete promise of John 14–16 indicates that the Paraclete replaces Christ in light of his physical absence or brings Christ's presence to the Christ community. This article presents a chiasm in John 14:15–16:24 that, to date, has been uniformly missed in Johannine scholarship. For two reasons, this chiasm strongly supports the scholarly view that the Paraclete is portrayed in this passage as bringing Christ's presence to the Christ community. First, it makes clear that John 15:1–15 is the Paraclete promise's central point of emphasis, rather than an abrupt digression from the Paraclete promise. Second, it suggests that both Christ and the Paraclete perform the same functions in unison for the Christ community, rather than the Paraclete performing these functions on Christ's behalf. This article will largely apply Blomberg's criteria for detecting extended chiasm to demonstrate the significance that this chiasm provides for understanding the Paraclete's role in John 14–16.

Introduction

Scholars debate whether the Paraclete in John 14–16 is characterized as replacing Christ or bringing Christ's presence to the Christ community. Matt Searles, Marius Nel, Frederick D. Bruner, J. Ramsey Michaels, Johann Joubert, Ruth Sheridan, Craig S. Keener, Marianne M. Thompson, and Raymond E. Brown propose that the Paraclete promise consists of how the Paraclete brings Christ's presence to the Christ community, so the Paraclete and Christ can perform functions in unison for

the Christ community, i.e., the “presence” view.¹ Alicia Meyers, Andrew Lincoln, G. Beasley-Murray, D.A. Carson, C.K. Barrett, and Leon Morris assert instead that the Paraclete is promised as Christ’s replacement who performs functions on Christ’s behalf in light of Christ’s physical absence following his ascension, i.e., the “replacement” view.² The presence view affirms the agency of both Christ and the Paraclete in empowering the Christ community. The Holy Spirit remained on Christ to connect him to the presence of the Father, who is the source of Christ’s strength (1:32; 14:10). Likewise, the Paraclete abides with the Christ community to connect them to the abiding presence of Christ, who is the source of their strength (14:16; 15:5). In contrast, the replacement view asserts that only the Paraclete has agency, which precludes Christ’s agency in empowering the Christ community.

This article presents a chiasm in John 14:15–16:24 that, to date, all scholars have uniformly missed. Of fourteen chiasms in the Gospel of John validated by Roger DePriest, none of these include this chiasm in John 14:15–16:24.³ I will

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- 1 Matt Searles, “‘THESE THINGS I HAVE SAID TO YOU’: AN INVESTIGATION OF HOW PURPOSE CLAUSES GOVERN THE INTERPRETATION OF JOHN 14–16,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 60, no. 3 (2017): 516; Nel Marius, “The Notion of the Holy Spirit as Paraclete from a Pentecostal Perspective: Original Research,” *In die skriflig : tydskrif van die Gereformeerde Teologiese Vereniging* 50, no. 1 (2016): 6; Frederick D. Bruner, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012), 629; Ramsey Michaels, *The Gospel of John*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 342; Johann Joubert, “A Theological Assessment and Interpretation of the Johannine Paraclete- Spirit,” *In die skriflig : tydskrif van die Gereformeerde Teologiese Vereniging* 41, no. 3 (2007): 510; Ruth Sheridan, “The Paraclete and Jesus in the Johannine Farewell Discourse,” *Pacifica: Australian Theological Studies* 20, no. 2 (2007): 128; J. Joubert, “Johannine Metaphors / Symbols Linked to the Paraclete-Spirit and Their Theological Implications,” *Acta theologica* 27, no. 1 (2007): 83–103; Craig S. Keener, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary Volume Two*, (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2003), 973; Marianne M. Thompson, *The God of the Gospel of John*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 181; Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John (xiii–xxi)*, The Anchor Bible (Garden City: Doubleday, 1970), 645.
 - 2 Alicia Meyers, *Reading John and 1, 2, 3 John: A Literary and Theological Commentary* (Macon: Smyth & Helwys, 2019), 160; Andrew T. Lincoln, *The Gospel According to St. John*, Black’s New Testament Commentary (London: Continuum, 2005), 395; George R. Beasley-Murray, *John Volume 36*, Word Biblical Commentary, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1999), 258; D.A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 501; C. K. Barrett, *The Gospel According to St. John: An Introduction with Commentary and Notes on the Greek text* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1978), 464; Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to John: The English Text with Introduction, Exposition, and Notes* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971), 651.
 - 3 Roger G. DePriest “An Examination of Literary Chiasms in the Fourth Gospel in Light of the Discourse Function of Verbal Aspect”. ProQuest Dissertations Publishing, 2012, iv, 148. In 1999, using Blomberg’s criteria for detecting extended chiasmus, Brouwer published a dissertation claiming that John 13–17 constitutes an extended macro-chiasm. I do not find Brouwer’s chiasm convincing in large part because he artificially divides the five Paraclete pericopes into just two sections. Even if Brouwer’s chiasm were convincing, however, nothing in Blomberg’s criteria precludes overlapping macro-chiasms. In fact, chiasms can overlap in various ways. John Breck, “Biblical Chiasmus: Exploring Structure for Meaning,” *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 17, no. 2 (1987): 70, 73.

