Previous scholars of Philip have identified the sacraments (which they have understood to be ritual activities) as a particularly troublesome puzzle. Thus ritual in Philip has been the subject of numerous important and intriguing academic studies over the last generation. Each of these studies has helped steadily advance our understanding of the subject, clarifying many of the problems connected with interpreting the Gospel of Philip.  

1 A rough draft of this paper was presented in 1998 to the Early Jewish and Christian Mysticism Group at the annual meeting of the Society for Biblical Literature. It appeared in draft form in the SBL Seminar Papers, Part 1 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1998) 483-523 under the title, “Entering God’s Presence: Sacramentalism in the Gospel of Philip.” I would especially like to thank my respondents, Elaine Pagels and Charles Gieschen, for their comments and criticisms on that draft as well as the members of the Early Jewish and Christian Mysticism Group. In addition, my gratitude is extended to Gilles Quispel and Rachel Elior for reading earlier drafts of this article and providing me with their helpful comments.

Yet, despite this extraordinary effort, several issues need more discussion since we have yet to come to a consensus on the number of sacraments in *Philip* let alone a "sacramental theology." Given this situation, some scholars suggest that the style of *Philip* is so allusive that we can not understand the individual actions of the specific sacraments. This line of reasoning is supported in the recent article by E. Pagels, "Ritual in the Gospel of Philip", in *The Nag Hammadi Library After Fifty Years*, and is further evidence that scholars are still struggling to reconstruct the ritual activity alluded to in this enigmatic gospel. In face of this impasse, I propose that the ritual activity in *Philip* and its sacramental theology can be reconstructed by seeing these traditions as reflective of similar traditions developing simul-

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² See especially, Williams, "Realized Eschatology", 1-17; Sevrin, "Les Noces Spirituelles", 143-193.