

NVMMEN

INTERNATIONAL REVIEW FOR THE
HISTORY OF RELIGIONS

ISSUED BY THE

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE
HISTORY OF RELIGIONS

VOLUME XXII



LEIDEN
E. J. BRILL
1975

FRUSTRATED BELIEFS AND EARLY CHRISTIANITY

A Psychological Enquiry into the Gospels of the New Testament

BY

URI WERNIK

Jerusalem

Belief is essential to the conception of religious systems and individuals. Belief crisis is an almost inevitable part in the evolution of both of them. Belief crisis might happen as a result of frustrated or disconfirmed beliefs, unfulfilled hopes and expectations. From a psychological point of view, this crisis can be examined using the theory of cognitive dissonance and its resolution, which was developed and researched by Festinger et al. and which won recognition after the publication of their book, *When Prophecy Fails* ¹).

Here it will suffice to explain cognitive dissonance as: "The condition in which one has beliefs, or knowledge that disagree with each other or with behavioral tendencies; when such cognitive dissonance arises, the subject is motivated to reduce the dissonance through changes in behavior or cognition." ²)

The idea that Christ's crucifixion is an instance of disconfirmation of a belief (his being the Messiah) and thus creating a cognitive dissonance in his followers is hinted at by Festinger, though with deep reservation (His main objection to using the crucifixion as a demonstration of his theory is "the unreliability of the data.") This line of reasoning is not new at all, as it is clarified by Flusser in "Salvation Present and Future":

Since Albert Schweitzer, the importance of eschatology for original Christianity has rightly been stressed. Later, a further point entered the scholarly discussion: If Christianity at its very beginnings expected that "The present

1) Festinger, L., Riecken, H. W., and Schacter, S. *When Prophecy Fails*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1956.

2) Hilgard, E. R., and Atkinson, R. C. *Introduction to Psychology*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and World Inc., 1967.

generation will live to see" Christ's second coming (Mk. XIII, 30), these hopes were not fulfilled. How much did this frustrated belief change the original structure of Christianity? Many think that this "Parousieverzögerung" was the decisive turning-point in Christian faith, which almost utterly changed its structure. According to this opinion non fulfilled eschatological expectations caused orthodox Christianity to come into existence and became the center of Christian thought; instead of expecting their salvation in future, Christians learned to look back. Their hopes now became based upon the salvation which already took place through Christ.

It seems to me that it is worth rethinking this thesis, because in its outspread form it does not fit the facts as reflected in ancient Christian sources and study of parallel phenomena in history of religions does not confirm it.³⁾

A careful analysis of these two studies reveals that two independent and two dependent variables are dealt with. The first two are alternative conceptions of the belief crisis:

- A. Unfulfilled eschatological expectations.
- B. The crucifixion or death of Jesus.

The second two are alternative modes of the crisis resolution:

- 1. Structural change, which is the core of Festinger's theory, that specifies the circumstances under which increased proselytizing would be expected to follow disconfirmation.
- 2. Content change i.e. Christology as expressed in the New Testament.

From these variables, four research hypotheses can be extrapolated. Flusser excludes *A1* and *A2* and Festinger rejects *B1*. Consequently, *B2* will be dealt with in this paper.

Unfulfilling Festinger's condition for cognitive dissonance, the validity of variable *A* is to be doubted.⁴⁾ Other research reports failure to replicate variable *1*.⁵⁾ Thus, further support is given for examining hypothesis *B2*.

3) Flusser, D. "Salvation Present and Future" in *NVMEN*, International Review for the History of Religions. Volume XVI, Fasc. 2, September 1969. pp. 139-155.

4) According to Festinger, disconfirmation of a belief will lead to and bring about a cognitive dissonance under the following five conditions; (1) A belief must be held with deep conviction and it must have some relevance to action. (2) The believer must have committed himself (by taking important action which is difficult to undo). (3) The belief must be sufficiently specific and sufficiently concerned with the real world so that it may be refuted unequivocally by events. (4) Such undeniable disconfirming evidence is produced and recognized by the believer. (5) The individual believer must have social support which enables him to withstand the disconfirming evidence.

5) Hardyk A. Jane, and Braden, Marcia. "Prophecy Fails Again; A Report

Beyond the considerations discussed above, the christological developments represent critical and far reaching changes; The Christian ethics, as in "The Sermon on the Mount" become secondary to Jesus' own being; "Kerugma" becomes more important than "Didache"; and Jesus more important than the Bible; a Jewish ideological movement accomodates itself to the Greco-Roman culture; the early Christians, who fought the religious establishment, begin building one of their own; a religion of duties becomes one of belief. About all of these changes Nietzsche said, "One would look in vain for a greater example of world historical irony."

The author hopes to make this irony at least somewhat more comprehensible.

Viewing these changes from a psychological point of view creates the dilemma of relying either on banal behavioristic approaches to religious phenomena, or on intelligible unfounded speculations. The method of inquiry in this article offers a possible alternative.

The main research hypothesis of the present article is that Jesus' death created in his believers a cognitive dissonance, whose resolution constitutes the Christology in the Gospels of the New Testament.⁶⁾

II.

To test this research hypothesis, one must: first prove that a cognitive dissonance did exist; secondly, supply a predictive model of its resolution and point out the material relevant to it and thirdly, find a confirmation for the validity of this model and theory.

Accordingly, the following propositions should be proven:

- A) There was a multi-faceted belief in Jesus by his disciples and followers.
- B) There was a commitment to this belief.
- C) The belief was disconfirmed by Jesus' crucifixion. Thus, a belief crisis came into existence. In terms of cognitive dissonance theory, element "A" is: "Jesus being considered to be a superior person, one beyond the realm of mortal man;" and element "B" is "Jesus being crucified and put into contemptible death." While not-"A" is implied from "B" (or "A" from not-"B").

on a Failure to Replicate." *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*. Volume 62, No. 2, 1962. pp. 131-141.

6) This article is based on the first part of the author's research which deals with the New Testament in its entirety. There, differentiation is made between Early Christology (which is discussed in the present article) and the Late Christology (which will be discussed in another article).

Review of relevant publications ⁷⁾ reveals some possible resolutions:

1. One can always forget or suppress the incongruity as well as repress and deny one of the constituent elements. (This possibility is dealt with by Freud as defense mechanisms.)
2. Bolstering: Instead of removing the incongruity, one seeks many congruent elements to neutralize it and thus reduce the relative dominance of the gap. i.e. a man, who (A) smokes cigarettes and (B) knows that it might be dangerous to his health, would claim that smoking helps him to relax, that cigarettes smell and taste good, give him a masculine appearance, and besides, most doctors smoke. (One can always find relief in the incongruity of others.)
3. Differentiation-Compartmentalization: i.e. one who believes (A) in the Bible (B) in evolution, might differentiate between the figurative Bible and the literal one, and think that he accepts only the first one (the second being in contradiction with the concept of evolution).
4. Transcendence: one might argue that the Bible and evolution are two faces of "one supreme entity which combines antithesis in a dynamic equilibrium."

