

**“I am the Door’ (John 10:7, 9)’
Jesus the Broker in the Fourth Gospel”**

Jerome H. Neyrey, S.J.
University of Notre Dame

Introduction: Why This Study?

The Fourth Gospel seems to be immune to interpretation via the ancient model of patron-client relationships. Peder Borgen applied the Semitic model of “agent” to Jesus.¹ But he does not tell us what makes for a good agent or whether the agent labors on behalf of those to whom he is sent. George W. Buchanan presented Jesus as an “apostle,” according to an understanding “agency” as a legal phenomenon. He considered the “agency” of angels, kings, apostles, and especially Jesus, the apostle sent from God.² Again, what makes for a successful apostle? Does the apostle also represent the interests of those to whom he is sent? Previous study of God as Benefactor-Patron has been mostly limited to studies of the Greco-Roman world,³ with only few New Testament studies going this route.⁴ Tricia G. Brown, who has written thus far the only full reading of the Fourth Gospel in terms of Patron-Client relationships, focuses on the role of the Spirit as the sub-broker of Jesus.⁵ But few indeed are studies of the Fourth Gospel in terms of the patron-broker-client model. Hence many questions are not even asked, much less answered. How does someone become a broker? What makes a person a good broker? Are brokers one-way agents (patron to clients) or two-way (patron to clients; clients to patron)? What do brokers broker? Previous studies of “agency” do not and cannot function at a high enough level of abstraction to answer these questions we ask. Something more is needed, namely, a more complete model of patron-broker-client relations, a worthy and needed contribution.

The basic hypothesis argued here is that Jesus the Broker belongs to two worlds, the

world of God-Patron and that of disciples-clients. In one direction, he serves as a bridge between them, as a go-between, a person whom God sends to mediate knowledge, power, loyalty and material benefaction to his clients; correspondingly he brokers the interests of the clients by praying for them and urging them to pray “in my name.” Jesus himself regularly insists that he is not acting on his own or representing another patron, nor serving as the agent or broker sent by God to speak and to act.

To argue this, we perform these tasks: 1. review the model of patron-client relationships, 2. investigate the Jewish and Greco-Roman background of a “broker,” 3. describe the role of broker in the light of the social sciences, and 4. examine the role of Jesus the Broker in the Fourth Gospel.

Basic Model of Patron - Client Relations

The basic model of patron-client relations is presumably well known to scholars by this time.⁶ Typical pairings in patron-client relationships include “God - man, saint - devotee, godfather - godchild, lord - vassal, landlord and so forth. We know, moreover, the characteristics of a typical structure⁷: 1. asymmetrical relationship between parties of different status.⁸; 2. interpersonal obligation, focussing on personal loyalty or attachment⁹; 3. favoritism¹⁰; 4. reciprocity: as goods and services are exchanged, clients incurs debts and obligations to the patron¹¹; 5. “kinship glaze” reduces the crassness of the relationship¹²; 6. honor is every present. Whereas human patron-client relationships tend to be asymmetrical, reciprocal, often including favoritism, focused on honor, and held together by “good will” or faithfulness,¹³ the characterize the relationship of divine patrons and mortal clients.

Fathers as Patrons¹⁴ We need first to consider the relationship of an earthly father-patron

and his son-client because this served as the model for “Father” and “Son” in the Fourth Gospel. What, then, were these “reciprocal relationships of human life” like? Seneca discussed father-son relationships in his Benefits, the best exposition of this. As regards fathers, they are indeed patron and benefactor: “Can there be any greater benefits than those that a father bestows upon his children?” (Seneca, Benefits 2.11.5). Fathers bestow power (to protect their sons), inducement (food, clothing, support), but especially commitment (loyalty, fidelity to them).¹⁵ Most importantly, fathers provide the strict and severe upbringing, his education and socialization of his son: “Do you see how parents force their children in the stage of tender infancy to submit to wholesome measures? Though the infants struggle and cry, they tend their bodies with loving care, and fearing that their limbs may become crooked from too early liberty, they swathe them in order that they may grow to be straight. . . And so the greatest benefits are those that while we are either unaware or unwilling, we receive from our parents” (Seneca, Benefits 6.24.1-2). As regards sons, their duties to their fathers must be learned in the school of hard knocks (see Heb 5:8; 12:5-11), and so fathers only occasionally see the fruit of their labors:

“Our parents almost always outdo us. . . When at last with age we have acquired wisdom, it begins to be evident that we ought to love them for the very things that keep us from loving them – their admonitions, their strictness, and their careful watch over our heedlessness – they are snatched from us. Few reach the age when they can reap some true reward from their children” (Seneca Benefits 5.5.2-4).

Sons are expected to live up to the customs of the ancestors, to be obedient, and to manifest loyalty, and thus honor their fathers. But the education was often achieved by the rod.

In Israelite terms, the duties of an earthly father include socializing his son into the

traditional values and roles which he himself learned.¹⁶ A father circumcised his son, “redeemed” his firstborn (Exod 13:13) and continually provided nourishment and protection. The father give his son his name (“Simon, son of Jonah” and “James and John, sons of Zebedee,” their trades, roles and statuses. Sons of priests are themselves priests (1 Sam 23:6); sons of kings are likely to be kings themselves (1 Kgs 1:32-37). Ideally sons are “chips off the old block,” embodying the virtue, identity, and status of their fathers.¹⁷

The rights of a father center around the honorable acknowledgment of his role and status by his sons. This is enshrined in the commandment: “Honor your father and mother” (Exod 20:12; Deut 5:6; Mal 1:6 and Eph 6:1-3). This honor is particularly manifested by children’s obedience to their fathers (Gen 27:8, 13, 43; Col 3:21; Eph 6:1), and support given to them in their old age (Sir 3:11-16). Conversely the father can be shamed when a son curses him (Exod 21:17; Lev 20:9), dishonors him (Deut 27:16), robs him (Prov 28:24), mocks him (Prov 30;17), strikes him (Exod 21:15) or disobeys him (Matt 21:28).

The rights and duties of earthly fathers serve as the model for considering the heavenly Patron as Father. The Patron Father, too, gives life to his clients, nurtures them, socializes them into his ways, provides them knowledge of how his family works, and provides them with their primary identity as “sons of god.” Conversely, earthly clients of this Patron Father owe him honor, obedience and respect. This will be manifest in acceptance of his words, his will, and his agents; faith (as obedience and loyalty) will be their primary way of honoring their Patron Father.

