

»We have Found the Messiah« (John 1:41) *The Formation of Disciples in the Gospel of John*

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<https://doi.org/10.31192/np.19.2.6>
UDK / UDC: 27-312.5-056.153
27-247.8:27-273

Izvorni znanstveni rad / Original scientific paper
Primljeno / Received: 15. veljače 2021. / Feb 15, 2021
Prihvaćeno / Accepted: 25. travnja 2021. / Apr 25, 2021

The disciple is a seminal topic for every Evangelist. The Johannine image of the followers of the Rabbi from Nazareth diverges from the Synoptic vision. In the Fourth Gospel, the disciples follow and serve the Master – like in Mark, Matthew, and Luke – yet the Johannine Jesus does not ask them to break their family ties or leave anything behind. A narrative analysis of the Fourth Gospel lets Culpepper consider the disciples of Christ from the perspective of their literary functions and determine the criteria of their discipleship. The critic divides their formation process into three stages related to seeing, believing, and continuing in the word. In the eyes of the reader, the followers of Jesus – perceived individually or as a community – perform functions as role models or representatives. To be a disciple is to accept the gift of becoming a child of God (John 1:12), which presumes a broad, universal perspective. For this reason, the author of John uses the term »disciple« as many as seventy-eight times, »Twelve« – only four times, while the word »apostle« is never spoken.

Key words: *Gospel of John, Jesus, disciple of Jesus, community of disciples, formation process.*

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Introduction

»What are you looking for?« (John 1:38)¹ – said Jesus to two men, disciples of John the Baptist, who followed him upon hearing the witness given by their master. »Whom are you looking for?« (John 20:15) – heard Mary of Magdala on Easter Morning. These questions call for an answer. Though asked in the Gospel of John, they are not addressed exclusively to the historical disciples following Jesus of Nazareth. They confront every reader. Man, by his nature, is a question. All his life, he keeps searching and opening his heart to the unknown. He strives to find what he does not own but misses, and what »his heart has loved forever«². The Fourth Gospel bears witness of the Beloved Disciple on the Eternal Word which descended upon the earth to be searched and found.

This study aims to present the formation of disciples in the work of John. The research analysis provokes the following questions: What is the essence of being a disciple of Christ? What criteria should be met by a true disciple of the Word?

1. The first disciples of Jesus in the perspective of John and the Synoptics

The disciple, the essence of discipleship, and the community of disciples are all seminal topics in the mind of every Evangelist. John's description of gathering the first followers of Jesus (John 1:19–51) stands in stark contrast to the reports of Mark, Matthew, and Luke (Mark 1:16–20, Matt 4:18–22, Luke 5:1–11). Despite his apparent familiarity with the Synoptic tradition, the Evangelist decided to present a different version of the story for his own literary and theological purposes³. In the light of the Synoptic descriptions, it is Jesus who takes the initiative of calling the disciples after the capture of John the Baptist. In the Gospel of Mark, the calling is accompanied by three actions of Jesus: he passes – by the Sea of Galilee or the receipt of custom – he sees, and he says⁴. The first men to answer the call of the Teacher are two brothers, Simon and Andrew, fishermen from the Galilean village of Bethsaida. The next pair of brothers called by Jesus are John and James, followed by Levi, the tax collector. In no way did these men stand out from the crowd. They were not among

¹ All Bible verses cited from New Revised Standard Version (1989).

² Silvano FAUSTI, *Rozważaj i głos Ewangelie. Wspólnota czyta Ewangelie według św. Jana*, [Consider and Preach the Gospel. The Community Reads the Gospel According St. John], Kraków, 2005, 43.

³ Andrew T. LINCOLN, *The Gospel According to Saint John*, London, 2005, 123.

⁴ Artur MALINA, *Ewangelia według świętego Marka. Wstęp–Przekład z oryginału–Komentarz* (Nowy Komentarz Biblijny. Nowy Testament II/1), [The Gospel According to Saint Mark. Introduction–Translation from the Original–Commentary], Częstochowa, 2013, 122–124.

the listeners of Jesus. They toiled in their professions – fishing, mending nets, collecting customs. Christ did not turn to them in recognition of their earlier merits or disposition for a new mission, but because he was passing by and saw them. In doing so, he discerned what others failed to notice.

In the Fourth Gospel, the Baptist is still free and active. He teaches at the River Jordan and gives baptisms. His disciples are at his side. When he recognises the messianic Lamb of God in the coming Jesus (1:29, 1:35), he bears witness. At this point, two of his disciples – Andrew and another one, unnamed – leave to follow the new Rabbi. The Baptist stays. He does not join the Messianic movement. The time of his activity draws to a close. Others carry the witness of John, while the Messiah keeps gaining new followers.