largely use Blomberg's criteria to propose that John 14:15–16:24 constitutes an extended macro-chiasm. While the following will apply all nine of Blomberg's criteria, it is notable that these criteria have cumulative weight and thus are seldom fulfilled *en toto*.⁴

In applying these criteria, I will explicate the following: (1) the current problem in perceiving John 15:1–15's relationship to the Paraclete promise; (2) clear examples of parallelism between the chiasm's halves; (3) verbal parallelism and conceptual parallelism; (4) central or dominant imagery or terminology; (5) words and ideas not regularly found elsewhere, (6) multiple sets of correspondence; (7) the division of the text at natural breaks; (8) the theological significance of the chiasm's center; and (9) the avoidance of ruptures. Beyond Blomberg's criteria, I will additionally provide two contextual arguments, drawing from John 17:20–26 and 10:7–16, in support of the "presence" view and thus the proposed chiasm.

The weight of evidence derived from all nine criteria, along with the additional contextual arguments, demonstrates the chiasm's legitimacy. For two reasons, this chiasm renders the "presence" view significantly more likely than the "replacement" view. First, it makes clear that John 15:1–15 is the central point of emphasis for the Paraclete promise, whereas the "replacement" view renders John 15:1–15 as an abrupt digression from this promise. Second, it suggests that both Christ and the Paraclete perform in unison the same functions for the Christ community. As such, John 14:15–16:24 read as a macro-chiasm demonstrates that the Paraclete implicitly enables the Christ community to see Christ (14:15–20; 16:4–24) (A; A') and implicitly enables Christ to equip them for discipleship (14:21–31; 15:16–16:3) (B; B') by connecting them to Christ's abiding presence (15:1–15) (C).

The Chiastic Structure of John 14:15–16:24 According to Blomberg's Criteria

The chiasm has the following structure:

A – The Paraclete implicitly enables the Christ community to see Christ (14:15–20)

B – The Paraclete implicitly enables Christ to equip the Christ community for discipleship (14:21–31)

C – Christ abides in the Christ community (15:1–15).

B' – The Paraclete implicitly enables Christ to equip the Christ community for discipleship (15:16–16:3)

4 DePriest, "An Examination of Literary Chiasms," 138.

A' – The Paraclete implicitly enables the Christ community to see Christ (16:4–24)

1. John 15:1–15: Digression from the Paraclete Promise or the Heart of the Paraclete Promise?

Blomberg's first criterion is that there must be a problem in perceiving the text's structure, which more conventional outlines fail to resolve.⁵ The problem in perceiving John 14–16's structure is that John 15:1–15 on the surface has an unclear relationship to the Paraclete promise of John 14–16. The replacement view overtly understands John 15:1–15 as an abrupt digression from the Paraclete promise. Although Keener, who affirms the presence view, claims that the indwelling of the Spirit mediates Jesus's activity as the source of fruit in John 15, neither Keener nor any other presence scholar provides an explicit rationale beyond general context to connect John 15:1–15 to John 14–16.⁶ The passage understood as part of this chiasm more firmly establishes that the abiding Christ empowers the Christ community to bear fruit (15:1–15) due to the implicit agency of the Paraclete (14:15–20; 14:21–31; 15:16–16:3; 16:4–24).⁷ In large part, this is why the surrounding chapters specifically discuss the Paraclete. Accordingly, *John 15:1–15 is actually the heart of the Paraclete promise because the Paraclete empowers the Christ community by implicitly bringing Christ's presence to them.*⁸

2. Clear Parallelism of Seeing Christ and of being Equipped for Discipleship

Blomberg's second criterion is that there must be clear examples of parallelism between the two "halves" of the hypothesized chiasm, to which commentators call attention, even when they propose quite different outlines for the overall text.⁹ The chiasm in John 14:15–16:24 demonstrates precisely this sort of parallelism in both its inner and outer layers.