Heavenly Father-Patron. Names for the earthly fathers are all connected with generating children in some fashion (“father,” “parents,” “ancestor,” “patriarch,” and “elder”). In the Greco-Roman world the high god, Zeus, was oftent addressed as “Father.” Dio Chrysostom states: “At

that time, the Creator and Father (δημιουργὸς καὶ πατήρ) of the World. . .” (Oration 36.60); Cicero comments: “. . .the poets call him ‘father of gods and men’”(Nature of the Gods 1.64). Of particular interest is this comment by Dio: “Yet all these poets in precisely the same fashion call the first and greatest god Father of the whole rational family. . .Some do not hesitate even to call him Father in their prayers” (Dio Chrysostom 36.35-36).

Similar paternal language was ascribed to the Roman Emperor, who was not only pater familias, but pater patriae.¹⁸ On the one hand Caesar extended his authority to the Empire, analogous to the authority of individual fathers to their families. On the other hand, he “kinifies” the relationship by trying to soften or mask the harsh realities of imperial power.¹⁹

“Broker”: Bridging Patron and Client

Inaccessible eastern potentates (patrons) utilized their viziers to broker their plans to the world outside the palace and to gather information for him about the state of affairs of the empire.²⁰ Petitioners employed the services of persons well placed in the circles of power,²¹ for example, Pliny, who brokered the concerns of friends and relatives to Caesar.²² A “priest” in Rome was called a “ponti-fex,” that is, a bridge-maker, for he functioned as the bridge linking gods-patrons and mortals-clients.²³ A broker is then, a mediator, a bridge, a go-between, an ambassador, etc. But besides examples and instances of a broker, we need an adequate definition of broker and brokerage, which will encompass the vast array of specific examples of “broker” that we shall shortly see: “A social broker, by definition, is a professional manipulator of people and information who brings about communication for personal benefit.”²⁴ A broker is a special type of entrepreneur who knows whom to contact for resources he does not have and which are desired by others.²⁵

Besides an adequate definition, we would want to know the characteristics of a successful broker.²⁶ There are, moreover, a series of questions about a broker which can focus our understanding. 1. How does a person become a broker? 2. What does he broker? The patron has first-order goods, such as land, jobs, funds, power, special knowledge and the like. The broker, however, has strategic contacts with those patrons; his contacts and networking ability are understood as second-order goods.²⁷ 3. What makes for a successful broker? 4. Why a broker at all or this broker? Is he special or necessary? 5. What does the broker receive for his services.

It profits us to consider certain figures in the ancient world who were understood as brokers. Consideration of them can provide clarity and support for our subsequent interpretation of the Fourth Gospel in terms of a full patron-broker-client model.

Israelite Brokers.²⁸ Moses was considered the consummate broker²⁹ between God and Israel in light of three episodes in his career: 1. Israel's arrival at Sinai, 2. Israel's worship of the golden calf, and 3. Moses' own death. When Israel arrived at Sinai, the people begged Moses to be their mediator with God: "You speak to us and we will hear; but let not God speak to us, lest we die" (Exod 20:19). Philo interprets this to mean that God respects human incapacity to receive "unmixed and exceedingly great" benefaction without a mediator:

It was our attainment of a conception of this that once made us address to one of those mediators (μεσιτῶν) the entreaty "Speak to us and let not God speak to us, lest we die" (Exod 20:19). For if He, without ministers (ὑπηρέταις), holds out to us. . .benefits unmixed and exceeding great, we are incapable of receiving them (Dreams 1.143; see Posterity 143, emphasis added).

Elsewhere Philo distinguishes the relationship of patron (God) and client (Moses) from that of

patron (God) - broker (Moses)- clients (Israel): “Now wise men take God for their guide and teacher, but the less perfect take the wise man; and therefore the Children of Israel say: ‘Talk to us, and let not God talk to us, lest we die’” (Heir 19). Whereas Moses is that “wise” man who has God as patron (“guide and teacher”), Israel is the “less perfect” (client) who needs a “wise man” (Moses, now as broker) to mediate between the Patron and his clients.

On the occasion of the golden calf, Moses acted the role of intercessor between sinners and the sinless God (Exod 32:32). Using a wide variety of synonyms, Philo articulated clearly Moses’s role as mediator/broker between the offended deity and the offending people:

Yet he took the part of mediator (μεσίτης) and reconciler (διαλλακτής) and did not hurry away at once, but first made prayers and supplications, begging that their sins might be forgiven. Then, when this protector (κηδεμών) and intercessor (παραιτητής) had softened the wrath of the Ruler, he wended his way back in mingled joy and dejection (Philo, Mos. 2.166, emphasis added).

This incident stands behind the remark in John 5:45. Israel presumes that Moses will continue to mediate on its behalf,³⁰ but Jesus claims that, on the contrary, Moses will condemn unbelievers.³¹

When Moses died, the people lamented that they had lost their intercessor, mediator, and premiere go-between with God. Thus, Josephus remarks, Israel was in tears both for Moses’ sake and their own:

They were in tears and displaying deep regret for their general, alike remembering the risks which he had run and all that ardent zeal of his for their salvation, and despondent concerning the future, in the belief that they would never more have such a ruler and that God would be less mindful of them, since it was Moses who had ever been the intercessor

(παρακαλῶν) (Ant. 4.194, emphasis added).³²

In addition to Moses as broker, Philo presents identifies another broker, namely, the Logos. While Moses evidently serves as the bridge between God-Patron and Israel-client, nothing was said about why and how he qualifies as a broker, much less a successful one. But in his description of the Logos, Philo supplies provides this important information.

To His Word, His chief messenger (πρεσβευτάτω), the Father(Πατήρ) has given the special prerogative, to stand on the border and separate creature from the Creator. This same Word both pleads with the immortal as suppliant (ικέτης) for afflicted mortals and acts as ambassador (πρεσβευτής) of the ruler to the subject. He glories that ‘and I stood between the Lord and you’ (Deut v.5), that is neither uncreated as God, nor created as you, but midway between the two extremes (μέσος τῶν ἄκρω), a surety to both sides (ἀμφοτέροις ὀμηρέων).(Heir 205-206, emphasis added).

The ancients did not have a technical term, much less a scientific one for the role of this figure, and so they described him in terms of familiar mediators: “messenger,” “suppliant,” and “ambassador.” Moreover, he is positioned “in the middle,” that is, on the border which separates mortals from the Immortal One. Far from being a barrier, the Logos “stands between the Lord and them” precisely as a bridge, not a wall.³³ He both “pleads with the Immortal as suppliant for afflicted mortals” and acts as ambassador of the ruler to the subject, i.e., “two-way” mediation. But of great importance is Philo’s description of this mediator sharing the worlds of both Sender and subject. “Standing between the Lord and you,” he belongs to the world of God, although not uncreated as God is; and he belongs to the world of those created, although not created as they are. Hence, he is ideally positioned “midway between the extremes,” a participant in both worlds

who facilitates the interests of both parties.³⁴

Greco-Roman Brokers. The catalogue below indicates that the Greco-Roman world considered a variety of roles and services as brokerage between patrons and clients. Whether agents, ambassadors, diviners, priests, or prophets, all serve as go-betweens between patrons and clients.