Arguing that Jesus is the Messiah (Christ), Andrew introduces him to brother Simon. Upon that meeting, Simon gets a new name. The Synoptic tradition situates this fact much later. The author of the Fourth Gospel fails to name the professions of the First-Called, but the nightly expedition to the Sea of Galilee reported in John 21 suggests that the readers had that knowledge from tradition. Lincoln⁵ observes that in Synoptic reports, the disciples set out on their path upon answering the call of Jesus and abandoning their daily chores. Meanwhile, the Fourth Gospel says that the first disciples followed Jesus upon the witness of John the Baptist. They left their former Master and his mission.

The prologue of the Gospel of John (John 1:6–8, 1:15) and the opening of the narrative (1:19–35) unequivocally define the goal behind the Baptist's mission: »He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him« (1:7). While the Synoptics show John as a herald of the Messiah, the Fourth Evangelist bestows upon him the function of a witness to the Word – the Light. John emphasises the contrast between the Baptist and the object of his witness. The world was made »by him« (the Word) – *panta di' autou egeneto* (1:3), and all men may believe »through him« (John) – *hina pantes pisteusōsin di' autou* (1:7)⁶. The Word is the ultimate truth for all mankind, but men may know the world only through a witness. The Word needs witnesses such as John the Baptist. Against the words of Matthew that the least important person in the kingdom of heaven is greater than John (Matt 11:2–11), the Fourth Evangelist poses the Baptist as a prototypical disciple of Jesus (Rissi) or the first Christian believer (Dodd)⁷.

Christological titles used by the first disciples of Jesus equate him to the Rabbi (1:38), the Messiah – Christ (1:41), him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, wrote as being (1:45), Son of God and King of Israel (1:49). These

⁵ LINCOLN, *The Gospel According to Saint John*, 123–124.

⁶ Aleksandra NALEWAJ, »Pojawił się człowiek, posłany przez Boga...« (J 1, 6). Jan Chrzciciel w ujęciu autora czwartej Ewangelii, [«There was a Man Sent from God...« (J 1:6). St. John the Baptist in the View of the Author of the Fourth Gospel], *Studia Warmińskie* [The Studies of Warmia] 51 (2014), 111.

⁷ Craig S. KENEER, *The Gospel of John. A Commentary*, Vol. 1, Peabody, 2005, 391.

terms imply that even at the threshold of their mission, the disciples believe that Jesus is the Christ, Son of God. The Evangelist calls upon his readers in the first epilogue to the same faith (cf. John 20:31). When the readers together with the author follow the next part of the narrative containing the promised »greater things« (1:50), they will comprehend the sense and the weight of those initial testimonies. They will learn that Jesus, the Son of Man, unites heaven and earth, and both realities converge at his cross. The second person singular pronoun »you« used in verse 50 turns into the plural pronoun »you« in verse 51. Thus, the text is addressed not at Nathanael himself, but at a larger audience, including the readers of the Gospel. The promise of seeing »greater things« is given to every reader. The death of the Son of Man, i.e. his exaltation, will reveal him as the Gate of Heaven, the new Jacob's Ladder⁸.

2. Stages of disciple formation in the Johannine Gospel

R.A. Culpepper⁹ observes that while over the last decades, the attention of critics has focused on the function of disciples in the Gospel of Mark, studies of the disciples in the Gospel of John failed to attract any greater interest. In his monograph on the narrative analysis of the Fourth Gospel, *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel. A Study in Literary Design*, in the chapter entitled *Characters*, the commentator examines the profiles of Jesus's disciples in terms of their literary functions. This inquiry allows Culpepper to define the criteria of discipleship¹⁰.

The commentator contends that the disciples in the Fourth Gospel, perceived individually or as a community, could serve the reader as representatives or models. An important quality of the disciples is their ability to recognise the Master and acknowledge his demands. Even though their faith is not ideal, and the words of the Master often escape their comprehension, they remain disciples. Above all, they are to become the children of God (cf. John 1:12). For these reasons, the author of John uses the term »disciple« as many as seventy-eight times, »Twelve« – only four times, while the word »apostle« is never spoken. The Fourth Evangelist extends his gaze beyond the present to include the followers of Christ in all times, even though – against Matt 28:19 – his book does not urge to »go and teach«.

Discipleship involves growth. It is a dynamic process. Culpepper distinguishes three stages of becoming a disciple. They are related to the actions of seeing, believing and continuing.

⁸ Lincoln, *The Gospel According to Saint John...*, 123–124.

⁹ R. Alan CULPEPPER, *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel. A Study in Literary Design*, Philadelphia, 1983, 115.

¹⁰ Aleksandra NALEWAJ, *Funkcje kobiet w Ewangelii według świętego Jana*, [*The Women's Functions in the Gospel According to Saint John*], Olsztyn, 2017, 24.