A. The Outer Layer: 14:15–20 (A) | 16:4–24 (A')

Outer Layer Parallel #1. The first parallel in the outer layer of the text concerns the role of the Paraclete in seeing Christ. In 14:16, 19 (A) and 16:7, 16 (A'), the Paraclete implicitly enables the Christ community to see Christ. This inference is necessary because the Christ community to whom John is writing, who were not representative of Christ's immediate disciples, could clearly not

5 DePriest, "An Examination of Literary Chiasms," 317.

6 Keener, *The Gospel*, 998.

7 Indeed, the ascended Christ cannot physically empower the disciples, thus necessitating the Spirit's agency.

8 See a similar notion found in Galatians 5:13–6:10. See also Nel, "The Notion," 5. Nel likewise suggests that the Paraclete abides with the Christ community forever to enable them to abide in Christ as their true vine.

9 DePriest, "An Examination of Literary Chiasms," 317.

physically see the resurrected or subsequently ascended Christ. As a result, the Christ community must be provided a “spiritual sight” of Christ, which is made possible only by the agency of the Paraclete.¹⁰

Other scholars have called attention to this parallelism. Nel and Joubert observe that the comparisons between Jesus and the Paraclete in John 14–16 indicate that the Paraclete makes Jesus present to the Christ community in a different form and manner.¹¹ Similarly, Brown, Thompson, and Keener suggest that (1) the Paraclete implicitly enables Christ’s presence to permanently come to the Christ community (14:16–20), and (2) Christ’s promise of permanent joy was fulfilled by his presence with them via the Spirit, as opposed to the resurrection appearances or second coming (16:16–24).¹² Furthermore, Bruner and Michaels propose that the Paraclete provides a positive means by which the Christ community can recognize Christ’s presence, as the Paraclete is the Spirit of truth (14:16; 16:13) and Christ is the truth (14:6).¹³

Though coming to quite disparate conclusions and yet still calling attention to the parallel nature of John 14:15–20 and 16:4–24, Carson, Beasley–Murray, Barrett, and Lincoln assert that the Christ community “sees” Jesus in both John 14:19 and 16:16–17.¹⁴

Outer Layer Parallel #2. The second parallel in the outer layer of the text concerns the identical revelatory functions that both the Paraclete and Christ perform for the Christ community. Just as the Paraclete and Christ perform identical revelatory functions in 14:15–20 because they both dwell with the Christ community (14:17–18, 20), they also perform identical revelatory functions in 16:4–24 because they both speak to the Christ community (16:7–15).¹⁵

Here as well, this parallel is recognized by a number of scholars. Searles, Sheridan, Nel, and Joubert propose that the Paraclete and Christ both dwell with the Christ community and speak to the Christ community (14:16–20; 16:12–15).¹⁶ Bruner and Brown remark that the Spirit of truth in both passages guides the

10 Christ sends the Paraclete (16:7) only because he asks the Father if he can send the Paraclete on the Father’s behalf (14:16).

11 Nel, “The Notion,” 510; Joubert, “A Theological Assessment,” 508–509.

12 Brown, *The Gospel*, 645–646, 729–730; Thompson, *The God*, 181–182; Thompson, *John*, 341, 343; Keener, *The Gospel*, 973, 1043, 1046.

13 Bruner, *The Gospel*, 626, 690; Michaels, *The Gospel*, 342, 362.

14 Carson, *The Gospel*, 543; Beasley–Murray, *John*, 284; Barrett, *The Gospel*, 464; Lincoln, *The Gospel*, 422. These replacement scholars believe that “seeing” Jesus in both passages refers only to the resurrection appearances.

15 Dwelling with the Christ community is a revelatory function because the dwelling of both the Paraclete and Christ reveals to the Christ community the power and identity of Christ, which the world cannot see because neither of them dwell with the world (14:17–18, 20). Christ still has many things to say to the Christ community (16:12), which he says through the mediation of the Paraclete (16:14), who shows the Christ community how to convict the world (16:7–11).

16 Searles, “THESE THINGS,” 516, 522; Sheridan, “The Paraclete and Jesus,” 127; Nel, “The Notion,” 6; Joubert, “A Theological Assessment,” 509.