Abelson ⁸⁾ claims that, "there will be a hierarchy of resolution attempts in general proceeding in the following order: denial, bolstering, denial, differentiation, and transcendence." (The first denial is total and primitive and only later comes the second and more sophisticated one.)

This hypothesis will have to be modified, taking into account two considerations: the resolutions that will be dealt with had to be acceptable to a community of believers and finding their expression in a written text, could not include a primitive and total denial (which might have satisfied a single believer or a group of believers in the very earliest stages, but in the later stages must have been disregarded. ⁹⁾

7) Campbell, D. T., "Conformity in Psychology's Theories of Acquired Behavioral Dispositions" in eds. Berg, I. A., and Mass, B. M. *Conformity and Deviation*. New York: Harper and Rowe, 1961. pp. 101-158.

McGuire, W. J. "The Current Status of Cognitive Consistency Theories" in ed. Fishbein, M. *Readings in Attitude Theories and Measurement*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1969. pp. 401-421.

8) Abelson, R. T., "Models of Resolution of Belief Dilemmas" in ed. Fishbein, M. *op. cit.*, pp. 349-356.

9) In fact, there is some evidence that an early sect believed that Jesus wasn't crucified—two angels carried him away from the cross, and what the spectators saw was nothing more than a mirage. Iranaeus in his *Gnostic Docetae* tells of a belief in which Jesus performed a transfiguration and it was Petrus who was crucified instead of him.

The second consideration is that differentiation is usually an unwritten reaction. One can hardly think of presentation of facts and their interpretation within the same document, especially so when it is considered to be an historical and authentic text.

These two considerations exclude the possibility of resolutions by total primitive denial and by differentiation. Thus, Abelson's hypothesis modified to our case will predict the following order: bolstering, denial, and transcendence.

Most scholars hold the opinion that in the New Testament Mark is the earliest Gospel, Luke and Matthew later and John the latest.¹⁰) This chronology offers a validity test of our hypothesis; predicting a hierarchy of resolutions in a given order i.e. (1) predicting different frequencies of each mode of resolution in the different Gospels. (2) Predicting a correlation between these two sequences—time of writing (earliest, middle, latest) and mode of resolution (respectively—bolstering, denial, transcendence). Verifying (1) will be conclusive enough to validate the research hypothesis. Verifying (2) besides lending stronger proof to the hypothesis will also bring to light an additional and most significant finding of the present research: confirmation of the chronology of the Gospels using a psychological model.

Technically, the research method employed is one of textual analysis which necessitates careful reading and rereading of the Gospels; first to identify the elements of each mode of resolution and then to check their frequency in each Gospel.

The following elements constitute the early Christology:

A. Bolstering

1. The extraordinary and prodigious birth and childhood of Jesus.
2. His recognition by God, men of excellence and believers.
3. Jesus's recognition of himself.
4. Miracles, temptation and signs.

B. Denial

1. An unusual death—after which occurred resurrection, appearance, ascendance to heaven and in the future reappearance (Parusia).
2. Jesus knew, predicted and chose his own death.
3. Jesus died a death of atonement and mission.
4. Others are to be blamed for his death.

C. Transcendence

1. "And the scripture was fulfilled."—a deterministic concept.
2. Jesus is of another world; human concepts of birth and death are not relevant to his being.

10) "Who Has the Good News Straight?". *Time*: December 27, 1971.

In the next section, supportive data is provided for the claims mentioned above.

III.

A) There was a multi-faceted belief in Jesus by his disciples and followers.

"What have you do to do with us Jesus of Nazareth? *Have you come to destroy us?* I know who you are, the *Holy One of God.*" (Mark, 1:24)

"And he *healed* many who were sick with various diseases, and *cast out many demons*; and he would not permit the demons to speak, because *they knew him.*" (Mk, 1:34)

"And they were filled with awe, and said to one another, "Who then is this, that *even wind and sea obey him?*" (Mk, 4:41)

"And those in the boat *worshipped him*, saying, "Truly you are the *Son of God.*" (Mk, 14:32)

"...and on the way he asked his disciples, "Who do men say that I am?" And they told him, "*John the Baptist*, and others say, *Elijah*: and others *one of the prophets.*" And he asked them, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter answered him, "*You are the Christ.*" And he charged them to tell no one about him." (Mk, 8:27-30)

The parallel paragraph in Matthew is more detailed:

"And they said, "Some say John the Baptist, others say Elia, and others *Jeremiah* or one of the prophets." He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" Simon Peter replied, "You are the Christ, the *Son of the living God.*" (Mt, 16:14-17)

In Luke, the paragraph is closer to that found in Mark. It is not to be found in John.

"Rabbi, we know that you are *a teacher come from God*; for no one can do these signs that you do, *unless God is with him,*" said Nicodemus." (John, 3:2)

Such expressions come not only from Jesus' disciples:

"...Bartimae'us a blind beggar, the son of Timae'us was sitting by

the roadside. And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out and say, "*Jesus, Son of David, have mercy upon me!*" (Mk, 10:46-50)

"And they brought the colt to Jesus, and threw garments on it; and he sat upon it. And many spread their garments on the road, and others spread leafy branches which they had cut from the fields. And those who went before and those who followed cried out, "*Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the kingdom of our father David that is coming! Hosanna in the highest!*" (Mk, 11:7-10)

This same conclusion can be drawn from a negative attitude towards Jesus:

"The Jews answered him, "Are we not right in saying that you are a Samaritan *and have a demon?*" (John, 8:48)

B) There was a commitment to this belief:

"Jesus withdrew with his disciples to the sea, and a great multitude from Galilee followed; also from Judea and Jerusalem and Idume'a and from beyond the Jordan and from about Tyre and Sidon, a great multitude hearing all that he did, came to him." (Mk, 3:7-9)

"Peter began to say to him, "Lo, we have left everything and followed you." Jesus said, "Truly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands, for my sake and for the gospel, who will not receive a hundredfold now in this time, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions, and in the age to come eternal life." (Mk, 10:28-30)

"And Zacchae'us stood and said to the Lord, "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have defrauded any one or anything, I restore it fourfold." (Luke, 19:8)

Part of the commitment included being criticized by others:

"Now John's disciples and the Pharisees were fasting; and people came and said to him "Why do John's disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?" (Mk, 2:18) "And the Pharisees said to him, "Lord, why are they doing what is not lawful on the sabbath?" (Mk, 2:24)

The disciples-apostles left everything to follow Jesus:

"As he walked the sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon who is called Peter and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. And he said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." Immediately they left their nets and followed him. And going on from there he saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee and John his brother, in the boat with their father, mending their nets, and he called them. Immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him." (Mt, 4:18-22)

Jesus demanded from his followers to relinquish possessions.

