

The last thirty years have seen an increased interest in the Bible as literature and story. Yet 'character' appears to be the neglected child in both literary theory and narrative criticism. Indeed, there is not even agreement amongst scholars on how to approach, analyse and classify characters.

This book is the first full-length treatment of all the characters in the Gospel of John that encounter and respond to Jesus. Applying a comprehensive theory of character to John's gospel, Bennema provides a fresh analysis of both the characters and their responses to Jesus.

While the majority of scholars view most Johannine characters as 'flat' or mere types, Bennema demonstrates that many are complex, developing and 'round'. John's broad array of characters and their responses to Jesus correspond to people and their choices in real life in any culture and time. This book highlights how John's gospel seeks to challenge its readers, past and present, about where they stand in relation to Jesus.

'This is a book I have been waiting for – a comprehensive, sophisticated analysis of the characters in the Gospel of John. Bennema gives us the tools to advance both our understanding of John's gospel and the theory of characterization.'

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'Bennema's thorough analysis offers further evidence for a more nuanced understanding of characters in the Gospel of John and moves the discussion about Johannine techniques of characterization forward in significant ways.'

Colleen M. Conway, Professor of Religious Studies, Seton Hall University

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