Christ community into all truth (16:13) by guiding them to the presence of Christ, who is the truth (14:6, 18; 16:12).¹⁷

While having a different understanding about how Jesus performs these revelatory functions for the Christ community, Lincoln and Barrett affirm the parallel nature of John 14:15–20 and 16:4–24 by acknowledging that the Paraclete and Christ both come to the disciples and speak to the Christ community.¹⁸

While Blomberg’s criteria suggests that the parallels indicative of an authentic chiasm must be widely recognized, I wish to nevertheless point out here one more parallel that has not readily been detected in the relevant scholarship. Each section’s ordering is identical, as the Paraclete’s revelatory functions of dwelling and speaking (14:16–17; 16:7–11) are stated prior to Christ’s identical revelatory functions of dwelling and speaking (14:18–20; 16:12–16). That not just the subject matter, but also the ordering of it follows a specific pattern is further evidence that the author organized the material via a literary chiasm as argued here.

B. The Inner Layer: 14:21–31 (B) | 15:16–16:3 (B’)

Inner Layer Parallel #1. The first parallel in the inner layer of the text pertains to the Paraclete’s role equipping the Christ community for discipleship. In 14:21–22, 26 (B) and 15:16, 19, 26 (B’), the Paraclete implicitly enables Christ to equip the Christ community for discipleship by revealing himself to them and choosing them out of the world. Moreover, both B and B’ have a twofold emphasis on revealing himself to them (14:21–22) and on choosing them out of the world (15:16, 19). As with the notion of “seeing” Christ found in the first parallel of the outer layer, the resurrected and ascended Christ cannot physically interact with the Christ community to whom John is writing, and thus this revelation of Christ must be “spiritual” in nature. Accordingly, Christ reveals himself to disciples and chooses disciples out of the world only via the Paraclete’s implicit agency.

This parallelism is likewise recognized by other scholars. Sheridan and Joubert propose that both the Paraclete and Jesus teach and testify to the Christ community, as the Paraclete implicitly “re-presents” Jesus to them (14:21–22, 26; 15:16, 19, 26).¹⁹ Furthermore, Bruner and Michaels remark that (1) Christ reveals himself to the Christ community by giving them spiritual insight about himself (14:21–22), and that (2) Christ provides people the initiative to join the Christ community as disciples, especially due to Christ’s twofold emphasis in declaring “I chose

17 Bruner, *The Gospel*, 694; Brown, *The Gospel*, 715.

18 Lincoln, *The Gospel*, 394-395, 420-421; Barrett, *The Gospel*, 463-464, 488-489. As replacement scholars, Lincoln and Barrett both claim that Jesus came to the Christ community only in the resurrection appearances, and that the Paraclete speaks to the Christ community on Christ’s behalf.

19 Sheridan, “The Paraclete,” 127; Joubert, “A Theological Assessment,” 508–509. “Re-presents” indicates that just as Jesus presented himself to the world in his earthly ministry, Jesus is presented to the Christ community again through the implicit agency of the Paraclete.

you” (15:16, 19).²⁰ Moreover, Keener and Brown suggest that the Paraclete’s union with Christ enables him to mediate how Christ teaches and testifies to disciples (14:21–22, 26; 15:16, 19, 26).²¹

Although they have different interpretations about how Christ’s dual work is done, Morris and Meyers affirm the parallel nature of John 14:21–31 and 15:16–16:3 by asserting that the Paraclete continues Christ’s work of teaching and testifying.²²

Inner Layer Parallel #2. As was the case with the outer layer, the second parallel of the inner layer also concerns how both the Paraclete and Christ perform identical revelatory functions for the Christ community. Both the Paraclete and Christ teach the Christ community in 14:21–31, because Christ reveals himself to the Christ community through the Paraclete’s implicit agency (14:21–22, 26). So too, they both testify to the Christ community in 15:16–16:3, because Christ chooses them out of the world through the Paraclete’s implicit agency (15:16, 19, 26). Revealing himself to his disciples that love him by keeping his commandments, Christ teaches them about his true identity (14:21–22). When Christ chooses disciples out of the world, he testifies as to why they should follow him to bear fruit instead of following the world (15:16, 19). The Paraclete teaches the Christ community about Christ by reminding them of all that he reveals to them (14:26). Further, the Paraclete testifies about Christ to the Christ community on Christ’s behalf by testifying as to why disciples should accept Christ’s call out of the world (15:26).²³

Observing this parallelism, Keener, Brown, Michaels, Bruner, and Joubert propose that the Paraclete implicitly enables Christ to teach and testify to disciples by continuing Christ’s presence in the Christ community.²⁴