2.1. Seeing

The first disciples follow Jesus upon the witness given by John the Baptist; they do so on their own initiative (John 1:35). Jesus calls them. His actions are limited to initiating the meeting. But when that meeting occurs, Rabbi names the conditions of acting like him¹¹. When he sees Andrew and the unnamed disciple, he asks: »What are you looking for?« (1:38). The disciples answer: »Rabbi! (...) where are you staying?« (1:38). Culpepper notes that even though the answer to that question is provided in the parting words (John 14:23; 15:4–10), Jesus already encourages: »Come and see« (1:39). By following the footsteps of the Teacher, the disciples will not only see the glory of their Master (2:11), but also recognise in him the Father (cf. 14:9). In the Fourth Gospel, Philip is the only disciple called by Jesus. Others come upon hearing the witness of others. »The only way to come to the Word is to hear the voice that bears its witness«¹². From the beginning of his narrative, the author of John indicates that discipleship involves action, that it presumes animation and movement. It comes to fulfilment in bringing others to the faith. The newly called give Jesus the messianic titles: Messiah – Christ (cf. 1:41), of whom Moses and the prophets wrote as being (cf. 1:45), Son of God (cf. 1:49), King of Israel (cf. 1:49). According to Culpepper, the first step on the path to discipleship is »seeing«, and its consequence – following the Master. A. Salas believes the opposite¹³. Following Jesus comes first (»Come!«) and culminates in seeing (»See!«). In contrast to the Gospel of Mark, where the disciples struggle to recognize the true identity of their Teacher, disciples in the Gospel of John know it from the start. They may not have the knowledge of the pre-existence of their Master, which becomes evident to the reader upon reading the prologue, but all recognise Jesus and their future experiences of »greater things« (1:50).

2.2. Faith

Another momentous step on the path to discipleship is faith. Upon the description of the sign of wine made during the wedding feast in Cana of Galilee, the narrator concludes that the followers of Jesus saw his glory and believed in him (John 2:11). Seeing the sign inspires faith, even though the called had already addressed Christ with important Christological titles when they came to Jesus (1:35–51). Culpepper¹⁴ asks about the significance of those seemingly unrelated episodes. Both point to the dynamic nature of the faith. The faith

¹¹ Antonio SALAS, *Ewangelia wg św. Jana. Jezus – Ten, który stwarza nowego człowieka*, [The Gospel According to St. John. Jesus – the One Who Creates a New Man], Częstochowa, 2002, 33.

¹² Fausti, *Rozważaj i głoś Ewangelię...*, 43.

¹³ Salas, *Ewangelia wg św. Jana...*, 33.

¹⁴ Culpepper, *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel...*, 116.

of the first disciples depends on signs (2:11), but it also results from seeing and bearing witness (1:36, 1:39, 1:46, 1:51). The cleansing of the temple and other miracles performed by Jesus at the time of the first Passover made many »believe in his name«. But the Evangelist remarks that Jesus himself did not entrust himself to them (2:23–24; cf. 1:12 and 2:11). The signs may initiate faith or be its first impulse, but a superficial faith devoid of any personal commitment will never survive. Christ, the source of life, performs a miracle to make the witnesses cling to him (cf. John 20:31). The purpose of God's work is the faith in his Only-Begotten Son (6:30)¹⁵. We should ask about the difference between the disciples and the »many«, if both came to Jesus attracted by the signs. The response is self-evident. While the disciples after the witness of John the Baptist proved that they wanted to follow Jesus (cf. 1:37, 1:38, 1:40), the others stopped halfway. Faith demands to follow in the Master's wake. It cannot be based solely on seeing signs or bringing emotions, indeed. He tests of the discipleship is to »continue« in his word (8:31) and bear fruit (15:1–8).

2.3. Continuing

In the light of the Gospel of John, seeing the signs and believing in the word of Jesus are insufficient for discipleship. A disciple must cling to Jesus with all his might and continue in him as a branch in a vine. The next chapters illustrate the practical function of the disciples. They address Jesus as »Rabbi« (cf. 1:38, 1:49, 4:31, 9:2, 11:8), share their time with him (cf. 3:22), give baptism (4:2 and the following) – though this remark appears to be superficial – eventually, they hurry to bring him food (cf. 4:8, 4:31). The sight of their Master conversing at a well with a woman from Sychar outrages the disciples as they come back from the town¹⁶. Yet, they show their respect and do not ask the Teacher to explain his reasons for going against the established custom (cf. 4:27, also 16:19). In the beginning of his public mission, Jesus has a large circle of disciples¹⁷. Unexpectedly, John 6:66 mentions that many of them already left the Master and did not follow him anymore. What precipitated the crisis inside the community, if the followers referred to Jesus by powerful Christological titles as early as in John 1, saw the glory of their Teacher in John 2, and witnessed the multiplication of bread and walking on water in John 6? Why did so many of them leave?

In contrast to the Synoptics, John does not note that the opposition to Jesus in John 6 forms as a result of his demands that prove too hard for the disciples

¹⁵ Fausti, *Rozważaj i głos Ewangelie...*, 56.

¹⁶ The Rabbinic literature confirms that in times of Jesus, man did not converse with a woman, even his wife, in a public place. In addition, the Samaritan is of a foreign ethnicity. The Rabbis preached that Samaritan women are a permanent source of impurity because they menstruate from birth (cf. Teresa OKURE, *The Johannine Approach to Mission*, Tübingen, 1988, 96).