"And Jesus looking upon him loved him, and said to him, "You lack one thing, go, sell what you have, and give it to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me." (Mk, 10:21, 22)

From his disciples, Jesus demanded almost self-denial:

"He charged them to take nothing for their journey except a staff, no bread, no bag, no money in their belts, but to wear sandals and not put on two tunics." (Mk, 6:8, 9)

"As they were going along the road, a man said to him, "I will follow you wherever you go." And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man has nowhere to lay his head." To another he said, "Follow me." But he said, "Lord, let me first go and bury my father." But he said to him, "Leave the dead to bury their own dead; but as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God." Another said, "I will follow you, Lord, but let me first say farewell to those at my home." Jesus said to him, "No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God." (Lk, 9:57-62)

A special kind of commitment to their belief was expressed by the women, not only by relinquishing possessions and material benefits, but also by love and admiration.

"And behold, a woman of a city, who was a sinner, when she learned that he was sitting at table in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster flask of ointment, and standing behind him at his feet, weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears, and wiped them with the

hair of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment." (Lk, 7:37, 38)

"...And the twelve were with him, and also some women who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities: Mary, called Mag'dalene, from whom seven demons had gone out, and Jo-an'na the wife of Chu'za, Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others, who provided for them (him) out of their means." (Lk, 8:1-3)

"And while he was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he sat at table, a woman came with an alabaster jar of ointment of pure nard, very costly, and she broke the jar and poured it over his head." (Mk, 14:3)

C) The belief was disconfirmed by Jesus's crucifixion, which was the turning point in early Christianity:

"And Jesus said to them, "Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs to capture me?" (Mk, 14:48)

"And some began to spit on him, and to cover his face, and to strike him, saying to him, "Prophesy!" And the guards received him with blows." (Mk, 14:65)

"And the soldiers led him away inside the palace (that is, the praetorium); and they called together the whole battalion. And they clothed him in a purple cloak, and put his own clothes on him. And they led him out to crucify him." (Mk, 15:16-20)

"And with him they crucified two robbers, one on his right and one on his left. And those who passed by derided him, wagging their heads, and saying, "Aha! You who would destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself, and come down from the cross!" So also the chief priests mocked him to one another with the scribes, saying, "He saved others; he cannot save himself. Let the Christ, the King of Israel, come down now from the cross, that we may see and believe." Those who were crucified with him also reviled him." (Mk, 15:27-32) In addition to this, in Matthew it is said: "He trusts in God; let God deliver him now, if he desires him, for he said; I am the Son of God." (Mt, 27:43)

"And one of them at once ran and took a sponge, filled it with vinegar and put it on a reed, and gave it to him to drink. But the others said. "Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to save him (And others took a spear and pierced his side, and out come water and blood)" (Mt, 27:48, 49)

In Luke, the description is similar. In John it's almost absent.

Testimony to the big disappointment is found in Luke:

"Then one of them, named Cle'opas, answered him, "Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?" And he said to them, "What things?" And they said to him, "Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how our chief priests and rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death, and crucified him. But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since this happened." (Luke, 24:18-21)

Even before the crucifixion (when Jesus described his approaching doom):

"After this many of his disciples drew back and no longer went about with him." (Jn, 6:66)

Jesus' death stands in contradiction to the belief in him. His believers already understood this contradiction from his prophecy alone.

"And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself." He said this to show by what death he was to die. The crowd answered him, "We have heard from the law that the Christ remains for ever. How can you say that the Son of man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of Man?" (Jn, 12:32-34)

This passage saves us the scholarly speculation which might have proven that Jesus' crucifixion stood in contradiction to the eschatological expectations of his disciples (waiting for the eternal Messiah who was supposed to come after the killed one—John the Baptist).

We have before us a movement of believers in a man more than in an idea. A man who was conceived to be, in different stages and by different people, a holy-one; one of the prophets, healer and exorcist, miracles' performer who dominates nature's forces, John

the Baptist, Elijah, Jeremiah, Christ, Son of God. There came to exist a movement of believers that committed themselves by following him, through sacrifices, criticism, persecutions, love and admiration. In opposition to this is Jesus' contemptible death by crucifixion (which Cicero describes as "the most cruel and abominable," Tacitus, as "Slaves' death" and Josephus, as "The most pitiful death").

In the Gospels, it is mentioned that the "women who had followed him from the Galilee" were present at the crucifixion (only Luke says that his acquaintances were present too and John says that his mother and aunt were there). Their reaction is not described. This emotional continence is literarily very impressive:

"And all the multitudes who assembled to see the sight, when they saw what had taken place, returned home beating their breasts. And all his acquaintances and the women who had followed him from Galilee stood at a distance and saw these things." (Lk, 23:48. 49)

The "sight" they saw and what they felt in their "hearts" was going to be of critical significance in the development of the christology and more so Christianity itself.

More can be found in the Gospels about Jesus' thoughts and feelings before the crucifixion and his last words on the cross. They can serve to measure the dissonance resolution tendencies: the degree of acceptance of his own fate—as described in the Gospels—correlates to the scope of attempted resolutions in each Gospel. This supplies an additional support to our thesis:

Mark: "And he said, "Abba, Father, all things are possible to thee; remove this cup from me; yet not what I will, but what thou wilt." (14:36)

"And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, "E'lo-i, E'lo-i, la'ma sabachtha'ni?" which means, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (15:34)

Matthew: A similar prayer is said three times: "My soul is very sorrowful, even to death.... And going a little farther he fell on his face and prayed, "My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt." (26:38, 39)...

"The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." "...My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, thy will be done." (26:41, 42)

"And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, "Eli, Eli, la'ma sabach-tha'ni?" that is "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (27:46)

Luke: Here Jesus' suffering is emphasized, but "balanced" by heavenly help.

"Father, if thou art willing, remove this cup from me; nevertheless, not my will, but thine, be done. And there appeared to him an angel from heaven, strengthening him. And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat become like great drops of blood falling down upon the ground." (22:42-44)

"Then Jesus, crying with a loud voice, said, "Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit!" And having said this he breathed his last." (23:46)

John: Here the prayer found in the synoptic Gospels is missing:

"Jesus said to Peter, "Put your sword into its sheath. Shall I not drink the cup which the Father has given me?" (18:11) "When Jesus had spoken these words, he lifted his eyes to heaven and said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify the Son that the Son may glorify thee." (17:1) "But now I am coming to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves." (17:13)

"When Jesus had received the vinegar, he said, "It is finished;" and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit." (19:30)

In the Gospels of Mark and Matthew, both the difficulty of "drinking the cup" and the cry of despair and solitude are described. This description evokes their human qualities.

In Luke, Jesus' suffering is described, but there is already heavenly interference. His last words on the cross express a complete acceptance. Here the description takes on an aura of the supernatural.