Despite their rather different conclusions, Barrett and Lincoln affirm the parallel nature of John 14:21–31 and 15:16–16:3 by acknowledging that the Paraclete’s purposes of teaching (14:26) and testifying (15:26) about Christ are interrelated.²⁵ Morris additionally points out that in both passages (14:26; 15:26) the Holy Spirit is sent in Jesus’s name.²⁶

Once again, each section’s ordering is identical. In both passages, the

20 Bruner, *The Gospel*, 631, 667; Michaels, *The Gospel*, 343, 356.

21 Keener, *The Gospel*, 977, 1024; Brown, *The Gospel*, 652–653; 698–699.

22 Morris, *The Gospel*, 656; Meyers, *Reading John*, 160, 167. These replacement scholars believe that the Paraclete takes Christ place to teach and testify on his behalf, precluding Christ’s agency mediated through the Paraclete.

23 Because the Father sends the Paraclete in Christ’s name (14:26) and Christ sends the Paraclete from the Father (15:26), the Father sends the Paraclete through Christ (14:26; 15:26).

24 Keener, *The Gospel*, 975–976, 1024; Michaels, *The Gospel*, 343, 356; Brown, *The Gospel*, 652–653, 698–699; Bruner, *The Gospel*, 631, 667; Joubert, “A Theological Assessment,” 509.

25 Barrett, *The Gospel*, 467; Lincoln, *The Gospel*, 397, 412.

26 Morris, *The Gospel*, 656.

Paraclete's revelatory functions of teaching (14:26) and testifying (15:26) are stated before Christ's identical revelatory functions of teaching (14:21–22) and testifying (15:16, 19).

3. Verbal Parallelism and Conceptual Parallelism of John 14:15–16:24

Blomberg's third criterion is that both verbal and conceptual parallelism should characterize most, if not all, of the corresponding pairs of subdivisions.²⁷ Verbal and conceptual parallels in the outer layer are as follows.

A. Verbal Parallelism in the Outer Layer: 14:15–20 (A) | 16:4–24 (A')

- “Advocate” (Παράκλητον) (14:16; 16:7)
- “give you” (δώσει ὑμῖν) (14:16); “send him to you” (πέμψω αὐτὸν πρὸς ὑμῖν) (16:7)
- “be with you forever” (ἢ μεθ ὑμῶν εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα) (14:16); “come to you” (ἔλθῃ πρὸς ὑμᾶς) (16:7)
- “the Spirit of truth” (τὸ Πνεῦμα τῆς ἀληθείας) (14:17; 16:13)
- “I am coming to you” (ἔρχομαι πρὸς ὑμᾶς) (14:18); “I still have many things to say to you” (Ἔτι πολλὰ ἔχω ὑμῖν λέγειν) (16:12)
- “a little while” (μικρὸν) (14:19; 16:16–17, 19)
- “see me” ([θωρεῖτέ με] 14:19; [ὄψεσθέ με] 16:16–17, 19)

B. Conceptual Parallelism in the Outer Layer: 14:15–20 (A) | 16:4–24 (A')

- The Paraclete is sent to the Christ community (14:16; 16:7)
- The Paraclete performs revelatory functions for the Christ community: dwelling with them, and speaking to them (14:16–17; 16:8–11, 13–15)
- Christ performs the identical revelatory functions for the Christ community: dwelling with them, and speaking to them (14:18–20; 16:12–15)
- The Christ community sees Christ through the Paraclete's implicit agency (14:16, 19; 16:7, 16–17)

Verbal and conceptual parallels in the inner layer are as follows.

A. Verbal Parallelism in the Inner Layer (14:21–31; 15:16–16:3) (B; B')

- “reveal myself to them” (ἐμφανίσω αὐτοῖς ἐμαυτὸν) (14:21); “you will reveal yourself to us” (ἡμῖν μέλλεις ἐμφανίζειν σεαυτὸν) (14:22); “I

27 DePriest, “An Examination of Literary Chiasms,” 317.

- chose you” (ἐγὼ ἐξελεξάμην ὑμᾶς) (15:16); “I have chosen you out of the world” (ἐγὼ ἐξελεξάμην ὑμᾶς ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου) (15:19)
- “Advocate” (Παράκλητον) (14:26; 15:26)
 - “the Holy Spirit” (τὸ Πνεῦμα Ἅγιον) (14:26); “the Spirit of truth” (τὸ Πνεῦμα τῆς ἀληθείας) (15:26)
 - “the Father will send in my name” (πέμψει ὁ Πατήρ ἐν τῷ ὀνόματί μου) (14:26); “I will send to you from the Father” (ἐγὼ πέμψω ὑμῖν παρὰ τοῦ Πατρὸς) (15:26)
 - “teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you” (ὕμᾶς διδάξει πάντα καὶ ὑπομήσει ὑμᾶς πάντα ἃ εἶπον ὑμῖν ἐγώ) (14:26); “testify on my behalf” μαρτυρήσει περὶ ἐμοῦ) (15:26)