<p>ἄγγελος (messenger, envoy)³⁵ ἀπόστολος (ambassador) διάκονος (attendants, diviners, heralds)³⁶ διαλλάκτικος, (conciliator, reconciler) δικαστής (judge) ἔγγυος (security) ἐντυγκχάνω (to appeal, obtain an audience) ἐξαιτησις (intercessor) ἐπιδιακρίνω (to decide as umpire) ἐπίτροπος (agent, representative)</p>	<p>ἱερός (priest) ἰκέτης (suppliant) λειτουργός (minister, performer of state duties) μεσίτης (mediator)³⁷ παραιτητής (intercessor) παράκλητος (a broker, a mediator) πρεσβευτής, (an ambassador) προφήτης (one who speaks for God) ὕπηρέτης (petty official, attendant)</p>
--	--

Political realm: Kings were often thought of as stand-ins for the deity:³⁸ “The king, regarded as god or the son of god, serves as a mediator of the people before the godhead, receiving divine laws and offering national sacrifices.”³⁹ Other political brokers are the λειτουργός (minister, performer of state duties) and the πρεσβευτής, (ambassador). We read, moreover, of ἄγγελοι (messengers, envoys) delivering messages from kings and receiving messages to the king. Similarly, an ἀπόστολος (envoy, embassy) is occasionally sent from city to city: “Alyttes straightway sent a herald (κήρυκα) to Miletus. . .offering to make a truce. So the envoy (ἀπόστολος) went to Miletus” (Herodotus 1.21).

Legal or Forensic Realm: An intermediary (μεσίτης) may be an arbiter in legal transactions who is linked with κριτής or appointed by one. A judge (δικάστης) appointed by a city acted as broker of justice between polis and populace (Herodotus 1.96). Finally an ἔγγυος, a type of intermediary (μεσίτης), acts as the guarantor who accepts legal obligation for a bond or

payment. He himself is the surety of the contract.⁴⁰

Religious Realm In this area one finds diviners, priests, oracles, prophets and the like. Plato describes the general role of a Hellenic priest: “According to the orthodox view they understand how to offer our gifts to the gods in sacrifices in a manner pleasing to them, and they know, too, the right forms of prayer for petitioning the gods to bestow blessings on us. Both of these expert activities are parts of the art of ministration, are they not?” (Plato: Statesman 290c-d). Greece’s famous oracles include a patron-god who gives illumination or knowledge to a client through brokers. The brokers are the oracle and then the interpreter of the oracle’s messages, i.e., a prophet: “The voice is not that of a god, nor the utterance of it, nor the diction, nor the meter, but all these are the woman’s; he puts into her mind only the visions, and creates a light in her soul in regard to the future; for inspiration is precisely this” (Plutarch, “Oracles at Delphi,” 397C).⁴¹ In summary, with the exception of Iris, the oracles and their prophets, Greco-Roman mediators are males, not surprising given the radical gender-division of ancient society.

Patron and Broker in the Fourth Gospel

With what we know about the patron-broker-client relationship, how a broker emerges, what he does and what makes him a successful broker, we focus now on the Fourth Gospel.

The Patron, Who is God-Father. The premiere name of the Patron-God in the Fourth Gospel is “Father,” whose patronage consists entirely of sending his ambassador, Jesus, to Israel. The Patron’s “sending” is expressed by two terms (ἀποστέλλω, πέμπω), which, despite similarities, exhibit important differences. In regard to ἀποστέλλω, we note the following patterns:

1. Patron’s sending: “God sent the son into the world” (3:17, 34)

2. Client's Duty: Acknowledgment of the Father's Sending: "The Father who sent me has borne witness to me. . .you do not believe him whom he sent" (5:36-38). "This is the work of God that you believe him whom he has sent" (6:29). "They have received the words you gave me and know in truth that I came from you, and they have believed that you have sent me" (17:8); ". . .that the world may believe that you sent me" (17:21, 23)

In the key of honor and shame, the Patron-Father makes an honor claim, namely, that Jesus is his ambassador and agent. Such claims must be honored by acknowledging the agent/ambassador.

The familiar legal principle states that whoever receives the agent receives not just the agent but the one who sent him (John 13:20; Matt 10:40). Hence when the clients acknowledge that God sent Jesus, they honor the Patron-Father who sent him. The converse is also true: dishonoring the agent means dishonoring the Sender: "I honor my Father, and you dishonor me" (8:49).⁴²

The case is different for the second verb, πέμπω, which is more closely linked with concrete things that the agent must do.

1. Do the Will of the Sender: "My food is to do the will of him who sent me" (4:34); "I seek not my own will but the will of him who sent me" (5:30); "I have come from heaven not to do my own will but the will of Him who sent me" (6:38); "This is the will of him who sent me, that I lose none of all that he has given me" (6:39)

2. What the Sender gives Jesus: "My teaching is not mine but his who sent me" (7:16)
 "We must do the works of him who sent me" (9:4)

3. Sender Testifies to Agent: "The Father who sent me has borne witness to me" (5:37);
 "The Father who sent me bears witness to me" (8:18)

4. Believing in Jesus means believing in the Sender: "Who believes in me believes not in

me but in him who sent me" (12:44)

Consideration of the Patron-Father will be resumed when we present a more detailed inventory of what the Patron gives the broker. But with this we know that the essential figures are Patron-Father and Son-Broker and that the honor, role and status of the Son is that of "agent" of God.

Jesus the Broker. Adequately to interpret Jesus the Broker in the Fourth Gospel, we need to consider these items in our model. 1. How does a broker become a broker? 2. What does he broker? 3. What makes for a successful broker? 4. What makes this broker special or necessary? 5. What does the broker get for his services? About these, the Fourth Gospel has much to say.

How become a broker? In this case it is a matter of ascribed honor: God "sent" him as agent and ambassador. God- Patron authorized Jesus as his broker when "on him God has set his seal" (6:27) and "consecrated and sent [him] into the world" (10:36). God's dedicatory "sealing" and "consecrating" indicates that Jesus is the chosen broker who is set aside exclusively for God's tasks. How does he become the broker of God's clients? He has a formal relationship with the world: he is the "lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world" (1:36). He was sent to save it (3:17) and is in fact the Savior of the world (4:42). At some point, the clients relate to Jesus as sheep to a shepherd (10:1-4); he is the door through which they exit and enter and find pasture (10:9); they acknowledge only his voice, not that of a stranger (10:5). So precious are they to him that he will act the "noble shepherd" and lay down his life for them (10:11, 14). The sheep depend upon the shepherd, which clearly is the intention of Jesus as broker. The most striking example of this relationship is the allegory of the vine and branches. The branches have life and bear fruit only if they remain in the vine. The Patron plays the role of the vinedresser, whereas Jesus is the vine. The vine belongs to the vinedresser, one set of relationships, but the

branches remain in the vine (another set). The issue is settled in the Farewell Address, where Jesus teaches the disciples to pray “in my name.”.