In John no more doubts and suffering exist. Jesus is looking forward to the cup, and when dying says vaguely, "it is finished."

This development from a suffering and hesitant Jesus, who is ready to accept the cup but in his last minutes feels forsaken; to Jesus that receives heavenly help and in his last minutes fully accepts his fate; and finally to Jesus who wants to glorify his Father with

his death, and dies indifferently—typifies the resolution of the belief crisis discussed until now.

IV.

In the following section, all the elements of the hypothesized resolutions will be examined separately as found in each of the four gospels.

A. *Bolstering*: strengthening element “A”—the superhuman aspect of Jesus.

1. *Jesus' extraordinary and prodigious birth and childhood:*

In the Gospels, five possible ways of expressing this are found: (a) Jesus was born in Bethlehem. (b) Jesus is a descendant of David. (c) Jesus is a child of the Holy Spirit. (d) His birth, name and fate were foreseen and told to Mary. (e) He was an exceptional child and adolescent.

Mark: No details appear about his birth and childhood. The beginning of the account is: “In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan.” (1:9) Thus, none of the five expressions are found here.

Matthew: Begins with a book of genealogy of Jesus, son of David, the son of Abraham (1:1-17). About his birth: “When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child of the Holy Spirit.” (1:18)

Jesus was born in Bethlehem, departed with his parents to Egypt and returned with them to Nazareth—all of these to “fulfill what was spoken by the prophets.”

Of the five expressions (d) and (e) do not appear, (a) is emphasized.

Luke: Here the book of genealogy of Jesus is longer and goes back to “...the son of Enos, the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God.” (3:23-28) The continuation of the genealogy from Abraham to God, might serve to bridge the apparent discrepancy between (b) and (c).

In Luke, the order of events is different from that in Matthew:

Joseph came from Nazareth to Bethlehem where Jesus was born and later returned with his family to Nazareth.

The five expressions appear here with a special emphasis on (b), (d), and (e).

The birth circumstances are more prodigious than in the former Gospel: The angel Gabriel is sent from God to tell Mary that:

“...you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; and his kingdom there will be no end.” (1:30-33)

This happens on a background of other miracles—as the giving birth to John by Zechariah and Elizabeth (1:5-25). At the age of twelve, already Jesus is described as a wise and well liked boy who knew his destiny.

John: Of all the five expressions described, only (c) appears, but here, without any reference to physical reality (Jesus’ parents). In John, as will be shown in section C2., the main feature is resolution by transcendence, which is expressed in the Gospel’s opening verses:

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God; all things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.” (1:1-5)

Jesus is the only Son of God and about the children of God the Evangelist says:

They were born “not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.” (1:13)

In John, the mundane details of Jesus’ birth and childhood are unimportant, and so it suffices to say: “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us...” (1:14)

The use of such a sophisticated means of resolution eliminates the need for introducing the expressions of bolstering found in Matthew and Luke and even permits including material which contradicts them:

“They (the Jews) said, “Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose

father and mother we know? How does he now say, 'I have come down from heaven'?" (6:42) (which contradicts (c)).

"The Jews marveled at it, saying, "How is it that this man has learning, when he has never studied?" (1:15) (This contradicts (e) in the synoptic Gospels).

"Others said, "This is the Christ." But some said, "Is the Christ to come from Galilee? Has not the scripture said that the Christ is descended from David, and comes from Bethlehem, the village where David was?" (7:41, 42) (And here a contradiction of (a) and (b) together).

2. His recognition by God, men of excellence, and believers.

Mark: "And when he came up out of the water, immediately he saw the heavens opened and the Spirit descending upon him like a dove; and a voice came from heaven, "Thou art my beloved son; with thee I am well pleased." (1:10, 11) In the second time, after Jesus's meeting with Moses and Eli'jah "...a voice came out of the cloud, "This is my beloved Son; listen to him." (9:7) John the baptizer preached: "After me comes he who is mightier than I, the thong of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and unite." (1:7)

Peter answered that Jesus is Christ. The blindman, the believers on the way to Jerusalem and the demons, all recognized him. (8:29, 10:46-48, 11:7-10, 5:7)

Matthew: The recognition of Jesus comes earlier: "Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, saying, "Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the East, and have come to worship him." (2:1, 2) In addition to what was said by John in the last gospel, he says here; "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?" (3:14) After which comes God's recognition, as in Mark. (3:16, 17)

All the other expressions by his followers are found here as in Mark: Peter, two blindmen (in Mark there is one), the people before his arrival in Jerusalem and the demons.

Luke: Jesus is recognized by the angel Gabriel (1:26-35), by Elizabeth when she was filled with the Holy Spirit (1:39-45), by an appearance of the angel to the shepherds (2:8-20), by the revelation to Simeon (2:25-35) and by Anna—the prophetess (2:36-38). Here also, as in the former Gospels, the Holy Spirit descended upon him as a dove and a voice came from heaven (3:21, 22); the same after the meeting with Moses and Elijah (9:28-36). Recognition by his followers is mentioned too.

John: In this Gospel, the disciples recognize Jesus earlier: Andrew says to Simon his brother, “We have found the Messiah” (which means Christ) (1:41). Nicodemus recognizes him too (3:1, 2) and so does John the Baptist (1:19-34), and again came a voice from heaven (12:28). The Samaritans believed that he is the “Saviour of the world.” (4:39-42), but the others believed less in him:

“There was again a division among the Jews because of these words. Many of them said, “He has a demon, and he is mad, why listen to him?” (10:19, 20).

Such non recognition is not found in the synoptic Gospels. Martha believed that Jesus is the Christ (11:27), and so did the the people at his entrance into Jerusalem (12:12-19).

3. Jesus' recognition of himself (being the Messiah)

This occurred on some occasions: in his reaction to the disciples' recognition of him, and in his answers to the high priests and Pilate at the inquiry.

Mark: “And he asked them, “But who do you say that I am?” Peter answered him, “you are the Christ.” And he charged them to tell no one about him.” (8:29, 30) Here there is neither confirmation nor denial.

“Again the high priest asked him, “Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?” And Jesus said, “I am; and you will see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven.” (14:61, 62)

“And Pilate asked him, “Are you the King of the Jews?” And he answered him, “You have said so.” (15:2)

And to his disciples Jesus said: "For truly, I say to you, whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because you bear the name of Christ, will by no means lose his reward." (9:41)

Matthew: "Simon Peter replied, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jona! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the powers of death shall not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Then he strictly charged the disciples to tell no one that he was the Christ." (16:16-20)

"And the high priest said to him, "I adjure you by the living God, tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God." Jesus said to him, "You have said so. But I tell you, hereafter you will see the Son of man seated at the right hand of Power, and coming to the clouds of heaven." (26:63, 64)

"Now Jesus stood before the governor; and the governor asked him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" Jesus said to him, "You have said so." (27:11)

Luke: Here, Jesus already recognized himself when he was twelve years old.