B. Conceptual Parallelism in the Inner Layer (14:21–31; 15:16–16:3)

- Christ performs revelatory functions for the Christ community: revealing himself to disciples, and choosing disciples out of the world (14:21–22; 15:16, 19)
- The Paraclete is sent to the Christ community (14:26; 15:26)
- The Paraclete performs identical revelatory functions for the Christ community: teaching disciples, and testifying to disciples (14:26; 15:26)
- Christ equips the Christ community for discipleship through the Paraclete’s implicit agency (14:21–22, 26; 15:16, 19, 26)

4. *Central Imagery or Terminology*

Blomberg’s fourth criterion is that the verbal parallelism should involve central or dominant imagery or terminology, not peripheral or trivial language.²⁸ This criterion is met here, as the outer layer and the inner layer both contain all of John’s uses of the term “Paraclete” (14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7), who is the subject of the Paraclete promise. Moreover, the verbal parallelism involves: (1) the dominant imagery of the Paraclete’s agency in abiding (14:16–17), teaching (14:26), testifying (15:26), and speaking (16:8–11, 13–15); and (2) Christ’s abiding (14:18–20), revealing himself (14:21–22), choosing disciples out of the world to himself (15:16, 19), and speaking (16:12–15) through the implicit agency of the Paraclete.

5. *Unique Words and Ideas*

Blomberg’s fifth criterion is that both verbal and conceptual parallelism should involve words and ideas not regularly found elsewhere within the proposed

28 DePriest, “An Examination of Literary Chiasms,” 317.

chiasm.²⁹ “Seeing” Christ in a “little while” (14:19; 16:16–17) by the implicit agency of the Paraclete (14:16; 16:7), and the Paraclete and Christ’s “abiding” with (14:15–20) and “speaking” to (16:8–15) the Christ community is only found in the outer layer. Moreover, Christ’s “revealing himself” to disciples (14:21) and “choosing” disciples out of the world to himself (15:16, 19) by the implicit agency of the “Paraclete” who “teaches” (14:26) and “testifies” (15:26) to the Christ community is discussed only in the inner layer.

6. Multiple Sets of Correspondence

Blomberg’s sixth criterion is that in addition to multiple sets of parallels between opposing layers in the chiasm, there are several layers to it as well.³⁰ While this chiasm does not register as strongly in this criterion, it does meet the minimum standard, possessing an outer layer (14:15–20; 16:4–24), inner layer (14:21–31; 15:16–16:3), and center (15:1–15).

7. Five Natural Breaks

Blomberg’s seventh criterion is that the outline should divide the text at natural breaks, which would be agreed upon even by those proposing very different structures to account for the whole.³¹ The data between scholars is quite close regarding the natural breaks for the Paraclete promise of John 14–16. Keener, Thompson, Lincoln, Meyers, and Barrett propose that there are four natural breaks corresponding to the four uses of the term “Paraclete” (14:16; 14:26; 15:26; 16:7).³² Sheridan and Beasley–Murray propose that there are five natural breaks (14:16–17; 14:25–26; 15:26; 16:7–11; 16:13–15), dividing the fourth Paraclete text (16:7–24).³³ Nel and Brown assert that there are three natural breaks (14:16–26; 15:26–27; 16:7–15), combining the first two Paraclete texts (14:15–20; 14:21–31).³⁴ This article resonates with these scholars’ findings by proposing five natural breaks. Four natural breaks correspond to the four usages of “Paraclete” (14:15–20; 14:21–31; 15:16–16:3; 16:4–24). The fifth natural break comprises the center of this chiasm, John 15:1–15. This article suggests that John 14:15 should begin the chiasm because it contains the prerequisite for receiving the Paraclete, which is obeying Christ out of love for him. John 16:24 should end the chiasm, as it concludes Christ’s explanation for “seeing” him in a “little while,” which is mediated by the implicit agency of the Paraclete.