¹⁷ Ester A. de BOER, *The Gospel of Mary. Listening to the Beloved Disciple*, New York, 2005, 162.

to fulfil. The disciples were not required to leave everything behind and there is no mention of taking the cross. Their approach is not fuelled by fear of persecution. According to Culpepper¹⁸, the obstacle on the path of faith is the word of Jesus. Even before, the disciples had difficulty understanding the words of their Master, and particularly his use of metaphors (4:33). In John 6:60, some refer to his teachings as »a hard saying« (*sklēros ho logos*). They argue that nobody can hear it. Even though they are disciples (cf. 6:64), they have no faith and thus leave. For those who remain, the teachings of Jesus are not »hard saying« but »the words of eternal life« (cf. 6:68). What occasions the schism in the community of disciples is »his word«. Some take a stance in »continuing«, others – in »leaving«. Both stances are the effect of the perceptual dispositions of the listeners. »Many« were ready to accept Jesus as the performer of signs. Yet, they failed to recognise him as the Word of God Sent by the Father and Revelator. Yet again, Culpepper¹⁹ accentuates that only those who continue in the teachings of the Master are indeed disciples (8:31). Fausti²⁰ adds that the word of the Son of God is the abode of the disciple (»abode with him« – 1:39), the abode of life. This is what shapes the follower and bestows upon him the power to become a child of God (1:12)²¹.

In the course of the narrative, the communication breakdown between Jesus and his followers seems increasingly pronounced. At the threshold of the public activity of the Teacher, the disciples miss the point of the metaphor about the body as a temple (2:21–22), and then its food (4:32–34)²². They fail to grasp the relationship between sin and suffering (9:2), the words about Lazarus' dream (11:7–16) or the significance of entering Jerusalem (12:16). They will understand all that later, once they have received the gift of the Paraclete. For now, this lack of comprehension represents no threat to their discipleship. In the Cenacle, in the context of »the hour«, the Rabbi sets an example of service and mutual love. In the parting words, he emphasises the future roles of his followers and prepares them for hardship. According to Culpepper, these exhortations say more of John's concept of disciples than the real qualities of the disciples. Their subsequent questions (13:36, 14:5, 14:8, 14:22) unequivocally show that they failed to fathom the teachings of the Master. They do not know his destination (13:36, 14:5), the way to the Father or see him in the Son (14:5–11), or the significance of »a little while« (16:17–18). Jesus is aware that their faith needs

¹⁸ Culpepper, *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel...*, 117.

¹⁹ *Ibidem*.

²⁰ Fausti, *Rozważaj i głos Ewangelię...*, 252.

²¹ Stanisław MĘDALA, *Ewangelia według świętego Jana. Wstęp – Przekład z oryginału – Komentarz* (Nowy Komentarz Biblijny. Nowy Testament IV/1), [*The Gospel According to Saint John. Introduction – Translation from the Original – Commentary*], Częstochowa, 2010, 269.

²² »Jesus said to them, 'My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to complete his work'« (J 4, 34).

to be polished and tested (16:31). Soon, the events of the Passover will allow the disciples to understand the revelation in its entirety.

At the dramatic time of the arrest in the Garden of Olives, the disciples remain with the Teacher (18:1–11). Peter and one more disciple follow him to the archpriest's courtyard but stop before the entrance. It is a telling sign. The author points to the paralysis of the bond between Jesus and the disciple who will soon betray him (18:19). Under the cross, the Evangelist notes only the presence of the Beloved Disciple (19:26–27). Jewish dignitaries – and secret disciples of Jesus, Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus – bury the Crucified (19:38–42). The last two chapters in the Book of John (John 20–21) solve the differences between Jesus and his followers. They confirm the position of the disciples as »children of God« and their future functions. Peter's and the Beloved Disciple's »run« to the tomb, as well as their behaviour in the events at the Sea of Galilee indicate the pastoral leadership of the former and the trustworthiness of the latter as a witness. Upon receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit, the disciples are sent to their apostolic missions (cf. 20:21–23). They will continue the work of Jesus in reproving the world's sin, i.e. the lack of faith (cf. 16:8–9). From this moment on, their mission is only in the hands of the exalted Lord. When they rely only upon their own strength, they cannot convince even one from their own midst (20:24–29).

3. *Seven representative disciples in the Fourth Gospel*

In the likeness of an antique drama, the Gospel of John presents various types and categories of people coming to Jesus. These include the disciples of John the Baptist, Nathanael the scribe (1:42, 1:43, 1:45–51), Nicodemus the Pharisee (3:1–10), a Samaritan woman, the schismatic (4:1–29). In doing so, the narrator shows that anybody can hear the Gospel of Jesus²³. Despite the momentous role of witness in the process of gathering disciples, personal contact proves even more significant. Andrew, Simon and Nathanael become true disciples upon meeting the Rabbi (1:29, 1:38–39, 1:42; cf. 8:31). Jesus knows the people who come to him (1:42, 1:43, 1:45–51, 3:1–10, 4:1–29). He knows his sheep (10:14, 10:27), because he was entrusted with them by his Father (10:29, 17:9) and he knows their hearts (2:23–25). In the course of the narrative, seven followers of Jesus stand out in bold relief from the community as individuals and representatives. They play prominent roles in the development of the story. These are: Andrew, Simon Peter, Philip, Nathanael, Thomas, the Beloved Disciple and Judas.