What makes a broker successful? Brokers are successful for several reasons: first, they belong to the worlds of both Patron and clients, and so represent fairly the interests of both, and second, they maintain loyal and faithful relationships with both.⁴³ As we saw above in regard to Moses and the Logos, successful brokers have a foot in the worlds of both Patron and clients. Jesus the Broker first “descends” from the heavenly world and later “ascends.” His was at home in the world of his Patron but subsequently descended from there to the world of his clients. For example, the two prologues of the gospel (1:1-18 and 13:1-3) state that the heavenly Word came from God into the world (1:10) and later prepared to “depart out of this world to the Father” (13:1). During his Farewell Address, this same Word tells the clients that “I go away,” and “I go to the Father” (16:5, 17; 14:28), stressing his belonging to God’s world. He petitions his Patron “Glorify me in your own presence with the glory which I had with you before the world was made” (17:5). No doubt, Jesus the Broker, who uniquely belongs to the world of the Patron, has also pitched his tent among us (1:14).

Conversely, for most people, because they do not know “whence” Jesus comes and “whither” he goes, they cannot accept him as broker. Some reduce Jesus to a person of this world only; They remove Jesus from the world of the Patron and reduce him to the status of a mere mortal. Yet some know Jesus’ “whence” and “whither,” and thus are positioned to accept him as a broker belonging to their world and God’s.

Jesus belongs equally and fully to the world of the clients.⁴⁴ Many characters in the gospel, however, reduce Jesus to a lowly figure of this world, and so cannot imagine how he

could be favored by the heavenly one. He comes from Nazareth (1:46) or Galilee (7:42, 52); his father was an undistinguished man (6:41-42). Evidence abounds that he belongs to their world: he hungers (4:8, 31-34), thirsts (4:7), grows weary (4:6) and is disturbed in spirit (12:27-28), but this is no reason for praise. He belongs to this earthly world, and to its least honorable parts. He certainly does not represent the world of his critics.

Third, For, the Word “became flesh and dwelt among us” (1:14). Like them Moreover, he performs signs on ill, dying and dead persons in a gesture which expresses his solidarity with those of this earthly world. Moreover, the relationship of broker and clients is a qualitatively rich relationship, not a fickle one (15:9-17).

Fourth, the successful broker belongs to both worlds at the same time by virtue of his relationships. “In my Father's house are many rooms. . . And when I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also” (14:2-3). The relationship of the Patron-Father and his Broker-Son is secure, and so is that of the Broker and his clients. After securing a relationships for the clients in God’s household, he returns to them and maintains the relationship. This, moreover, is a relationship the clients may rely on: “Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father in me? . . . the Father who dwells in me does his works. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father in me; or else believe me for the sake of the works themselves” (14:10-11). This relationship must be highly significant for it to be mentioned many, many times (14:20, 23; 17:21, 23). Conversely the relationship of the Broker and his clients receives much attention. “I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in me, and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing” (15:5). “In that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you” (14:20).

Not only does he belong to both worlds, he bridges them in his own person.

Fifth, a final reason for success rests on the ability of a broker to maintain his relationships with Patron and clients. In short, he must have a lasting bond of reliability, loyalty and faithfulness between himself and each of them.

Unity Between Patron and Broker The author tells us that the Patron Father “loves” the Son, indicating just such a reliable relationship: “The Father loves the son and has given all things into his hands” (3:35). For his part, the Broker Son shows loyalty to his Patron Father by virtue of obeying his commands. “I do not seek my own will but the will of him who sent me” (5:30; 6:38; 4:34). The absolute loyalty of the Broker to his Patron-Father constitutes the topic of John 17 where Jesus gives an audit of his actions prior to his death:

- I have glorified you on earth (4)
- I have manifested your name (6, 26)
- I have given them the words which you have given me (8, 14)
- I have kept them in your name, I have guarded them (12)
- I have consecrated myself (19)
- I have given them the glory which you have given me (22).

Unity Between Broker and Clients. Similarly, the Broker maintains bonds of loyalty with his clients by “loving” them. This bond of loyalty is never more important than when Jesus enters into the events of his death. We are told that “having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them perfectly” (13:1). I follow Bruce Malina in interpreting “love” in this context as “group glue” or faithfulness.⁴⁵ In fact, upon departure Jesus gives a commandment that replicates the “love” between him and the clients in the relationship of client with client: “A

new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; even as I have loved you, that you also love one another” (13:34).

“Solidarity” between broker and clients is also highlighted. In that same chapter 17, Jesus speaks more broadly of his relationship to his disciple-clients. He tells the Father

- I have kept them in your name. . . (17:12)
- These things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy fulfilled in them (17:13)
- Keep them from the evil one (17:15)
- For their sake I consecrate myself, that they may be consecrated in truth (17:19)

Unity Between Patron, Broker and Clients The three figures, moreover, are glued together in an utterly reliable relationship, as the following citations indicate:

He who has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me; and he who loves me will be loved by my Father (14:21).

If a man loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him (14:23).

As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you; abide in my love. (15:9).

I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me. (17:23).

“Love,” then, is the mark of reliability in these relationships: the Patron with the Broker, the Broker with the clients, and the Patron and Broker with the clients.

The term abide/remain (μένειν) images the same sense of loyal and reliable relationships. As regards Patron and Broker, the Patron sent a Holy Spirit to Jesus which “remained” on him (1:32-33); in contrast, when God’s Spirit comes on others, it is a limited and transient

relationship. Similarly, the Patron is “in” the Broker and the Broker is “in” the Patron: “The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own authority; but the Father who ‘remains’ in me does his works” (14:10). Because of the loyalty of Broker to Patron, “the Father ‘remains’ in me.” Similarly, sometimes clients “remain” with Jesus (1:38-39) or he “remains” with them (2:10; 4:40). The point of the exhortation about vine and branches centers on just this broker-client relationship. First, it is hardly insignificant that “remain” occurs ten times in 15:1-11. “Remaining,” of course, means “remaining” in me or the vine (15:4-7) or my love (15:9-10). If the relationship is secure and faithful, then the Broker assures his clients that “you should bear fruit and your fruit should ‘remain’” (15:16).

What does he broker? We could make an exhaustive list of each and every benefaction that Jesus brokers, but then we would still have to collect, digest and classify these data. Or, we could employ a model developed by Talcott Parsons and adjusted by Bruce Malina which abstracts these benefactions and classifies them according to four comprehensive categories: 1. power,⁴⁶ 2. commitment,⁴⁷ 3. inducement and 4. influence.⁴⁸ Because of their power, kings can protect and deliver their subjects. Gifts of seed, food, dowries for daughters, and hospitality illustrate inducement. As regards influence, teachers give instruction to students; people who consult sybils, oracles or prophets for influence-as-knowledge and influence-as-access. Finally commitment refers to faithfulness, loyalty, obedience, as well as to fictive-kin bonds, and grants of honor and respect.