29 DePriest, “An Examination of Literary Chiasms,” 317.

30 DePriest, “An Examination of Literary Chiasms,” 317.

31 DePriest, “An Examination of Literary Chiasms,” 317.

32 Keener, *The Gospel*, 953; Thompson, *The God*, 177; Lincoln, *The Gospel*, 393; Meyers, *Reading John*, 160, 166–167; Barrett, *The Gospel*, 461.

33 Sheridan, “The Paraclete,” 125; Beasley–Murray, *John*, 255.

34 Nel, “The Notion,” 8; Raymond E. Brown, *An Introduction to the Gospel of John*, Ed. Francis J. Moloney, Anchor Reference Bible Library (New York: Doubleday, 2003), 308–309.

8. *John 15:1–15 as the Chiasm's Center*

Blomberg's eighth criterion is that the chiasm's center and climax should be a passage worthy of that position due to its theological or ethical significance.³⁵ While Keener claimed the indwelling of the Spirit mediates Jesus's activity as the source of moral fruit, he did not substantiate his claim with an explicit literary justification.³⁶ This article's chiasm constitutes just such a justification. The chiasm's center focuses on the way that only Christ's abiding presence can empower the Christ community to produce fruit (15:4–5). Clearly, John 15:1–15 satisfies this criterion because only the Christ community's reliance on the abiding Christ to produce fruit demonstrates that they are his disciples (15:8). In fact, lacking Christ's abiding presence results in being removed, thrown away, withered, and burned (15:2, 6). In John 15:1–15, Jesus does not mention the Paraclete. This chiasm proposes that the Paraclete is not explicitly mentioned in John 15:1–15 precisely because Christ's abiding presence is the Paraclete promise's central point of emphasis. That is, the Paraclete implicitly brings Christ's abiding presence to the Christ community to empower them to produce such fruit.³⁷ Accordingly, then, John 15:1–15 can be properly interpreted only in terms of the Paraclete's implicit role in connecting the Christ community to Christ's abiding presence.

9. *No Ruptures in the Chiasm*

Blomberg's ninth and final criterion is that ruptures in the outline should be avoided if at all possible.³⁸ A rupture would occur if a section of the chiasm does not account for something in the text. The chiasm proposed here avoids all ruptures, as each section flows seamlessly into the next. First, John 14:15–20 focuses on how the Paraclete dwells with the Christ community (14:15–17) and then on how he implicitly enables the Christ community to see Christ dwell with them (14:18–20). Second, John 14:21–31 focuses on how Christ equips disciples by revealing himself to them (14:21–25) and then on how he does so through the implicit agency of the Paraclete who teaches disciples (14:26–31). Third, John 15:1–15 focuses on how Christ abides in the Christ community to empower them to produce fruit due to the implicit agency of the Paraclete. Fourth, John 15:16–16:3 focuses on how Christ chooses disciples out of the world to bear fruit (15:16–15:25) and then on how he does so through the implicit agency of the Paraclete who testifies on Christ's behalf (15:26–16:3). Fifth, John 16:4–24 focuses on how the Paraclete

35 DePriest, "An Examination of Literary Chiasms," 318.

36 Keener, *The Gospel*, 998.

37 See the similar notion found in Galatians 5:13–6:10. See also Nel, "The Notion," 5. Nel likewise suggests that the Paraclete abides with the Christ community forever to enable them to abide in Christ as their true vine.

38 DePriest, "An Examination of Literary Chiasms," 318.

speaks to the Christ community (16:4–11) and then on how he implicitly enables Christ to speak to them (16:12–24).

Contextual Arguments

Adding to Blomberg’s criteria, two contextual arguments in support of the “presence” view and thus the proposed chiasm are worth noting here. These contextual arguments demonstrate correspondence with the notions of spiritually “seeing” Christ in the outer layer and of being equipped for discipleship by Christ in the inner layer. First, corresponding to the outer layer, Christ’s prayer in John 17:20–26 comprises the only other section in John that discusses how the Christ community beyond the immediate disciples sees Christ after his ascension. Fernando Segovia observes that this section of Christ’s prayer focuses on the glorification of both Christ’s immediate disciples and all future disciples in the Christ community (17:20–26).³⁹ He proposes that “seeing” Christ’s glory refers to how Christ himself will be present in the disciples to continue to make the Father known to them (17:24–26).⁴⁰ Brown and Bruner suggest that the indwelling presence of Christ may make the Father’s name known through the work of the Paraclete (17:26; 14:26; 16:13–15).⁴¹ Particularly, Christ linked the Christ community’s “seeing” his glory with his being in them (17:23–24, 26), just as he linked the community’s “seeing” him with his being in them in John 14:19–20. As such, his prayer indicates a continuous “spiritual” sight of him via the implicit agency of the Paraclete for the Christ community at large.