"And he said to them, "How is it that you sought me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" (2:49)

In Nazareth he read from the book of Isaiah; "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord." ...Today this scripture has been fulfilled in you hearing." (4:16-21)

To his disciples; "And he said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" And Peter answered, "The Christ of God." But he charged and commanded them to tell this to no one, saying, "The Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief

priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised.” (9:18-22)

And the chief priests and scribes said; “If you are the Christ, tell us.” But he said to them, “If I tell you, you will not believe; and if I ask you, you will not answer. But from now on the Son of man shall be seated at the right hand of the power of God.” And they all said, “Are you the Son of God then?” And he said to them, “You say that I am.” (22:66-70)

Jesus didn’t answer Herod’s questions and to Pilate’s question “Are you the King of Jews?” he answered, “You have said so.” (23:3, 9)

John: Here the questioning is different. “The high priest then questioned Jesus about his disciples and his teaching. Jesus answered him, “I have spoken openly to the world; I have always taught in synagogues and in temple, where all Jews come together; I have said nothing secretly.” (18:19, 20)

Pilate is the one who is judging Jesus. “Pilate entered the praetorium again and called Jesus, and said to him, “Are you the King of the Jews?” Jesus answered, “Do you say this of your own accord, or did others say it to you about me?” Pilate answered, “Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have handed you over to me; what have you done?” Jesus answered, “My kingship is not of this world; If my kingship were of this world, my servants would fight, that I might not be handed over to the Jews; but my kingship is not from the world.” (18:33-36)

Jesus is telling Nicodemus. “For God sent the Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him.” (3:17)

And in his conversation with the Samaritan woman, he again shows his self-recognition:

“The woman said to him, “I know that Messiah is coming (he who is called Christ); when he comes, he will show us all things.” Jesus said to her, “I who speak to you am he.” (4:25, 26)

Jesus in his talk to the Jews on Sabbath at Jerusalem again and again talks about his being the Father’s true Son:

"This was why the Jews sought all the more to kill him, because he not only broke the sabbath but also called God his Father, making himself equal with God. (5:18) (5:17-47)

And also: "For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me." (6:38 and the rest of the Chapter 25-71) "I know him, for I come from him, and he sent me." (7:30 and most of the chapter 25-44). Jesus's self-recognition is also evident in Chapter 8:21-59. To the Jews who said: "How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Christ, tell us plainly." Jesus answered them, "I told you, and you do not believe, The works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness to me." (10:25, 26) "I and the Father are one." (10:30) And to Thomas he said, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but by me. If you had known me, you would have known my Father also; henceforth you know him and have seen him." (14:6, 7)

4. *Miracles, temptations, and signs*: In the following table, (See p. 115) special events, signs and miraculous healings in the Gospels will be outlined differentiating between specific cases (where the name of the healed person is mentioned) and general ones (these will be written in parentheses).

The review of the different aspects of the resolution of dissonance by bolstering leads to the following conclusions:

1. Jesus' extraordinary and prodigious birth and childhood are not described at all in Mark, mentioned briefly in Matthew and expounded on in detail almost mythologically in Luke. In John, one could say that instead of Mythology, there is Theology.

2. His recognition by God is equal in the synoptic Gospels, and expressed in a smaller scope in John. Recognition by men of excellence is almost non-existent in Mark, more prominent in Matthew, and the most extended in Luke. In John, it is similar in scope to Mark. The recognition by his disciples and followers is again equal in the synoptic Gospels, but more prominent and especially stressed in John. Again we find a sequence of gradual change from Mark through Matthew to Luke, while in John the emphases are completely different.

3. Jesus's self-recognition is described with some differences in the synoptic Gospels but with a similar emphasis. In John more

Summary of Miracles and Signs according to Subjects

	<i>Mark</i>	<i>Matthew</i>	<i>Luke</i>	<i>John</i>
The Satan's temptations	mentioned briefly	detailed description	detailed description	—
Meeting Moses and Elijah	+	+	+	—
calming down the storm (wind and sea)	1	1	—	—
walking on the sea	1	1	—	1
the empty net becomes full of fish	—	—	1	1; after his death
the witherings of the fig tree	1	1	—	—
turning water into wine	—	—	—	1
feeding many with little food	2	2	1	1
<i>Total</i>	5	5	2	3
commanding unclean spirits	4+(1)	7+(2)	4+(1)	—
healing diseases	5+(1)	2+(5)	9+(2)	2
revival of the dead	1	1	2	1
healing the blind	2	2+(1)	1	—
healing the deaf and dumb	1	1	1	1
<i>Total</i>	13+(2)	13+(8)	17+(3)	4

expressions of his recognition of himself as Christ are found. A review of his answers to the high priest reveals a descendant level of clarity and unequivocalty from Mark to Matthew, from Matthew to Luke and from Luke to John. This last point does not confirm the research hypotheses and needs an explanation (namely, the expected inter-Gospels development was not found and in the last case the order is reversed). A possible explanation might be the more unequivocal Jesus's admission at the trial that he is Christ, the more justified the verdict.

4. Miracles and signs: While Mark and Matthew describe the same miraculous events (e.g. walking on the sea), Luke discusses fewer than both of them. The predicted sequence is found only in regard to healing (in a growing number of cases and in more detailed description); in Matthew more than in Mark, in Luke more than in Matthew. John brings fewer and different cases and events.

These conclusions typify Mark as expressing most acutely the dissonance, with very few attempts to resolve it. Matthew is typified as a text in which the dissonance is still expressed but with resolution tendencies that find their utmost expression in Luke. The resolutions in Matthew are cautious and in Luke—exaggerated (stories about his birth and childhood, recognition by others, healing many and especially exorcism). Resolutions by bolstering are not used by John.

B. *Denial*: weakening element “B” (Jesus’s death)

1. *An unusual, non-final death—after which occurred resurrection, appearance, ascendance to heaven and in the future, reappearance (parousia) will take place:*

Mark: At the end of the Gospel, Jesus’s tomb is found empty (There are later versions that describe in addition, Jesus’s appearance).

Matthew: Jesus appears after his death twice to the women in Jerusalem and to his disciples in Galilee.

Luke: Jesus appears twice, both times in Jerusalem. In this Gospel, there is a new element—his ascendance to heaven: “While he blessed them, he parted from them (and was carried up into heaven).” (In the Revised Standard Version, the part in parentheses appears as a footnote added by “other ancient authorities.” Our mode of analysis bears also upon the problem of authenticity of such additions. The present addition would have a low probability of being authentic in Mark, slightly higher in Matthew, and a very high probability in Luke, being in accordance with the whole style of dissonance resolution in this Gospel.)