Although brokers generally have only second-order goods, i.e., access to the patron’s first-order goods, the evangelist argues in the Fourth Gospel that Jesus himself has these first-order goods. On the one hand we are told that “the Father loves the Son and has given all things

into his hand” (3:35) and again “the Father loves the Son and shows him all that he himself is doing” (5:20). “All” is certainly inclusive and comprehensive. But to get specific about what God gives Jesus, we use the Talcott-Malina model to process data in the Fourth Gospel and classify them more accurately. Note, moreover, that Jesus cannot broker what he himself has not received from the Patron-Father. In effect, whatever Jesus has received from God-Patron he in turn brokers to others.

<p><u>Power:</u></p> <p>1. Power = signs “Never since the world began has it been heard that any one opened the eyes of a man born blind. If this man were not from God, he could do nothing” (9:32-33).</p> <p>3. Power = over death: “. . .and I will raise him up at the last day” (6:39, 44, 54); “Lazarus, come out” (11:43); “I have power to lay down my life and I have power to take it back” (10:17-18).</p>	<p><u>Inducement:</u></p> <p>1. Abundant wine (2:7-10), water (4:14; 7:37-38), bread (6:1-13); light (8:12)</p> <p>2. Everything (14:14)</p>
--	--

<u>Commitment:</u>	<u>Influence:</u>
<p>1. Kinship: Father, Son and other offspring: “To all who received him. . .he gave power to become children of God: (1:12)</p> <p>2. Relationships: “When I prepare a place for you, I will come and take you to myself” (14:2); “We will come to him and make our home with him” (14:23).</p> <p>3. Loyalty/Obedience: “I do not seek my own will but the will of him who sent me” (5:30); “This is the will of him who sent me, that I lose nothing he has given me. . .this is the will of my Father, that every one who sees the Son and believes should have eternal life” (6:39-40)</p> <p>4. Love: “As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you; abide in my love. . .you will abide in my love, just as I abide in his love” (15:9-10); “. . .that the love with which thou [Father] hast loved me may be in them, and I in them” (17:26); “Love one another as I have loved you. Greater love . . .than a man lay down his life for his friends” (15:12-13)</p>	<p>1. Jesus as Word: “In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God” (1:1-2).</p> <p>2. Witness to his relationship with God: “He bears witness to what he has seen and heard” (3:32; 8:18).</p> <p>3. Teaches God’s Teaching: “My teaching is not mine, but his who sent me” (7:16-17); “I do nothing on my own authority but speak thus as the Father taught me” (8:28)</p> <p>4. Jesus as Teacher in synagogue (6:59; 18:20) and Temple: “Jesus went up to the Temple and taught” (7:14; see 7:28) ; “Teacher” = “a teacher come from God” (3:2; see 11:28) and “Rabbi”= “Rabbi, you are the son of God” (1:48; see 1:38; 4:31)</p> <p>5. Speaks God’s words: “He whom God sent utters the words of God” (12:49); “The words which you hear are not mine but the Father’s ” (14:24); “I have given them your word” (17:14)</p> <p>6. Sees and reveals God: “[No one] has seen the Father except him. . .he has seen the Father” (6:46) and “No one has ever seen God; the only Son, in the bosom of the Father, has made him known” (1:18).</p> <p>7. Reveals Name:⁴⁹ “I manifested your name. . .” (17:6); “I made known to them your name and I will make it known” (17:26)</p>

In terms of comprehensiveness, the model indicates that Jesus is rich in all four comprehensive categories. There is an emphasis, however, on commitment (kinship, relationships, loyalty and love) and influence (Jesus as Word and witness, teacher and revealer). The model we are using to gather and classify data allows us to relate these four categories in the case of Jesus into a coherent whole; they are not miscellaneous items, but the stuff that Jesus

brokers to God's clients. In short, he is not a broker of this or that benefaction, but a complete broker of all of God's favor. Moreover, the gospel makes it clear that God gives these to Jesus, making Jesus an exceptional broker and the disciples blessed clients. Moreover, if given by God, then Jesus is and remains broker; he does not displace the Patron. What do we know if we know this? Precisely because he is the Broker of Brokers, Jesus is himself most richly endowed with the things that are God's: unique powers associated only with God, the closest possible relationship with God the Patron, and unique knowledge of God. Because he is given God's first-order good, he has the where-with-all to function as a superior broker. Indeed, his relationship with God the Patron is his "capital,"⁵⁰ that is, the source of all other endowments.

Is this broker unique or necessary? The author claims that Jesus is unique as a broker. "Unique" is my term for what the ancient rhetoricians sought to show in their amplification of praise of a person. Aristotle expressed uniqueness this way: ". . .many kinds of amplification, for example if the subject is the only (μόνος) one or the first (πρώτος) or one of a few (μετ' ὀλίγων) or the one who most (μάλιστα) has done something" (*Rhet.* 1.9.38). In the Fourth Gospel, Jesus is not only the unique, but the necessary broker:

No one (οὐδείς) has ever seen God. . .

the only (μονογενής)⁵¹ son, has made him known (1:18).

No one (οὐδείς) has ascended into heaven

but (εἰ μὴ) he who descended from heaven (3:13).

No one (οὐδείς) has seen the Father,

except (ἐὰν μὴ) him who is from God (6:44)

His being "first" or "only" is not a personal achievement of Jesus' prowess in arms, athletics,

etc., the typical grounds for personal honor. Rather because of God's pleasure, Jesus alone descends from God's world, he alone has seen God and he alone makes God known. His honor, then, is all the more significant because of his being a unique Broker. But his uniqueness is not simply that of a descending figure who makes the Patron known but because of ascending role as Broker. He brokers the unique and necessary way to the Patron: "No one (οἶδεῖς) comes to the Father except (εἰ μὴ) by me (John 14:6; see Acts 4:12). Similarly, "Without me you can do nothing" (15:5).

What does the broker get for his services? The Patron who sent him will glorify him with the glory which he had before the creation of the world (17:5). As Jesus explains, the only but most important thing his Patron can give him is "glory": "Jesus said, 'Now is the Son of man glorified, and in him God is glorified; if God is glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself, and glorify him at once'" (31:31-32). Because Jesus glorifies and honors his Father Patron especially in his death, Jesus expects that this Patron will "glorify him" and "glorify him at once." Yes, the broker receives a tariff from the patron, but reader are hard pressed to find any tariff from the clients.