Second, corresponding to the inner layer, the “gate and good shepherd” parable of John 10:7–16 comprises the only other section of John that demonstrates how Christ simultaneously testifies to disciples (10:7, 9, 16) and teaches disciples (10:11–16). As the gate, he testifies to disciples to follow him rather than thieves (10:7, 9, 16). As the good shepherd, he teaches disciples to know him (10:11–16). The gate is a self-referential metaphor that points to Christ as the means of entrance into the community of the Father’s people (10:7, 9, 16).⁴² Wendy North remarks that John 10:7, 9 uses the same term *θύρα* as found in John 18:16, where the beloved disciple helps Peter follow Jesus by convincing the doorkeeper to let Peter enter the courtyard’s gate.⁴³ Further, she remarks that John uses the same term *ἀλτήξ* to refer to both the “courtyard” in John 18:16 and the “fold” in 10:16.⁴⁴

39 Fernando F. Segovia, “Inclusion and Exclusion in John 17: An Intercultural Reading,” in *What is John? Literary and Social Readings of the Fourth Gospel*, vol. 2, ed. Fernando F. Segovia (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998), 197–198.

40 Segovia, “Inclusion and Exclusion,” 198.

41 Brown, *The Gospel*, 781; Bruner, *The Gospel*, 1011.

42 Beasley-Murray, *John*, 169.

43 North, *What John Knew*, 36.

44 North, *What John Knew*, 36.

Accordingly, entering the courtyard's gate symbolizes a willingness and ability to follow Jesus. Bruner suggests that the Paraclete is the gatekeeper who opens the gate, thereby enabling the Christ community to listen to the good shepherd (10:3).⁴⁵ As such, the Paraclete enables Christ to testify to the Christ community (15:16, 19, 26).

The good shepherd is another self-referential metaphor pointing to Christ's function, as per a messianic reading of Ezekiel 34, in which God promises to set his servant David, i.e., the Messiah, as the shepherd of God's people who will gather and pasture his sheep (10:11–16).⁴⁶ Keener observes that the sheep hear Christ's voice through the Spirit who reveals him to them (John 16:7–15).⁴⁷ Accordingly, this parable suggests that Christ cooperates with the Paraclete to simultaneously testify to disciples by choosing them out of the world (15:16, 19, 26) and teach disciples by revealing himself to them (14:21–22, 26).

Conclusion

The Holy Spirit remained on Christ to connect him to the presence of the Father, who is the source of Christ's strength (1:32; 14:10). Likewise, the Paraclete abides with the Christ community to connect them to the abiding presence of Christ, who is the source of their strength (14:16; 15:5). Thus, the Paraclete can hardly be understood in John as Christ's replacement. The chiasm in John 14:15–16:24 strongly supports this view. The Paraclete implicitly enables the Christ community to see Christ ([A] 14:15–20; [A'] 16:4–24) and implicitly enables Christ to equip them for discipleship ([B]14:21–31; [B'] 15:16–16:3) by connecting them to Christ's abiding presence ([C] 15:1–15). In turn, because of its support of the "presence" view—particularly in terms of its affect upon the interpretation of 15:1–15—the chiasm impacts the Godhead theology found in the Gospel of John by affirming the agency of both the Paraclete and Christ in empowering the Christ community. The chiasm, then, resolves the problem of perceiving John 15:1–15 as an abrupt digression from the Paraclete promise of John 14–16.

Additionally, the chiasm more firmly establishes that, for John, both the Paraclete and Christ perform revelatory functions in unison for the Christ community. In all, it demonstrates that the implicit agency of the Paraclete brings Christ's abiding presence to the Christ community.

There is, of course, a circularity to this argument, as the "presence" interpretation is required to detect the chiasm. Nevertheless, once seen, the chiasm constitutes a proverbial silver bullet in favor of the "presence" view. That is, it confirms

45 Bruner, *The Gospel*, 610.

46 Beasley-Murray, *John*, 168.

47 Craig S. Keener, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary Volume One* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2003), 808.

the “presence” view by consistently demonstrating that both Christ and the Paraclete perform functions in unison for the Christ community through the Paraclete’s implicit agency in bringing Christ’s abiding presence to the Christ community. Finally, it rightly demonstrates that John 15:1–15 is the Paraclete promise’s central point of emphasis.