²³ Keneer, *The Gospel of John...*, 475.

Andrew is the first named disciple. He bears a Greek name *Andreas* which means »man« or »husband«²⁴. Even though it was he who »found« Simon and brought him to Jesus, he remains overshadowed by his distinguished brother. This dynamic corresponds to the designation given to him by the narrator: »Andrew, brother of Simon« (1:40). Andrew's recognition of the Messianic status of Jesus (1:41) may be his interpretation of John the Baptist's witness about the Lamb (1:29, 1:35) in the light of his experiences with Jesus. The adverb »first« used in 1:41 indicates that the family took priority in spreading the witness (cf. 7:5), and that the good news reached not only Simon but also others, such as the boy with loaves and fish (6:8) and the Greeks wishing to see Jesus (12:22)²⁵. In the Fourth Gospel, Andrew appears to be a model disciple who bears much fruit (15:8)²⁶.

Simon Peter is the most complex figure of the narrative besides Jesus. His Hebrew name *Shimeon* or *Szemoel* means »God has heard«, »listening«, and finds its Greek equivalent in *Symeon* or *Simon*²⁷. From the moment of the calling, Christ prepares the disciple for the double role of a pastor and martyr. It is him that he entrusts with his sheep. As a good shepherd, Peter will have to give his life for the sheep (10:14–16, 21:15–19). Jesus knows the birth name of the disciple, but he changes it at their first meeting. Henceforth, Simon is to be called *Cephas*, that is a stone (1:42)²⁸. Culpepper²⁹ wonders whether the name change points to the potential for stable leadership or represents an ironic reference to changing nature of the disciple. The Christological formula of faith expressed by Peter on behalf of the Twelve in a time of crisis: »Lord, to whom can we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe and know that you are the Holy One of God« (6:68–69), is the Johannine equivalent of the confession at Caesarea Philippi in the Synoptic version. Peter witnesses the glory of Jesus and grasps the meaning behind his words. He understands that the words of Jesus give eternal life. Paradoxically, they may lead to death, but that knowledge is yet to come to Peter. He refuses to accept that the Teacher will give his life for others. He objects to the foot washing. He cannot see his cleanliness as he communes with the Master. He fails to fathom the significance of the »hour« or why he could not follow Jesus when it has come. Peter will follow Jesus to the cross, but afterwards (13:36–38). In the Olive Garden, he tries to defend Jesus with zeal and spontaneity, thus becoming a representative for the crowds of future followers of the Nazarene. He does not deny that Jesus is the Lord, but he denies three times being his disciple (18:17, 18:25,

²⁴ Pius C. BOSAK, *Postacie Nowego Testamentu*, [New Testament Characters], Pelplin, 1996, 46.

²⁵ Keneer, *The Gospel of John...*, 475.

²⁶ Culpepper, *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel...*, 119–120.

²⁷ Bosak, *Postacie Nowego Testamentu...*, 663.

²⁸ The Aramaic term *cepha* refers to a stone, and its Greek equivalent is *petros*.

²⁹ Culpepper, *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel...*, 120–121.

18:27). He betrays and leaves his Master. He does not accompany him on the way to Golgotha.

Peter will play a leading role in the community of the disciples. Their work is illustrated by the images of the crops (4:33), flock tending (10:1–16, 21:15–19), bearing fruit (15:1–8), and fishing (21:3–14). The symbolic representation of Peter shows him dragging a net full of fish. The Resurrected asks him three times about love and Peter three times gives his affirmation, which alludes to his triple denial. Only upon his experience of the Passover is Peter ready to follow the Lord and fulfil his earlier promise: »I will lay down my life for you« (13:37)³⁰.

The Beloved Disciple fulfils a special role in the Fourth Gospel and the Johannine community of the faith (cf. 13:23–25, 19:26–27, 19:35, 20:2–10, 21:7, 21:20–24). The narrator observes his presence near the Master in key moments of the book. The identity of the Disciple has sparked a long-standing academic debate and remains an open question. The commentators wonder whether he was a historical figure and whether his function in the narrative is paradigmatic or symbolic. Resembling no other Johannine figure, he is a paragon of discipleship³¹. He believes in Jesus, continues in the love of Jesus, and bears true witness. His name means: »Disciple whom Jesus loved«. The scene in the Cenacle on the eve of Passion illustrates the relationship between the Disciple and the Master. Not only does he display no incomprehension, but even explains the words of Jesus at the behest of Simon, and finally leans upon his bosom (13:23). That detail accentuates the privilege enjoyed by the Disciple and his profound intimacy with the Teacher. Furthermore, it echoes another relationship – between Jesus and God – as mentioned by the author of the prologue (cf. 1:18). Like the Only-Begotten Son – who knows and can preach about the Parent by virtue of having been in the Parent’s womb – the Disciple knows the Master and bears witness about him by virtue of their special relationship. Continuing in the love of the Teacher, he shares his knowledge of the identity of the traitor. He is the only disciple to remain at the foot of the cross. When dying, Jesus entrusts him with his Mother. From then on, the Mother and son start a new family of faith.