John: Jesus appears four times after his death (the author of the Gospel counts only three). It is understood that he ascended to heaven: “Do not hold me for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to my brethren and say to them, I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.” (20:17)

2. *Jesus knew, predicted and chose his own death:*

Mark: “And he began to teach them that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again.” (8:31)

"...for he was teaching his disciples, saying to them, "The Son of man will be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill him; and when he is killed, after three days he will rise." But they did not understand the saying, and they were afraid to ask him." (9:31, 32)

Jesus's knowledge of his own death is also deducted from the vineyard parable (12:1-11). It was understood that Jesus talked about himself, "for they understood that he told the parable against them." (12:12). Jesus knew that he would be betrayed (14:17-21) and that his disciples would fall away, and that he would be raised from death (14:27-30).

Matthew: "But he answered them, "An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign; but no sign shall be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the whale, so will the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." (12:39, 40)

Here as in Mark, he prepares his disciples for his own death:

"From that time Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and the chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on that third day be raised. (16:21)

"And as they were coming down the mountain, Jesus commanded them, "Tell no one the vision, until the Son of man is raised from the dead." (17:9)

"Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man will be delivered to the chief priests and scribes, and they will condemn him to death, and deliver him to the Gentiles and be mocked and scourged and crucified, and he will be raised on the third day." (20:18, 19) The same vineyard parable is found in this Gospel too. (21:33-43)

Jesus knew the exact date of his crucifixion:

"When Jesus had finished all these sayings, he said to his disciples, "You know that after two days the Passover is coming, and the Son of man will be delivered up to be crucified." (26:1, 2)

As in Mark, he knows that he will be betrayed, he predicted by whom and knows that the hour is coming and the betrayer approaching. (26)

Very clearly, Jesus says that if he only wanted, his death could have been prevented.

"Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels." (26:53)

Luke: As in the last two Gospels, after his disciples recognize him to be Christ, Jesus starts to tell them about his death (9:22). He asked to tell Herod:

"And he said to them, "Go and tell that fox, 'Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I finish my course. Nevertheless I must go on my way today and tomorrow and the day following; for it cannot be that a prophet should perish away from Jerusalem.'" (13:32, 33)

Here too, he predicts his suffering and death (18:31-34), tells the vineyard parable (20:9-17) and knows beforehand of his betrayal, death and the falling out of his disciples. (22)

John: "Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up." ...But he spoke of the temple of his body." (2:19-21)

In Capernaum he said:

"I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any one eats of this bread, he will live for ever; and the bread which I shall give for the life of the world is my flesh." (6:51)

At the end of this sermon, he talked about his betrayal.

"Jesus answered them, "Did I not choose you, the twelve, and one of you is a devil?" He spoke of Judas the son of Simon Iscariot, for he, one of the twelve, was to betray him." (6:70, 71)

Jesus expresses explicitly his willingness to die:

"For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life, that I may take it again. No one takes it from me, but I have power to lay it of my own accord. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again; this charge I have received from my Father." (10:17, 18)

In Chapter 13, there are many expressions of his knowledge about

his own death (13:1-3, 11). Also in Chapter 16, there are many clues of his knowledge—but the disciples don't understand them. (16:16-18)

In the three synoptic Gospels, but not in John, there is an early reference to Jesus' knowledge of his end:

"Can the wedding guests mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? The days will come, when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast." (Mt, 9:15; Mk, 2:19; Lk, 5:34)

3. Jesus died a death of atonement and mission:

Mark: "And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, and they all drank of it. And he said to them, "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for the many." (14:23, 24)

Matthew: "And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, "Drink of it, all of you; for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins." (26:27, 28)

Luke: In the Revised Standard Version, a similar verse is added as a footnote ("Other ancient authorities").

"...And likewise the cup after supper saying, "This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood." (22:17-20)

John: "The next day he (John) saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" (1:29)

John called him in the same manner again (1:36)

"I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any one eats of this bread, he will live for ever; and the bread which I shall give for the life of the world is my flesh." (6:51)

"For my flesh is food indeed, and my blood is drink indeed." (6:55)

"I am the good shepherd; I know my own and my own know me, as

the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep." (10:14, 15)

Ca'iaphas, the high priest, wanted Jesus to die for the nation:

"...you do not understand that it is expedient for you that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation should not perish." He did not say this of his own accord, but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus should die for the nation, and, not for the nation only, but to gather into one the children of God who are scattered abroad." (11:50-52)

4. *Others are to be blamed for Jesus's death:* This type of resolution represents, what is called in terms of psychological defense mechanisms, 'displacement' or, 'finding a scapegoat.' Investing energy in blaming others for one's own difficulties, enables one to disregard the resulting consequences. Blaming the Jews for Jesus's death enables his believers to disregard the significance of the death.

In the synoptic Gospels, the Jews' blame is implied in describing the priests' instigation and the Jews' demand of Pilate to crucify Jesus (Mk, 15:6-15; Mt, 26:17-25; Lk, 23:13-25). In Matthew, the blame is stressed more:

"So when Pilate saw that he was gaining nothing, but rather that a riot was beginning, he took water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, "I am innocent of this man's blood; see to it yourselves." And all the people answered, "His blood be on us and on our children." (Mt, 27:24, 25)

In John, the Jews, persecution, deprecation and killing of Jesus is described in full:

"And this was why the Jews persecuted Jesus, because he did this on the sabbath. But Jesus answered them, "My Father is working still, and I am working." This was why the Jews sought all the more to kill him, because he not only broke the sabbath, but also called God his Father, making himself equal with God." (Jn, 5:16-18)

"After this Jesus went about in Galilee; he would not go about in Judea, because the Jews sought to kill him." (7:1)

"...but now you seek to kill me, a man who has told you the truth which I heard from God; this is not what Abraham did." (8:40)

"The Jews answered him, "Are we not right in saying that you are a Samaritan and have a demon?" (8:48)

"So they took up stones to throw at him; but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple." (8:59)

"His parents said this because they feared the Jews, for the Jews had already agreed that if any one should confess him to be Christ, he was to be put out of the synagogue." (9:22)

"The Jews took up stones again to stone him. Jesus answered them, "I have shown you many good works from the Father; for which of these do you stone me?" The Jews answered him, "We stone you for no good work but for blasphemy; because you, being a man, make yourself God." (10:31-33)

"Again they tried to arrest him, but he escaped from their hands." (10:39)

The Jews' behavior is not just evil, it's returning evil for good deeds. "Now the chief priests and the Pharisees had given orders that if any one knew where he was, he should let them know so that they might arrest him." (11:57)

"The Jews answered him, "We have a law, and by that law he ought to die, because he has made himself the Son of God." (19:7)

What is described in Matthew as said by Pilate, is here said by Jesus himself.