Does a Broker show favoritism, as Patrons Do? In the Farewell Discourse in John 13-17, we find statements celebrating the favoritism of Jesus for his disciples. He gives them warnings of future hard times, thus strengthening the disciples: "I tell you this now, before it takes place, that when it does take place you may believe that I AM" (13:19; see 14:29; 16:1-2, 31-33). He exhorts them not to be troubled: "Let not your hearts be troubled" (14:1); "I will not leave you desolate, I will come to you" (14:18); "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you" (14:27); see 16:20-24. It seems, moreover, that he has love for the few who are loyal to him: "Love one

another; even as I have loved you” (13:34). Jesus asks on behalf of the few, who in turn ask in his name: “Whatever you ask in my name, I will do it. . .If you ask anything in my name, I will do it” (14:12-14); “I will pray the Father and he will send another Counselor” (14:15-16); “If you abide in me and my words abide in your, ask whatever you will. . .” (15:7); “. . .so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you”(15:16b); “In that day you will ask nothing of me. . .if you ask anything of the Father, he will give it to you in my name” (16:23-24). In short, the disciples alone are the recipients of his benefactions: “In my Father’s house there are many rooms. . .I go to prepare a place for you” (14:2-3); ““I will love him and manifest myself to him.’ Judas (not the Iscariot) said, ‘How is it that you will manifest yourself to us and not to the world?’” (14:21-22) “I have manifested thy name to them” (17:6; see 17:11-12, 26). Finally, it is clear that Jesus prays only for his disciples, not for the rest: “I am praying for them; I am not praying for the world but for those whom thou hast given me” (17:9; see 17:11-12, 26).

Favoritism is manifested in the simple fact that only the elite few hear this discourse; only they have Jesus’ warnings of future trials and his exhortations to peace; only for them does Jesus pray.

Summary

As regards models, readers should be acquainted now with the model of patron-client relationships. Hardly a modern invention, it functioned widely in the ancient world. But in this study, we expanded this classical model to include understanding of the role of broker who links or bridges patron and client. Jesus-the-Broker has both a descending and an ascending role vis-à-vis God’s clients. “Descending” means that he belongs to God’s world and mediates heavenly benefaction to God’s earthly clients; “ascending” brokers belong to the world of the clients and function as intercessors between them and the heavenly Patron. Jesus acts, in short, as a two-way

broker.

As models go, the patron-broker-client model proves more helpful in understanding the Fourth Gospel than theories about “agency.” Borgen’s and Buchanan’s considerations of Jesus’ relationship to God in terms of “agency” or “apostle,” certainly valid, are simply incomplete. First, our patron-broker-client model can surface much more data in the gospel than their “agent” model. Moreover it provides a conceptual glue that holds together diverse materials in the narrative in a cogent and coherent whole. Furthermore, their model only describes a one-way agent; it does not account for that agent playing a two-way role. A better conceptual tool is needed to account for the “descending” and “ascending” role of Jesus. As a model, it exposed various items that typically occur in patron-broker-client relations which allowed us to surface materials in the Fourth Gospel that would otherwise not be noticed or if observed, not put into relationship. It makes, indeed, a whole out of the pieces – in this case, a whole greater than the sum of its parts. And so, the model passes the test of discovery, integration and utility. If the success of a model depends on how much and how well it accommodates the data, by this standard the patron-broker-client model is judged highly successful. The model which best accommodates the data in the gospel and integrates it into a coherent whole is the patron-broker-client model.

Philo’s examples of Moses’ brokerage are exceptionally valuable because they are very strong arguments for the existence of the “broker” role and embody the qualifications for his success. Although Philo is only expanding on passages from Exodus, in doing so he casts the figure and role of Moses as a mediator (μεσίτης), a minister (ὑπηρέτης), a reconciler (διαλλακτής), a protector (κηδεμών), intercessor (παραιτητής), and advocate (παρακαλών).

Similarly, the Logos plays the role of broker: as messenger (πρεσβευτάτω), suppliant (ικέτης), ambassador (πρεσβευτής). Most importantly, Philo states the prime qualification for a successful broker: quoting Deut 5:5 (“and I stood between the Lord and you”), Philo understands that the Logos belongs to both world, but not wholly in each: “that is neither uncreated as God, nor created as you, but midway between the two extremes (μέσος τῶν ἄκροω), a surety to both sides (ἀμφοτέροισι ὀμηρεύων)”. This manner of thinking, then, fully existed in antiquity and was a concept ready to hand for the author of the Fourth Gospel to describe Jesus’ role.

This study, moreover, describes what a broker is and does. The cluster of five questions about a broker provided us with the proper lenses with which to examine Jesus, his words and deeds. He is a broker because God “sent” him. He is successful because he belongs to the world of both patron and client. He faithfully serves the interests of both. Because of God’s largesse, Jesus is equipped to mediate God’s power, kinship, material benefaction, and in particular wisdom and knowledge. As a broker, Jesus is positioned such that he forms unique relationships: 1. God in Jesus, 2. Jesus in the disciples and 3. God and Jesus dwelling in the disciples. Jesus, we are told, is the unique and necessary broker because he is the “only” son and because “no one can come to the Father except through me.” And finally, Jesus truly receives a tariff from God, his glorification or return to former glory. He seems not to receive any tariff from the disciples.

Finally, this model should help readers consider the role of Jesus in the Pauline letters and Hebrews. When a doxology is prayed or when an author talks about God’s patronage, glory, honor and praise are given to God through Jesus Christ. Romans alone provides these examples:

“I thank my God through Jesus Christ. . .” (1:8)

“We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (5:1)

“Through him we have obtained access to this grace “ (5:2)

“To the only wise God be glory for evermore through Jesus Christ!” (16:27)

Furthermore, the utility of this model invites us into richer interpretation of other places where Jesus is called “mediator” or “intercessor.” Some New Testament authors formally label Jesus as a “mediatory” (μεσίτης), such as “For there is one God; there is also one mediator between God and humankind, Christ Jesus, himself human” (1 Tim. 2:5) and “But Jesus has now obtained a more excellent ministry, and to that degree he is the mediator of a better covenant” (Heb 8:6; see 9:15; 12:24). Jesus is, moreover, acclaimed as “priest,” one who bridges the world of God and of mortals: “Consider Jesus, the apostle and priest of our confession,” (Heb 3:1) he is, moreover, the perfect priest because God declares him to be “a priest forever” (7:17, 21). Jesus’ role as a “priest forever” is elegantly explained later:

But he holds his priesthood permanently, because he continues forever. Consequently he is able for all time to save those who approach God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them (7:24-25, emphasis added).

Finally, we think that all expressions of Jesus “seated at the right hand of God” understand his session there precisely as a broker. Acts certainly does, for Luke links Jesus’ heavenly session with his dispensation of God’s Spirit:

Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you both see and hear. For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he himself says, 'The Lord said to my Lord, "Sit at my right hand"’ (Acts 2:33-34).