The relationship between the Beloved Disciple and Peter is presented in their shared scenes. During the Last Supper, Peter cannot – or rather cannot dare – inquire Jesus about the identity of the traitor. He asks the Beloved Disciple for intermediation but receives no answer. While Peter categorically denies Jesus, the Beloved Disciple remains under the cross. On Easter Monday, he is the first to reach the tomb and look inside, though he lets Peter enter first. Owing to his open disposition, he manages an accurate interpretation of the

³⁰ *Ibidem*, 121.

³¹ *Ibidem*, 121–123.

meaning behind the empty tomb³². At the Lake of Gennesaret, he recognises the Resurrected in the Stranger, while Peter wants to be with the Lord first, ignoring the community. The disciples have different roles, but both fulfil the will of Jesus. The author refers to Peter in a manner that seems defensive rather than offensive. The text does not grant Peter superiority over the Beloved Disciple, despite his undeniable function of a shepherd and a leader.

The conclusion of John (21:24–25; cf. 19:35–36) confirms the authority of the Beloved Disciple as the witness and a guardian of the traditions presented in the Gospel. He will remind the others of all the words and acts of Jesus. There is a striking similarity between the functions of the Beloved Disciple and the Paraclete following Jesus' death. The Paraclete shall stay with the disciples (14:17), teach them everything (14:26), remind them of the words of Jesus (14:26), confirm what he has heard (16:13), and finally, glorify Jesus³³. All that has been done by the Beloved Disciple. Albeit he is not Paraclete, he helps bring the Spirit of Truth into the community of the faith and forge his understanding. He personifies the perfect disciple guided by the Holy Spirit³⁴. If the reader gives an affirmative answer to the revelation, he must at least accept the veracity of that witness. It is the Beloved Disciple who recorded the words of the Lord or contributed to their preservation in writing.

Philip, like Simon and Andrew, comes from the town of Bethsaida at the Sea of Galilee (1:44, 12:21). His Greek name *Philippos* means »horse-loving, friend of horses«, »fond of horse-back riding and cavalry«³⁵. Soon after Andrew »found« Simon (1:41), Jesus »found« Philip (1:43). That wording is characteristic of the author of the fourth Gospel; furthermore, it operates as a paradigm for witness: *Heurékamen ton Messian* (1:41). Summoned by the Teacher, Philip bears witness of him to Nathanael: »We have found him about whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus son of Joseph from Nazareth« (1:45). The episode reiterates the pattern where one disciple finds another and brings him to Jesus. »One lighted torch serves to light another« (Godet). The use of the plural (»we have found«) suggests that Philip already identifies with a small group of Jesus' disciples³⁶.

At several points in the narrative, Philip is paired with Andrew and turns to be the less perceptive of the two (6:5–7, 12:21–22, 14:8). He has a limited understanding of Jesus, being helpless when faced with the lack of food in the

³² Thomas L. BRODIE, *The Gospel According to John: A Literary and Theological Commentary*, New York – Oxford, 1993, 561–562.

³³ Marek KARCZEWSKI, *Duch Prawdy jako przewodnik w świetle J 16,12-15*, [*The Spirit of Truth as a Guide in John 16:12-15*], *Studia Warmińskie*, 49 (2012) 81–92.

³⁴ Culpepper, *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel...*, 123.

³⁵ Bosak, *Postacie Nowego Testamentu...*, 138.

³⁶ Leon MORRIS, *The Gospel according to John*, Grand Rapids, 1995, 143.

wasteland³⁷, and does not understand that the Father reveals himself in the Son³⁸. Yet, Philip remains a disciple³⁹.

Nathanael bears a name which means »God has given« or »a gift of God« in Greek and Hebrew⁴⁰. Jesus calls him »an Israelite indeed, in whom is no deceit!« (1:47). The Evangelist portrays him under a fig tree, which is the traditional place for studying the Torah. That detail will prove significant for the narrative. Scribe Nathanael of the Cana of Galilee comes to Jesus before the seed of enmity towards the Teacher grows in the hearts of the Jews (cf. John 5). The disciple's faith requires justification. Nathanael, despite his initial doubts regarding the provenance of the Messiah, overcomes his provincial scepticism. He professes his faith in Jesus as the Son of God and King of Israel (1:45–49) who represents the true Israel⁴¹. According to Culpepper⁴², considering the description of the Jews provided by the author of the Gospel, Nathanael manifests a rightful protest against the condemnation of the entire Jewish nation. The episode at the Lake of Galilee in the final part of the Gospel suggests a prominent role of Nathanael in the missionary work of the disciples (21:2).