"Jesus answered him, "You would have no power over me unless it had been given you from above; therefore he who delivered me to you has the greater sin." (Jn 19:11)

Apparently, the need for finding a scapegoat was so great that the author attributed to Jesus this absurd statement (as if his delivery was done without being given from above).

This review of the different aspects of resolution by denial suggests:

1. Resurrection: is not found in Mark, Jesus appears twice in Matthew, twice in Luke with an addition of his ascendance to heaven,

and in John he appears four times and here too ascends to heaven.

2. Jesus knew, predicted and chose his own death; few expressions of this idea in Mark; in Matthew and Luke it is dealt with more; and in John, it is the most expressed and has a special emphasis.

3. Atonement: is little and similarly dealt with in the synoptic Gospels; in the Gospel of John it is a central idea which is fully dealt with (Lamb of God).

4. Blaming the Jews: again stressed little in the synoptics (in Matthew more than in the other two), yet greatly in John.

Regarding the first two subjects, we found a clear sequence of development from Mark to Matthew, from Matthew to Luke and Luke to John. Regarding the last two, we found generally equal little emphasis in the synoptics—and a tremendous emphasis in John.

C. *Transcendence*: Resolution beyond elements 'A' and 'B'

1. *Predestination*: events came to happen, to actualize what was written and prophesized from before. In the Gospels this deterministic concept is expressed by mentioning in the text that by some happening, "the scripture was fulfilled."

Mark: Events that recollect verses in the Bible (The Old Testament) are presented without the qualification "And the scripture was fulfilled." (i.e. Jesus's entry into Jerusalem) Only once does it happen (and in the R.S.V. it appears as an insertion by other ancient authorities):

"And with him they crucified two robbers, one on his right and one on his left. And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "He was reckoned with the transgressors." (15:27, 28)

Matthew: "He (Herod) inquired of them (the chief priest) where the Christ was to be born. They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it is written by the prophet." (2:3-7)

"And he rose and took the child and his mother by night, and departed to Egypt, and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfil what the Lord had spoken by the prophet, "Out of Egypt have I called my son." (2:14, 15)

"Then Herod, when he saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, was in a furious rage, and he sent and killed all the male children

in Bethlehem and in all that region who were two years old or under, according to the time which he has ascertained from the wise men. Then was fulfilled what was spoken by the prophet Jeremiah:

“A voice was heard in Ramah,
wailing and loud lamentation,
Rachel weeping for her children;
she refused to be consoled,
because they were no more.” (2:16-18)

“And he (Joseph) went and dwelt in a city called Nazareth, that what was spoken by the prophets might be fulfilled, “He shall be called a Nazarene.” (2:23)

“...and leaving Nazareth he went and dwelt in Caper’na-um by the sea, in the territory of Zeb’ulun and Naph’tali, that what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled:

“The land of Zeb’ulun and the land of Naphtali,
toward the sea, across the Jordan,
Galilee of the Gentiles—
the people who sat in darkness
have seen a great light,
and for those who sat in the region and shadow of death
light had dawned.” (4:13-16)

“All this Jesus said to the crowds in parables; indeed he said nothing to them without a parable. This was to fulfil what was spoken by the prophet:

“I will open my mouth in parables,
I will utter what has been hidden since the foundation of the world.” (13:34, 35)

“This took place to fulfil what was spoken by the prophet, saying,

“Tell the daughter of Zion,
Behold, your king is coming to you,
humble, and mounted on an ass,
and on a colt, the foal of an ass.” (21:4, 5)

Jesus himself is relating to the scriptures:

“Then Jesus said to them, “You will all fall away because of me this

night; for it is written, 'I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.' (26:31)

"Then was fulfilled what had been spoken by the prophet Jeremiah ¹¹), saying, "And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him on whom a price had been set by some of the sons of Israel, and they gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord directed me." (27:9, 10)

Luke: Here the Evangelist does not add the predeterministic qualification as in the former two; it is Jesus himself who does it.

After reading from the book of Isaiah, Jesus said:

"And he began to say to them, "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing." (4:21)

"And taking the twelve, he said to them, "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written of the Son of man by the prophets will be accomplished." (18:31)

Even after his death, in his appearance to his disciples, he says:

"Then he said to them, "These are my words which I spoke to you, while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the law of Moses and the prophets and psalms must be fulfilled." Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, and said to them, "Thus it is written that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead...." (24:44-46)

John: Until now two modes of this resolution were evident—either a comment by the Evangelist, or by Jesus himself. In John, a third mode is found which is a post-factum recognition by the disciples.

11) "Actually the Evangelist makes the mistake of crediting the prophecy to Jeremiah, and in this connection one cannot help smiling at the comical ingenuity with which Augustine tries to excuse so flaring a blunder. Matthew, Augustine says, knew very well that the sentence came from Zechariah, but he also knew that he was writing at the dictation of the Holy Ghost, and he dared not taken the liberty of correcting it. And why, Augustine proceeds, did the Holy Ghost dictate an inaccuracy? To show that all the Prophets were equally inspired and that it did not matter whether what was said by one was ascribed to another." (Augustine, *De Consensu, Evang.* III, 7. Cited in Craveri, M. *The Life of Jesus*. London: A Panther Book, 1969.) This constitutes another resolution of cognitive dissonance by transcendence. But actually, it can be learned that the Evangelist's aim was more to emphasize predestination than to show pedantic scholarship.

"His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for thy house will consume me." (2:17)

"When therefore he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this; and they believed the scripture and the word which Jesus had spoken." (2:22)

"...for as yet they did not know the scripture, that he must rise from the dead." (20:9)

In his sermons, Jesus is referring to the scriptures:

"You search the scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness to me." (5:39)

"If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote of me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe my words?" (5:46, 47)

"It is written in the prophets, 'And they shall all be taught by God.' Every one who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me." (6:45)

"Jesus answered them, "Is it not written in your law, 'I said, you are gods?' If he called them gods to whom the word of God came (and scripture cannot be broken)..." (10:34, 35)

"And Jesus found a young ass and sat upon it; as it is written,
"Fear not, daughter of Zion;
behold, your king is coming,
sitting on an ass's colt!"

His disciples did not understand this at first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that this had been written of him and had been done to him." (12:14-16) ¹²⁾

Though he had done so many signs before them, yet they did not

12) One gets the impression that events are changed here to suit the scripture. In Mark and Luke, it's written that Jesus sat on a colt and in Matthew it was an ass with a colt and in John it's a young ass: In John and Matthew, Zechariah 9:9 is cited or translated in accordance with the 'facts' presented: (John—"ass's colt"; Matthew—"on an ass and on a colt, the foal of an ass"; Zechariah—on an ass, on a colt the foal of an ass). Such an observation demonstrates the need that was felt among the Evangelists to stress predestination—to find a solution to the dissonance.

believe in him; it was that the word spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled;

“Lord, who has believed our report,
and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?”
Therefore, they could not believe.