Jesus as broker, then, is a common interpretation of his role in the Christian Scriptures. But it is

the Fourth Gospel that uses this model most extensively

NOTES

1. Peder Borgen, "God's Agent in the Fourth Gospel," in ed. Jacob Neusner, ed., Religions in Antiquity (Leiden: Brill, 1968) 137-48; A. E. Harvey, "Jesus as Agent," in eds. L. D. Hurst and N. T. Wright, The Glory of Christ in the New Testament (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987) 239-250). See Karl H. Rengstorf, Apostleship (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1952) 11-24.
2. George W. Buchanan, "Apostolic Christology," SBLSP 1986: 172-82. Moreover, Charles A. Gieschen (Angelomorphic Christology. Antecedents and Early Evidence [Leiden: Brill, 1998] 293) remarks: "John never calls Jesus an angel, this analysis of evidence has demonstrated that angelomorphic terminology, traditions, and functions are an integral part of his Christology."
3. See Jerome H. Neyrey, "God, Benefactor and Patron: The Major Cultural Model for Interpreting the Deity in Greco-Roman Antiquity," JSNT 27 (2005) 471-83. See Arthur Darby Nock, "Soter and Euergetes," in his Essays on Religion and the Ancient World (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1972) 720-35.
4. See Stephen C. Mott, The Greek Benefactor and Deliverance from Moral Distress (unpublished dissertation: Harvard University, 1971) 74-82 and 345-53; Bruce J. Malina, "Patron and Client. The Analogy behind Synoptic Theology," in his The Social World of Jesus (London: Routledge, 1996) 143-74; Bruce J. Malina and Richard L. Rohrbaugh, Social-Science Commentary on the Gospel of John (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1998) 115-19.
5. Tricia Gates Brown, Spirit in the Writings of John (New York, NY: T & T Clark International, 2003).
6. See Richard P. Saller, Personal Patronage under the Early Empire (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982); S. N. Eisenstadt and L. Roniger, Patrons, Clients and Friends. Interpersonal Relations and the Structure of Trust in Society (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 1984); and Ernst Gellner and John Waterbury, eds., Patrons and Clients in Mediterranean Societies (London: Duckworth, 1977).
7. S. Eisenstadt and Roniger, Patrons, Clients and Friends, 48-49.
8. See Gellner and Waterbury, Patrons and Clients, 4; Saller, Personal Patronage under the Early Empire, 1-2.
9. John Rich ("Patronage and Interstate Relations in the Roman Republic," in Patronage in Ancient Society [ed., Andrew Wallace-Hadrill; London: Routledge, 1990] 128) describes the importance of loyalty/faithfulness in the patron-client relation: "In one of the most important of its many uses fides means 'protection.'" The weaker party is said 'to be in the fides' of the stronger. At the formation of such a relationship, the weaker party is said to give himself into or entrust himself to the fides of the stronger and the stronger to receive the weaker into his fides."

10. Richard Saller, "Patronage and Friendship in Early Imperial Rome: Drawing the Distinction." Pp. 52-53 in ed. A. Wallace-Hadrill, Patronage in Ancient Society (London: Routledge, 1990). Plutarch states: "There are favors that involve causing no offence, such as giving a friend preferential help in obtaining a post, putting some prestigious administrative function into his hands, or a friendly embassy" (Precepts for Politicians 19-20).

11. Richard Saller, Personal Patronage under the Early Empire, 21 and 27-29; see also Stephen C. Mott, "The Power of Giving and Receiving: Reciprocity in Hellenistic Benevolence." Pp. 60-71 in ed. Gerald F. Hawthorne, Current Issues in Biblical and Patristic Interpretation (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1975).

12. Dionysus of Halicarnassus Roman reform of Greek relationships: "The Athenians called their clients 'thetes' or 'hirelings,' because they served for hire, and the Thessalians called theirs 'penestai' or 'toilers,' by the very name reproaching them with their condition" (2.9). So he recommended that the poor and lowly be described by a "handsome designation," namely "patronage."

13. Patron-client relationships could be coercive and exploitative: Paul Millett, "Patronage and Its Avoidance in Classical Athens." Pp. 15-47 in ed. A. Wallace-Hadrill, Patronage in Ancient Society (London: Routledge, 1989) and Peter Flynn, "Class, Clientelism, and Coercion: Some Mechanisms of Internal Dependency and Control," Journal of Commonwealth and Comparative Politics 12 (1974) 129-56.

14. Patrons elected to become such and did so for their own advantage. In Greece, benefactors were pressured into performing a λειτουργία. On the burdensomeness of these, see Naphtali Lewis, Inventory of Compulsory Public Services of Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt (New Haven, American Society of Papyrologists, 1968). See also S. R. Llewelyn, "The Development of the System of Liturgies," NDIEC 7 (1994) 93-111.

15. The analogy of fathers/sons as patrons/clients is evident here: "In order to choose our duties to them [parents] easily, we should have this summary statement at hand, namely, that our parents are the images of the gods, and by Zeus, domestic gods, benefactors (εὐεργέται), kinsmen, creditors, lords and the warmest of friends. . . They are lenders of the most valuable things, and take back only things which will benefit us when we repay them. For what gain is so great to a child as piety and gratitude to his parents (Hierocles, "How to Conduct Oneself Toward one's Parents" Stob. 3.52).

16. See Jerome Neyrey, "Father," in ed., Carroll Stuhlmuller, The Collegeville Pastoral Dictionary of Biblical Theology (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1996) 315-19. See also John J. Pilch, "'Beat His Ribs While He is Young' (Sir 30:12): A Window on the Mediterranean World," BTB 23 (1993) 101-13.

17. After instructing a father to "whip his son often" and "discipline him," Sirach explains the importance of such training: "The father may die, and yet he is not dead, for he has left behind

him one like himself” (30:4).

18. T. R. Stevenson, “The Ideal Benefactor and the Father Analogy in Greek and Roman Thought,” CQ 42 (1992) 429-36. See P. H. Swan, The Augustan Succession: An Historical Commentary on Dio Cassius’ Roman History Books 55-56 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004) 55-56.

19. See W. K. Lacey, “Patria Potestas,” in Beryl Rawson, ed., The Family in Ancient Rome. New Perspectives (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1986) 121-44.

20. John T. Green (The Role of the Messenger and Message in the Ancient Near East [Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1989] xvi-xvii) distinguishes five types of messenger (ambassador, emissary-courier, envoy, herald and harbinger; he argues that the concept of messenger was constant and did not change (40-41).

21. “The Emperor and His Court,” 41-78.