Thomas is characterised by the Greek nickname *Didymos* – »a Twin« (11:16, 21:2). He belongs to the Twelve⁴³. The Aramaic name *Toma* takes the form of *To'am* in Hebrew and *Thomas* in Greek. It is difficult to say anything of his twin brother or the provenance of that designation. Thomas enters the story as a keen realist. He knows that the return of the disciples and Jesus to Judea is a death risk. Yet, he appeals to others to accompany the Master on his way (11:16). He cannot fathom that the death of Christ will be his exaltation. He

³⁷ Mędala, *Ewangelia według świętego Jana...*, 549. In terms of literary structure, the description of the Multiplication of the Loaves opens with an indication of a shortage. Jesus asks Philip a question which has double meaning. On one hand, it presumes the need for feeding the masses; on the other, it indicates that true bread cannot be bought with money. Philip interprets the question in its material dimension. Two hundred denarii were the equivalent of eight months' wages and could not suffice to buy food for so great a crowd.

³⁸ Branislav KLUSKA, *Uczeń ikoną Chrystusa. Studium egzegetyczno-teologiczne Mowy pożegnalnej J 13, 31-16, 33, [Disciple as an Icon of Christ. Exegetical and Theological Study of Farewell Speech Jn 13:31-16:33]*, Lublin, 2007, 178. The Evangelist shows Philip as an eye witness of the signs of Jesus. Yet, this revelation is insufficient to the disciple. Communing with the earthly Jesus had a goal, which was to get to know him (»Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known me, Philip?« – John 14:9). The disciple represents the contemporary belief that the worlds of God and man are entirely different. He fails to recognize that Jesus has united them both.

³⁹ Culpepper, *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel...*, 120.

⁴⁰ Bosak, *Postacie Nowego Testamentu...*, 512.

⁴¹ Raymond E. BROWN, *The Gospel According to John, (The Anchor Bible 29-29a)*, Vol. 1, New York, 1966-1970, 86–87. »Here John may be close to the distinction that Paul makes in Rom 9,6: 'Not all who are descended from Israel [Jacob] belong to Israel'; the true Israelite believes in Jesus«.

⁴² Culpepper, *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel...*, 123.

⁴³ Bartłomiej M. SOKAL, *Uczniowie zmartwychwstałego Jezusa. Studium egzegetyczno-teologiczne J 20, 1–29, [Disciples of the Risen Jesus. Exegetical and Theological Study of John 20, 1-29]*, Lublin, 2016, 172.

does not know the destination or the way of Jesus (14:5). He fails to understand the resurrection. The narrator presents the disciple in the context of the lack of faith which led Judas to betrayal. Thomas does not believe the witness of the Resurrected given by the disciples. Only the experience of Christophany allows him to overcome his miscreance and profess his faith in Christ as the Lord and God (20:28). According to Culpepper⁴⁴, the disciple – like Magdalene – represents the realists rather than doubters.

Judas is the last in the party of seven representative disciples in the Fourth Gospel. The Hebrew name *Jehuda* (short for *Jehud-el*) translates to: »praised be the Lord«, »praiseworthy«, »worshipper of the God«. Its Greek equivalent is *Joudas*⁴⁵. The Johannine image of the disciple diverges from the Synoptic vision. His role is determined from the start (6:64). The disciple represents a personification of the cosmic powers of evil. He was chosen by the devil (13:2) and remains under his control (13:27). In essence, Judas is the devil (6:70, 13:18). While Jesus and Father make their abode in the disciples (14:20, 14:23), Satan lives in Judas. John refers to him as a traitor (6:64, 21:20). The name of Judas appears in the Gospel in several variants: *Ioudas* – a hellenised form of the Hebrew name *Jehuda* (cf. Mark 14:43, Matt 26:25, 26:47, 27:3, Luke 22:47 and the following, Acts 1:16, 1:25, John 13:29, 18:2 and the following, 18:5), *Ioudas Iskariōth* – the second part of the name is Semitic in form (cf. Mark 3:19, 14:10, Luke 6:16 and parallel), *Ioudas ho Iskariōtēs* – the second part of the name is Greek in form (Mt 10:4, 26:14, Luke 22:3, John 6:71, 12:4, 13:2, 13:26, 14:22), *Ioudas Simōnos Iskariōton* (John 6:70–71, 13:2, 13:26)⁴⁶.

Among the Evangelists, only John identifies the father of Judas as Simon or links the designation »Iscariote« with the disciple's father. Originally, the designation »Iscariote« was not combined with the name Judas. It appeared with time to distinguish the disciple from his namesakes (cf. Luke 6:16, Acts 1:13, John 14:22). The genesis of the nickname is far from evident. Some disciples derive it from the Greek noun *sikarios* which signifies a man fighting with a dagger (a Sicaree), a murderer or an assassin (cf. Acts 21:38). The same supposition allows Judas to be linked with the Zealots. Some critics explain the nickname of the disciple in relation to his deed. The Hebrew root *škr* refers to notions such as falsehood, treason, perversity, duplicity and deceit. In this way, the Greek phrase *ho paradidous* is a simple translation of *I(Skariot/h)*. Others draw a connection between the term »Iscariote« and the family town of Judas, a Judean village of *Kerioth*⁴⁷. In the mind of Culpepper⁴⁸, that last theory fits

⁴⁴ Culpepper, *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel...*, 123–124.