For Isaiah again said,

“He has blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts,
lest they should see with their eyes and perceive with
their hearts,
and turn for me to heal them.”

Isaiah said this because he saw his glory and spoke of him.

Nevertheless many even of the authorities believed in him, but for fear of the Pharisees they did not confess it, lest they should be put out of the synagogue.” (12:37-42)

And at Jesus’ crucifixion:

“...so they said to one another, “Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it to see whose it shall be.” This was to fulfil the scripture,

“They parted my garments among them,
and for my clothing they cast lots.” (19:24)

“After this Jesus, knowing that all was now finished, said (to fulfill the scripture). “I thirst.” (19:28) ¹³

“For these things took place that the scripture might be fulfilled, “Not a bone of him shall be broken.” And again another scripture says, “They shall look on him whom they have pierced.” (19:36, 37)

2. Jesus is of another world: human concepts of birth and death are not relevant to his being:

This aspect is found only in John. In this Gospel, the word glorification is used instead of death or crucifixion:

“...but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that this had been written of him and had been done to him.” (12:16)

“No one has ascended into heaven but he who descended from heaven, the Son of man.” (3:13)

¹³) And again “Too much, is too little,” placing Jesus’s thirst, such a natural and human wish, so as to fulfill the scripture—adds to the picture a dimension of artificiality and exaggeration.

"But the testimony which I have is greater than that of John; for the works which the Father has granted me to accomplish, these very works which I am doing, bear me witness that the Father has sent me." (5:36)

"For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up at the last day. For this is the will of my Father, that every one who sees the Son and believes in him should have eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day." (6:38-40)

"Jesus then said, "I shall be with you a little longer, and then I go to him who sent me;" (7:33)

"He said to them, "You are from below, I am from above; you are of this world, I am not of this world." (8:23)

"Now before the feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end." (13:1)

"Yet a little while, and the world will see me no more, but you will see me; because I live, you will live also. In that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you." (14:19,20)

"You heard me say to you, 'I go away, and I will come to you.' If you loved me, you would have rejoiced, because I go to the Father; for the Father is greater than I. And how I have told you before it takes place, so that when it does take place, you may believe." (14:28, 29)

"Nevertheless I tell you the truth; it is to your advantage that I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. And when he comes, he will convince the world of sin and of righteousness and of judgment;" (16:7, 8)

Step by step, the death which was so contemptible, isolating and disappointing becomes acceptable: Returning to the outstretched arms of a loving Father, after doing his will on earth. Death turns into a gift of love for which the believers have to be happy. Moreover, this death becomes essential to the remaining others. Raising the

painful reality to a super and non-human plane is expressed to the full in the following verse:

"I came from the Father and have come into the world; again, I am leaving the world and going to the Father."

His disciples said, "Ah, now you are speaking plainly, not in any figure! Now we know that you know all things, and need none to question you; by this we believe that you came from God." Jesus answered them, "Do you now believe? The hour is coming, indeed it has come, when you will be scattered, every man to his home, and will leave me alone; yet I am not alone, for the Father is with me. I have said this to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." (16:28-33)

What an acute contrast from the man Jesus who cried on the cross, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?", to Jesus who has overcome the world.

Two resolutions by transcendence were discussed:

1. Predestination (fulfilling the scriptures) is expressed in three ways; as a comment added by the Evangelist; integrated into the sayings of Jesus; and mentioned by the disciples.

In Mark, this device is used only once by the Evangelist. In Matthew, it is used in the same way on more occasions (The wrong citation, mentioned before in a footnote, raises the possibility that in some cases, predestinatory comments are a later addition to the text). In Luke, predestination is stressed only in Jesus's saying. In John, this device is the most used in all the three ways.

2. "Jesus is not of this world" is a subject developed and stressed only in John and not at all in the synoptic Gospels.

CONCLUSIONS

The research hypothesis that the cognitive dissonance, which is the belief crisis in early Christianity, will be resolved gradually (from the earliest to the latest Gospel) by means of: bolstering, denial and transcendence (these too are presented from the earliest resolution to the latest) was tested by identifying the elements and constituents of each resolution and checking their frequency and dominance in each of the Gospels. Jesus's image before the crucifixion

(his attitude towards dying and his last words on the cross) was also examined.

In the three categories of resolution, and in nine elements out of ten (and the exceptional element was also explained), the hypothesis was verified.

The data presented enables us to typify each of the Gospels according to the evolving conception of christology and to describe this conception:

In *Mark*, no bolstering, denial or transcendence of the inner tension, which is presented very acutely, is found. (The dissonance remains unresolved). This indicates that of the Gospels, Mark is the earliest and is closest in its character to being an historical text.

In *Matthew*, there are a few attempts of resolution by bolstering and denial, but the inner tension is expressed almost as in Mark. There is use of one element of resolution by transcendence, of which there is some evidence of it being a later addition to the text. Matthew is evidently later than Mark and constitutes an historical text which suffers from moderate bias.

In *Luke*, there are many attempts of resolution with an extreme use of bolstering and denial. The inner tension is eased and diffused, but as a result, the Gospel is characterized as Mythology. Thus, Luke is later than the former two Gospels (but the time gap between Luke and Matthew is smaller than between Matthew and Mark).

In *John*, no resolutions by bolstering are found, but on the other hand denial is used more than in the synoptic Gospels in its scope and strength. Transcendental resolutions are used to the fullest in this Gospel and the inner tension, that was so prominent in Mark, does not exist here at all. John is the latest among the four Gospels (and the gap or the time lag between John and Luke is the biggest).

The picture of Christology presented here is partial, dealing only with the early Christology. However, it should be noted that in the New Testament, there are two Christologies which existed in different sects, appeared in different texts and answered different problems. But owing to interactions between the sects, interdependence between the problems (in the early Christology, "the death of Jesus," in the later one "frustrated eschatological expectations") and later additions and editions—diffusion of the borders and convergence took place.

Nevertheless, one can conclude that Christology is not a self-understood phenomenon. It can be approached from a causal—dynamic point of view. Christology answers needs, that spring from a crisis, and constitutes a line of resolutions to a problem. It is not “Deus ex machina.” (One can even say that it is “Machina ex Deo...”)

Unlike Festinger, ¹⁴⁾ changes in cognition (and not changes in behavior), which found their expression in the Gospels, are stressed in this article.

In accord with Flusser, ¹⁵⁾ this article rejects the thesis that frustrated eschatological expectations (Parousieverzögerung) changed the structure of Christian faith. Instead, we recognize and accept the decisive role of Christ’s crucifixion and the resulting cognitive dissonance and its resolution.

In addition to the finding of determination of the chronological order of the Gospels’ writing, the application of this model led to a detailed organization, description, differentiation and construction of the early Christology in the New Testament, which is ground for further hypotheses and enrichment of the discussion.

14) See footnote 1.

15) See footnote 3.