22. Examples of Pliny’s brokerage are common in his letters, but see 10.2, 4, 5, 6, 12, 26, 51. See also Tor Hauken, Petition and Response. An Epigraphic Study of Petitions to Roman Emperors 181-249 (Stavenger: MHS, 1994).

23. See Gottlob Schrenk, “ἱερεὺς,” TDNT 3.267. See also Hans Gärtner, “Pontifex,” Paulys Realencyclopädie der Classischen Altertumswissenschaft, Supp. Bd. 15. 331-96, especially the list of pontifices maximi on p. 346.

24. Malina, “Patron and Client,” 152. See also P. G. Davis, “Divine Agents, Mediators, and New Testament Christology,” JTS 45 (1994) 484-85.

25. Jeremy Boissevain, Friends of Friends. Networks, Manipulators, and Coalitions (New York, NY: St. Martin’s Press, 1974) 147-48.

26. The characteristics of a successful broker depend on the work of Boissevain, Friends of Friends, 148-63.

27. For further discussion of first and second order goods, see Boissevain, Friends of Friends, 147-48; Malina, “Patron and Client,” 151-54. Israel’s great prophets, Moses and Elijah, did not themselves possess power, manna and quail, oil and flour, etc. which they delivered to God’s clients; they were but channels or bridges through which these benefactions came from Israel’s Patron.

28. It has been pointed out that there is no simple term for “mediator” in the Old Testament, but as A. Oepke said, “Though the word is not used, mediatorship is at the heart of Old Testament religion” (“μεσίτης,” TDNT 4.614).

29. Abraham was also appreciated as an intercessor for the people with God; see Gen 18:22-33 and 20:17. See Ronald H. Nash, “The Notion of Mediator in Alexandrian Judaism and the

Epistle to the Hebrews,” WTJ 40 (1977) 95.

30. While we use the term “broker” or “mediator” for Moses, others consider only his role as “intercessor” with God for the people; this is the perspective of David Crump, Jesus the Intercessor. Prayer and Christology in Luke-Acts (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1992) 204-30.

31. On Moses as intercessor, see Wayne Meeks, The Prophet-King. Moses Traditions and Johannine Christology, (Leiden: Brill, 1967) 118, 137, 160-61, 200-204.

32. Yet despite Philo and Josephus, there is evidence of the opposite position, namely, that God does not use mediators or brokers; see Judah Golden, “Not by Means of an Angel and Not by Means of a Messenger,” in ed., Jacob Neusner, Religions in Antiquity (Leiden: Brill, 1974) 412-24.

33. See Lala Kalyan Kumar Dey, The Intermediary World and Patterns of Perfection in Philo and Hebrews (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1975) 7-30.

34. In Philo’s “Life of Moses” the patriarch’s role as broker has many names: mediator, intercessor, priest, judge, defense attorney, defender, and savior. Similarly Philo provides another example of the two-way bridge that brokers play between God and the people. “The sacred record calls them “angels” (ἀγγέλους) or messengers, employing an apter title, for they both convey the biddings of the Father (τοῦ Πατρὸς) to His children and report the children’s need to their Father (τῷ Πατρὶ). In accordance with this they are represented by the lawgiver as ascending and descending: not that God, who is already present in all directions, needs informants, but as a boon to us in our sad case to avail ourselves of the services (διατηταῖς) of ‘words’ acting on our behalf as mediators (μεσίταις), so great is our awe and shuddering dread of the universal Monarch and the exceeding might of His sovereignty” (Dreams 1.140-43. Emphasis added).

35. Margaret Mitchell, “New Testament Envoys in the Context of Greco-Roman Diplomatic and Epistolary Conventions: The Example of Timothy and Titus,” JBL 111 (1992) 644-51.

36. John N. Collins (Diakonia. Re-Interpreting the Ancient Sources [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990) 73-148) understands διάκονος a more than a mere table serving role. His data warrant calling the διάκονος a “go-between” or middleman. Other διάκονοι function those who transmit messages, such as Hermes and Iris as well as earthly sybils, prophets, interpreters of dreams, heralds and couriers.

37. See Oepke, “μεσίτης,” 4.598-624; C. Becker, “μεσίτης,” NIDNTT 1.372-76. Harold Attridge, Hebrews (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress, 1989) 221.

38. E. R. Goodenough (“The Political Philosophy of Hellenistic Kingship,” Yale Classical Studies 1 [1928] 64-67) describes how a king rules in place of God; his duties in his realm are threefold, military leadership, the dispensation of justice, and the cult of the gods.

39. A. Oepke, “μέσιτης,” 4.609. J. Scharbert (Heilsmittler im Alten Testament und im Alten Orient [Freiburg: Herder, 1964] 21-67) in his comparative study of intercession in antiquity, listed kings and priests as the premiere mediators in the ancient near east.
40. Ronald H. Nash, “The Notion of Mediator in Alexandrian Judaism and the Epistle to the Hebrews,” WTJ 40 (1977) 114-15.
41. See David E. Aune, Prophecy in Early Christianity and the Ancient Mediterranean World (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1983) 23-48.
42. God mandates equal honor for Jesus: “. . .all may honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. Who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him” (5:23).
43. Plutarch remarks that Solon was an ideal mediator because he represented the interests of patrons and clients: “He was chosen archon to succeed Philombrotus, and made mediator (διαλλακτῆς) and legislator (νομοθέτης) for the crisis, the rich accepting him readily because he was well-to-do, and the poor because he was honest” (“Solon,” 14.2).
44. Hebrews argues the same point: “Since the children share flesh and blood, he himself likewise shared the same things. . .he had to become like his brothers in every respect. . .to make a sacrifice of atonement for the sins of the people” (2:14-17).
45. Bruce J. Malina, “Faith/Faithfulness,” in John J. Pilch and Bruce J. Malina, eds., Handbook of Biblical Social Values (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1998) 72-75.
46. Parsons, Politics and Social Structure, 352-404, originally published as “On the Concept of Political Power,” Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society 107 (1963) 232-62.
47. Parsons, Politics and Social Structure, 439-72.
48. Parsons, Politics and Social Structure, 405-29.
49. The broker’s name is also important, for the clients must petition the Patron using the Broker’s name: “Whatever you ask in my name, I will do it, that the Father may be glorified in the Son; if you ask anything in my name, I will do it” (14:13-14, 25; 15:16).
50. Boissevain, Friend of Friends, 147-48 and 156-61.
51. Many translate μονογενῆς as “only” or “single”; see Paul Winter, “Μονογενῆς Παρά Πατρὸς,” ZRG 5 (1953) 335-65; Gerard Pendrick (“Μονογενῆς,” NTS 5 [1995] 587-600) whose data overwhelmingly indicate that its proper translation is “the only one of its kind” or “unique.” But see also J. V. Dahms, “The Johannine Use of Monogenes Reconsidered,” NTS 29 (1983) 222-32.