⁴⁵ Bosak, *Postacie Nowego Testamentu...*, 417.

⁴⁶ Aleksandra NALEWAJ, Judasz Iskariota w powieści Romana Brandstaettera »Jezus z Nazarethu«, [Judas Iscariot in the Novel of Roman Brandstaetter »Jesus of Nazareth«], *Studia Warmińskie*, 56 (2019), 196.

⁴⁷ *Ibidem*, 196–197.

⁴⁸ Culpepper, *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel...*, 124.

well with the impressive knowledge of the Evangelist about the Judean territories. Moreover, John is not interested in any psychological or political motivations behind the actions of Judas. The disciple's betrayal was not for the money. The narrator makes no mention of silver, though he does note that Judas was pilfering money from the common coffer (12:6). The problem of Judas in the Fourth Gospel is that he represents dissent. He is one of the non-believers who have the devil for their father (8:44, 1 John 3:8, 3:10). Johannine Judas experiences no pangs of conscience (in contrast to Matt 27:3–10). He does everything according to plan. John does not describe the death of Judas but notes that he entered the realm of darkness. What he represents is less of a traitor and more of a disciple who betrayed Jesus. The Evangelist accentuates that Judas was one of the Twelve (6:71), one of the disciples of Jesus (12:4, cf. 6:64, 6:71). The remark that he was given to Jesus by the Father together with other disciples adds complexity to his character (17:12; cf. 6:65). His departure is a failure of the Son (17:12). However, Jesus cannot cleanse the true son of condemnation (13:11) or force him to change his mind with a gesture of love (13:26). Judas enters the realm of darkness (13:30, 1 John 2:19, 4:1). He represents the dissenters, the bevy of »antichrists« who appeared in the bosom of the community of the Beloved Disciple (1 John 2:28–29).

Conclusions

The narrative analysis of the Fourth Gospel allowed Culpepper to define the criteria of discipleship and to present the followers of Jesus of Nazareth from the perspective of their literary functions. They represent various models or categories of people who come to Jesus and then follow in the Master's wake. The narrator illustrates the words spoken and actions exhibited in various situations by people belonging to each category. The reader can easily identify with individual characters.

Contrary to Synoptic descriptions, according to which being a disciple is associated with abandoning the closest relatives and taking up the cross, the author of John accentuates that being a disciple of Christ hinges on the criterion of continuance in his love and word and bearing fruit, or witness. Through the Gospel of the Beloved Disciple, which contains a record of his witness of the faith, the Resurrected appeals to the readers to continue in him like branches in a vine, and thus attain full joy (John 15:1–11).

The above study does not exhaust the subject of discipleship and comprehensive analysis of the matter requires further detailed, and extensive studies. The Fourth Evangelist is paid much attention to women, and they appear, in the context of important Christological formulas of faith. In separate and successive researches, it is worth analysing of John's biblical females characters in terms of criteria that define a disciple of Christ.

Aleksandra Nalewaj*

»Našli smo Mesiju« (Iv 1,41). Formacija učenika u Evanđelju po Ivanu

Sažetak

Učeništvo je osnovna i izrazito važna tema za svakog evanđelista. Ivanovski prikaz sljedbenika Rabija iz Nazareta razlikuje se od sinoptičke vizije. U četvrtom evanđelju učenici slijede Učitelja i služe mu – kao u Marka, Mateje i Luke – međutim, ivanovski Isus ne traži od njih da prekinu svoje obiteljske veze ili da ostave sve iza sebe. Narativna analiza četvrtoga evanđelja omogućila je Culpepperu da Kristove učenike promatra iz perspektive njihovih literarnih funkcija i ujedno odredi kriterije njihova učeništva. Ovaj biblijski stručnjak dijeli proces formacije učenika na tri etape koje su povezane s činom viđenja, vjerovanja i ostajanja (nastavljanja) u Riječi. U očima čitatelja, Isusovi sljedbenici – doživljeni pojedinačno ili kao zajednica – uzori su ili predstavnici s kojima se čitatelji mogu poistovjetiti. Biti učenik znači prihvatiti dar po kojem postajemo djeca Božja, što pretpostavlja širu, univerzalnu perspektivu. Zbog toga autor Ivanova evanđelja koristi termin »učenik« čak sedamdeset i osam puta, »Dvanaestorica« samo četiri puta, dok riječ »apostol« nije nikada upotrijebljena.

Ključne riječi: Evanđelje po Ivanu, Isus, Isusovi učenici, proces formacije, zajednica učenika.

(na hrv. prev. Tomislav Zečević)

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